

SHARPER

by

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&

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SHARPER noun

/shärp-er/

A cheat, one who lives by their wits.

TITLE CARD: **TOM**

We hear the JINGLE of a SHOPKEEPER BELL.

INT. STORIES (BOOKSTORE) - MORNING

TOM (26), smart, approachable, sits at a REGISTER reading a book of poetry by Keats. He looks up to spot--

SANDRA (23) enter through the front door. She's dressed conservatively, wearing glasses and a quick smile.

She surveys the BOOKSTORE -- small and cozy.

TOM

Morning.

SANDRA

Morning.

She browses the shelves as Tom watches her discreetly from behind his book. Then:

TOM

Looking for something?

SANDRA

Yeah, a hardcover of *Finnegans Wake*?

TOM

I think I might have one.

Tom heads to the back of the narrow store, he runs his fingers along a shelf of books until...

TOM (CONT'D)

Here we go.

He removes a heavy copy of *Finnegans Wake* and hands it to her. They head back to the register.

TOM (CONT'D)

Some light reading you got there.

SANDRA

It's actually a gift for my professor.

TOM

You're a student?

SANDRA
Yeah, I'm getting my PHD.

TOM
Columbia? NYU?

SANDRA
Columbia.

TOM
Nice. What's your thesis topic?

SANDRA
Social resistance in Irish
Literature.

TOM
And how's that going?

SANDRA
Slowly. Very slowly.

TOM
Well, I'm impressed. Let me wrap
this up for you. Free of charge.

Tom begins to gift wrap the book. Sandra continues to browse.

SANDRA
God, I could move in here. It sucks
how all these bookstores are
closing. I blame the internet.

TOM
Yeah, that and the fact that nobody
reads anymore.

SANDRA
I know. It's sad.

TOM
That'll be fifteen even.

Sandra hands Tom a CREDIT CARD. Tom spots her name: SANDRA MITCHELL. He runs it through the machine. They wait. Then:

TOM (CONT'D)
Hey, there's this great little
Vietnamese restaurant on Mott
street. If you're not doing
anything later, dinner's on me.

SANDRA
Oh, well, um...

TOM

Sorry, was that weird? That was a little weird, wasn't it?

SANDRA

No, it's just that--

TOM

You probably have a boyfriend.

SANDRA

I don't. I'm single. I'm single and I kinda like being single.

TOM

Oh, sure. I get it.

Tom looks down at the credit card machine.

TOM (CONT'D)

Uh, your card's not going through.

SANDRA

I must have maxed it out again. Let me see if I have enough cash.

Sandra rummages through her pocket book.

TOM

Tell you what, take the book, you can come back and pay for it later.

SANDRA

I couldn't. What if someone else came in looking for it?

TOM

They can always order it online.
(smiles)
Go on, take it. I trust you.

SANDRA

Thank you. I promise I'll be back with the money.

TOM

Yeah, whenever.

Sandra exits the store. Tom moves to the window and watches her walk off. He then turns to a LAPTOP and types in her name: SANDRA MITCHELL.

He scrolls through FACEBOOK and finds her page: *Different pictures of Sandra with friends, updates, forwarded articles.*

Tom lets himself linger on it for a beat, she is adorable.

TOM (CONT'D)
 (mocking himself)
Sorry, was that weird? Idiot.

Tom shuts the laptop and goes back to his book.

EXT. STORIES - NIGHT

Tom exits the store, on this quite downtown Manhattan street.

SANDRA (O.S.)
 Wait! Wait!

Tom turns to spot Sandra hurrying towards him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
 Hi, remember me? I got your money.

TOM
 Oh, hey, you didn't have to bring
 it back *tonight*.

SANDRA
 I didn't want to leave you hanging.
 Here, keep the change.

Sandra hands Tom a twenty dollar bill.

TOM
 Thanks.

SANDRA
 Okay. Well, see ya.

TOM
 Yeah. Have a good night.

But Sandra doesn't leave. She just stands there. Tom's not sure what to do. Sandra laughs, embarrassed.

SANDRA
 So, remember this morning when you
 asked me to dinner?

TOM
 Yeah, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to--

SANDRA

No, it's-- I wanted to say yes. I was actually standing there thinking how nice would it be if this guy asked me out, and right as I thought it, you did and, I don't know, I panicked.

TOM

You panicked?

SANDRA

I panicked. I'm Sandra.

TOM

I'm Tom.

INT. VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sandra is laughing as Tom recounts a story.

TOM

...What am I getting myself into? A short story was one thing, but a novel? I mean, that's, like, at least three hundred pages.

SANDRA

I know. Sometimes more.

TOM

Exactly, and here they were offering me, like, real money. I had to deliver *something*.

SANDRA

So, what'd you do?

TOM

I took the money, had a year long panic attack and wrote a book that was... *terrible*.

SANDRA

I'm sure it wasn't that bad.

TOM

Oh, no, it was awful. It was so bad they wouldn't publish it.

SANDRA

I'm sorry.

TOM

It's okay. At least I got to keep the advance.

SANDRA

Do you still write?

TOM

No. Not really. All that happened around the time my mom died and I just kinda gave up.

SANDRA

I lost both my parents when I was a kid.

Tom nods, they share a moment.

TOM

Anyway, I started managing the bookstore and that takes up most of my time now.

SANDRA

It must be nice being surrounded by books all day.

TOM

Yeah, it's great.

SANDRA

After my parents passed my brother and I hopped from one foster family to the next. At some point we were living with this couple who had a great collection of novels. One night I started reading *Jane Eyre* and here was this character who was sorta going through everything I was going through...

(thoughtful beat)

I didn't want it to end. I finished it and went straight back to page one and started reading it all over again. I've loved books ever since.

Sandra trails off, wistful. Tom watches her closely.

TOM

Jane Eyre, huh?

SANDRA

Jane Eyre.

TOM
Can I show you something?

INT. STORIES - NIGHT

Tom and Sandra enter, Tom flicks on a light, motions for her to follow him to a LOCKED GLASS DISPLAY CASE.

Tom takes out a small KEY, opens it and delicately removes A COPY OF JANE EYRE. He carefully hands it to Sandra.

SANDRA
Oh my God, is this a first edition?

TOM
Yup. And here's the best part.

Tom opens the book, delicately. Sandra looks down. Reveal that the book has been SIGNED BY CHARLOTTE BRONTE.

SANDRA
Is this real?

TOM
This is real.

Sandra puts the book down on the counter and gazes up at him.

SANDRA
How can I be sure?

Tom leans in close and kisses her and she kisses him back.

EXT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - DAY

Tom waits outside a building as a GROUP OF STUDENTS spill out. Sandra among them, she meets up with Tom.

SANDRA
Sorry, my class ran late.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Tom and Sandra walk along a trail. It's autumn and picturesque as the leaves are changing colors.

SANDRA
...these professors are so obnoxious.

(MORE)

SANDRA (CONT'D)

This guy today actually used the phrase "*the vaginization of German literature.*" I'm pretty sure *vaginization* isn't even a real word.

TOM

What do you want to eat tonight?

SANDRA

That's hilarious, I say *vaginization* and you start thinking about food. What Freud would say?

TOM

Freud would say we should go someplace nice for dinner.

SANDRA

Like, how nice?

TOM

Nice, like, we've been seeing each other for a week and a half and so far so good, *nice*.

SANDRA

I know the perfect place.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sandra delivers a large feast, as Tom sits at a table.

SANDRA

We've got ravioli with homemade pesto, fried zucchini, salad. And dessert is in the oven.

TOM

Where did you learn to cook?

SANDRA

I spent my junior year in Florence.

The following dialogue in italics will be spoken in Italian.

TOM

Do you speak Italian?

SANDRA

I used to speak it well, now it's a bit rusty, unfortunately.

TOM

Did you like Italy?

SANDRA

I have great memories. But, I had this boyfriend who was a real jerk.

TOM

Where is he? I'll kill him!

Sandra smiles and returns to English:

SANDRA

How about you? Where did you learn to speak Italian?

TOM

My mom was from Italy and I also watch a lot of Fellini movies.

SANDRA

I love Fellini.

TOM

Most people think that *8 & 1/2* is his best film, but I'll stand by *La Strada* as being his most perfect.

SANDRA

The end is so moving.

TOM

Oh, man, it's heart breaking.

SANDRA

Have you ever had your heart broken, Tom?

TOM

Once or twice. How about you?

SANDRA

No, I mean, there was the jerk in Italy, and after him, I was sort of... Turned off to guys for while.

TOM

You still turned off?

SANDRA

Depends on the guy.

She smiles at him.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tom and Sandra are furiously making out in her bed. Sandra stops for a moment, takes a breath, then:

SANDRA
I need you to know that, there's no
one else, okay?

Tom realizes that Sandra has suddenly turned serious.

TOM
Okay. Yeah, me neither...

SANDRA
(relieved)
Okay. Good. Great. Great.

Sandra kisses him and they fall onto the bed and make love.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Tom sleeps in Sandra's bed. He stirs awake when HE HEARS THE SOUND OF VOICES. He notices Sandra isn't in bed with him.

Tom gets up and moves to the doorway, peeks into the living room. Sandra talks to SOMEONE OBSCURED at her front door.

SANDRA
Go away. I can't help you.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Come on, don't say that, you
haven't even heard what I need--

SANDRA
I don't care, I want you to leave.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Sandra, please!

Tom quietly steps further into the living room, watching.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't turn your back on me! You're
all I have in this world!

SANDRA
I'm sorry, Jason... I'm sorry.

Sandra shuts the door, and he begins pounding on it.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Sandra! Sandra! Open the door!
 Please don't do this me, I need
 your help! Please! Please!

More pounding. Sandra now in tears.

SANDRA
 Go away! Just go!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
 You fucking bitch! I hate you!

One last loud POUND on the door. Then the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS retreating. Sandra spots Tom standing there.

SANDRA
 (embarrassed)
 I'm sorry about that.

TOM
 Are you okay?

SANDRA
 That was my brother. I haven't seen him in, like, six months, but when he comes by it only means one thing. He needs money... *All happy families are alike* and all that...

TOM
 Right. How about a drink?

EXT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Sandra and Tom drink whiskey on the fire escape, the sounds of the city below them.

SANDRA
 I had it pretty easy. I was good in school, I had teachers who helped me get into college. My brother wasn't so lucky. Some of the homes he was put in were a nightmare.

TOM
 That's not your fault.

SANDRA
 I know, but he's the only family I've got. And no matter how many times he takes advantage of me, I find it impossible not to help him.

TOM

You're a good person, Sandra.

SANDRA

About a year ago I got a call from the police. I thought they were calling to tell me he had died. He hadn't, he had just gotten arrested. And I... I remember being disappointed. I remember thinking it wouldn't be so bad if... I am not a good person, Tom.

TOM

Yes, you are...

Tom cocoons her with his arms as she weeps into his chest.

GUESTS (PRELAP)

Happy Birthday to you/ Happy birthday to you...

INT. STORIES - NIGHT

A small gathering of GUESTS. The lights are low as JACK (20s), clearly a fun guy, delivers a CAKE to the birthday boy: Tom, who stands with Sandra.

GUESTS (O.S.)

Happy birthday dear Tom/ Happy birthday to you!

JACK

Make a wish, Tommy boy!

Tom blows out the candles. Everyone applauds.

INT. STORIES - NIGHT

Sandra sips wine, talks to a artsy girl, BRENDA (20s).

BRENDA

So, how long have you known, Tom?

SANDRA

Oh, uh, a few weeks now.

BRENDA

That's it? It seems so much longer.

SANDRA
I know, it's been a real whirlwind
romance.

BRENDA
Where did you go to undergrad?

SANDRA
Vassar.

BRENDA
Oh my God, so did I!

SANDRA
You know, I thought you looked
familiar. When did you graduate?

BRENDA
Class of fourteen.

SANDRA
Class of sixteen.

BRENDA
Did you hang out at the Mug a lot?

SANDRA
I spent almost all of my time at
the library. But don't tell Tom, I
want to maintain the illusion that
I'm not a total nerd.

ON JACK AND TOM

Watching Sandra and Brenda from across the store.

JACK
She's like a sexy librarian, she's
literally your dream girl.

TOM
I know. She's incredible.

JACK
It's good to see that you're...
I don't know. Doing okay? I mean,
you were in a bad place there.

TOM
I was just a little depressed.

JACK

Dude, you were more than a *little* depressed. We were all worried about you. But, you're good now?

TOM

Yeah. Believe it or not.

JACK

Cool. Cool.
(then)
So, how is she in bed?

TOM

Awful. Terrible. It's torture.

INT. STORIES - LATER

Sandra peruses a book shelf by herself. Tom approaches her.

TOM

Hey, you okay?

SANDRA

I'm great. I met someone who I went to college with.

TOM

Really? Small world.

SANDRA

Oh, and I got you something.

She hands him a PACKAGE. He opens it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I noticed you don't wear a watch.

He removes an EXPENSIVE WATCH.

TOM

This is amazing. Sandra, it must have cost a fortune.

SANDRA

No, it's a long story, but it was given to me by an old friend. Anyway, I want you to have it.

TOM

Thank you.

SANDRA
Happy birthday.

They kiss.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - CONEY ISLAND - AFTERNOON

Sandra and Tom ride in the front car of the ROLLER COASTER. They squeal and shriek, enjoying the ride.

EXT. STREET - CONEY ISLAND - AFTERNOON

Sandra and Tom walk down the street, arm in arm.

SANDRA
Soooo, why do we always go back to my place?

TOM
What?

SANDRA
I want to see where you live.

TOM
It's kind of uncomfortable there.

SANDRA
Tom, my apartment's not exactly the *Four Seasons*.

TOM
No, it's not that.

SANDRA
Let me guess. You still live with your parents?

TOM
I live with my dad and his new wife, yeah.

SANDRA
So?

TOM
It's complicated. My dad and I don't get along. He doesn't like me. He loves me but he doesn't like me. He sees me as a disappointment.

SANDRA
How's that possible?

TOM
(shrugs it off)
All happy families are alike... and
all that, right? Anyway, he's
really sick, so we're both trying
to get some closure, I guess.

SANDRA
That sounds rough.

TOM
It is what it is.

Sandra's phone RINGS. She checks the caller ID and grimaces.

SANDRA
Hold on...
(into phone)
Hello? Yeah... I don't know--
What?! Okay... I said okay!
(hangs up phone)
I have to go. I'm sorry.

TOM
Sure, I'll call us an *Uber*--

SANDRA
No, I have to go by myself. I'm
sorry. Please. I have to go.

She hurries away leaving Tom alone, confused.

EXT. STORIES - NIGHT

Tom pulls down the gate and locks it.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Tom climbs the stairs carrying a bag of groceries. He gets to Sandra's door, then notices the door isn't fully shut.

TOM
Sandra?

Tom carefully pushes the door open and enters...

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Tom spots Sandra sitting by the window, drinking a glass of wine and smoking a cigarette.

TOM
Since when do you smoke?

SANDRA
I quit two years ago.

TOM
You're not returning my texts.

SANDRA
I'm sorry.

TOM
I don't know what's going on with you and you don't have to tell me. But you should eat.

Tom heads to the kitchen with the groceries.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom cooks. Sandra appears at the entrance of the kitchen.

SANDRA
My brother's in trouble.

TOM
What kind of trouble?

SANDRA
He owes people a lot of money.

TOM
What happens if he can't pay?

SANDRA
He says they'll kill him.

TOM
And you believe that?

Sandra looks at him for a beat. Then:

SANDRA
They cut out one of his eyes.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sandra barely touched her food. Tom listens to her.

SANDRA

I went to see him in the hospital.
He looked awful. They told him if
he didn't pay up they would come
back and take his other eye.

TOM

How much does he owe them?

SANDRA

Paying them back is not an option.

TOM

So, what is an option?

SANDRA

I was thinking of giving him money
and getting him out of the country.

TOM

How do you know they won't come
looking for him? And there's
something else to consider.

SANDRA

What?

TOM

Suppose your brother does
disappear, and they can't find him.
Who do you think they're going to
come looking for to collect?

SANDRA

Me? They wouldn't come for me, they
don't even know I exist.

TOM

How can you be sure that your
brother didn't mention you?

SANDRA

I'm not sure of anything, Tom.

TOM

You have to pay them off.

SANDRA

I told you that's not possible.

TOM
How much do they want?

SANDRA
Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars and they want it in four days, so short of robbing a bank it is just not gonna happen.

Tom takes this in, nods. Then:

TOM
I can give you the money.

SANDRA
(confused)
What?

TOM
I have it. It's in the bank. You wouldn't have to rob it. I could just go make a withdrawal.

SANDRA
I don't understand. You live at home. You work in a bookstore.

TOM
I *own* a bookstore. And how do you think I can afford to keep it open? All that place does is lose money.

Sandra stares at him, as if seeing him for the first time.

SANDRA
You have that much money just sitting in the bank?

TOM
More. Yeah. My family has money.

SANDRA
Why... Why is this the first time I'm hearing about this?

TOM
It never seemed to come up. Maybe I didn't want you to know.

SANDRA
Well, honestly, it's fucked up that you never said anything.

TOM
Sandra, I can help you.

SANDRA
I can't take your money, Tom.

TOM
Why not?

SANDRA
Because it's three hundred and
fifty thousand dollars, that's why!
(takes a breath, then)
I appreciate the offer, I really
do. But let's face it, Tom, we're
practically strangers.

TOM
Before I met you I was sinking into
a hole I didn't think I was ever
gonna climb out of. Then one day
you walked into my store and the
world's never looked the same. I
love you, and I'll do *anything* for
you. Let me say that again. I love
you, and I'll do anything for you.

Sandra takes in the sincerity of his words.

CUT TO:

QUICK CUTS: A DUFFLE BAG ZIPPER PULLED OPEN... HANDS PLACING
STACKS OF CASH INTO A DUFFLE BAG... THE DUFFLE BAG ZIPPER
PULLED SHUT.

INT. BANK - DAY

A BANK EMPLOYEE hands over the DUFFLE BAG to Tom. Tom turns
around and strides out of the bank.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Tom exits and meets Sandra. He hands her the bag of money.

TOM
It's all there.

SANDRA
I'm going to pay you back, if it
takes the rest of my life...

TOM

It's okay. I wish you'd let me come with you, though.

SANDRA

I told you, I don't want you anywhere near these people. I'll be fine. What are you doing tonight?

TOM

I was hoping to hang out with this pretty girl I know.

SANDRA

Well, there's this great little Vietnamese restaurant on Mott street. If you're not doing anything later, dinner's on me.

Sandra hugs Tom tight. She hangs onto him for a long beat.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

(whispers in his ear)

I will never forget this.

Then she heads off down the street toting the bag.

INT. VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tom sits at a table, checks his watch-- the gift from Sandra. The door opens and he looks to the entrance. It's not Sandra.

EXT. VIETNAMESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is closing up. Tom steps out. He checks his watch again. Then removes his phone and checks that as well.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Tom skips up the stairs. He reaches Sandra's door and KNOCKS. The door swings open and a YOUNG GUY (30) stands before him.

YOUNG GUY

Can I help you?

TOM

Where's Sandra?

YOUNG GUY

Who?

TOM
Cut the bullshit. I'm Tom. The hell
happened today?

YOUNG GUY
You got the wrong--?

TOM
I thought they cut out your eye.

YOUNG GUY
What?

A DARK HAIREd WOMAN (30) comes to the door in a robe.

TOM
What happened? Where's Sandra?!

DARK HAIREd WOMAN
Who's Sandra?
(to Young Man)
Who's Sandra, Todd?

TODD
I have no idea.

DARK HAIREd WOMAN
Todd, what have you been up to?

TODD
Nothing, I just spent the last
month in Mexico with you.
(to Tom)
Seriously, you got the wrong
apartment, dude. Alright?

TOM
I don't... I want to see Sandra.
You hear me? I want see Sandra!

TODD
Get the fuck out of here, man,
before I call the police.

SLAM! The door SHUTS IN TOM'S FACE.

TOM
Sandra! Sandra! Sandra!

Tom POUNDS on the door as we abruptly-- CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: **SANDRA**

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - STREET - NIGHT

A shitty neighborhood-- vacant, desolate, cold. A YOUNG WOMAN in a short skirt and a flimsy jacket hurries down the street. One of her heels BREAKS and she FALLS to the ground.

YOUNG WOMAN
Oh, fuck me! Shit!

She hoists herself up and heads into...

INT. ROUND ABOUT BAR - CONTINUOUS

The Young Woman enters this decrepit bar. We notice for the first time IT'S SANDRA. Her hair is longer and in disarray. Cheap make-up decorates her face. Her nose is runny. She's a disaster. A far cry from the Sandra we just got to know.

She looks around and spots LESTER (35), dressed in a TRACK SUIT and covered in cheap gold. He sits in the corner, drinking scotch. Sandra forces a smile and approaches him.

SANDRA
How you doing, Lester?

Lester ignores her. She sits down across from him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Fucking 'a it's cold. I ain't feeling so good--

LESTER
How much you make tonight, Sandy?

SANDRA
It's empty out there, it's fucking Christmas, what do you expect?

She removes some CASH from her bra. Lester counts it.

LESTER
I expect more than this.

SANDRA
Lester. It's Christmas.

LESTER
I don't give a fuck what day it is!

A MAN (30s) at the other end of the bar notices them. He's dressed in an elegant suit, too elegant for this place.

SANDRA

I know, Lester, I'm sorry. You take such good care of me and tomorrow I'm going to get you that money, I swear. As soon as I get some rest.

LESTER

Who you trying to hustle?

SANDRA

I ain't trying to hustle nobody.

LESTER

As soon as you get some rest? You rest when I get paid. See that guy?
(points to the Man at Bar)
Go ask if he needs company.

Sandra looks at the Man at the bar. She squints.

SANDRA

Lester, he looks like a cop.

LESTER

Cops get lonely like everybody else. Go work your magic, girl.

Sandra starts heading for the Man, but Lester stops her.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Wait up. You look like shit. Go fix yourself up.

Sandra heads to the back. She passes the Man and they lock eyes. She does her best to smile, then ducks into the...

INT. ROUND ABOUT BAR - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sandra enters, fishing in her pocket book. She removes a small BAGGIE OF HEROIN. She snorts a bump. Then looks at herself in the mirror and puts on lipstick.

INT. ROUND ABOUT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Sandra exits the bathroom and approaches the Man at the bar. She sits next to him. He notices. She smiles at him.

SANDRA

Buy me a drink?

The Man motions to the BARTENDER.

THE MAN
Dewars for the lady.

The Bartender pours Sandra a drink. She takes a deep gulp.

SANDRA
That's good. It warms you right up.
It's cold out there tonight, I'm
freezing my fucking pussy off.

THE MAN
Not advisable for a woman in your
profession.

SANDRA
Haha... You're funny. I like funny
guys. You alone? You wanna hang?

THE MAN
And do what?

SANDRA
Use your imagination.

She takes the Man's hand and rests it on her leg.

THE MAN
What are you worth?

SANDRA
Sixty, but we can talk about it...

THE MAN
No. I mean, what are you worth to
yourself?

SANDRA
Don't know what you're asking me.
You wanna take me home? We'll
cuddle.

THE MAN
(RE Lester)
Is that your pimp?

SANDRA
Shit. You a cop? 'Cause, I've had a
real fucked day, man, the last
thing I need is to get arrested.
Please, it's Christmas, tell me to
walk away and I'll walk away.

THE MAN

Is that what you want? To walk away? I can help you do that.

(Sandra sizes him up)

I can help you walk away.

SANDRA

You think you're the first guy to tell me that?

THE MAN

I'm the first guy to mean it.

SANDRA

There's always a catch.

THE MAN

There sure is.

SANDRA

So, what is it?

THE MAN

I need your trust.

SANDRA

I don't trust anybody.

THE MAN

That's too bad.

The Man returns to his drink. Sandra watches him carefully. There's just something about him...

SANDRA

Okay. Okay... I trust you.

The Man smiles, stands and heads towards Lester, motions Sandra to follow him. She does.

THE MAN

(to Lester, RE Sandra)

This belong to you?

LESTER

I don't know her.

THE MAN

Great. So you don't mind if I take her out of here.

LESTER

You ain't taking shit.

THE MAN
Oh, so you do know her.

LESTER
The fuck you want, man?

THE MAN
How much is she worth to you?

LESTER
Sandy? Sandy's one of my top earners. What you want with her?

THE MAN
I want with her, what I want with her. What do you care?

The Man takes out a WALLET. He lays a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL on the table, then another, and another. He gets to five hundred. Sandra continues to eye The Man, curiously.

LESTER
Keep going.

THE MAN
That's all I've got on me. Why don't you just tell me how much she's going to cost?

LESTER
It's going to take more than that, that's for damn sure.

The Man gathers his money.

THE MAN
Forget green. Let's talk silver.

The Man lifts up his sleeve and removes a SILVER WATCH -- WE REALIZE IT'S THE SAME WATCH THAT SANDRA GAVE TOM. The Man places it gently on the table. Lester inspects it.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
That's a *Rolex Submariner*.

LESTER
Yeah, I know what a Rolex is. So?

THE MAN
It's worth eighty five hundred. New.

LESTER

You gonna pay eighty five hundred
for this bitch? You high?

The Man contemplates Sandra, then shrugs.

THE MAN

Yeah, I guess you're right. Forget
it. Must be the booze.

The Man reaches across the table, takes his watch back.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Sorry to have wasted your time.

Sandra watches helplessly as the Man walks straight out of
the bar and out of her life. Sandra deflates. Then:

LESTER

Where the fuck does he think he's
going?

Lester shoots up and follows after The Man.

EXT. ROUND ABOUT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The Man walks to his BMW. He opens the door when Lester comes
running out of the bar.

LESTER

Wait up, wait up, yo, yo, wait up.

He can't help but notice the Man's brand new BMW.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Why don't you come back inside?
I'll buy you a drink. We'll talk.

INT. ROUND ABOUT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The Man sits at the bar with Lester. Sandra is a seat away,
listening in.

THE MAN

I run a brothel outside of Vegas.
Now, I can use her, but I'm not
about to pay over five grand.

SANDRA

A brothel?! What? I ain't going to
no brothel. Fuck that--

LESTER
Sandy, I'm warning you. Shut the
fuck up.

Sandra looks to The Man, but his face betrays nothing.

LESTER (CONT'D)
(to the man)
Fine, I'm good with five grand.

THE MAN
Great, I'll be back next month, and
I'll take her off your hands.

LESTER
Next month? She may be dead or in
jail next month. Let's do this now.

THE MAN
I only have five hundred on me.

LESTER
So gimme the watch.

THE MAN
Watch is eighty-five hundred. Nice
try. I'll see you next month.

LESTER
Wait, wait, you said the watch is
eighty-five hundred *new*? Correct?
How much is it used? Like, seven?

THE MAN
Maybe. Why?

LESTER
Alright, then gimme the watch and
I'll give you change.

Lester takes off his shoe. Inside is a small stack of bills.
He counts out two thousand dollars, places the money on the
bar. The Man contemplates it.

THE MAN
You mind putting that in an
envelope?

LESTER
(to Bartender)
Frankie! Get me a fucking envelope!

The Bartender roots around for an envelope as the Man removes
his watch and hands it to Lester. Lester is very pleased.

LESTER (CONT'D)
Happy holidays.

EXT. ROUND ABOUT BAR - MOMENTS LATER

The Man and Sandra exit the bar together.

SANDRA
Fucking Vegas. I knew it, shit, I
fucking knew it--

THE MAN
Just get in the car.

He unlocks the door and opens it for her.

SANDRA
I heard what goes down in those
shit bag places, and there are
things I will not do, motherfucker--

The man stops, looks her in the eye.

THE MAN
I told you to trust me.

Sandra hesitates, then gets in. The Man shuts her door.

INT. BMW - CONTINUOUS

The Man walks around and gets in the driver's seat. He fishes around in his coat pocket, removes the envelope of money.

THE MAN
Jesus, what kind of a man hides
money in his shoe? Disgusting.

He takes out half the money and hands it to Sandra.

SANDRA
(confused)
What's this for?

THE MAN
That's your cut.

SANDRA
(skeptical)
My cut?

He leans over, opens the dashboard. IT'S FILLED WITH WATCHES IDENTICAL TO THE ONE HE JUST GAVE LESTER.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
Oh fuck. You mean it ain't real?

THE MAN
Nope. It *ain't* real. I get them from a guy named Topsy in New York. The best junk money can buy.

SANDRA
Well, you fucking fooled me.

THE MAN
That's because you associate with stupid people. And stupidity is contagious.

The Man starts the car and takes off.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A small one-bedroom, the kind of apartment you can rent by the week. The Man and Sandra enter. Sandra lights a cigarette. The Man fixes himself a drink.

SANDRA
Can you make me one?

THE MAN
No. From now on you don't drink, you don't smoke.

He approaches her, grabs her cigarette and puts it in his mouth, takes a drag.

THE MAN (CONT'D)
Do me a favor. Take off your clothes.

He sits in a chair across from her, crosses his legs and watches her as she begins to strip. Sandra dances a little.

SANDRA
You wanna put on some music?

THE MAN
Just take off your clothes.

She strips down to her bra and underwear. She's about to remove her bra when--

THE MAN (CONT'D)
That's enough. Go sit on the couch.

Sandra sits. The Man walks up close, then kneels in front of her. He takes her arms into his own and inspects her forearms. Then spreads her legs and runs his hands along her inner thighs. He takes a hold of her feet and looks in between her toes.

SANDRA

You trying to see if I shoot up?

THE MAN

Last thing I need is some junkie.
Get dressed.

He stands up and hands her some blankets from nearby.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

You'll sleep out here tonight. Now, you got a thousand dollars on you, and that door over there is going to remain unlocked. You can leave whenever you want. Or you can stay. It's up to you.

SANDRA

I've never been to Vegas.

THE MAN

We're not going to Vegas. We're staying right here.

Sandra looks at the Man as he heads to a bedroom door, *Is he for real? What the hell is going on?* He shuts off the light in the living room.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

Get some sleep.

SANDRA

You haven't told me your name.

THE MAN

(beat)

Max

SANDRA

Merry Christmas, Max.

MAX

Merry Christmas, Sandra.

SANDRA

You can call me Sandy. Everybody calls me Sandy.

MAX
Not anymore they don't.

Max steps inside his bedroom and shuts the door.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Sandra wakes up. Waiting for her is a tray with coffee, and a full breakfast. She sits up, sips the coffee and grabs a piece of toast.

Max enters the room, adjusting his tie. He sits down on the couch next to Sandra.

MAX
How did you sleep?

SANDRA
Good.

MAX
Let me ask you a question. What's your favorite movie?

SANDRA
(confused)
What's my favorite movie?

MAX
What's your favorite movie?

SANDRA
Um... You'll probably think it's stupid. *Titanic*.

MAX
It's not stupid. I love that movie.

SANDRA
You do? It's so good, right?

MAX
Of course.

SANDRA
God, DiCaprio was so young in it.

MAX
Honestly, he's never been better.

SANDRA
He was pretty great in *The Departed*, too.

MAX

He was okay. But nothing compares to *Titanic*.

SANDRA

Kate Winslet was beautiful.

MAX

And the end is so moving.

SANDRA

I can't believe you like *Titanic*.

MAX

I don't. I've never even seen it.

SANDRA

You've never seen *Titanic*?

MAX

I don't watch movies, they're a waste of time. But I was able to give you the impression that I had seen it, and was able to discuss actors I barely know. And *that* is what we are going to do with you. We're going to create the impression that you are somebody you're not. And when I am done with you, it's going to be one hundred percent convincing.

SANDRA

How you gonna do that?

MAX

We're going to teach you a little about everything, so you can lie about anything.

Max hands her an iPad.

MAX (CONT'D)

I downloaded today's newspapers. Read them all cover to cover.

SANDRA

Newspapers? You fucking kidding me?

MAX

Where'd you put the thousand dollars I gave you?

SANDRA

Why?

MAX

Where did you put it?

SANDRA

In that drawer there. Why?

Max opens the drawer of the coffee table. Counts money.

MAX

From now on, every time you curse
I'm taking a hundred dollars.

Sandra reaches for her money, Max moves away.

SANDRA

Fuck that. That's my money!

Max takes another bill and throws the rest down on the table.

MAX

Now you got eight hundred left.
Choose your words wisely.

With that he turns around and exits the apartment. Sandra
sinks back into the couch. Stares at the money.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

All the lights are off. The front door opens. Max enters.

MAX

Sandra?

He turns on the lights. The living room is empty.

MAX (CONT'D)

Sandra?

He walks over to the...

BATHROOM

And opens the door.

Sandra is sitting on the toilet in a t-shirt. Her eyes have a
glazed quality to them. Her nose runny again. Max looks over
at the sink to spot a small, empty BAGGIE.

He rushes Sandra...

SANDRA

No...

Grabs her by the shirt...

MAX

Get out.

SANDRA

No, come on, I was only snorting
what I had left, I don't shoot or
nothing.

Max isn't listening. He drags her back into the...

LIVING ROOM

Pulls her to the front door.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Come on, let me go!

MAX

Get out. I've wasted enough time
with you.

He opens the front door and pushes her out into the...

HALLWAY

And SLAMS the door behind him.

SANDRA

Max! Let me back in! Please!

Sandra POUNDS on the door as she breaks down.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I don't have any clothes! Please,
let me back in! I swear, I'll do
anything you ask! Please! It's
cold! It's so cold out there!
Please! Oh, Jesus, please!

She keeps hitting the door until she's spent and goes limp.
Tears falling hard and fast down her face.

After a few moments, the door creaks open. Sandra looks up
from her knees. She pulls herself together.

MAX

That was your only warning.

Sandra nods and steps back inside. The door quietly shuts.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sandra sits across from Max. She looks a little healthier.

MAX

The Great Gatsby.

SANDRA

"In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since."

MAX

The Stranger.

SANDRA

"Mother died today. Or maybe it was yesterday, I don't know."

MAX

Anna Karenina.

SANDRA

"All happy families are alike, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

MAX

Very good.

(then)

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of tim--"

SANDRA

A Tale of Two Cities.

MAX

"Call me--"

SANDRA

Ishmael" *Moby Dick.*

INT. BURGER JOINT - DAY

Sandra and Max eat burgers across from each other.

MAX

Where'd you study?

SANDRA
Vassar College.

MAX
From when to when?

SANDRA
Twenty twelve to twenty sixteen. I
lived in a dorm -- Jewett -- for
two years, then moved off campus.
Didn't have much of a social life,
spent all my time in the library.

MAX
Good.
(then)
You're not without talent.

SANDRA
Am I the first?

MAX
First what?

SANDRA
First girl you've done this with?

MAX
Yes.

SANDRA
Why'd you pick me?

MAX
Because you came along.

SANDRA
I'm from Seattle, originally. I've
got a mom there. She's a total hard
ass but she's alright--

MAX
What did you major in?

SANDRA
What?

MAX
At Vassar. What did you major in?

SANDRA
Where are you from, Max?

MAX

What did you major in at Vassar?

SANDRA

English... I'm just trying to make some conversation.

MAX

I have no interest in making conversation. I don't care about the person you were, I'm only interested in who you are about to become.

(then)

Now, let's rewind. When did you go to Vassar?

SANDRA

Twenty twelve to twenty sixteen.

MAX

You were there the whole time?

SANDRA

No, I spent a year abroad.

MAX

Where?

SANDRA

Florence. Italy.

MAX

How's your Italian?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Max and Sandra are jogging and a brisk pace. She's put on weight and is clearly stronger. All dialogue in italics will be spoken in Italian, with English subtitles.

SANDRA

I used to speak it well, now it's a bit rusty, unfortunately.

MAX

And what did you think of Italy?

SANDRA

I've got great memories. But, I had this boyfriend who was a real jerk.

MAX

Have you ever danced an Irish jig?

SANDRA

I have no idea what you just said.

MAX

So, what do you do?

SANDRA

I change the subject.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Max sits at a DINING ROOM TABLE. He can hear a commotion in the Kitchen. After some time, Sandra steps out holding a pot. She places the pot in front of Max, removes the cover.

SANDRA

Chicken cacciatore. Enjoy.

IT LOOKS DISGUSTING. Max frowns.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I followed the recipe. I don't know what happened. Maybe it tastes better than it looks?

MAX

We're going to have to simplify this. Can you boil water?

INT. BEAUTY SALON - DAY

Sandra is getting her hair and nails done. She looks like a completely different person. Max sits behind her. A HAIRDRESSER works on her.

HAIRDRESSER

Big plans for the weekend?

SANDRA

My brother's coming to town.

HAIRDRESSER

That's nice.

SANDRA

Not exactly. If he's coming it means he needs money. And I'll probably end up giving to him. He's the only family I've got.

HAIRDRESSER

Well, family's important, honey.

Max watches as Sandra continues to make small talk. Sandra spots him looking at her. She smiles at him.

SANDRA

Yeah, our parents died when we were young. All we had was each other...

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra sits on the couch in front of an OPEN LAPTOP. We see a briefly that she's on TOM'S FACEBOOK PAGE. Max enters carrying a large garment bag.

SANDRA

What's this?

MAX

This is for you. Try it on.

He opens the bag revealing an ELEGANT DRESS.

SANDRA

It's beautiful.

MAX

I'm taking you someplace tonight.

INT. THE RITTENHOUSE HOTEL - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The nicest hotel in Philly. Max and Sandra sit across from each other, eating steaks. A WAITER drops off two MARTINIS.

MAX

Do you like martinis?

SANDRA

I like martinis.

MAX

Then you're in luck. They make a great one here.

They both take a sip of their Martini.

SANDRA

What exactly are we doing?

MAX

We're celebrating.

SANDRA
What are we celebrating?

MAX
My birthday.

SANDRA
It's your birthday?

MAX
Yes. Watch your elbows.

Sandra moves her elbows off the table.

SANDRA
How old are you?

MAX
I'm thirty-three. You've been doing
very well. Better than I expected.

SANDRA
Thank you.

MAX
You're ready for a test run.

SANDRA
A test run?

MAX
See the man behind me, at the bar?

Sandra looks over at the bar and spots a middle aged man,
WILLIAM TYLER, sitting at the bar by himself.

SANDRA
What about him?

MAX
Get him to take you back to his
hotel room.

SANDRA
How?

MAX
Figure it out. You got forty
minutes.

SANDRA
You want me to do it *now*?

MAX

The clock's ticking.

Sandra smiles, and we realize she's up for the challenge.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - BAR - MOMENTS LATER

William nurses a drink, when Sandra sits down next to him. He can't help but notice her. The BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER

What can I get for you, Miss?

SANDRA

Vodka martini, please.

The Bartender goes to fix her drink. Sandra catches William checking her out and she smiles at him.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

How do you do?

WILLIAM

Hi. Good.

The Bartender returns with Sandra's drink. She opens her purse and takes out cash.

SANDRA

Can you break a hundred?

BARTENDER

No problem.

He goes to get her change. Sandra looks over to William.

SANDRA

Buy you a drink? I hate drinking alone.

WILLIAM

Uh... Sure.

SANDRA

My name is Sandra.

WILLIAM

William.

SANDRA

Nice to meet you, William.

Sandra offers a hand to shake.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

William and Sandra are walking to his room. They're both laughing. They reach a door and enter...

INT. WILLIAM'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

William heads to the mini-bar, as Sandra lies out on the bed.

WILLIAM
Get you a drink?

SANDRA
Yes, please.
(then)
I have a confession to make.

WILLIAM
What is it?

SANDRA
I noticed you at the bar.

WILLIAM
You noticed me?

SANDRA
I have a thing for older men.

WILLIAM
A thing?

SANDRA
A bad thing.

WILLIAM
What's the matter, daddy didn't
love you?

SANDRA
Daddy wasn't around much.

He hands her a drink, she sips it.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
You're married, aren't you?

WILLIAM
That's what the ring on my finger
says.

SANDRA

I hope you have liberal ideas about marriage.

WILLIAM

Very liberal.

He kisses her, when there's a KNOCK at the door.

SANDRA

Ignore it. It's just turn down service.

They continue to kiss. The knocking becomes louder.

WILLIAM

What the hell?

He gets up, walks to the door, opens it, revealing Max.

MAX

Where is she?!

Max plows past William into the room.

MAX (CONT'D)

There you are, you miserable bitch!

SANDRA

What are you doing here?!

MAX

How could you do this to me?

WILLIAM

I'm calling the front desk--

MAX

You shut up! You shut up! You're fucking my girl, you motherfucker!

Max looks like he's going to kill him. William freezes.

WILLIAM

Hey, okay, nothing happened here--

MAX

Just shut up!

SANDRA

Jason. It's over. It's been over!

MAX

But, why?!

SANDRA
Baby, I'm sorry.

Max sits down and starts crying. Deflated.

MAX
You're killing me, you know that?

Max continues to sob. William turns to Sandra.

WILLIAM
Should I call security?

SANDRA
No, please don't, William. He's not dangerous. He's just hurt. He's an old boyfriend...
(then)
Can you give us a few minutes?

WILLIAM
Uh, sure... Sure...

SANDRA
Go down to the bar and I'll meet you there in a half hour. Okay?

WILLIAM
You going to be alright?

MAX
Jesus Christ, look what you've turned me into! I'm so fucking pathetic. I'm so pathetic...

SANDRA
I'll be fine. I'll get him out of here and I'll come meet you.

Sandra kisses William and escorts him out of the room. She shuts the door behind her. Max drops the act.

MAX
Well done. Seriously, I didn't even have to tell you what the game was.

SANDRA
I figured it out.

MAX
You're a natural. You were able to think quick and improvise and keep cool. That's the most important part of doing what we do.

SANDRA

Thank you.

Max gets up and rifles through William's bags and luggage. He finds an ENVELOPE with some CASH and smiles.

MAX

I'm always surprised that people still walk around with cash.

He pockets it. He keeps looking and finds a BOX FROM TIFFANY'S. He opens it, revealing beautiful EARRINGS.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ah, for the dutiful wife who sits at home while her husband preys on young women.

SANDRA

I wouldn't say he was preying on me. We sorta set him up.

MAX

Don't do that.

SANDRA

Do what?

MAX

Feel sorry for him.

Max starts putting the earrings on Sandra.

MAX (CONT'D)

There's an old saying in this business. *You can't cheat an honest man.* This is why you never feel sorry for a mark.

He finishes putting on the earrings. She looks at herself in the mirror. She's a new person.

MAX (CONT'D)

You wear them well.

Sandra turns to Max. She gazes up at him. She smiles. The energy in the room has shifted. Max notices. Sandra wraps her arms around him and brings him close to her. Kisses his cheek, his neck...

MAX (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

SANDRA
Happy birthday, Max...

She kisses him, and he kisses her back. They fall onto the bed together and begin to make love.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: **MAX**

INT. LUXURY SUBURBAN - NIGHT

Max sits in the back, wearing large headphones, bobbing his head mindlessly, as he watches the Upper East Side pass by.

He looks YOUNGER than we last saw him, less rough around the edges. He has the air of an entitled rich kid.

The Suburban pulls up to a curb and stops. The Driver, CHARLIE, turns back towards Max.

CHARLIE
We're here, sir.

Max looks up at a massively ornate Fifth Avenue building, dating back to the Gilded Age. He takes it all in.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - NIGHT

A DOORMAN lets Max in. Max carries a suitcase and backpack towards the FRONT DESK. A CONCIERGE greets him.

CONCIERGE
Good evening, sir.

MAX
I'm Max. I'm here to see Madeline Phillips. She's in the Penthouse.

CONCIERGE
Yes, they're expecting you. Take the elevator to the top floor. May we help you with your luggage?

MAX
I got it. Thanks.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

The elevator doors open and Max steps inside. The apartment is massive. 10,000 square feet, a luxurious maze of wealth and refinement, overlooking Central Park.

A HOLIDAY PARTY takes place. Within seconds of Max stepping out of the elevator, a MAN appears at his side.

MAN

Good evening, sir, may I take your jacket and bags?

Max takes off his jacket and hands it to the Man who also takes his bags and vanishes as quickly as he appeared.

A CATERER carrying a TRAY OF DRINKS passes Max, and Max helps himself to two. He downs one, and nurses the other as he makes his way deeper into the party.

And then Max stops as he sees MADELINE, holding court with a GROUP OF GUESTS. She has an effortless beauty. Her age is hard to pin down. She could be on either side of fifty.

As Max sees her he softens, but only for a moment. Next to Madeline is RICHARD HOBBS (60s), who radiates power. Madeline spots Max heading towards them, and smiles.

MADELINE

Max! You made it!

MAX

Hey, mom.

Madeline beams, turns to Richard.

MADELINE

Richard, I'd like you to meet my son, Max.

Richard holds out his hand, they shake.

RICHARD

I've heard so much about you.

MAX

I wish I could say the same.

MADELINE

Well, maybe if you returned a text. Or picked up the phone and actually called your mother.

MAX

I've been busy. Sorry.

RICHARD

How was the flight?

MAX

Great. Thanks for having your car pick me up.

RICHARD

Of course. Your mother tells me you were in Saint Tropez.

MAX

Yeah. I was.

RICHARD

I had some fun times there myself in the seventies.

MAX

Well, look at us. We already have so much in common.

MADELINE

Max...

MAX

What? I'm just saying, we're starting off on the right foot. We both partied in Saint Tropez, we both love mom.

(to Richard)

You do love mom, right? This isn't just some fling, is it?

Richard, annoyed, smiles through it.

RICHARD

I care for your mother very much. Any advice you can give me, Max?

MAX

Nope. You're on your own.

(to Madeline)

Can I talk to you privately?

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

The party takes place elsewhere, but mother and son are in the quiet of the library.

MADELINE

You didn't have to be so rude.

MAX

What do you know about this guy?

MADELINE

Come on, Max, anything you want to know, you can just *Google* him. He's a public figure.

MAX

Why can't you be alone for two minutes? You gotta always throw yourself into these relationships.

MADELINE

This is different, Max.

MAX

Sure it is.

Max walks over to a BAR, pours himself a drink.

MADELINE

Go easy on the alcohol, please.

MAX

Stop being my mom, mom.

Max takes a deep gulp.

MADELINE

Why are you so hostile? And where's Candice? I thought she was coming.

MAX

Candice is in the Maldives with Stefano. They are now an item.

MADELINE

I'm sorry. Still, I never liked her. She was not a good influence.

MAX

Can I stay here for a while?

Madeline hesitates, then:

MADELINE

I need to know you're not using.

MAX

I'm not. I'm clean. I haven't done drugs in a year.

Madeline doesn't believe him.

MAX (CONT'D)

Jesus, mom, I swear to God. I'm clean, okay?

MADELINE

It's just... I won't go through that again, Max, I--

MAX

For chrissake, you want a piss test? Huh? Is that what you want?

Max finishes his drink. Then starts unzipping his pants.

MADELINE

What are you doing?

MAX

Proving it to you.

Max turns away from her and pisses in the empty glass.

MADELINE

Stop it. Stop it right now.

Max finishes peeing, turns back around and slams the tumbler full of piss on the coffee table.

MAX

There. Go on. Test it. Go on--

MADELINE

Enough!

Madeline starts to cry. Max is quiet. Then:

MAX

I'm sorry... I'm sorry.

Madeline continues to cry. Max softens.

MAX (CONT'D)

I just need a place to stay for a bit. If I can't stay here, I'll make other arrangements.

Madeline wipes away her tears. She hugs Max.

MADELINE
Of course you can stay.

MAX
Thanks, mom.

Max turns and leaves... On his way out of the Library he almost runs into Richard who has been standing outside the library eavesdropping. Max looks him in the eye.

MAX (CONT'D)
You enjoy the show?

Before Richard can answer Max keeps walking.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - GUEST ROOM - MORNING

Max wakes up in bed. He's hungover. He sits up, looks out the window and takes a moment to admire the view.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MORNING

Max, showered and dressed but still groggy, makes his way down the hallway. As he approaches the DINING ROOM, he hears his mother and Richard discussing him. He listens in...

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - SAME TIME

The apartment STAFF bring in food and take away plates as Madeline and Richard eat breakfast and talk quietly. Richard is taking a NUMBER OF VARIOUS MEDICATIONS, as he speaks.

RICHARD
I'm just trying to get a sense of how he lives. How does he get by?

MADELINE
Well, he spent most of last year putting together a company to charter boats in the Bahamas, but that hurricane wiped the whole thing out. It's too bad because--

RICHARD
Madeline, how does he live?

MADELINE
His father left him some money. And I help him out from time to time.

RICHARD

There's no shame in that. I know what it's like to be a parent. You don't have to make excuses to me.

MADELINE

I know.

RICHARD

I just want to be able to discuss all topics openly, that's all.

MADELINE

I had Max when I was very young. His father died soon after. I was suddenly a widow and I had this child and I didn't always know how to be a mother. I made mistakes.

RICHARD

We all have. But, he's an adult now, Madeline.

MADELINE

No. He certainly is not. And that's my fault. I never let him grow up. He's always been my little Max. And now he can't swim without me.

RICHARD

Maybe you just have to throw him in the deep end and watch him sink.

Madeline takes this in. A THROAT is cleared as Max steps in.

MAX

Morning.

MADELINE

Morning, hon. How did you sleep?

MAX

Great. Thank you. The room's got an incredible view.

MADELINE

Good. Now, I have an appointment downtown. But, maybe we can have lunch later?

MAX

I'd like that, mom.

MADELINE

Perfect.

Madeline stands up, kisses Richard, smiles at Max and exits. Max and Richard are left alone. Slightly, awkward. Finally:

MAX

I'm sorry about last night. I took a *Klonopin* on the plane and I had a few drinks too many.

RICHARD

It's fine. Your mother and I are attending an event tonight to commemorate *The Hobbes Foundation*. My late wife founded it. We do medical research, work on climate change, help third world economies.

MAX

(joking)

Are you looking for a donation? Because, to be honest, I'm a little light at the moment.

RICHARD

No, I thought you might want to join us. There will be Hollywood people in attendance and a few musical acts that I'm told are quite... relevant.

MAX

Relevant musical acts? Wow. Sounds like a good time.

RICHARD

There will also be a bevy of young women your age. You may enjoy yourself, despite yourself.

MAX

Thanks. But after last night, I think I should just stay in. Rest.

RICHARD

Okay. Max, I meant what I said. I care for your mother very deeply.

MAX

I'm starting to see that.

RICHARD

You and I are going to be in each other's lives for the foreseeable future. It would be nice if we could find some way to navigate these rocky shores.

Max, smiles, nods. Satisfied, Richard goes back to eating.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - NIGHT

A SUBURBAN pulls up. A DOORMAN hustles to the back and opens the door, as Richard and Madeline step out.

RICHARD

See you tomorrow, Charlie.

The Doorman leads them into the building.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Richard and Madeline ride up, slightly buzzed, in good moods.

MADELINE

...honestly, Richard, you treated him like a waiter.

RICHARD

I still have no idea who he was.

MADELINE

He's on that television show. The one where he plays a spy.

RICHARD

Well, I don't watch television. It's a waste of time.

(smiles, then)

A few months ago I would never have made it past ten. My body would've given out...

He brings her close.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

But, you've done what all those doctors were unable to do. You made me well. You're my cure, Madeline.

MADELINE

I love you, Richard.

She kisses him lovingly. The Doors open...

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

As the two step out, they're met by a HOUSEKEEPER.

HOUSEKEEPER
Sir, the police are here.

RICHARD
The police?

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Richard and Madeline enter and are met by DETECTIVE COLLINS, black, middle age. Max sits sheepishly on the couch.

DETECTIVE COLLINS
Mr. Hobbes? I'm Detective Collins.

RICHARD
What's this all about?

DETECTIVE COLLINS
Does this young man live here?

MAX
I didn't say I lived here, I said--

DETECTIVE COLLINS
(to Max)
Sir. Please.

RICHARD
He's staying here, yes.

MADELINE
What's going on?
(to Max)
Max, what did you do?

MAX
I didn't do anything.

DETECTIVE COLLINS
He solicited sex from an undercover officer.

MAX
I hit on a girl in the park. How is that illegal?

DETECTIVE COLLINS

It became illegal when you offered her money.

(to Richard and Madeline)

As we were arresting him he told us he lived here and he told us who you were. I thought I'd give you the courtesy of a heads up.

RICHARD

Is he in trouble?

DETECTIVE COLLINS

We ran his name through the system. He has priors. He's looking at doing some time.

MADELINE

Jesus, Max.

Max stays silent. Madeline begins to cry.

RICHARD

What happens now, Detective?

DETECTIVE COLLINS

We take him downtown and book him. It's late, so he'll spend the night in jail and he'll be arraigned in the morning. You're going to want to meet him there with a lawyer.

Detective Collins motions Max to stand up. Max gets up. Detective Collins takes out HANDCUFFS.

DETECTIVE COLLINS (CONT'D)

Turn around.

MAX

Come on, man.

Detective Collins puts handcuffs on him. Madeline is now really crying. Richard's mind is working.

RICHARD

Detective, I've given large donations to the NYPD every year.

DETECTIVE COLLINS

I'm aware of that, sir, that's the reason for the courtesy call.

RICHARD

I know the Commissioner. Martin is a dear friend. I could call him, put in a good word, Detective.

Detective Collins hesitates.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

My word carries some weight in this city. And it can go both ways.

Richard delivers this congenially, but there is the trace of a threat. Detective Collins suddenly looks out of his depths.

DETECTIVE COLLINS

Uh... I, uh... I don't know...

RICHARD

I appreciate what you've done by coming here. How long were you waiting for us?

DETECTIVE COLLINS

Not long... an hour maybe?

RICHARD

I will pay you for your time.

DETECTIVE COLLINS

No, that's, um...

Richard takes out his wallet, and begins to count out TEN CRISP HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS. He holds the money out.

RICHARD

Do the right thing.

Detective Collins, defeated, nods. He uncuffs Max. Madeline watches all this, her mind working. Detective Collins reaches out for the money when--

MADELINE

Stop. He's not a cop.

Everyone turns to Madeline who has a look of disgust.

DETECTIVE COLLINS

Ma'am--?

MADELINE

Shut up.

(to Richard)

This is what Max does. He plays these little *confidence games*.

(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(to Max)

That's what this is, isn't it? One of your stupid little games?

DETECTIVE COLLINS

I assure you, I am a police--

MADELINE

Get out of my apartment or I really will call the police.

She steadies her gaze on Detective Collins WHO WE NOW REALIZE IS NOT A DETECTIVE AT ALL. He looks at Max.

MAX

Tipsy, you better go.

Tipsy quickly leaves. Madeline turns her fury onto Max.

MADELINE

I gave you *everything*. I gave you the best education money can buy. You never wanted for anything and *this* is how you repay me? By getting cheap thrills hustling the man I love for a few hundred dollars? How dare you!

MAX

Mom, I--

SLAP! The slap is hard and vicious and echoes in the spacious room. Max turns away. Madeline gets close to him.

MADELINE

Get out.

Madeline exits the room. Richard and Max are left alone.

RICHARD

I'll get you a hotel room.

Richard leaves the room, as Max is left alone.

INT. CARLYLE HOTEL - ROOM - MORNING

It's early but Max is already up. He's packing his bags and drinking coffee. There's a KNOCK on the door. He opens it and Madeline is standing there, Max FROWNS.

MADELINE

I'm sorry I hit you.

MAX

Forget it.

MADELINE

I took it too far.

MAX

It's fine.

She reaches for his face, he pulls back.

MADELINE

Let me see...

She takes hold of his face, inspects it, then looks him in the eye and leans in and KISSES HIM DEEPLY ON THE MOUTH.

They kiss for a long beat, before she lets him go.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

You got anything to drink?

Madeline goes looking for the mini-bar, notices Max's bags.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

What's going on here?

MAX

You screwed up. There's love in his eyes.

MADELINE

So?

MAX

So the man is worth half a billion dollars. What do you think he's going to do when we up and vanish? He will use his resources to find us. I'm not living like that.

MADELINE

We're one month and forty grand deep on this thing.

MAX

He loves you. You understand? He won't stop looking for you. We leave now, we cut our losses, we set up shop somewhere else.

MADELINE

We're close.

MAX

I don't care.

MADELINE

It's in arm's reach. He wants to meet with you at his office at one o'clock.

MAX

That is a meeting I will not be attending.

MADELINE

That is a meeting *you will* be attending.

MAX

I'm not spending the rest of my life looking over my shoulder. It's why I never liked him for a mark. I told you.

MADELINE

We're taking him for a pittance compared to what he's worth.

MAX

You're not listening. It's not the money. He's not gonna let you go.

Madeline regards Max, then a slow smiles crosses her lips.

MAX (CONT'D)

What?

MADELINE

Are you jealous?

MAX

Madeline, we're leaving.

Madeline steps close to him, still smiling.

MADELINE

You're jealous...

Now, Madeline is close to him, breathy, there's is an erotic charge coming from her that we see Max is helpless against.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Is that what you've been doing? Sitting here stewing? Thinking about me and him together...

MAX

Stop...

MADELINE

Thinking about the things I was
letting him do to me? Was it
driving you crazy?

She pushes him down on the bed, and straddles him. She's
wearing a long skirt that flowers around him.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Or maybe you liked it? Hm? Maybe it
turned you on a little?

Madeline unzips his pants, takes him and slips him inside
her. She lets out a soft moan. Madeline begins to move back
and forth slowly...

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Did it turn you on a little? You
can tell me...

Max doesn't answer, just closes his eyes. Madeline continues
to move on top of him, taking her time, enjoying it.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Who's in charge, Max?

MAX

You're in charge.

MADELINE

Who taught you everything?

MAX

You taught me everything.

MADELINE

Are you going to do what I say?

MAX

I'm going to do what you say.

MADELINE

Are you going to get me my money?

MAX

I'm going to get you your money.

Madeline kisses him as they continue to make love.

INT. THE HOBBS FUND - RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Richard sits behind a desk. His entire office has large windows overlooking the financial district. It's like a glass box floating in the sky.

There's also glass looking into the rest of the office, as we see a vast and moneyed financial empire in full swing.

A PHYSICIAN takes Richard's blood pressure.

Richard's ASSISTANT KNOCKS on the glass door and points to Max standing behind her. Richard motions them to enter. The Assistant opens the door and lets Max in.

The Physician finishes what he's doing and begins packing up.

PHYSICIAN

I want to see you again later this week, Richard.

The Physician gives Richard a worried glance. Richard nods.

RICHARD

Sure thing, Sam.

Physician leaves, Richard turns his attention to Max.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Max, thank you for coming.

MAX

Are you okay?

RICHARD

Yes, just maintenance. Have a seat.

Richard points to a large couch. Max sits down and Richard comes around the desk and takes a seat opposite him.

MAX

I'd like to apologize. What I did last night was inappropriate.

RICHARD

That's a hell of an understatement. You almost took me for a ride.

MAX

It was just a prank, you know? I thought it would be funny. It wasn't even for that much money.

RICHARD

I get the sense that the money
wasn't the point.

MAX

No, I guess not.

RICHARD

When your mother first told me
about you, she said you were well
educated. Smart. Clever. I thought,
I'm always on the look out for such
a young man.

MAX

Are you offering me a job here?

RICHARD

I doubt that you'd want one.

MAX

Why's that?

RICHARD

Because, you came in here wearing
sweats.

MAX

In fairness, these sweats probably
cost more than your suit.

RICHARD

Then it was you who was taken for a
ride.

Richard smiles. He points to a PICTURE on a SHELF.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

That's my son up there.

Max looks at the picture and we recognize Richard's son
immediately: HIS SON IS TOM.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

He's traveling through Italy at the
moment.

MAX

Lucky him.

RICHARD

I always thought my son would
inherit all this. Then his mother
died and he did not take it well.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

It became clear that he did not possess the internal fortitude one needs to be in this business. You need to be strong and my son is fragile.

Richard stands up, takes the picture off the shelf and takes a moment to study it.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

When he turned twenty one I offered him anything he wanted. Most boys his age would request a sports car. Those slightly more grounded may have asked for a piece of property. You know what my son wanted?

MAX

I haven't a clue.

RICHARD

A signed copy of Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. After his mother died he spent his days reading and watching foreign films. For a moment it looked as if he might have some success as a writer, but that too proved to be a dead end. Now he wants to open up a used book store.

MAX

Not exactly a sound investment.

RICHARD

No. But, I'm going to give it to him anyway. Another man in my position might not. Perhaps they would insist that he come work for the family business. But, not me. You know why, Max?

Max shrugs.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Because we only get one life. And I will not be my son's jailer for his brief time here on earth.

Richard lets that sit. Just then the glass door opens and Richard's ASSISTANT steps in carrying a LARGE TRAY with FOOD.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I thought we could have lunch.

The tray is placed between them and they help themselves.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I want you to be honest with yourself, Max, if I hired you here how do you think it will end?

MAX

I think it's quite certain that I would shit the bed.

RICHARD

I concur. Still, I would like to offer you a job, just not here. I'm thinking thirty thousand dollars a month should be commensurate to your skill and experience.

MAX

You're gonna pay me thirty grand a month? For what?

RICHARD

To do what you do. To go out and find opportunity.

MAX

Wow. I don't know what to say.

RICHARD

I refuse to be your jailer, Max. We only get one life. So?

MAX

Yes. I'm in. And this is the right city. I got a lot of connections here and I think I can make moves--

RICHARD

No, Max. Go off into the world. See what you find. I hear you tried to start something in the Bahamas. It sounded promising. Perhaps, you could revisit it?

Max takes this in and pushes his plate away. Then:

MAX

You want me gone.

RICHARD

No, I--

MAX

You want to talk about honesty?
You want to me to stay away.

Richard looks at him for a long beat, then:

RICHARD

It's not me.

MAX

Oh.

RICHARD

You cause your mother a great deal
of anguish, Max. A separation might
not be the worst thing.

MAX

That's what my mother thinks I'm
worth? Thirty grand a month?

RICHARD

Think of it as an opportunity.

Max takes all this in, then:

MAX

Fine. But, I want a years salary up
front.

RICHARD

Yes, well, that can be arranged.
We'll transfer the money into your
account--

MAX

Transfer the money? No. What? Then
I gotta pay taxes? Huh? Hire an
accountant? No. She wants me gone,
she pays me the whole thing, up
front, cash.

Richard hesitates. Max, hurt, looks ready to break, but then
a look of resolves crosses his face.

MAX (CONT'D)

Give me the cash and you can tell
my mother she won't hear from me
again. Not so much as a fucking
postcard.

Richard meets Max's gaze. Then:

RICHARD

Wait here.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT STREET - DAY

Max walks on a crowded street carrying an OVERSIZED BAG, his face a mixture of giddiness, paranoia, relief and joy.

INT. MCCALL'S BAR - DAY

An EMPTY DIVE BAR, with a small dance floor. Max is getting super drunk. MUSIC IS BLARING, as Max smokes a cigarette and dances by himself, celebrating.

SAMMY, the bartender, pours him a shot. Max wordlessly downs it, then spots something and smiles wide.

Walking in the bar is Madeline. She also can't stop smiling. She starts to dance towards him. When she reaches Max she kisses him passionately and deeply.

They continue to kiss, still dancing, this feeling is better than sex for them.

As she kisses him, she moves seductively, giving him a improptu lap dance as Max leans against the bar stool...

And then she looks him in the eye, with love. Max grins.

MAX

We did it.

MADELINE

We sure did, baby.

She grins back and kisses him again.

TIPSY (O.S.)

WHERE'S MY MONEY?!!!!

They look over and spot Topsy grinning as he enters. Max turns to Sammy and motions to him.

MAX

Give me the bag.

Sammy removes the bag from behind the bar. Max opens it, the bag is overflowing with money. Max produces a large WAD OF CASH, he walks towards Topsy.

MAX (CONT'D)

You want your money?

Max starts throwing HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS in his direction.

MAX (CONT'D)
Here's your money...

He throws more money at him.

MAX (CONT'D)
Here's your money...

He throws even more...

MAX (CONT'D)
Here's your money!!!!

And Max throws the rest in the air, hundred dollar bills falling from above as Max makes it rain in celebration.

INT. MCCALL'S BAR - LATER

Max, Madeline and Topsy have been drinking for hours, they're all sluggish, but still in good spirits.

TIPSY
This guy Goldie just got to town from LA. He's a real pro, started out working as a stuntman before grifting. Comes highly recommended. He's looking for a score.

MAX
Well, look elsewhere. We're out.

TIPSY
Oh, you guys are retiring? That it?

MAX
No, just taking a well deserved vacation.

TIPSY
Yeah, well, you hit me up when you get back. I'm telling you this guy is good. You will want to meet him.

Topsy stands up, Max slides a LARGE ENVELOPE towards him. Topsy looks inside, frowns.

TIPSY (CONT'D)
Where's the rest of it?

MAX

We had expenses we didn't account for. That's your cut.

TIPSY

It's not what we agreed on.

MAX

Things change.

TIPSY

This is becoming a habit with you two. I'm starting to feel like I'm the mark.

MAX

Tipsy, move on.

TIPSY

I guess, there's no honor among thieves, right?

MADELINE

Wrong, Topsy. There's no honor in thieving.

Topsy sizes both of them up, cuts his losses. Sighs.

TIPSY

It was a beautiful con.

MAX

You can thank Madeline.

TIPSY

Thank you, Madeline.

MADELINE

You're very welcome, Topsy.

Topsy takes his money and walks out.

MAX

Alright, so we're forty grand in, plus Topsy's twenty. Another ten for incidentals. Leaving us with two ninety. That's one forty five each. Not bad for one month's work.

Max kisses Madeline, she smiles and then gets serious.

MADELINE

I got some good news and some bad news. Good news is you get to keep it all.

MAX

What's the bad news?

MADELINE

Bad news is gonna sting a bit.

MAX

What is it, Madeline?

MADELINE

This is where we part ways.

MAX

What are you talking about?

MADELINE

I'm staying, Max. I got a good thing going here. You were right. The old man loves me.

MAX

You're not thinking straight.

MADELINE

You know what happens to people like us? They end up sitting in a bar all day every day, pulling short cons for a couple a hundred bucks a pop. That won't be me.

MAX

That's not gonna be us. Madeline, we're just getting started here. This was a good con, we can keep doing this.

MADELINE

No. There's nothing worse than having to play a mother. I'm out.

MAX

(beat, take a breath)
Sooner or later the old man is gonna start asking questions.

MADELINE

No, he won't. He's got a lot on his mind. He's got his business. His son's an emotional mess.

(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

And he's got health problems. I'm the only thing he's got going.

MAX

You stay and you will slip.

MADELINE

I won't slip. You know how I know that? Because, I am that good.

Max stands up.

MAX

I love you and I will not let you go. This conversation is over.

MADELINE

Max...

MAX

Listen to me, I will blow this whole thing up if I have to.

Madeline takes in his words. Max softens:

MAX (CONT'D)

Look, let's take this money, go someplace warm. What do you say? Look at this money.

Max shows her the bag of money. She can't help but smile.

MAX (CONT'D)

You really wanna wake up next to that old man every day? Use your head. This was a good score. Okay?

MADELINE

Okay. I'll go home and get my stuff. I'll wipe everything down. I'll tell him I got a sick aunt in Long Island. We'll spend the night at the hotel, we're out first thing in the morning.

(then)

You really love me?

MAX

Unfortunately.

She brings him close and kisses him.

INT. CARLYLE HOTEL - ROOM - SUNSET

Max impatiently sips a drink while watching the sun dip. On his bed, his bags are packed, he's ready to go. His PHONE RINGS, he answers:

MAX (INTO PHONE)
Where are you?

Madeline is on the other end, we hear her disembodied voice.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
I'm sorry, Max.

MAX (INTO PHONE)
We discussed this.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
I made up my mind.

MAX (INTO PHONE)
I told you what I would do. I will blow everything up.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
No, you won't.

MAX (INTO PHONE)
And why's that?

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
Because, if you do I'll never forgive you. And you'll lose me anyway.
(softer)
Just let me go.

There's a BANGING ON THE DOOR. Max is alarmed, then:

MADELINE (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Good luck to you, Max.

VOICE AT DOOR (O.S.)
Max Burnett! It's the police we have an outstanding warrant for your arrest, please open the door!

MAX (INTO PHONE)
Nice try, Madeline. Who's at the door? Topsy? One of his new guys?

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
You need to go. Now.

MAX (INTO PHONE)
You're bluffing.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
Then call my bluff. Open the door.

VOICE AT DOOR (O.S.)
We are coming in!

More BANGING. Max's suddenly has a moment of realization:

MAX (INTO PHONE)
The old man was the real con this
entire time, wasn't he? I was just
a side act.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
It's your final lesson, baby. Trust
no one.

Madeline hangs up the phone. Max grabs his bags, walks over to a SIDE DOOR and gets on his knees. He quickly removes a LOCK PICKING KIT and very smoothly opens the door.

Max slips into the side door taking him into an adjoining hotel room, just as the front door opens and POLICE STEP IN.

Max deftly DISAPPEARS, shutting the side door behind him.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: MADELINE

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Madeline sits on a bench reading a paper. Her hair is shorter, and she looks a little younger. As she reads, something catches her eye.

A few feet away there's a YOUNG MAN, baseball hat, flannel shirt, jeans, walking up to strangers.

YOUNG MAN
Excuse me, uh, I was mugged and I'm
trying to get home. I just need
money to buy a--

People ignore him and keep walking. Upon closer inspection we realize this YOUNG MAN IS MAX. Madeline, interested, puts down the paper and continues to watch.

ON MAX

Max walks up to a MIDDLE AGE COUPLE.

MAX
Hey, I was just mugged and--

MIDDLE AGE MAN
Sorry...

They pass him. Max looks around, searching for someone else, when he spots TWO POLICEMEN heading his way. He starts to turn, but they call out to him.

POLICEMAN # 1
Can we see some ID?

MAX
Well, see the thing is--

POLICEMAN # 1
ID. Now.

Max hesitates.

POLICEMAN # 2
Let's see some identification or
we're bringing you in.

Max, helpless, searches for a way out, when:

MADELINE (O.S.)
There you are!

Madeline, frantic, runs up to him.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

Max, confused, doesn't answer.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
We got here as quickly as we could.
Mom and Dad are at a hotel.

POLICEMAN # 1
Ma'am, please step away.

MADELINE
Excuse me?

POLICEMAN # 1
We need him to show us some ID.

MADELINE

This is my brother. He was mugged.

POLICEMAN # 2

Yes, that's what he's been telling people. We need to see some ID.

MADELINE

If his wallet was just stolen, Officer, please explain how you expect him to show you identification?

This stumps the two cops, and Madeline continues.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

And I'd like you to tell me why you're harassing my brother after he's been the victim of a crime?

POLICEMAN # 1

Okay, we're sorry, some people come here and try to scam--

MADELINE

Try to what? *Scam?*

POLICEMAN # 2

Uh... It was a misunderstanding.

MADELINE

You can make it up to us by giving us a ride.

POLICEMAN # 1

What?

MADELINE

I'd like to get my brother back to the hotel. My parents are beside themselves and there's not a single taxi outside. Please give us a ride. It's the least you can do.

The two police officers just look at each other.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Madeline and Max sit in the back seat as the Police Officer's drive them. Max is now super confused. He looks over at Madeline who turns to him and delivers a devilish grin.

Max is beside himself. *Who is this woman?* He leans in.

MAX

Where... Where are we going?

MADELINE

The Rittenhouse Hotel. You like martinis?

MAX

I... I like martinis.

MADELINE

Then you're in luck. They make a good one.

Madeline goes back to reading her paper, we quickly notice she's reading an article about RICHARD HOBBS.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - BATHROOM - PRESENT DAY

Madeline GRIPS the side of a sink. Her hair is longer, she looks a little older. She's staring at herself in the mirror. Slowly tears begin to flow down her face.

She BLINKS. Dabs her eyes. Takes a deep breath.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY

A WAKE takes place. Friends of Richard are all mourning his death. Everyone wears black. Madeline exits the bathroom and nervously mingles with other mourners. She approaches a group of WOMEN, JILL, KAREN and VALERIA.

MADELINE

Can I get you anything? A drink?

They look at Madeline with sympathy.

JILL

Oh, Madeline, please sit down...

KAREN

You don't need to be fetching drinks for us.

MADELINE

I just need to do something... I can't sit still...

And as Madeline speaks, she breaks down in tears. The Women take out handkerchiefs and comfort her.

VALERIA

Madeline, you gave so much meaning to his life. Especially at the end.

KAREN

He adored you. As he should. I mean, look at you.

JILL

You'd be so easy to hate if you weren't so lovely.

Madeline manages to smile through tears.

VALERIA

You have your whole life ahead of you. You have to begin thinking about what you will do now.

Madeline takes in these words, when DAVID (60s), steps up, with all the pragmatic efficiency of a well paid lawyer.

DAVID

I need a minute of your time.

Madeline nods and allows herself to be led away by David.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We have to go over Richard's will.

MADELINE

Now? Can't it wait?

DAVID

There are papers to sign that are time sensitive. Also, I think it's best we do it now, for Tom's sake.

David looks over and we spot Tom sitting off with his friends Jack and Brenda. He's practically catatonic.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIBRARY - DAY

Madeline and Tom sit across from David as he shuffles papers.

DAVID

Richard dictated this last draft of the will to me personally, then he signed it. And because he was at the height of his sickness I feel it's my obligation to assure you that he was cogent and of sound mind when he did so.

David lets those words sink in and then moves on:

DAVID (CONT'D)
Richard left the bulk of his
inheritance to Madeline.

MADELINE
What?

Tom nods, a part of him finds it funny.

TOM
Perfect.

MADELINE
This is ridiculous. Tom is his son.
He should be inheriting it all.

DAVID
Richard was very clear. After the
past incident with Tom, he had
major misgivings leaving Tom both
the business and the estate.

TOM
You mean the incident where I had
three hundred and fifty thousand
dollars stolen from me and I then
proceeded to have a nervous
breakdown? That incident?

DAVID
Tom, you will be taken care of
through a trust. It's generous and
will allow you to hold on to your
bookstore. You will also retain
control over the *Hobbes Foundation*.
But, as for everything else, it
will all go to Madeline.

MADELINE
David, I need to speak with Tom.

DAVID
Of course.

David leaves the Library. Madeline turns to Tom.

MADELINE
I am so sorry.

TOM
Don't be. It's not your fault.

MADELINE

He left you the foundation. That's what he prized more than anything. And he left it all to you.

TOM

He left me his tax write off. That's what he called it. You can't fix my relationship with my dad, Madeline, especially now.

Madeline leans over and takes Tom's hand, warmly.

MADELINE

I'm here for you, Tom.

TOM

I know. Thank you.

Tom stands up and starts to leave.

MADELINE

You don't have to move out any time soon. Stay as long as you like.

Tom is confused by this.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I'm planning on selling the apartment. I'm moving into something more manageable. But, that's not something we need to discuss now.

TOM

I see. Okay.

MADELINE

I don't know why I even brought it up. I have so many things going through my head right now, Tom. Forget I said anything. I'm sorry.

She starts to cry. Tom walks up to her and embraces her.

TOM

It's okay... It's okay.

They share a moment, then Tom leaves. Madeline watches him go, and the moment he exits THE TEARS STOP.

She sits down in a plush chair and takes a deep breath. She clenches her fists in silent victory and you can tell that every fiber of her being wants to scream with joy!

But, they're mourning her husband in the next room. So, instead she quietly takes in the enormity of the moment.

She just pulled off a half a billion dollar con.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - MORNING

A DOORMAN opens the door, Madeline steps out. A Suburban waits for her. The doorman opens the back door. As Madeline gets in:

MADELINE
Good morning, Charlie.

The door is shut, the Suburban takes off.

INT. BARNEYS - DAY

Madeline sips champagne, while a NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES buzz around her, fitting her with clothes and accessories.

Madeline slips into an EXPENSIVE DRESS, she admires herself.

BARNEY EMPLOYEE
That is stunning.

Madeline continues to look at herself, happily.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY

Madeline enters, carrying a number of BAGS. A HOUSEKEEPER comes and quickly takes them from her.

HOUSEKEEPER
I'll bring these to your room.

MADELINE
Thank you.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Madeline walks down the hallway and pauses at Tom's room. She peeks inside, and spots Tom just sitting at his desk looking mindlessly at his computer.

Madeline regards him with a cold gaze. Then keeps going.

INT. RESTAURANT - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

A LARGE GROUP have gathered for a dinner party. They are all of the highest social circle, some are obviously celebrities or artists, while others are just plain rich.

Madeline is there, completely at ease, looking gorgeous in her new dress and fitting right in.

A HANDSOME OLDER MAN whispers something in her ear. Madeline laughs and laughs... This is her life now.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Madeline wakes up to faint VOICES coming from somewhere in the apartment. Curious, she gets up and slips on a robe.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Madeline steps into the living room and spots THREE MEN standing there. They are all large men, clearly ex-military, wearing dark suits. The oldest, BRADDOCK (50s), sees her.

BRADDOCK

Mrs. Hobbes, good morning. I'm Pat Braddock, we met briefly at your husband's wake.

Madeline, startled, sticks out her hand.

MADELINE

Yes, of course, how do you do?

BRADDOCK

I am well, thank you. These are my associates, Mr. Mosely and Mr. McCabe.

Braddock points to the other two men, who greet her politely.

MADELINE

How can I help you?

BRADDOCK

Oh, no, ma'am, we were called in by Tom. We're doing a bit of business for him.

MADELINE

A bit of business?

Tom steps into the living room, excited.

TOM

It's okay, Madeline, Braddock is an old family friend. These men are part of Blackwell Security. They did work for my father whenever he had anything sensitive that needed to be taken care of. Come on, I want you to see this.

BRADDOCK

(hesitates)

Maybe I should walk you through things first, Tom, and then you can decide what you'd like to share.

TOM

It's fine. Madeline is family.

BRADDOCK

Okay, then.

Madeline, surprised, takes all this in.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIBRARY - MORNING

Tom and Madeline sit down, Mosely and McCabe pull the SHADES SHUT, dimming the room. Braddock, facing Tom and Madeline, holds an iPad in front of him.

BRADDOCK

Tom enlisted our help in finding the young woman who committed the theft. We had very little to go on other than the few pictures Tom had of her and whatever we could glean from her fabricated social media.

MADELINE

Tom, are you looking for this person?

TOM

Yes. I want to find her.

MADELINE

This is not a good idea. Dredging it all up again, how can this be healthy? Why are you doing this?

TOM

Because, I need to know why she picked me. Why was I chosen?

MADELINE

Your father was a wealthy man. It's rather obvious. You were targeted.

TOM

This city is full of rich kids. Why was I targeted?

BRADDOCK

Would you like to know what we uncovered?

TOM

Please.

BRADDOCK

After running these photographs through facial recognition software we landed on this woman.

Braddock punches at his iPad and on a TV SCREEN hanging on the wall A PICTURE OF SANDRA APPEARS, an OLD MUG SHOT.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

We believe this to be her.

Tom is stunned. He stands up and approaches the TV Screen as if in a trance.

TOM

That... That's her... Who is she?

BRADDOCK

Her name is Sandra Carmichael. Born in Seattle in Nineteen Ninety Seven. Her mother Liza is the only living family she has. We questioned the mother who has not heard from her in several years.

TOM

What else did you find out?

BRADDOCK

A bit. She drops out of high school at sixteen and from there begins to rack up a number of petty offenses. Shoplifting, possession, assault. Then she develops a habit and begins escorting. She crisscrosses the country for the next few years.

As Braddock speaks he SWIPES through a number of MUG SHOTS OF SANDRA and other pictures he's accumulated.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

She strips when she can find the work, her longest stint is a year and a half in Atlantic City. Eventually, she makes her way to Philadelphia, where she's arrested a number of times for possession and solicitation and that's where her trail runs cold. No trace of her in over two years.

A look of relief crosses Madeline's face.

MADELINE

So, that's it?

BRADDOCK

For now. Frankly, it raises more questions.

TOM

How so?

BRADDOCK

Pulling off what she did required a great deal of sophistication and I don't see how this woman was capable of it. To be blunt, she's a hooker with a drug habit. She's a mess.

TOM

You don't think she did it?

BRADDOCK

I don't think she did it *alone*. I think she had help. I think we're looking for more than one person.

Tom and Madeline take this in, silently.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - FOYER - MORNING

Madeline and Tom are seeing Braddock and his men out.

BRADDOCK

We'll keep you posted with any new developments. All we need is a small break.

TOM

Thank you, Pat. For everything.

Braddock gives Tom a familial hug.

BRADDOCK

We're going to find these people,
Tom. I promise you that.

Braddock looks to Madeline and smiles.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

Have a good day. We'll be in touch.

Braddock and his men leave. Tom is positively giddy.

TOM

I better go, too. The shop was
supposed to be open an hour ago. My
three customers are going to be
very upset.

Tom walks over to a SIDE CLOSET, grabs a JACKET. He looks at Madeline and smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

You heard him, right? He said we're
going to find these people.

Madeline smiles back. Tom turns and exits. As soon as he's gone her face fills with rage.

But, we also see that she's *thinking... thinking... thinking...* and then her eye's land on something.

On a small SIDE TABLE is a PHOTOGRAPH OF -- YOUNG RICHARD, YOUNG TOM, who's in the arms of his MOTHER.

Madeline focuses on the picture. Her mind working.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Madeline steps into the kitchen with a number of bags. She quickly unpacks the bags, TAKE-OUT BOXES filled with food.

She removes pots and pans and places them on a stove, then empties the food into the pots and pans and sets everything to simmer. She tosses the take out boxes in the trash.

She uncorks a bottle of wine, pours herself a glass, takes a sip, checks her watch and waits...

Then she hears footsteps coming towards the kitchen. She puts the glass of wine down, turns towards the stove, just as Tom steps into the kitchen.

TOM

I didn't know you could cook.

MADELINE

Yes, well, I wasn't always a trophy wife.

Tom is taken back by this, but Madeline smiles.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Your father told me what you thought of me when we first got together.

TOM

I'm sorry. I didn't know you then. It had more to do with him.

MADELINE

It's okay. Are you hungry?

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - KITCHEN - LATER

Madeline and Tom sit at the kitchen island eating. Though the kitchen is grand, there's something cozy and intimate about them sitting there and just sharing a simple meal.

MADELINE

Any luck with the elusive girl?

TOM

Not yet. Braddock had a lead down in Miami but it was a bust.

MADELINE

Tom, I know you're hurting. What these people did to you was awful and confusing and unfair. But, I promise you, finding them is only going to make everything worse.

TOM

I disagree...

MADELINE

You need to move on with your life. Let me show you something.

Madeline produces a number of REAL ESTATE LISTING.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I've begun looking for apartments for you.

(MORE)

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I think these three are quite nice. They're all downtown right near the bookstore, so it wouldn't be much of a commute--

TOM

What is this?

MADELINE

I told you. I'm selling the penthouse, you're going to need a place to move into. Now, take a look at this one in Tribeca--

TOM

I don't need you to do this for me.

MADELINE

I want to. I want to help you. And these are all great apartments--

TOM

I'm just saying, I can find my own apartment, okay?

MADELINE

Why are you getting so upset?

TOM

Because, you can't just come in here and do this for me and--

MADELINE

Tom, you need to move on with your life. You need to find a place to live and--

TOM

Stop it, just stop it.

MADELINE

I'm sorry if this hurts, but you have to hear this. You can't just keep living like this--

TOM

You're not my mother!

This stuns Madeline into silence, then:

MADELINE

You're damn right I'm not. If I was I'd tell you to grow the fuck up.

Now it's Tom's turn to be stunned into silence.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

You had your heart broken, Tom.
Guess what? It happens to guys your
age every day but not everyone is
entitled enough to hire men to
track down the girl that did it.

TOM

She stole money from me, she--

MADELINE

That's not why you're doing it. You
want to see her again. That's all.
You can lie to yourself but you
can't lie to me.

Madeline stands up, about to leave, but then stops.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry if I was harsh.

TOM

You think I'm pathetic.

She smiles at him, and the energy shifts.

MADELINE

Oh, honey, no. I think you're
human. I think we're all just
human. Doing the best we can.

They share a moment. Tom then looks at her.

TOM

You're right. I'll call Braddock
and call it all off.

MADELINE

Good for you.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

An empty spacious apartment in the West Village. Tom and
Madeline are being led around by a REALTOR.

REALTOR

It's just shy of two thousand
square feet.

MADELINE

But, it's only a one bedroom?

REALTOR

Yes, there's another apartment upstairs that has two bedrooms. We can take a look if you like.

TOM

One bedroom is fine.

MADELINE

You may want more space, Tom.

TOM

No, it's cool. I mean, this place seems okay. I guess I should just take it?

Madeline turns to the Realtor.

MADELINE

You'll have to forgive my step-son he's very discerning.

Then Tom's PHONE RINGS. He answers it.

TOM

Hello?... Yes?... Yes. Okay. Bring her to the apartment. Thank you.

Tom hangs up the phone, flustered.

TOM (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

MADELINE

Is everything, alright?

TOM

They found her.

MADELINE

You said you were going to call Braddock and put a stop to this.

TOM

I did, but they had one last lead to follow and they found her.

MADELINE

What are you hoping to get out of this?

TOM

I just want to talk to her, that's all... I haven't been able to stop thinking about her.

MADELINE

Tom... It's not a good idea--

TOM

(resolved)

I need to do this.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - HALLWAY - DAY

Madeline and Tom follow Braddock down the long hallway, as he catches them up to speed.

BRADDOCK

We've set her up in the guest room on the south east corner.

MADELINE

Where did you find her?

BRADDOCK

She was living at the Lincoln Motel off the Cross Bronx Expressway. She was prostituting herself. She's got a serious heroin addiction.

They reach a door, where Mosely and McCabe are stationed.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

We gave her a sedative to calm her down, but she's going to be experiencing some pretty heavy withdrawal soon.

TOM

Can I go in and talk to her?

BRADDOCK

Of course. You want one of us in there with you?

TOM

No. I'm okay.

Tom hesitates, then takes a deep breath and enters. Madeline, Braddock and the two other men are left alone in the hall.

MADELINE

Well done, Mr. Braddock.

BRADDOCK

Thank you.

MADELINE

Did she tell you anything? Did you get anymore insight?

Braddock shakes his head. Then:

BRADDOCK

I first met Tom when he was just a boy. Mr. Hobbes was receiving kidnapping threats. This was after 9/11, everyone was on edge. I was Tom's bodyguard for over three years. I watched him grow up. You'd think a kid who grew up with this kind of wealth would turn into a real asshole, but not Tom. You wanna know the truth? This money was the worst thing that could happen to a kid like that.

Braddock sighs, smiles at Madeline.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

About a week before he passed, Mr. Hobbes called me here. You were out. He was not well. He could barely speak above a whisper. As I was leaving, I went to shake his hand and he slipped me a piece of paper where he'd written three simple words. Protect. My. Son.

Braddock shakes head ruefully, rests his hands on his hips, causing his JACKET TO OPEN, revealing a SIDEARM. Madeline stiffens at the sight of the weapon. Then smiles.

MADELINE

Well, you've done an incredible job.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Madeline sits in silence, nursing a drink, while Braddock stands by the window and gazes out at Central Park.

Tom steps into the room, he's clearly in a daze. Madeline and Braddock notice him.

MADELINE

Are you alright, Tom?

TOM

Yeah. I'm okay... It's weird, it's like, it's her, but it's not her.

BRADDOCK

Did she tell you anything?

TOM

Oh, yeah, you were right. She wasn't working alone. There's this guy who was her accomplice. He taught her everything and trained her. He planned the whole thing. He has some kind of connection to us.

MADELINE

A connection?

TOM

That's what she told me. She said he knew all about me. She said it seemed *personal*.

BRADDOCK

Did she tell you anything about him?

Madeline holds her breath. Waits. Then:

TOM

Just that he ended up cheating her, too. Left her with almost nothing.

(then)

I told her she could stay here.

MADELINE

What? Tom, no--

TOM

She's sick. She needs a place to kick her habit and, you know, she's real sorry for what she did.

MADELINE

This woman is a liar and a thief and she is not to be trusted.

BRADDOCK

I agree with Madeline, Tom.

MADELINE

She's a junkie who will say anything to get a fix or some money. You do not want any part of this. Trust me.

TOM

I know it sounds crazy, but, I want to help her.

MADELINE

If you want to help her we can set her up in a rehab. We'll start making calls--

TOM

No, she's staying here. I'm gonna take care of her. I'll call in doctors and nurses. I want to do this.

MADELINE

It's just not safe. Right, Mr. Braddock?

BRADDOCK

(reluctantly)

I can post men outside her room. She'll be essentially under lock and key. The issue is, Tom, are you prepared for when she does sober up and you get to see the real her?

TOM

I'm dying to see the real her.

MADELINE

I want to talk to her. If this woman is going to be staying under my roof, I want a word.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Madeline steps into the room and shuts the door behind her. Sandra is lying in bed, sweating, track marks covering her arms, a black eye, she looks like death.

MADELINE

Sandra? My name is Madeline. I was married to Tom's father before--

SANDRA

Shut the fuck up, you lying cunt.

Madeline freezes, Sandra levels her gaze at her.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Max told me the whole score. How there was an old man who was dying and was gonna leave behind a fortune and Max and I just needed to nudge the only heir aside so that his very full of shit widow could inherit it all. Yeah, I know who you are, Madeline.

MADELINE

I see. What is it you want?

SANDRA

I want to get this off my chest. I want to confess. I want to confess to it all. Do me a favor and get Tom so that I can unburden myself.

MADELINE

So, this is a shakedown? Okay. How much? How much do you want?

SANDRA

I don't want your money, bitch.

MADELINE

Then what do you want?

SANDRA

Max and I were supposed to meet at the waiting room in *Penn Station*. I waited there for three days. Because I was so fucking stupid, I actually thought something had happened to him. I was worried. Can you believe that? He had run off with almost all the money and I was sitting there worrying about him. My heart breaking.

MADELINE

How much does he still owe? I'll pay it. Plus interest.

SANDRA

I said I don't want your money. I don't want to have anything to do with you.

MADELINE

Sandra, I know all about you too,
and I can say with some certainty
you do not have the moral high
ground here.

SANDRA

At least when I fuck someone, they
know what they're getting.

MADELINE

If it's not money you want then
what is it?

SANDRA

I want *Max*. I want to see Max. I
want to look him in the face. I
want him to see what he did to me.

MADELINE

I don't know where he is.

SANDRA

Well, you better find out. Or I
will tell everyone in the next room
who you really fucking are.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tom and Braddock wait, as Madeline breezes through on her way
out of the apartment. As she walks past them, she calls out:

MADELINE

She can stay!

INT. MIDTOWN ELECTRONIC STORE - DAY

An EMPLOYEE removes a BURNER PHONE from the shelf and hands
it to Madeline. She counts out two hundred dollars in cash.

INT. BEACH FRONT BAR - DAY

We're in Florida, as evidenced by the blue ocean and white
sand beaches we see from a window. Max enjoys an afternoon
cocktail at the bar. His PHONE BUZZES. He answers it.

MAX (INTO PHONE)

Where's my money?

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY - INTERCUT

Madeline, on the phone, walks briskly down the street.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
There's a problem.

MAX (ON PHONE)
The problem is I don't have my money. Did I not do my part? I cracked him, Madeline, just like you asked and don't think I didn't have to put a lot of my personal shit aside to come back and help you.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
From what I remember it didn't take a hell of a lot of convincing.

MAX (ON PHONE)
I swallowed shit, Madeline, and here am I a year later and I don't have my share.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
They found the girl.

Max pauses, then:

MAX (ON PHONE)
Where?

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
Turning tricks off the Cross Bronx Expressway. You really did a number on her. Left her high and dry.

MAX (ON PHONE)
She got a cut. Enough to start over, if she backslid into bad habits that is not my concern.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
It is very much your concern. Because she is in my apartment pining after you.

MAX (ON PHONE)
She knows nothing about me. I'm a ghost. I'm not exposed.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
 She is in my apartment. She is threatening to talk. I am very much exposed. You want your money?

MAX (ON PHONE)
 Yeah, I want my money.

MADELINE (ON PHONE)
 Then get back here and fix this.

Hold on Max.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Madeline sleeps, when the sound of SCREAMS awaken her.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Madeline makes her way through the apartment, following the sound of screams. As she gets to the GUEST ROOM, the screams get louder and louder...

There's quite a bit of commotion outside the guest room, with NURSES coming in and out of the room.

Madeline walks to the door and looks inside. Tom is sitting on the bed holding a bucket as Sandra, in the height of withdrawal, vomits into it.

Sandra looks up and spots Madeline standing at the doorway. She locks eyes with her.

SANDRA
 Did you find him?!

Tom spots Madeline and walks to her.

TOM
 She's delirious. She's just been screaming things all night.

SANDRA
 Did you find him?!

TOM
 They say she'll be better in the morning. I apologize.

Tom goes back to help Sandra, who's glaring at Madeline.

SANDRA
DID YOU FIND HIM?!

Madeline retreats and hurries away.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Madeline stands at the window, smoking a cigarette. She's looking out at the city down below. A BUZZING can be heard.

She walks to her purse. REMOVES THE BURNER PHONE. There's a TEXT: I'M HERE.

Madeline puts out her cigarette.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Sandra is sitting up in bed, while Tom sits next to her. They're talking, and laughing, as if they're getting to know each other all over again. Madeline steps in.

MADELINE
And how is our young patient doing?

Madeline smiles at them, and they smile back.

SANDRA
Feeling a lot better. Thank you.

TOM
Yeah, last night was rough, but, I think she's over the hump.

MADELINE
That's a relief. I'm going to get a pedicure. Would you like to join me, Sandra?

TOM
That's not a good idea. She's still not a hundred percent.

MADELINE
The fresh air will do her good.

TOM
Um, I don't know--

SANDRA
No, it's okay. A pedicure sounds perfect.

MADELINE
Get dressed then.

TOM
But--

MADELINE
We'll only be a short while, Tom.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - ELEVATOR - DAY

Madeline and Sandra ride in silence.

SANDRA
That was fast. Where was he?

MADELINE
You can ask him yourself. We had a deal, right? After you see Max you get out of my apartment and you get out of my life.

SANDRA
I told you, I don't want anything from you.

MADELINE
Good. You are not my problem.

Sandra regards her for a beat, a mixture of revulsion but also an odd admiration.

SANDRA
How can you do what you do?

MADELINE
Practice.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The Elevator Doors open and Sandra and Madeline step out. The Doorman spots her.

DOORMAN
Hello, Mrs. Hobbes, shall I call your driver?

MADELINE
No, thank you. We're going to walk.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Madeline and Sandra step out of the building. Madeline walks at a brisk pace, as Sandra tries to keep up.

They turn the corner, and Madeline raises her hand. A TAXI comes to a stop. She opens the back door.

MADELINE

Get in.

Sandra gets in, and Madeline follows her.

EXT. QUEENS STREET - WAREHOUSE - DAY

The taxi pulls up to a warehouse in this industrial neighborhood. Madeline and Sandra exit the taxi.

Madeline starts to head for a warehouse, but Sandra pauses, looking around, noticing just how isolated she is.

There is literally not a soul around.

MADELINE

Are you coming?

Sandra, hesitates, but then follows her.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Sandra steps in after Madeline in this empty warehouse, and standing there, waiting for them, is Max.

Sandra freezes at the sight of him. And then she's filled with a mixture of rage and sadness.

SANDRA

You piece of shit!

Sandra attacks him, hitting him and punching him, crying all the while.

MAX

Hey, hey, hey...

SANDRA

How could you?! How could you?!

Max tries protect himself from Sandra but she's keeps pummeling him in anger, her small fists attacking fiercely, as Max attempts to calm her.

Madeline watches, annoyed, and lights a cigarette.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

I waited for you! I waited for days! You left me! You threw me aside like trash!

Sandra continues hitting Max, Madeline has had enough.

MADELINE

Alright, are you done?

Sandra spins, turns her fury on to Madeline.

SANDRA

You stay out of this!

MADELINE

Too late. You dragged me into it. You got taken. That's what we do. Now, the question is, how do we make this right by you?

SANDRA

I want him to apologize.

MADELINE

He can't. Because he's not sorry. So, what else do you want?

SANDRA

(to Max)

I want to know... Did you feel anything for me? Ever?

Max hesitates, but Madeline steps forward.

MADELINE

Give it to her straight, Max.

MAX

If I had allowed myself to feel anything it would've jeopardized what we were doing. So, no. I did not allow that to happen. That is the discipline.

Sandra deflates, it's as if all the anger has gone out of her. She looks back at Max and Madeline, genuinely confused:

SANDRA

Why did you save me if you were just going to destroy me?

MAX

Because, that was the con.

SANDRA

Who are you people?

BRADDOCK (O.S.)

Great question.

They look over and bum rushing the warehouse is Braddock and his men. Following behind is Tom.

Madeline and Max grow alarmed, as they spot themselves being descended on.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

But, here's the good news. We're going to find out. We're going to find out exactly who you are. You guys are through.

The men start to surround Madeline and Max. But, Madeline steadies herself, her mind working.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

You have been lying about who you are, about your intentions. This whole thing was a set-up from the beginning. You targeted Mr. Hobbes because of his wealth. Then targeted Tom here so that you can pull the inheritance out from underneath him. Lady, believe me when I tell you. You are fucked.

Madeline sits in silence as Braddock approaches her.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

Well? You got nothing to say?

MADELINE

(icy)

I do. I have advice.

BRADDOCK

You have advice? Let's hear it.

MADELINE

My advice to you is, lawyer up.

BRADDOCK

You don't get it. You're not in the position to be making threats.

MADELINE

I'm making promises.

BRADDOCK

The inheritance belongs to Tom. And you're going to give it all back. It's Tom's money.

MADELINE

If it was Tom's money, he would have his money. But, he doesn't. Because it is not Tom's money. It is my money. And you know what I will do with my money, Mr. Braddock? I will take a half a billion dollars and aim it in your direction.

Braddock notices he's losing ground.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Your three bedroom in Scarsdale, or Lloyd Harbor or wherever the fuck. It's gone. Your Benz. Gone. The clothes you're wearing, your children's college fund. By the time we're done with you, it's all gone.

Tom, as if in a trance, steps forward.

TOM

That's what it's all about for you.

Madeline turns to Tom, who's just staring at her. He's shaking, clearly in the midst of a break down.

TOM (CONT'D)

It's all about the money for you. It's why you seduced my dad, right? (nods to Tom and Sandra)
Why you got these two to steal from me? It was all for money. You'll do anything for money. Well, I'll tell you what. You can have it. You can have it all.

With sudden speed, Tom turns to Braddock and removes his SIDE ARM from Braddock's belt. Tom SHOVES THE GUN in this mouth.

BRADDOCK

Tom, no--!

And he pulls the trigger. A loud GUNSHOT is heard, and the back of Tom's head explodes -- sending blood and skull and brains splattering behind him, spraying Braddock.

Sandra lets out a SCREAM. Everyone else just stands there in shock. Braddock falls to his knees.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no, no...

He cradles Tom's body in his arms, this big military man is on the verge of tears...

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
No! No! No! NO!

Braddock is suddenly back on his feet. And he's got the gun in his hand. He points it at Madeline and Max and Sandra.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
You did this! You did this!

Madeline, Max and Sandra all back up.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
Get on your knees! All of you!

Madeline, Max and Sandra do as their told. Braddock steps closer to them, pointing his gun squarely at Madeline. She squeezes her eyes shut, and turns away.

MAX
Wait, wait, wait, we can fix this
for you! She will fix this!

Max gets in front of Madeline to shield her.

BRADDOCK
You can't fix this!

Braddock HITS MAX with the GUN. Max falls over. Braddock firmly plants the gun against Madeline's forehead. His finger on the trigger, beginning to squeeze...

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
You killed him...

MADELINE
Please.

MAX
Don't do this. Don't do this.

BRADDOCK
 (to Madeline)
 Look at me. Open your eyes.

MAX
 You don't need to do this.

BRADDOCK
 (to Madeline)
 Open your eyes!

Madeline opens her eyes, looks up at Braddock.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
 Say it. You killed him. Say it.

MADELINE
 I... I killed him... I'm sorry.

BRADDOCK
 You're damn right you are.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

MAX
 NO, MADELINE!

Yet, as the echo of the gunshots die down, we notice that Braddock had moved the gun to the left before firing. He couldn't bring himself to do it.

He stands there, exhausted, holding the gun limply by his side. Madeline, shaking, on her knees, weeping from fear.

Braddock looks at her with disgust, then turns and walks over to McCabe and Mosely. The three men begin to confer.

Madeline turns to Max, motions towards a side-door just fifteen feet away. The two shift their weight, starting to get up, attempting to make a run for it--

Braddock notices.

BRADDOCK
 Don't fucking move!

Max and Madeline stop. Braddock finishes conferring with his men, then comes back to Madeline, Max and Sandra.

He goes into his inside pocket and removes a handkerchief. He quickly wipes down his gun. He turns back to Madeline.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
 Give me your right hand.

Madeline, confused, as Braddock grabs her right hand.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
Give me your hand!

Madeline struggles to free herself, but the much bigger man overpowers her. He puts the gun in her hand, makes sure her prints are all over it.

Braddock gets the gun back from her. McCabe steps up with a plastic zip lock bag, and Braddock drops the gun inside.

He turns back to Madeline, Max and Sandra.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
I want you out of the city. You come back and that gun goes straight to the NYPD. I will use every connection we have to make sure you get a murder rap. You leave today.

Madeline, Max and Sandra all stand up, warily.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
But, before you leave you give all the money back.

MADELINE
To who? Look, Tom is dead. That is a terrible tragedy. But, you and your men are very much alive. I can make it up to you. All of you. I can make amends--

BRADDOCK
Stop talking! That is the problem with you people! You can never just shut the fuck up!

Braddock turns to her, filling up again with rage.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)
You're giving the money back to the *Hobbes Foundation*. You're turning it all over. That money is going to do good. That's what's going to happen. It gets done today or so help me God, I will see to it that you rot away in prison for the rest of your miserable life.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - BUILDING - DAY

A NUMBER OF SUBURBANS pull up outside of a BUILDING. Braddock steps out of the passenger side and opens a back door, revealing Madeline, Max and Sandra in the back seat.

He motions to Madeline to step out of the car and she does.

BRADDOCK

Get it done.

She nods, still shaking, and heads for the building.

INT. LAW FIRM - WAITING ROOM - DAY

A large and active law firm. David steps into the waiting room, spotting Madeline.

DAVID

Madeline, hello, is everything alright?

MADELINE

Yes. I want to talk to you about transferring my inheritance.

DAVID

Transferring?

MADELINE

Yes. To *The Hobbes Foundation*.

DAVID

It was your husband's wish that you receive it, Madeline. It's yours.

MADELINE

And it's my wish that it goes to the foundation. I need it done today.

DAVID

I... I don't understand. What you're asking is not a simple task, there are tax implications and--

MADELINE

Just do it. Now.

David is taken back, looking at Madeline who stands there with a forced smile.

DAVID

Sometimes, when we experience a loss, we feel guilt. And that guilt can manifest itself in a number of ways. Perhaps, you should take a moment and speak to someone. A trusted confidant or a therapist.

MADELINE

I need you to do this, David. I need it done as soon as possible.

David regards her again, skeptical.

DAVID

Madeline, are you under duress?

MADELINE

Duress?

DAVID

You can tell me if something has happened. If there are extenuating circumstances. I can help you. Whatever it is.

David sees Madeline wavering, he keeps going.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We are your lawyers. We are here no matter what. Look around you. You have all this at your disposal.

Madeline takes this in, she opens her mouth, when:

BRADDOCK (O.S.)

David?

David and Madeline look behind them and spot Braddock.

DAVID

Oh, Pat, are we meeting today?

BRADDOCK

I'm just in the neighborhood and wanted to ask you about something.

DAVID

Have a seat. I'll be with you momentarily.

David turns back to Madeline, but the spell is broken.

DAVID (CONT'D)
So, Madeline, is there something
you need to tell me?

MADELINE
You're my lawyer?

DAVID
Yes.

MADELINE
And you want to continue being my
lawyer?

DAVID
Of course.

MADELINE
Then do what I say. Transfer the
money. Every last dime.

INT. LAW FIRM - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Madeline sits at a long conference table, surrounded by PILES
OF PAPERS. She begins to sign.

She looks up. Through the glass partition she can see
Braddock, smiling and joking around with David.

As if sensing her looking at him, Braddock looks back at her.
He's no longer smiling. He looks ready to kill her.

Madeline goes back to signing the papers.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - BUILDING - NIGHT

Braddock and Madeline exit the building and step up to the
awaiting Suburban. Braddock opens the back door, as Madeline,
defeated, wordlessly gets in the back.

INT. SUBURBAN - CONTINUOUS

Braddock gets into the passenger seat. Madeline, Max and
Sandra are all squeezed into the back.

MADELINE
Now what?

BRADDOCK
Now you get the fuck out of my
city.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - NIGHT

The Suburban parks in front of the airport. Madeline, Max and Sandra step out of the Suburban. Braddock also exits, removes PLANE TICKETS and distributes them.

BRADDOCK

Next flight out is to Oklahoma City. It's the Nine O'clock.

Braddock LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.

BRADDOCK (CONT'D)

Forty minutes to take off. Make sure you're on when it departs. We'll be watching.

The three of them take the tickets and head inside.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Madeline, Max and Sandra walk down the aisle, and find their seats. Madeline and Sandra are both in a daze. But, Max is starting to regain his composure. Madeline just sits there.

MAX

It's all gonna be okay, I promise. It's the two of us again. We're gonna be fine.

MADELINE

I just gave up hundreds of millions of dollars. It doesn't feel fine.

MAX

We'll line up new scores. We'll start over.

MADELINE

I don't want to start over.

SANDRA

Did you see all that blood?

They look at Sandra, as if remembering she's there.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

There was all that blood and you're still talking about money. How can you people just do what you do over and over again, not caring?

MAX

What did I tell you? You can't
cheat an honest man.

SANDRA

Tom was honest. He was honest and
we killed him. We killed him.

MADELINE

Keep it together.

SANDRA

I'm going to be sick.

Sandra stands and heads for BATHROOMS. They watch her go.

MADELINE

We gotta get rid of her.

MAX

We'll ditch her when we land.

Max checks his watch. Madeline watches him do this, her mind
working, then a look of horror crosses her face.

MAX (CONT'D)

We'll get there around midnight. We
spend the night at OKC and regroup.
I got some money set aside. We'll
be okay for a while.

(then)

Everything's going to be okay. It's
you and me, baby, it's you and me.

Madeline just keeps staring at him, he notices.

MAX (CONT'D)

What?

MADELINE

Don't trust anyone.

MAX

What?

MADELINE

You're behind this.

MAX

What are you talking about?

MADELINE

But... I don't understand. Why?

MAX
Madeline...?

MADELINE
You fucked me. You fucked me!

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

MADELINE
Your watch. Your bullshit watch!

MAX
Yeah?

MADELINE
Braddock had the same one.

INSERT QUICK FLASH: Braddock, curb side, checking the time.
Sure enough, it's the same one Max has.

MADELINE (CONT'D)
You fucked me. I'll kill you. I'll fucking end you!

Madeline starts to attack Max, punching him.

MAX
Listen to me. Listen to me.

MADELINE
You told me you would blow it all up and you did. You destroyed me.

MAX
Madeline! Madeline! *Madeline!* I had nothing to do with this!

They both stop for a beat, minds working and then they crane their head towards... SANDRA'S EMPTY SEAT.

Madeline is on her feet, sprinting down the aisle. A STEWARDESS tries to stop her.

STEWARDESS
Ma'am, please sit down, we're about to take off--

But Madeline shoves her aside and keeps running to the back until she gets to the bathrooms. There are two. She swings one open and it's empty.

She turns to the next, it's locked. Madeline BANGS on it.

MADELINE

Sandra! Sandra! Sandra!

She keeps banging, and then the door opens: A MIDDLE AGE ASIAN WOMAN, who just stares at her confused.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

No! No! Sandra! SANDRA!

INT. STORIES - NIGHT

We're back inside the bookstore. Sandra sits with Braddock and the rest of his crew. Gone are the dark suits, replaced by HAWAIIAN SHIRTS and KHAKIS.

They're all celebrating, drinking CHAMPAGNE. Music plays.

TIPSY (O.S.)

WHERE'S MY MONEY?!

The look over. Topsy's just entered. They all laugh as he walks in. Everyone is in good spirits. Sandra removes a bag.

SANDRA

Here's your money.

She begins to take out large ENVELOPS and doles them out. Topsy looks at his cut.

TIPSY

Not bad, little lady, Max taught you well.

BRADDOCK

I'm off to Rhode Island on a land deal. I could use someone like you. You got a real future.

SANDRA

Sorry, Goldie. I'm done.

TIPSY

I've heard that before.

SANDRA

Well, here's to you hearing it again. I'm done.

She lifts her glass, they all cheers and drink.

BRADDOCK

Okay. Time to get out of Dodge.

One by one everyone files out of the bookstore. Sandra watches them all leave. Then a door in the back opens and Tom exits a bathroom. He's clearly very much alive.

He's washed his hair, cleaned himself off and drying off with a towel. Suddenly he and Sandra are very much alone.

TOM

It took forever to wash that all out. Did everyone go?

SANDRA

Yeah. They all thought it would be better to leave town. I guess, that's what you do.

TOM

I see. Did you get your cut?

Sandra takes out one last envelope from the bag. Pockets it.

SANDRA

I should go.

TOM

Thank you.

SANDRA

You're thanking me? I got everything taken from you.

TOM

You also got it all back.

Sandra takes this in. She starts to turn, when Tom says:

TOM (CONT'D)

So, there's this great little Vietnamese restaurant on Mott street. If you're not doing anything later, dinner's on me.

Sandra takes this in.

SANDRA

I thought you'd never ask.

And with that, we...

CUT TO BLACK