

WAIT LIST

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FADE IN:

1

INT. GYM - NIGHT

1

A chain gym, one of those Planet Fitness-type places. Warehouse-y with high ceilings, fluorescent light fixtures, industrial-sized fans. It's night and pretty empty. A few muscle dudes are lifting weights, and some middle-aged women sit on spin bikes.

KATE (23), mousy with a long dark ponytail, runs on a treadmill, listening to music on her earbuds. She's focused, watching the red digital 'Calories Burned' number: 620.

She presses the 'Up' button on the 'Speed' control. She's pounding it now, ponytail bouncing, music blasting.

A shadow. She jolts.

A steroid-pumped bodybuilder, CHAD (35), handsome but kind of past his prime, lumbers up beside her. He says something indiscernible. He looks at her expectantly. She ignores him. Eyes on the prize: the Calories Burned number. 630.

But he's not going away. She removes one of her earbuds, but doesn't stop running.

KATE

What?

CHAD

Cool if I do some tricep dips here?

Kate looks around at the countless unoccupied treadmills.

KATE

Whatever.

She sticks her earbud back in before he can say anything else. Chad starts doing his dips, using the rail of her treadmill and the one next to it. He's sweating profusely, muscles quivering, face burning with exerted effort.

Kate tries to focus on her numbers, but he's too close. His arm flexing. Tricep twitching. Up and down, up and down.

Focus. Focus. Focus -

A bead of Chad's sweat flies off and plops onto Kate's bare arm. The 'Calories Burned' display only reads 649, so Kate hesitates, but she literally can't even.

She yanks the 'Emergency Stop' and rushes over to the antibacterial wipe station (a sign: 'Please Wipe Down Machines After Use!!'). They're not intended for use on people, but hey, she's desperate.

She pants, frantically rubbing her arm, her skin becoming red and irritated.

2

EXT. GYM - NIGHT

2

Neon fast food signs in the background, headlights streaming past, a Texas highway town. The gym shares a parking lot with a strip mall - a dry cleaner, a vape shop, a tax place.

Gym bag in hand, Kate marches towards her car. The lot is as good as empty, but there's a shiny blue Mustang parked right up against her beat-up old Corolla.

She wedges herself between the cars but even though she's tiny, she can't get her driver's side door open wide enough to get in. She curses under her breath, makes her way toward the passenger side.

Footsteps from behind.

She turns around. It's Chad, of course. Wearing the half-giddy, half-sinister smile and swagger of a guy whose crazy plan to nab a woman has actually worked.

CHAD

Sorry, my bad! I'll move it.

Kate opens her trunk and sets her bag inside. She checks to make sure all of the compartments are zipped all the way. She checks again.

Chad watches her and hesitates, like he's going to say something else. He doesn't. He gets into his Mustang and throws it into reverse, moving it out of the way.

Kate shuts her trunk and makes a move towards her freed driver's side door. Behind her, the Mustang stops. The door bursts open. Chad jumps out and hands her a slip of paper.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Have a good night.

He hops back in, revs, and speeds off, tires squealing.

Kate looks at the paper. It's his name and number scrawled on the back of a GNC receipt.

There's an uncomfortable silence. He stares at the muted TV. He exhales a plume of smoke.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna shower.

DAD

Don't use all the hot water.

He turns the volume back on. White guys in zany ties shout at each other about poverty, gangs, inner-city violence.

7 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

7

Hair wet and wearing a shoddy robe, Kate sits at her desk. She straightens her laptop so that it's perfectly aligned with her stack of L-SAT Prep books. When everything is just right, she opens the laptop.

She checks her email. *Ding*. A new message from Yale Law. Kate knocks on her stack of L-SAT books three times with her fist, a little good luck ritual, and clicks to open the email.

CUT TO:

INSERT - EMAIL MESSAGE

...Unfortunately all spots have now been secured for the class of 2021... We wish you the best of luck with all of your future endeavors...

BACK TO:

8 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM**

8

Kate adds this email to a folder titled 'Rejections.' Many, many rejections. She opens a drawer, removes a notebook, and crosses 'Yale' off her list. Only one school left: Columbia.

A knock. Kate shuts her laptop.

KATE

Come in.

Her dad opens the door and leans against the door frame.

DAD

I'm headed to the shooting range in the morning. You're welcome to come. Been a while, might be good to sharpen up.

He mimes sniping her.

KATE

I don't believe in making a sport of violence.

DAD

Don't know 'bout that. It's a human right, ain't it? It's in the Constitution. Bear arms.

He holds out his arms in an impression of a grizzly bear and makes a 'grrr' sound. Kate doesn't laugh.

KATE

Why do you keep doing this?

DAD

My bear impression?

KATE

Inviting me to shoot with you.

DAD

I don't know. Your mom always said we should spend more time together. Might be good before you go.

Silence. Kate twists in her chair, popping her back.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well, anyway, I'm leaving roundabouts nine.

KATE

I have Zumba at nine.

DAD

You've been exercising a lot lately.

KATE

What's that supposed to mean?

DAD

Nothing. Just an observation. Healthy habit.

Kate wraps her robe more tightly around herself.

DAD (CONT'D)

Well, If you change your mind, just-

-

Leo sighs and traces a 'check mark' in the air with his index finger. The door dings, and in comes a CUSTOMER (60s), a retiree wearing a big bedazzled cross necklace. Kate steps up, but Leo remains, hovering.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hey there. Lemme know when you're ready.

LEO

No, it's 'Welcome to Subway, how may I serve you today?'

Kate tries hard not to roll her eyes. She turns back to the customer, mimics Leo.

KATE

Welcome to Subway, how may I serve you today?

LEO

Now ask about the bread.

CUSTOMER

Six inch, whole wheat. New employee?

Kate plops the bread down on the counter.

KATE

I've worked here for six months.

LEO

Now the cheese. It's 'extra cheese makes for a tastier sandwich. Would you like to add extra cheese for just 50 cents more?'

Leo edges in, bumping Kate out of the way, so that he's now in front of the bread.

CUSTOMER

No thanks.

LEO

Okay, and then the meat or meat alternative.

KATE

I can handle it, Leo, thank you.

Leo doesn't budge.

LEO

'What meat or meat alternative piques your interest today?'

Leo looks at Kate, waiting. Kate sighs.

KATE

What meat or meat alternative piques your interest today?

11 INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - DAY

11

Kate, still in her Subway shirt and snacking on carrot sticks, sits at her laptop and clicks through photos of superstar lawyer Amal Clooney. Sleek physique, glamorous wardrobe, movie star husband.

After a moment, Kate closes out the photo gallery and goes to an internet forum for individuals awaiting law school admissions news. She clicks on the 'Columbia' forum and clicks one: 'Anyone hear anything??'

She skims the replies: *...Nothing yet. ...Radio silence! ...I've got intel that they'll be sending out decision letters any day now.*

12 INT. SPIN CLASS - DAY

12

A darkened room packed with sweaty bottle blondes in neon Spandex. A dub-step remix of a popular song squeals and screeches. Kate, wearing baggy dark clothes, cycles with the utmost intensity.

The INSTRUCTOR (30s), a petite woman who fancies herself an amateur life coach, shouts encouragement.

INSTRUCTOR

Keep it going, ladies! It's make or break it time. Draw on that infinite well of greatness within you.

Kate spins and spins, leaning into the instructor's words and occasionally glancing down at the 'Calories Burned' display.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

There's no limit to what you can do, ladies. You have all the world's potential within you. You will do whatever it takes to get what you want.

Kate's feet start spinning freely, the resistance suddenly gone. She looks down at her machine. The digital display screen has gone blank.

Groans and sighs all around. The other women all stop pedaling, look around, wipe the sweat off their faces with their sleeves and terry cloth wristbands, grumble.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)

Well, ladies. I think we've tripped a fuse with our awesomeness!

13

INT. GYM - DAY

13

Head down and hair wet from the showers, Kate heads out. She's almost to the door when something bumps hard into her shoulder. She stops, looks up. It's Chad. Of course. He's smiling like, what a coincidence.

CHAD

You should watch where you're going.

Kate shoots him a death glare.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey, do you, uh... Are you free right now?

He moves so he's squarely in front of her, completely blocking her path.

KATE

This is America. Aren't we all?

CHAD

Oh, uh. Yeah. Hey, so there's this new place. They do these fruit... I mean, do you want to grab a smoothie with me?

KATE

No.

Kate maneuvers around a flabbergasted Chad and out the door.

14

EXT. GYM PARKING LOT - DAY

14

Kate heads to her car. The parking lot is pretty full, but the blue Mustang is still only a few spots away. Of course.

KATE

I mean, they all sound pretty gross, so whatever.

A brief moment of tension, but then Chad smiles, as though she's joking. The Mixologist beams back, in on the joke.

MIXOLOGIST

Good thing sound and taste are two separate senses! Anyway, your total will be \$14.99, please. Cash or card--

Kate jumps in.

KATE

Actually, I'm a Secret Shopper, so this should be free.

MIXOLOGIST

Whoa, you've got a live wire here! She's a hoot.

KATE

I'm serious.

CHAD

Wait, really? That's so cool.

A moment of awkward silence.

MIXOLOGIST

Oh, um. Well, my manager didn't say anything about--

KATE

Of course not. That would give it away. I'm only allowed to tell you after you've rung up the order.

MIXOLOGIST

Oh, um... Hold tight, and I'll just give my manager a call...

KATE

You're literally losing points by the second.

Flustered, the Mixologist cancels the order.

MIXOLOGIST

Yeah, okay. I'm sorry. I'll bring them right out to you...

19

INT. SMOOTHIE BAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

19

Kate and Chad sit at a booth, sipping from their Styrofoam cups. A blender whirls intermittently in the background.

CHAD

So that's when I started doing bodybuilding semi-professionally. If you win the competition, you get a cash prize, and then I also have companies who sponsor me.

KATE

Like they pay you to use their stuff?

CHAD

No, I just get the stuff for free. But actually, I make the majority of my income from selling this protein powder. It's called The Powder. Coming up on my two-year anniversary. It's been great. Self-employment. Being my own boss.

KATE

A boy boss.

He's oblivious to the fact that she's making fun of him.

CHAD

Yeah. It's good money and it's fulfilling. There are other benefits, too. If you're a top seller in your division, you get a trip to Las Vegas. All expenses paid. You ever been to Vegas?

Kate shakes her head, no.

CHAD (CONT'D)

So I mean, hey, if it's something you'd be interested in...

KATE

Joining a protein powder pyramid scheme?

CHAD

No, no, no, that's a common misconception. It's actually network marketing. You know what, sorry, I don't want this to turn into a business thing.

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

And I know you're probably already killing it with your Secret Shopper hustle...

KATE

I'm really not. I made it up.

Chad smiles like she's joking. When he realizes she's serious, his face falls. He glances around, whispers.

CHAD

Wait, you lied? We stole these?

KATE

It's a big corporation, it doesn't matter. It's probably not even real fruit.

Chad looks like he's going to be sick. Kate takes the last sip of her smoothie, stands up.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm joking, it's fine. Can we go?

Chad nods, but he still looks uncertain. On their way out, he beelines back to the counter and stuffs a \$20 into the tip jar, just in case.

20 **EXT. ROAD - DAY** 20

The Mustang speeds down a long, two-lane country highway, drought-afflicted fields on either side.

21 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY** 21

Chad presses the 'Scan' function on the car radio. It's mostly picking up static.

CHAD

You're way out in the boonies.

KATE

Yep.

CHAD

I grew up in the boonies too. But as soon as I could move into town, I did. I rent a nice little duplex behind the Walmart. One-bedroom, but it suits me for now.

KATE
Cool. Here is fine.

He doesn't slow down, but Kate unbuckles her seat belt.

CHAD
Wait, are you joking again?

There are no houses anywhere to be seen. Just fields. A few cows. Rusty barbed-wire fences.

KATE
No. Here is really fine.

Chad slows the car to a stop, flips on his hazard lights. Kate reaches down to grab her gym bag.

CHAD
Is this one of those safety precautions girls take? So I won't know where you live.

KATE
You're smarter than you look.

CHAD
This is a small town. Whether you like it or not, people have a way of figuring things out.

He says this with a friendly smile, clearly meaning no harm, but it's still creepy. Kate gets out. Chad rolls down the window.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Wait!

He reaches into the backseat and hands her a sample of his protein powder. He rolls the window up and speeds off, his car wheels kicking up dust. Kate lingers for a moment, shoves the sample into her bag, and begins jogging home.

22

INT. KATE'S KITCHEN - DAY

22

Kate goes to put the protein powder sample in the trash can, but it's overflowing with fast food bags and wrappers. She glances back to the living room, where the TV is on full-blast. She sighs and uses the sample as a makeshift compactor, pressing down the other trash before pulling the bag. She ties it off and sets it on the floor.

At the sink, she scrubs her hands until they turn red. A shadow behind her.

DAD

Kate?

She turns off the tap, turns around.

DAD (CONT'D)

My tank's on E. I was wondering if you could front me some cash--

KATE

I can take it tomorrow and fill it up. Mine crapped out again.

DAD

Again? Well, I've got plans tomorrow.

KATE

Yeah, so do I. I need to get to work. Otherwise, there is no money, is there? And I need to be at the gym in the morning.

They're at an impasse. He ashes his cigarette into a chipped 'Number #1 Dad' mug on the kitchen counter.

DAD

I could give you a ride, how 'bout that? We fill her up on the way. Two birds, one stone. Need to get me a new case of Marlboros too.

Defeated, Kate mumbles in agreement, turns around, angrily rewashes her hands.

23 **INT. GYM - DAY**

23

Morning light streams into the gym. Kate finishes off another run on the treadmill - 700 calories. Not too shabby.

24 **INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

24

Kate, showered and wrapped in her raggedy beach towel, sits on a bench, rummaging through her gym bag.

Two overly made-up, slightly out-of-shape party girls in Lululemon gear, JENNIFER and MEGAN (both early 20s) stumble into the room, in the middle of a too-loud conversation. Kate takes off her towel and starts getting dressed.

JENNIFER

Yeah, so then he shows up at three a.m., banging on my door, screaming my name.

MEGAN

Ew. Was he drunk?

JENNIFER

No. Just obsessed with me.

Kate releases her ponytail, her hair cascading over her face.

MEGAN

Girl, your abs are to die for.

It takes a second before Kate realizes Megan is talking to her. She does up her bra, looking down as she speaks.

KATE

It's only because I'm so skinny. The muscles show through.

The girls laugh like, obviously. Kate raises her head and pulls back her hair, giving them a clear view of her face.

MEGAN

Wait. Kate? Kate Brady?

JENNIFER

Holy shit. What are you doing here?

Kate throws on the rest of her clothes, grabs her bag, goes.

25 **EXT. GYM - DAY**

25

Kate storms towards her dad's truck. He has the window rolled down, smoking. He calls out to her.

DAD

You okay? You're looking pale.

KATE

I'm fine. I'm calling in sick to work. Can we just go home?

26 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

26

Kate sits at her desk. She gnaws on a celery stick and clicks through an Amal Clooney photo gallery. Sleek, smart, perfect.

Ding! A new email. She opens her inbox. Columbia Law. She looks away, performs her L-SAT book ritual, and clicks it open.

...Unfortunately, all spots have now been secured... However, in rare cases, enrolled students do sometimes withdraw, and so you will automatically remain on the waiting list until classes commence...

27 **INT. KATE'S BATHROOM - DAY**

27

Kate turns off the faucet. Her hands are bright red from scrubbing. She stands in front of the mirror, looking at her reflection in disgust. She hisses to herself.

KATE

You stupid fucking idiot.

She reaches up and uses her fingernails to yank out an eyebrow hair. Another. Another. She stares, blinking, her eyes welling, her reflection blurring. She swallows a sob.

But no, she's better than this. She takes a deep breath, stops herself from crying. She opens a drawer, removes an eyebrow pencil and fills in the bald patches. Good as new.

28 **INT. SUBWAY - DAY**

28

Mid-morning, and the place is empty. Kate stands behind the sandwich counter, doing her usual calf raises, watching the clock in the dining area. She touches her eyebrows, lowers her visor. She paces. She peeks around the door and into the prep area.

KATE

Leo? I'm gonna take a quick bathroom break.

No response. She heads towards the bathroom. She's in the dining area when Leo appears behind the counter.

LEO

Number one or number two?

KATE

What?

LEO

I don't actually care. I just want an estimate of how long you'll be.

Kate shakes her head, says nothing, continues on her way.

LEO (CONT'D)

Hello?

Kate disappears around the corner, slams the bathroom door.

29

INT. SUBWAY - BATHROOM - A MOMENT LATER

29

Kate stares at herself in the mirror, blinking back tears. She takes a deep breath, places a sanitary cover on the toilet seat, and pulls her phone from her pocket. She sits, fully dressed, opens her YouTube app, scrolls through the recommended videos, opens one: *Fierce feminist spoken word poet!*

On screen, a hip, confident POET (20s) stands on stage, speaks into the mic:

POET

Lemme tell you, sister, what it means to be alive / But first, girl, I think you need a bit of hype / You're a boss babe, a hustler, babe / Beautiful and why shouldn't beauty should take up space? / Your mind's a galaxy, a system of stars / The Akashic library, containing everything we are--

The door handle jiggles. A knock. Another jiggle. Kate stops the video.

KATE

Someone's in here. Obviously.

LEO (O.S.)

Yeah. Are you gonna be much longer? I need someone to decant the olives.

Kate stands up, unzips her pants, lets them fall around her ankles. She waddles over to the door, opens it fully.

KATE

Just finishing. Be there shortly.

Leo's eyes widen. He's flustered, embarrassed. Kate shuts the door again, shakes her head, pulls herself back together.

30 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

30

Kate scrolls through the admissions forum, clicks a post:
WAIT LIST OFFER FROM COLUMBIA!

Don't give up hope, y'all! I literally got the email yesterday morning and this afternoon, I'd gotten another one saying someone had dropped out. They're offering me a place!

Kate clicks on the user name. A few clicks through her posting history and she has a first name, a town: Robyn Meisner, 24, Norman, Oklahoma.

31 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - SOME TIME LATER**

31

Kate, red-eyed and manic, still at her desk. She has a half-dozen browser tabs open, all with Robyn's name on them. She creates a fake Facebook profile under a false name. She swipes some pictures from a fitness influencer's Instagram, adds a bunch of random people as friends to lend some credibility, and shoots Robyn a friend request.

A knock at the door. Kate jolts, then hurriedly minimizes the browser and opens a law book to a random page. Her dad cracks opens the door.

DAD

There's a human rights expert
 fixin' to be on TV.

KATE

Cool. Be there in a sec.

32 **INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

32

Kate's dad is kicked back in his recliner; he plays with his pack of cigarettes, hitting it rhythmically against his palm, a nervous habit. Kate walks in, perches on the sofa's arm, and focuses her attention on the TV, where a silver fox human rights attorney, SAAD HARIRI (40s) appears on a talking-head cable news segment.

SAAD

It is a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. And, as is usually the case, the women and children are suffering the most. While many believe this nightmare could end soon, others are less optimistic.

CHAD

Lemme know when you do. It's great stuff. It has changed my body and my life.

She sticks her earbud back in. But he's not going anywhere. Exasperated, Kate takes it out again.

KATE

What?

CHAD

What's going on with your car?

KATE

Nothing.

CHAD

It's been sitting in the parking lot for nearly a week.

KATE

I'm keenly aware.

CHAD

They're pretty strict here with that kinda thing. It's not the gym, it's the shopping center management. Few months back, my buddy left his Tahoe for a few days while he was outta town. Came back and it was impounded.

She goes to put her earbud back in.

CHAD (CONT'D)

So you should move it.

Instead, she rips out of her other earbud and yanks the 'Emergency Stop' cord.

KATE

It's broken down, okay? I can't afford to have it towed or fixed at the moment, so... Could you please just leave me alone?

She steps off the treadmill, and storms off towards the locker room. Chad, knowing he has screwed up, rubs his face, composes himself, and then jogs over to a guy who is laying down to start a set of bench presses.

CHAD
 (To the guy)
 Here, bud, let me spot you.

35 INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

35

Kate emerges from a hot shower wrapped in a towel. She steps out of the steam and stops in her tracks. Megan and Jennifer. Kate eyes the exit, but they're blocking it. And she can't get to her stuff - it's on the bench beside them.

JENNIFER
 Kate! We meet again. You gonna tell us what you're doing back in town now?

Megan elbows her.

MEGAN
 Shh... I told you, her mom...

Kate squares her shoulders. She's got to face this.

KATE
 Yes, that's correct. My mom died. She's dead.

JENNIFER
 Oh, shit. Guess that's karma though, right?

Uncomfortable, Megan elbows Jennifer again. Jennifer plops down on the bench, rummages around in Kate's bag, pulls out a pair of holey underwear, holds them up, puts them back. She removes a T-shirt and folds it tenderly in her lap.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
 (to Megan) What? I'm not gonna be nice to someone who stole money from a cancer fundraiser.

Megan looks a bit empowered by this.

MEGAN
 Mmm, fair enough. (to Kate) Well, you'll be happy to know that Bailey is in full remission now. She was a cheerleader for Tech, and now she's getting her master's in journalism. In New York City.

KATE

Cool. That's where I'm going to law school. Maybe I'll ask her for a coffee.

Kate plods over and grabs her T-shirt from Jennifer's hands. She turns around and pulls it over her head.

JENNIFER

Yeah, okay. Don't you, like, work at Subway?

KATE

No.

JENNIFER

Mm. Then what's this?

Jennifer removes the Subway polo shirt from Kate's bag. Caught out, Kate snatches her stuff back, hurriedly gets dressed as the girls watch her, eyeing her up and down, appearing to judge her every flaw.

Humiliated, she goes. She stops at the door, opens it and shuts it to make it sound like she has left. She waits. After a moment, she overhears snickering and whispering.

MEGAN

God, she's always been such a scammer.

JENNIFER

Yeah, she's definitely lying about the whole law school thing. I guarantee you, in ten year's time, she'll still be here, still working at Subway. She'll probably have, like, twenty kids. Maybe become a tweaker like her dad. Hey, if she's really lucky, she'll get promoted to assistant manager before she's 30...

Kate leaves for real this time. The girls go silent, realizing she's heard them. Then, they snicker again.

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

Whatever. I'm glad she heard.

36 **EXT. GYM PARKING LOT - DAY**

36

Kate walks past her car. This time she stops and reads the notice; the vehicle will be towed and impounded at the owner's expense.

Her dad's truck pulls into the lot, slows to a stop. He rolls down the window. A lit cigarette dangles out of his mouth.

DAD

What's that?

KATE

A flyer. For the circus.

Before he can question her further, she bolts around the front and hops into the truck.

37 **EXT. GYM PARKING LOT - DAY**

37

Chad emerges from the gym just as the truck is pulling away. He walks over to Kate's car, reads the notice. He rips it off the windshield and pulls out his phone.

38 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

38

Kate absentmindedly picks at her eyebrows as she scrolls through her fake Facebook profile's news feed. She has a notification: Robyn has accepted her friend request.

Kate clicks on Robyn's profile. She reads her About section: In a Relationship. B.A. Political Science from Tulane. Internships in Washington D.C. Study abroad in Peru. It's too much.

Kate clicks over to Robyn's timeline, scrolls down. Lots of photos of Robyn with family, Robyn with friends. She stops on a post from a few weeks earlier: *I got into Duke today! Still waiting to hear from Columbia, fingers crossed, y'all.*

She scrolls back up to the top, rocks slightly in her seat, fiddles with her eyebrows. A new post pops up, from a friend named Monica: *Hey Robyn, just wanted to wish you a happy early birthday! Can't wait to celebrate this weekend.*

A knock on the door. Kate jumps. She shuts her laptop, stares straight ahead. Cool, calm, collected.

KATE

Come in.

Her dad opens the door.

DAD

You busy?

KATE

Just studying.

DAD

Okay, well. I just wanted to tell you, Bill, my buddy from the shooting range, he knows a guy who's looking to hire a maintenance man down at the motel on the lake. I was just thinking, if I get the job, maybe I can help you out with your car.

KATE

Probably better to sell it for scrap metal at this point, but thanks for the offer.

DAD

...Or your rent in New York.

Kate sighs. He lingers in the doorway.

DAD (CONT'D)

Hey, I know I'm in a big hole with all that medical debt from your mom. But I'm gonna get my shit together. She'd want that.

He starts to choke up, but works to control himself.

DAD (CONT'D)

Right. Get back to studying then.

He goes, shutting the door behind him. A buzz. Kate's phone, vibrating. Incoming call. Unknown number. She hesitates before picking up.

KATE

...Hello?

CHAD (V.O.)

Hey, Kate. It's me. Chad. From the gym. I got your number from the gym manager. They're not supposed to give out personal information, but, uh, you know... I was just calling to let you know I had your car towed into the place on Pearl Street. I've had a lot of work done on my car there. Honest guys.

He wakes, opening his eyes wide, trying to pretend that he wasn't sleeping.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm going to study with a friend.

He nods, but he's already drifting back to sleep. Murmurs, smacking his lips.

DAD

...Mmm, have fun. ...The hot water.

42 **EXT. ROAD - DAY**

42

A tangerine and neon pink Texas sunset. Kate jogs down the road, slows to a stop. While she waits, she starts doing jumping jacks. A few jumps in, Chad's car comes into sight. Kate stops, takes a deep breath, smooths her T-shirt, tames her hair.

43 **INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

43

A Japanese restaurant chain. Around the hibachi table, overweight white families sit, dazzled by the rice volcanos and the Mexican chefs tossing shrimp into the air.

Chad and Kate sit facing each other at a normal table. Chad scowls, scanning the menu.

CHAD

Sa-sure-mi.

KATE

Sashimi.

CHAD

I can't read Chinese.

KATE

It's Japanese. But it's all in English.

A waiter in a standard-issue polo shirt flits past carrying a tray of octopus. Horrified, Chad sets down his menu.

CHAD

Maybe you should just order for us both.

44 **INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - SOME TIME LATER**

44

Their cocktail glasses are empty, there's a bottle of sake on the table, and the food has arrived. Kate expertly holds her chopsticks and daintily draws a piece of sushi to her mouth. Chad tries to do the same, but he's struggling, unable to pick anything up.

KATE

Think of them as extensions of your fingers.

He tries, but again fumbles. He flags down a passing waiter.

CHAD

Sorry, could I get a fork?

The waiter nods.

CHAD (CONT'D)

How do you know all this stuff anyway? Did you study abroad?

KATE

No. Believe it or not, I've never left the country.

She takes another piece of sushi, washes it down with a big gulp of sake.

KATE (CONT'D)

You can fake manners and class. All it takes is educating yourself. Learned that from my mom.

She takes another big gulp and refills her glass.

KATE (CONT'D)

Unfortunately she couldn't fake her way out of her circumstances.

The waiter returns with Chad's fork. He grips it, stabs a piece of sushi, pops it in his mouth, gags.

45 **INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)**

45

The waiter brings dessert, three mochi ice cream balls in a shallow dish. Chad eyes them with trepidation, but Kate, sloppy drunk now, takes a spoon and digs right in.

KATE

She was a cleaning lady. She even worked at my elementary school for a while as a janitor. Which was cool until it was embarrassing. It's fucked up, though. I think about it all the time. She never got to do any of the things she wanted to do and then, poof, gone.

CHAD

Sorry to hear that. My dad died when I was eight, so I get it.

Kate talks over him.

KATE

The point is, I was supposed to go off to college, start over. I got into NYU. Barnard. Cornell. But when she got cancer, I decided it'd be best to stick closer to home.

CHAD

So that's why you went to Austin.

KATE

Yeah, it's only a three-hour drive. I could come home on weekends.

CHAD

But now you're doing it. New York. The Big Apple.

KATE

Well, actually, I'm not--

She stops, corrects herself. She's drunk, but not that drunk.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm not as happy about it as I should be. Obviously it'd all be better if my mom were still alive. Thank god I got into Columbia though. Blow this joint. Live the dream before I die too.

Chad offers her a pitying smile, like she's an earnest but talent-less American Idol hopeful. Kate looks beyond him at two girls entering the restaurant, dressed to the nines. Megan and Jennifer. She blinks, starts to tremble.

CHAD

Well, anyway, I like me a woman with some ambition. It's getting late. Should I get the check?

She nods, draws her drink to her mouth with shaky hands, takes one final swig. She watches the girls take a seat at the bar - they haven't spotted her yet. She rises.

KATE

I'm gonna... I'm not feeling so well. I'll wait for you outside.

46 **EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT**

46

Chad's Mustang speeds down the empty night street, past strip malls and big-box stores and fast food chains. His brakes squeal as he slows, pulls into the center lane, and signals. He turns into the mechanic's parking lot.

47 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - NIGHT**

47

Chad leans back in his seat, drums the steering wheel.

CHAD

Well. You feeling any better?

KATE

Yeah, just a case of the fish sweats. Thanks for dinner. And the car. And everything. Are you sure I can't pay you back? It might take me a while, but I--

CHAD

No need.

Kate, still pale and trembling, struggles to unbuckle her seat belt.

CHAD (CONT'D)

You sure you're okay to drive? I could bring you home, and we could just pick up your car tomorrow.

The seat belt finally pops out.

KATE

No. It's fine. I'm fine.

Chad stares at her. She reaches for the door handle, but not quickly enough. He's leaning in for a kiss.

She catches his face in her hands, pushes it away. His eyes widen. She lets him go, and he pulls back.

CHAD

Sorry, it's cool if you're not ready. I respect that.

Kate flees, almost falling out of the Mustang. She hurries over to her car, digs her keys from her bag, and gets in. She starts it up and speeds away.

48 **INT. KATE'S CAR - NIGHT**

48

At a red light. Kate listens to a story on NPR about Syrian refugees on the radio. Her eyes well up. Her breathing quickens.

Green light. She signals and pulls into a Taco Bell parking lot. She cuts the radio and in silence, she watches some teens in hoodies and ripped skinny jeans. Skateboarding, laughing, slurping from soda cups.

One of the girls in the group is very pregnant. She's laughing too, but then she stops abruptly, and looks sadly into the distance, in Kate's general direction. But it's like she's looking right at her.

A boy saunters up behind the pregnant girl and slings his arm over her shoulders, claiming her, laying stake. The girl smiles, laughs, turns her back on Kate. Kate gathers her resolve and puts the car into drive.

49 **EXT. CHAD'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**

49

Kate's car turns past the Walmart and into Chad's neighborhood. She parks across the street and down a ways from Chad's house. She cuts her engine and lights and watches him get out. He's carrying a Chili's To-Go bag.

50 **INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

50

Kate and Chad in bed, having sex. She's on top, still wearing a sports bra. He comes, and she rolls off him and onto her back. Dazed, he stares up at the ceiling, catches his breath.

CHAD

Wow.

51 **INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 51

Chad snoring beside her, Kate lays with her back to him, looking at her phone, at Robyn's Facebook page. A new post from that evening: *Finally decided. Going to confirm with Columbia tomorrow! Happy birthday to me!*

Kate focuses, tries to regulate her breathing.

KATE

One, two, three...

Chad stirs every so slightly. She holds her breath, tries to keep quiet. She Googles 'negotiation techniques.' She scrolls through an illustrated Wikihow article about rhetoric: logos and pathos. She enters Robyn's address into Google Maps - a three-hour journey. She sits up in bed.

52 **INT. CHAD'S KITCHEN - NIGHT** 52

Kate grabs one of Chad's gym hoodies and pulls it on over her clothes. Grabs an onion ring from the untouched Chili's To-Go bag, eats it. Snatches his car keys from their hook.

53 **INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 53

Kate tiptoes in and stands over Chad for a moment, watching him sleep. Peacefully, innocently. Then, she goes.

54 **EXT. CHAD'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT** 54

Kate, hood up, holds a fistful of flowers, plucked from a neighbor's front yard. She pulls out a few more, shakes the dirt from the roots, adds them to the bouquet. Done.

55 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - NIGHT** 55

Kate drives down the highway. Tiny raindrops sprinkle onto the windshield. The roads are mostly empty, save for a few big-rigs. She turns on the radio; it's set to a Christian rock station. She promptly switches it off again.

56 **EXT. ROBYN'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 56

A rural neighborhood. No street lights. Kate sits in the Mustang, her headlights and engine killed. Two beat-up cars are parked side-by-side in the drive in front of Robyn's house. The sky grows gradually lighter.

57 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY**

57

Kate finds a pack of gum in the center console, pops a piece in her mouth, and glances at her phone - 6:03 a.m. It buzzes in her hand. Chad's name pops up. She clicks ignore. He calls again. Ignore again. And again. Finally, she gives in.

KATE

Hello?

CHAD (V.O.)

Hey, um. This might be a weird question, but did you take my car?

Out the window, Kate sees Robyn's house door open. Robyn's boyfriend KEVIN (20s) emerges, dressed in a shoddy suit. Kate wills herself to emotion. She performs a convincing fake sob.

CHAD (V.O.)

Kate? Is everything okay?

KATE

My grandma - my Nana - had a stroke.

The boyfriend stops. He turns in Kate's direction, squints. Kate ducks down.

CHAD (V.O.)

What? Why didn't you wake me up? Where are you? Is she okay?

Kate peeks up over the dash. Kevin is no longer looking her way. He gets into his car.

KATE

Yeah. I'm in Oklahoma. I'm... My car wasn't working. Sorry, I missed your calls, they don't let you use phones in the ICU. But don't worry, she's stable.

The boyfriend backs his car out of the drive and heads off on his merry way.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sorry, I've gotta go.

58 **EXT. ROBYN'S HOUSE**

58

Kate walks up, takes a deep breath, and knocks on the front door. After a moment, ROBYN (20s) answers, half-awake in her pajamas, clutching her phone. Kate holds out the flowers.

KATE

Good morning, and happy birthday! I have a flower-gram for you from your friend, Monica.

ROBYN

Sorry, what?

KATE

Monica. Happy birthday, Robyn!

Fully awake now, Robyn plants herself firmly in the doorway.

ROBYN

Is this a joke? I'm allergic to flowers...

Kate shifts her weight. Robyn eyes the grubby bouquet.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Shouldn't you be wearing a uniform?

KATE

You're right. I'm... I'm sorry. This was a stupid idea. This is actually about a personal matter. Could I come in?

Kate smiles softly, apologetically. Robyn looks her up and down, decides she's not a threat.

ROBYN

Yeah, fine, whatever. Leave those out here though.

Kate drops the flowers by the front door, steps inside.

59

INT. ROBYN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

59

Kate is sitting on the couch. There's noise from the kitchen as Robyn gets Kate a glass of water. Kate notes Robyn's phone on a side table. She glances up to make sure Robyn isn't coming, snatches it, slides it into the hoodie's pocket.

Robyn returns, hands Kate the water.

ROBYN

So, listen, if this is about Kevin, I know he cheated on me. That was two years ago, and we're well past it now.

KATE

No, no, it's nothing like that. Is that a Herman Miller chair?

ROBYN

IKEA. Can you just, like, cut to the chase? I have to be at work in an hour.

Kate takes a slow sip of water.

KATE

It's about law school.

ROBYN

Wait. What?

KATE

I just wanted to say that Duke is a great school, with a stellar reputation, and I think that it'd be a better fit for you, considering your specific background and ambitions.

Robyn stares at her, confused.

KATE (CONT'D)

And North Carolina would be a much smoother transition for you. Not everyone's cut out for big cities. That summer in DC was tough enough, you said. The train was so hard to navigate there - that blog you wrote about it. Imagine New York.

ROBYN

I'm sorry. What is happening right now? ...Where's my phone?

KATE

Robyn, I'm just trying to help you make the right choice. Think of me like a guardian angel. Or a hype woman. There's no limit to what you can do. You have all the world's potential within you.

ROBYN

Okay, I need to find my phone, and I need to get ready for work, so--

Kate jumps up, starts pacing like she's delivering an increasingly manic argument before a judge.

KATE

You want to help people, don't you? Not everyone's as lucky as you are. Not everyone has opportunities. Look at you, you're gorgeous. And I mean, this couch. Peru. I mean, my god. You can have everything you want, and you can let other people have what they want too. If that isn't privilege, I don't know what is. Cake, you can have your cake. You can eat your cake. You can have your cake. You can eat your cake. But it's not cake, is it? It's life. It's--

ROBYN

Okay. You need to leave, or I'm going to call the police.

KATE

You're a boss babe. A hustler, babe. Beautiful and why shouldn't beauty take up space? Your mind's a galaxy, a system of stars. The Akashic library, containing everything we are--

ROBYN

Where the fuck is my phone? Did you take my fucking phone?

Kate stops, sits. She shoves her hands inside the hoodie, toying with Robyn's phone. Robyn stares at her. Silence.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Okay, let's... Let's talk about this, okay? Let's just... I'm going to get some water too, and then we'll talk about whatever you want to talk about.

Robyn disappears into the kitchen. Kate stands, rubs her hands on the fronts of her leggings, does a couple of calf raises. A drawer opens in the kitchen, a cabinet shuts - the sounds are too loud. The room feels like it's closing in. This has all gone too far. Kate makes a move for the door.

Just as she reaches for the door knob, there's a scream from behind. Kate spins around - Robyn is charging at her with a kitchen knife, its handle held in both fists.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
*Get out of my house, you fucking
 psycho!*

KATE
 I'm going. I'm going!

But Robyn is already almost on top of her. Kate grabs Robyn's wrists, trying to push the knife away. They tussle for a moment, back and forth, and then the knife plunges a bit too far forward, directly into Robyn's abdomen. Her eyes widen.

ROBYN
 What..? Why did you...?

Kate looks down at the blood soaking Robyn's T-shirt. At her own hands around Robyn's hands, wrapped around the knife.

KATE
 I didn't... I was trying to stop
 you--

ROBYN
 Help me. Call an ambulance. Use my
 phone. Please.

Kate gazes into Robyn's desperate eyes. She pulls Robyn's phone from the hoodie, looks at it. Looks at Robyn.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
 Help me. *Please*. You psycho, just
 call 911.

Kate slips the phone away. She pulls the knife from Robyn's abdomen. Robyn gasps, crumples to the floor. Kate holds onto the knife, her hands shaky. She hesitates for a second, then crouches down beside Robyn. She gently strokes her hair. Robyn stares at her with a terrified, glazed expression.

KATE
 You poor thing. I'm so sorry.

Kate raises the knife, lowers it. Again. Again. Again.

60

INT. ROBYN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

60

Kate sits on the floor beside Robyn's lifeless body, soaked in blood. She reaches over, gently places Robyn's phone back onto the side table. She reaches up, yanks out one of her own eyelashes. Winces. Another. Another. She blinks. Clarity. The room feels light, vast, peaceful.

65 **EXT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - DAY**

65

Chad stands outside Kate's car, parked at the curb. He leans into the open driver's side door. Kate sits inside, sticks the keys in, turns them. It starts, no problem.

 CHAD
Seems fine.

 KATE
Yeah. Weird. It just kept turning over this morning.

 CHAD
Old cars can be tricky sometimes.

 KATE
Yeah. Well. Thanks for everything.

 CHAD
Go home and get some rest.

He leans in, kisses her on the cheek, gently shuts the door, and taps the roof. She presses the accelerator. She's off.

66 **INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

66

A rerun of Baywatch plays at low volume on the TV. Kate marches in. Her dad, sitting in recliner but hunched over the side table, startles. He blunders, trying to cover up whatever it is he's doing.

Embarrassed, Kate starts to back out of the room.

But something shiny on the side table catches her eye. A pipe made from a light bulb. There's a small plastic baggy beside it, with something white inside.

 KATE
What... what is that?

 DAD
What is what?

Kate glares at him. He realizes there's no way out.

 DAD (CONT'D)
You know it's been years since I...

Kate clenches her fists, rocks on the balls of her feet.

KATE

You spent the money I gave you for groceries, didn't you?

DAD

The anniversary of your mom's... I just thought--

KATE

You thought what?

He's got nothing. He picks up the pipe, peers into it like it's a crystal ball.

KATE (CONT'D)

Do you think you're healthy enough to be taking these kinds of risks?

Still nothing.

KATE (CONT'D)

Honestly. Medically. Do you feel like you're just in tip-top shape and there's no chance that anything might go wrong? Or is that it? You don't care what happens to you? And by extension, what happens to me?

DAD

I just... I'm...

KATE

I am trying so fucking hard here. I am killing myself. For you. So you'll be okay. ...What happens when I leave? What then?

DAD

I'm... I'll...

KATE

Does the job you're applying for drug test applicants, Dad?

He has no answer. He sets the pipe back on the table, grabs his pack of cigarettes, taps it in his palm.

KATE (CONT'D)

Fuck this. I'm going to bed.

She leaves. He pulls out a cigarette, lights up, takes a deep drag, coughs on the smoke. He reaches for the remote and changes the channel to Fox News.

67 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

67

Kate sits at her laptop, on the Columbia forum. No new posts.

Kate's stomach gurgles. She opens a desk drawer, removes a chocolate bar. She unwraps it, takes a single bite. She chews slowly, deliberately, as she logs into her fake Facebook profile and deactivates the account.

Satisfied, she places the rest of the chocolate bar back into the drawer, slides it shut.

68 **INT. SUBWAY OFFICE - DAY**

68

Kate raps on the half-shut office door and lets herself in. Leo sits at a desk, inventory sheets spread out before him.

KATE

Hey Leo, can I talk to you for a sec?

LEO

What's up?

He's half-listening, not bothering to look up from his work.

KATE

I was wondering if I could start taking on a couple more shifts.

LEO

You wanna work more?

KATE

Well, it's not cheap, you know, going to one of the best law schools in the country. I really need to boost my savings.

He keys some numbers into his calculator.

KATE (CONT'D)

Earth to Leo?

He finally looks up, leans back in his chair.

LEO

I'm afraid not. It's not really my decision to make anyway. It's corporate.

Kate awaits further explanation. He sighs and continues.

LEO (CONT'D)

If I give you more than 30 hours,
they have to give you benefits.
Health insurance, PTO, all that.
I'm the only one here who's a full-
time employee.

KATE

But doesn't Mitch work more than 30
hours a week?

Leo lifts his pencil, bored with this conversation.

LEO

Sometimes, but it's not a regular
thing, and then we still have to
cook the books a bit, move things
around so that his overall average
is below 30. It's complicated.

KATE

But can't you do the same for me? I
mean, it'd only be for a few more
weeks anyway, and then I'm gone.
And I'm happy to do whatever you
need. I mean, I could deep clean
the whole place or help you with
the accounting or--

The door dings, interrupting her argument.

LEO

Can you get that?

KATE

You can't just write me off like
this. I'm trying to help you.

There's sound from around the corner - the customer shuffling
their shoes, clearing their throat.

LEO

Look, if you want to continue
having a job here, I suggest you
continue doing your job.

Leo stares daggers at her. Kate clenches her fists, take a
deep breath, and storms off. As she rounds the corner, she
calls to the customer with exaggerated-to-the-point-of-
terrifying enthusiasm.

KATE (O.S.)

Why, hello there! Welcome to
Subway! How on earth may I serve
you today?!

69

INT. STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT

69

A chain steakhouse. A basket of shiny rolls, a red-and-white checkered table cloth. Chad is at ease - this is his kind of joint.

KATE

It's just so frustrating. And like, ethically problematic. There's this huge percentage of the under-class of America that is working in these shitty jobs and being abused by employers, and yet unions are these socialist things that we should never, ever talk about, much less enact--

Chad picks up a roll, tears off a chunk.

CHAD

Ah, cheat day, sweet day!

She stares at him, mouth agape.

KATE

Okay, what? I was literally in the middle of a sentence...

CHAD

I just think - and this is something my mentor told me - it's a problem to just have problems. Problems are meant to be solved.

Chad pushes the basket of rolls at her. Kate shakes her head, leans away, crosses her arms over her chest.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Look, I know it's hard to believe looking at me now, but not too long ago, I was living month-to-month too. My mom, before her Alzheimer's got bad, she was coming over, dropping off groceries because I couldn't afford them.

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

Most days, I was eating a dozen boiled eggs because that was the cheapest source of protein available. Two bucks, wham, bam, thank you ma'am.

The waiter brings their food: a salad for Kate and a steak and a baked potato for Chad.

KATE

That's kind of disgusting.

Chad cuts into his steak, shoves a bite into his mouth, continues talking as he chews.

CHAD

It wasn't a good look - or smell. But then a buddy of mine suggested The Powder, becoming my own boss. I took him up on it because what did I have to lose? By month three, I was making bank. Two years in, my car's paid off, I eat like a king, and I'm halfway to that Vegas trip. All I'm saying is--

KATE

Yeah, I really don't think hawking protein powder is for me, so--

CHAD

Nothing's for you unless you take it.

Kate pushes a piece of lettuce around her plate.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I could be your mentor.

To stifle her laughter, Kate raises a forkful of lettuce to her mouth, stuffs it in. She chews, swallows.

KATE

I honestly couldn't even afford all the start-up fees right now, so.

CHAD

No, it's cool. I'll front you, and then you can get me back once you're rolling in it.

KATE

Chad, I don't think--

CHAD

This is how much I believe in you.
You can resist all you want, but
I'm not going to take no for an
answer.

He shoves another piece of steak into his mouth, relishes it.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Mmm, yeah. This is the life, baby.
This is the life!

70

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

70

Kate, holding a plastic tub of The Powder, poses for a timed photo on her phone. As soon as it clicks, her fake smile falls, and she snatches the phone from its makeshift tripod: a rusty refrigerator turned on its side.

On her phone, she crops the photo, adds a filter, and posts it to Instagram. Hey, it almost looks like she's somewhere beautiful, a vast green field behind her, instead of a rundown trailer in a yard full of broken-down machinery.

A notification. One new comment: 'You should eat a sandwich.'

Kate lowers her phone, kicks over the protein powder tub, and retreats inside.

71

INT. KATE'S KITCHEN - DAY

71

Kate's dad stands, flipping through a stack of white envelopes with words like 'OVERDUE' and 'FOR IMMEDIATE ATTN.' printed on the outside. He looks up as Kate enters.

DAD

Hey, sweetie. Glad I caught you. My
tank's down on E again, and I'm
running kinda low on smokes...

Kate ignores him, heads straight for the sink, pours herself a glass of water.

DAD (CONT'D)

So if I could possibly get a small
loan...

Kate takes a gulp of the water, looks her dad dead in the eye, and walks out.

72

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - DAY

72

Kate sits at her desk, looking at an Oklahoma local news website on her laptop. She clicks a headline: *Boyfriend arrested in connection with woman's murder*. There's a picture of Robyn and a mugshot of Robyn's boyfriend.

She exits the tabs. Checks her email. No new messages.

She goes onto the law school forum. And voila, there's one new post: 'Wait Listed No More!' The author writes that she just got the call.

Unbelievable. Kate clicks the poster's profile. With just a few key pieces of information entered into Google, she's able to ascertain the poster's identity: Christina from Shreveport, Louisiana. An IRS office clerk by day and freaky-sex-haver by night (her OKCupid profile implies as much). In her profile, she also writes: *I want to be a lawyer so I can help people*.

As Kate clicks through Christina's photos, she reaches under her desk and draws the protein powder tub into her lap. She unscrews the lid, licks her finger, and dips it in. She draws her finger back to her mouth and sucks on it, thinking.

73

INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

73

Kate and Chad sit up in bed, watching a documentary about Palestine on Netflix. Rubble, explosions, tearful women - to Kate, this is riveting stuff, but Chad struggles to pay attention. He clears his throat.

CHAD

How're the sales going?

KATE

Okay.

CHAD

Okay?

Chad grabs the remote and hits pause.

KATE

Slow.

He picks up his phone.

CHAD

Okay. It's time for a HA then. An honest assessment. Alright, so--

He holds his phone so she can see her Instagram profile. All five of the photos are of her looking toned and perfect and smiley, posing with the tub of protein powder.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Honestly, you look like a hostage. As my mentor always said: to be a successful influencer, you've gotta share all aspects of your life. The good and the bad. The party days and the struggle days.

KATE

Can we just watch the movie?

Kate tries to grab the remote, but Chad won't let go.

CHAD

You're not selling a product, Kate, you're selling a lifestyle. And life is made of ups and downs.

Kate, desperate to stop this conversation, reaches under the blanket and fondles Chad.

KATE

Ups and the downs, huh?

Chad pouts.

CHAD

I'm being serious.

But he can't continue being 'serious'. Not when she's touching him like this. At last he relents, kicks back, lets her have at it.

74

INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - NIGHT

74

Chad snores in bed. Kate paces from the living room to the kitchen and back again. She pauses for a moment, then removes Chad's keys from the hook, clasps them tightly so they won't jingle, and places them in her bag.

She returns to the kitchen. She rummages around under the sink, removes a few black trash bags, adds them to her bag.

She rises, pauses. Takes a breath. Gently slides open a kitchen drawer, stares at the knives. Her hand trembling, she picks one up, peers at her own distorted reflection in the blade. She puts it back. She breathes in, steadies her hand. Picks it up again. Wraps it in some paper towels, slides it into her bag, and zips it all up.

75 INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

75

Kate throws on Chad's hoodie, leans over the bed, gently jostles his shoulder, whispers.

KATE

Can I borrow your car?

He stirs.

CHAD

What? ...What time is it?

KATE

It's just... Ever since my mom passed, I've had bad insomnia. Driving sometimes helps me relax. But my car's so unreliable.

CHAD

You're not gonna fall asleep at the wheel, are you?

KATE

No.

CHAD

...I'd never forgive myself.

Kate sits down on the edge of the bed, snuffles.

KATE

I've never told anyone this before. About the insomnia. I try to... you know... stay strong. But you're showing me that it's okay to be more vulnerable. What you said earlier, about the ups and downs...

He's moved. He reaches out, wraps his huge arms around her.

CHAD

Go.

He shuts his eyes and loosens his grip. She gets up and grabs the keys. Just before she reaches the door, Chad calls out.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Babe?

She stops.

CHAD (CONT'D)

...You look really cute in my clothes.

76 INT. CHAD'S CAR - NIGHT 76

Kate driving, the road mostly empty. A shiny green 'Bienvenue en Louisiana' sign through the windshield.

77 EXT. LOUISIANA GAS STATION - NIGHT 77

Kate exits a gas station's convenience store carrying a poncho and a pair of gloves. The Mustang beeps as she unlocks it with the remote key.

78 EXT. LOUISIANA HOUSE - DAY 78

Early morning. The Mustang, lights off, engine off, parked at the curb a little ways down from a small white house. There's a sign stuck in the overgrown lawn: *An Amnesty International Supporter Lives Here!*

CHRISTINA (30), dressed in an ill-fitting pant suit, lumbers from the house and toward the junky Ford Fiesta in the driveway - there are Co-Exist and Equal Rights sticks on the bumper. She sets her travel mug of coffee on top of the car while she gets in, but forgets to grab it.

As she backs out, the mug falls off the car and cracks onto the drive, leaking dark liquid onto the concrete. Christina doesn't notice.

79 EXT. LOUISIANA HIGHWAY - DAY 79

Hazy, as if in a dream. Roadside. The Mustang stops. The driver's side door opens. Kate, gloved and poncho'ed, falls out, pretending to seize.

The Ford Fiesta pulls over, its door pops open, and out comes Christina, running clumsily towards Kate. Christina whips out her cellphone, ready to make a call.

CHRISTINA

Hey! Are you okay? Don't worry! I'm gonna call 911!

Christine nears and Kate jumps up and grabs her, sending the phone skittering across the road's shoulder.

Its screen cracks on the asphalt as Kate plunges the knife into Christina's chest.

80 **EXT. WALMART - DAY** 80

In some small town in Louisiana, Kate disposes of a trash bag in a dumpster. She looks around, but no one pays her any mind. She's just another small, harmless girl in a world full of them. She whistles a tune as she gets back in the car.

81 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - CONTINUOUS** 81

Kate searches *how to turn back odometer* on her phone. She clicks on the first result, a YouTube video. As it plays, she reaches up and yanks out an eyelash. She blows it off her fingertip, making a wish.

82 **INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - DAY** 82

Mid-morning light streams through the shades. It's quiet, save for a rhythmic whoosh-whoosh. Kate drops her bag, looks around, and spots Chad through the murky glass - he's out on the small patio, jump-roping. She slides open the back door.

KATE

Morning. Gonna go shower.

Chad gives her a nod. He whispers numbers to himself under his breath, counting his jumps.

83 **INT. SHOWER - DAY** 83

Kate, whistling happily to herself, stands naked, holding the knife under the shower head. She squeezes some of Chad's Axe shower gel onto it, rubs it in.

Under her feet, the water runs red, and then pink.

Her smile fades; the panic, the reality, sets in. She drops the knife - it barely misses her toes - and jumps out of the shower, the water still running. She grabs the anti-bac hand soap at the sink and pumps it out, rubbing it all over her body, scrubbing and crying and counting to herself under her breath.

KATE

One, two, three. One, two, three...

84 **INT. SUBWAY - DAY**

84

Smooth jazz plays softly from the speakers. Kate leans against the sandwich counter, performing calf raises. Leo scuttles out from the back room, carrying a black prep container of tomato slices. He bumps Kate out of the way.

LEO

New schedule's up.

He replaces the old tomatoes with his fresh container, and starts tidying the already-tidy vegetable bar.

85 **INT. SUBWAY BACK ROOM - DAY**

85

Kate stands in front of the printed schedule. Her name is only down for one shift. The door dings.

86 **INT. SUBWAY - CONTINUOUS**

86

Kate stomps out to the front, where Leo, wearing a hammy smile, is already helping the customer.

KATE

You cut my hours?

LEO

Not now.

He turns his attention back to the customer.

LEO (CONT'D)

Would you like to make that a meal deal for just a dollar more?

Kate cracks her knuckles. Smooths her shirt. Bites her lip.

KATE

Yes now. *Now.*

Leo shoots the customer his most apologetic expression. He mutters to Kate.

LEO

Let me finish, and then we'll talk.

87 **INT. SUBWAY BACK ROOM - DAY**

87

Leo leans against the stainless steel prep table.

KATE

I don't understand. I told you... I told you I need the money.

LEO

It's nothing personal.

KATE

Yeah, clearly. Nothing's personal to you because you're just another pathetic white man who gets the tiniest taste of power and uses it to abuse and bully everyone in his path to make himself feel like less of a fucking loser.

He's not at all fazed, as if he deals with this kind of disgruntled outburst all the time. As if he enjoys it.

LEO

You should calm down.

KATE

Oh, should I? You know, there are people in this world who actually want to help other people. Did you know that? Not everyone's a sociopath like you.

Leo smirks.

KATE (CONT'D)

Do you actually find this fulfilling? Bossing people around?

LEO

More fulfilling than what you do.

KATE

What's that supposed to mean?

LEO

All I'm saying is that I'd rather be the boss than the one getting bossed.

Kate clenches her fist, fights off angry tears.

KATE

Yeah, okay, I don't need this. I'm better than this.

LEO
 Whatever. Keep telling yourself
 that.

The door dings. Leo picks up a rag and a spray bottle and starts wiping down the already-clean prep table.

LEO (CONT'D)
 Maybe you should start looking for
 a second job if you're so hard up.
 I hear McDonald's is hiring.

He continues spraying and wiping. From the front of the store, the customer squeaks his shoes against the floor and loudly clears his throat. Leo gestures for Kate to go serve him.

Kate squares her shoulders, takes off her visor.

LEO (CONT'D)
 Oh, come on. You're not actually
 going to quit, are you?

Kate doesn't back down.

LEO (CONT'D)
 Look, I'll see what I can do about
 next week, okay? Maybe you can make
 up the hours then.

KATE
 Maybe?

Another phlegmy throat clearing sound.

LEO
 Not maybe. You can make up the
 hours then. I promise.

Kate sighs, puts on her visor, goes to serve the customer.

88 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

88

Kate slumps at her computer, refreshing the law school forum over and over, but no new posts. She refreshes her email - nothing there either.

Kate's dad knocks softly, opens the door.

DAD
 There's a 60 Minutes on about
 modern slavery.

KATE
Modern slavery where?

DAD
Africa. Where else?

KATE
Jesus, Dad. You can't say things
like that.

DAD
I can say whatever I like in my
house, can't I? The libs can't take
that away.

Kate has no response. She shuts her laptop and gets up.

89 **INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY**

89

The 60 Minutes episode concludes. Her dad mutes the TV.

DAD
So. I got the maintenance gig.

Kate stares at the TV. A local news show comes on. A report about the 'Columbia Murders.' The media have connected the two cases. Photos of Robyn and Christina. These photos are close-ups, both girls looking sweet, innocent, almost pretty.

Her dad follows Kate's wide-eyed gaze back to the TV and does a double-take.

DAD (CONT'D)
Oh, hell.

He unmutes it, but it's only the very tail end, the reporter signing off. He mutes it again and turns to her.

DAD (CONT'D)
Kate--

She interrupts.

KATE
I know, I know. But don't be
ridiculous. It's just fear-
mongering.

DAD
This is serious.

KATE

It's the media wanting you to worry about your daughters and your wives. Keep them inside. Keep them from reaching their full potential because of *safety*.

He considers this. He picks up his pack of cigarettes, taps it against his palm.

DAD

Well, either way. How about you start carrying one of my guns? Bring it with you in the car, lock it up in the trunk if you gotta go in somewhere.

He sticks a cigarette in his mouth, struggles to get the lighter to work, starts muttering under his breath.

DAD (CONT'D)

Got half a mind to go out there and find the killer myself...

The lighter is just click, click, clicking. No flame. Kate stands up, annoyed.

KATE

It's out of fluid.

He tosses it down on the table.

DAD

We got any matches?

KATE

Who knows what we've got, Dad. Look around.

She gestures at the pipe and the now-empty plastic bag he's left out on a shelf next to her mother's urn. Ashamed, he sinks down in his chair. Silence. He tries the lighter again. Click. Click.

90

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

90

Kate stands behind the sandwich counter, performing alternating bicep curls with two cans of diet soda. Out the glass front, she watches Chad's Mustang pull up. Kate shoves the cans back into the display fridge, smooths her hair.

Ding - Chad struts inside. Leo pokes his head around the corner, gives Kate an 'I'm watching you' look.

KATE

Welcome to Subway. How can I serve you today?

CHAD

Hey.

She tries again, louder and more enthusiastically.

KATE

Welcome to Subway! How can I serve you today? ...Perhaps a Philly Cheesesteak sub would do the trick?

CHAD

Oh. Um. No, I've already maxed out my carbs for the day. I'll just do three chicken breasts.

Kate takes out a plastic salad container and plops the sad, beige breasts inside.

KATE

Any vegetables? Sauce?

CHAD

No, just like that's cool.

Leo emerges, smooth, naturally, as though he hasn't been lurking this entire time.

LEO

Afternoon, sir. How're you doing?

CHAD

...Oh, Kate's my girlfriend, so I'm not, like, a real customer.

LEO

Kate never mentioned she had a boyfriend.

Chad extends his arm over the sneeze-guard for a handshake. Leo limply shakes back - he's intimidated.

CHAD

Good to meet you, man.

LEO

Oh, okay.

Then, to Kate he softly adds:

LEO (CONT'D)

No discount for non-family members.

Kate moves to the register to ring him up. Leo hovers, watches her searching the buttons, and then butts in.

LEO (CONT'D)

You've gotta charge him full price for three chicken breast sandwiches. You can't ring up individual items individually, if that makes sense.

Kate follows his nonsensical instructions.

KATE

Okay. So, that'll be \$19.42.

CHAD

Oh, jeez. Okay.

Chad pulls out his wallet. Kate watches over his shoulder as outside, a red Mustang pulls up and parks next to Chad's blue one. A sporty blonde, MOLLY (25), gets out, comes in, and approaches the counter.

91 **INT. SUBWAY BACK ROOM - DAY** 91

Kate watches the dining area from the security monitor. Molly sits. Chad smiles at her. He stands, picks up his container of breasts, and joins Molly at her table.

92 **INT. SUBWAY - DAY** 92

Kate busies herself at the sandwich counter, very slowly refilling a tub of olives, all a front for eavesdropping.

CHAD

And that's when I realized, this stuff is for real. It builds strength, sure, but more importantly, it builds confidence.

Molly smiles a big, chemically-whitened smile.

MOLLY

That's so cool. Confidence is, like, such a turn-on.

She laughs, touching his arm. Chad leans into her touch, catches himself, glances over to the counter. Spotting Kate, he jerks away from Molly, and gives Kate a reassuring nod.

CHAD

Well, Ms. Molly, it was great meeting you. I've got your details here, so we'll definitely be in touch.

Grinning victoriously, Chad heads for the counter. He comes around the register, ignoring the 'Employees Only' sign.

KATE

You're not supposed to be back here.

CHAD

I'm feeling rebellious today.

He plants a wet kiss on Kate's cheek.

CHAD (CONT'D)

See ya after your shift.

Kate watches him walk out to his car. Molly's out there already, taking entirely too long to get in. Chad says something to her, and she bounces around to the back of his car. He pops open the trunk, digs, and then hands her a sample of The Powder.

A shadow. Kate jolts.

LEO

Just so you know, public displays of affection while in uniform are strictly forbidden.

Kate rolls her eyes as Leo walks away. She turns her attention back out the window, to the two Mustangs, now driving off in opposite directions.

93

INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - NIGHT

93

Chad does pull-ups on a bar in the door frame. Kate, wearing his hoodie, sits cross-legged on the sofa. Chad's arms quiver, and he's all out of breath, but he's exhilarated.

CHAD

See, that's how you lock down a sale! Charm and honesty. We're gonna build a dynasty together, babe. A dynasty!

Half-listening, Kate scrolls through her phone. She clicks on a news story: *'The previous suspect, the victim's boyfriend, has been released from police custody...'*

The two women share an interesting connection to Columbia Law School but the motive remains unclear...'

CHAD (CONT'D)

She added me on the 'gram already, so I think she's definitely game. Her pics are really good. You should check them out for inspo. There's this one of her where she's doing squats and she wrote this really honest caption about her struggles with her thigh gap and perfectionism.

Kate sneers, but Chad, chatting away, doesn't notice. He leaps down, disappears into the kitchen, and then reemerges.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Hey babe?

KATE

Yeah.

CHAD

I actually don't have all the ingredients for the low-carb cauliflower pizza.

KATE

I'll go to the store.

CHAD

No, I don't mind. You relax.

Chad grabs his keys. Kate jumps up.

KATE

Actually, I need to get tampons.

CHAD

Oh... Shit.

Embarrassed, he tosses the keys to her. She takes off the hoodie and ties it around her waist.

94

INT. WALMART - DAY

94

Kate approaches the checkout with a hand basket full of the cauliflower pizza ingredients and a box of tampons, as well as gloves, a poncho, and a knife. The female CASHIER (20s) rings up and bags her items.

CASHIER
Ooh, somebody's a messy cook.

Kate shrugs.

KATE
I have a heavy flow.

The cashier pulls a face as she bags the tampons. Kate forks over the cash.

CASHIER
Hey, don't I know you from somewhere?

KATE
I get that a lot. Just one of those faces, I guess.

The cashier gives her the change.

CASHIER
No, no, I definitely do. Were you in Mr. Tompkins's Calculus class? Class of 2012? I sat next to you, you always copied off my--

Kate snatches the bags away. She stomps off.

CASHIER (CONT'D)
Hey, your receipt!

95 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY**

95

Kate sits in the Walmart parking lot. She turns on the radio; it's a female SCIENTIST (40s) talking about bees.

SCIENTIST (V.O.)
The thing is, most people think, oh, this isn't something I need to think about right now.

On her phone, Kate finds Molly's Instagram account, flicks through her feed. She stops on a photo of Molly with her 'Work Family', the employees of a real estate agency. One of the men, a handsome realtor, has his arm around her. No one else has their arms around anyone.

SCIENTIST (V.O.)
But it matters. Bees matter.

Kate Googles the agency, clicks the agent info page. She finds the guy's head shot. She Googles his name - turns out he's married (not to Molly) with three young kids.

SCIENTIST (V.O.)

And what we're finding is that the diesel emissions are creating catastrophic problems. They can't detect the floral odors when these contaminants are present. And so it's throwing them off course. Molly is a fucking bitch who deserves to die.

Kate jerks in her seat and shuts the radio off. She returns to Molly's Instagram. She clicks another photo, with the caption 'Loving my outdoor summertime space! #patio #summer' The photo contains a geo-tag of Molly's neighborhood, in the next town over.

Kate clicks the map and puts the car into drive.

96 **EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT**

96

Kate cruises through the neighborhood. She turns a corner and spots a red Mustang in the drive. She stops the car, pulls on the hoodie, puts up the hood, rummages around in the bag.

97 **EXT. MOLLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

97

Kate, wearing gloves and a poncho, charges up to the door and knocks. Molly answers.

KATE

Hey there, I'm Kate!

An awkward silence as Molly takes in this strange guest.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm... My boyfriend... I mean, we sell the protein powder? The Powder. You met my boyfriend at--

MOLLY

Oh, Subway. Yeah. Why are you wearing--

Kate talks over her.

KATE

I just thought I'd swing by with some samples. Let you try it out.

MOLLY
Your boyfriend already gave me one.

KATE
Well, one is never enough, is it?
For some people.

Molly crosses her arms over her chest.

MOLLY
Oh. Look, I'm sorry if you thought
I was... I mean, he's hot, I get
it, but...

KATE
But what?

MOLLY
I'm pretty sure *he* was flirting
with *me*.

Trailing off, Molly, looking increasingly uneasy, studies
Kate's face.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
How'd you know where I live?

KATE
Small town. Towns.

MOLLY
Okay. Well, I consider my home a
safe space, and this situation is
making me extremely uncomfortable.
You don't have to worry, okay? I
get it. He's taken.

Kate peers over her shoulder and into the house.

KATE
Is there anyone else here? I mean,
anyone who might like a sample?
Maybe your boss? Is he here? Or is
he at home with his wife?

Molly, completely freaked out now, starts to shut the door.

KATE (CONT'D)
You're a contaminant. You're going
to ruin everything...

Kate wedges her foot into the doorway. Molly, dumbfounded and
on the brink of tears, looks down at it.

MOLLY
What are you talking about?

98 INT. MOLLY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

98

Kate plows the door open with her shoulder, and shoves Molly inside and up against the wall.

They struggle. Kate lunges for her neck, but Molly pushes her off before she can get a proper grip. Kate flies backwards, catches her balance, and lunges again. This time, Kate reaches inside the poncho for the knife.

She raises it. Molly freezes, stunned. But at the very last second, Kate stops herself. This is stupid. This is not part of the plan. She breathes.

KATE
One, two, three...

Molly remains frozen in place, terrified.

KATE (CONT'D)
One, two, three...

Eerily calm now, Kate reaches out, gently tucks a piece of hair behind Molly's ear.

KATE (CONT'D)
You want more. I get it. People don't like it when women want more.

Molly trembles, whimpers.

KATE (CONT'D)
But don't ever, ever come near my boyfriend again. And if you ever speak a word of this to anyone... Let's just say, no one ever believes a home-wrecking slut, do they?

Molly whimpers.

MOLLY
I won't. I promise.

99 EXT. CHAD'S CAR - NIGHT

99

Kate, pops some gum into her mouth and looks at her phone. A text message from Chad: 'u ok??' She texts back: *pit stop at gym, be back in a few.*

Kate starts the car and drives in silence, save for the popping of her gum.

100 **INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - NIGHT**

100

Kate unpacks the groceries, making a big show of being chipper, but Chad is tense and brooding, methodically chopping an onion.

KATE

The cauliflower wasn't very big so I got two. I figure we can use whatever's left for cauliflower rice or something.

Chad doesn't say anything.

KATE (CONT'D)

Earth to Chad? Hello?

He doesn't answer. Kate goes and wraps her arms around him from behind.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hey, what's wrong?

CHAD

You were gone a long time.

KATE

Yeah. I told you. I was at the gym.

His chopping speed quickens.

CHAD

I'm just going to finish this, if you don't mind.

Kate backs off, leaves him to his chopping. She sighs, wipes her stinging eyes, and heads for the sofa.

101 **INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - NIGHT (LATER)**

101

The pair sit at Chad's dinky IKEA table. Kate, looking pale, has hardly touched her cauliflower pizza.

CHAD

Is there something wrong with it?

KATE

I'm just not that hungry.

CHAD

Mm. Of course you're not.

KATE

People are allowed to not be hungry.

CHAD

Or is it that you have a problem? I'm not judging you, but if you have a... *problem*... you should get help. I can help you get help.

KATE

I don't have a 'problem'. See?

With flourish, Kate cuts off a big piece, stabs it with her fork, and shoves it into her mouth. Chad looks away, unimpressed, not convinced.

CHAD

Kate. Where did you really go? After the store?

KATE

What?

CHAD

Eric was at the gym all afternoon. He said he didn't see you there.

KATE

What is this, the KGB?

Chad stares at her.

KATE (CONT'D)

I was in a class. Pilates.

CHAD

There's no Pilates on Saturday.

With her fork, Kate cuts her remaining pizza into neat little squares. She steadies her voice.

KATE

It was a trial, this friend of mine, she wants to start teaching but she hasn't finished her certification yet, so she asked to just borrow a room. It was an under-the-radar, practice-y kind of deal.

CHAD
What's your friend's name?

KATE
Helena.

Chad stares at her in disbelief.

CHAD
Why are you lying?

KATE
I'm not lying.

CHAD
This is... Look, I know what's
really going on, Kate.

Kate tenses, holds her breath.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I thought... I thought you said we
could be long-distance when you go.
But the idea of you going is kind
of... If you're not in this... I
mean, if you're already seeing
someone else... If this doesn't
mean anything to you, just say it.

KATE
What?

CHAD
I'd rather know now so my heart
won't get totally shattered later.

KATE
I'm not seeing anyone else.

There's a long pause as Chad scans Kate's face, searching for
any sign, any hint of dishonesty.

Finally, he exhales.

CHAD
Okay. I'm going to choose to
believe you. Please don't make a
fool of me.

Kate nods, not breaking eye contact.

KATE
I do need to tell you something
though.

Chad sets his fork down.

KATE (CONT'D)
I didn't get into Columbia.

He is stunned. He opens his mouth, but no words come out.

KATE (CONT'D)
I was wait-listed. And when that happens, there's very little chance of moving up. Unless... Well, this is morbid, but unless somebody dies or something. But I just didn't know how to deal, and I can't stand my life here, this stupid job, everyone who knows me. Knew me. So I lied to my dad. And to you. And everyone. ...I just thought maybe if I said it enough times, it would come true. I know that's stupid.

CHAD
Wow.

KATE
Yeah. I fucked up.

CHAD
I... Well, I understand why you did it.

Kate shrugs.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Columbia is the same school those girls got murdered from, right? In the news?

KATE
Yeah.

CHAD
Might be a good thing you didn't get in then.

Kate nods, tries to look like she's actually considering this - that not getting in might have been a good thing.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Kate, I really care about you. I think you should come clean to your dad, reapply to law school next year, see a therapist, all of that.
(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

Get your ducks in a row. And I know you're ashamed of your house--

KATE

I'm not ashamed--

He talks right over her.

CHAD

So, I was thinking maybe you move in here with me. It's closer to town, and you can borrow my car whenever you need. I'd keep paying rent so it wouldn't be any financial strain on you at all. Let me take care of you.

He pauses to let his offer sink in.

CHAD (CONT'D)

And hey, if you're not leaving, that means maybe you can come to Vegas. I could pay for your flight.

KATE

I don't know.

CHAD

I mean, you could pay for it, and you could pay some rent too if you wanted, if it'd make you feel better. Even just some token amount. But tell me you'll think about it.

KATE

Fine. I'll think about it.

Chad, unburdened now, pushes his plate away - he hasn't eaten much either.

CHAD

This is nasty. Do you wanna just order a real pizza from Dominos?

Kate nods.

102

INT. CHAD'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

102

Kate stands at the sink, holding her phone, doing calf raises, counting to herself.

KATE

One, two, three. One, two, three.

She runs a Google search: 'calories Dominoes pizza slice'.
Answer: 300. There's a knock at the door.

CHAD (O.S.)

Everything okay in there?

She runs another search: *calories hot yoga 1 hour class*.
Another knock.

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

Kate? Pizza's here. Kate?

She opens the door and jolts - he's right there, a looming figure, the pizza box balanced on one palm, grinning like the Cheshire cat. He wraps his free arm around her and guides her out of the bathroom.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I'm so happy. I'm so happy you're sticking around.

103

INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

103

Kate sweaty and on a mat, surrounded by other sweaty women on mats. A new age music track plays from a Bluetooth speaker. At the front of the room, a goddess-y, middle-aged TEACHER (50s) waxes philosophical.

TEACHER

Let's circle back to our intention.
Remember, let's hold on to what serves us and let go of what doesn't. Shed what we don't need. Shed it like a snake shedding its skin.

In downward facing dog, Kate wobbles and falls over. She blacks out. In the abyss, she hears voices.

STUDENT (O.S.)

She's probably faking it. She pulled this kind of thing in high school all the time.

ANOTHER STUDENT (O.S.)

Yeah, it's an attention thing, for sure.

STUDENT (O.S.)

Can't do things on her own, so she has to cheat and scam her way to the top.

ANOTHER STUDENT (O.S.)

I heard she's, like, a serial killer, but it's like, she can't even keep her calories balanced. She's a disgusting slob with no self-control. I heard she binged on Dominoes, literally six slices in one night, so how's she gonna get away with mur--

Kate blinks, opening her eyes, coming back to herself. The teacher crouches over her, snapping her fingers.

The other students are whispering and looking annoyed. Or maybe concerned. No, definitely annoyed. The teacher offers her hand to Kate, and Kate takes it, pulls herself up, and stumbles out of the room.

104

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

104

Kate, still in her yoga clothes, sits on a bench, her phone pressed to her ear.

KATE

Yeah, I can't come in. I'm sick.

LEO (V.O.)

Can't you just pull it together for a few hours? We're gonna get slammed at lunch.

KATE

I passed out.

There's silence.

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm vomiting blood, Leo. And not just vomit. It's coming out both ends.

A woman, some NOSY NELLY wrapped in a towel, ceases rummaging noisily through her locker and turns to steal a look at Kate. Kate scowls at the Nosy Nelly, who immediately looks away.

LEO (V.O.)

I can't get anyone else to cover at such short notice.

KATE
I'm sorry. I can't.

LEO (V.O.)
Come on. Don't do this to me, Kate.
I gave you the extra shifts. Don't
do this--

Kate hangs up. The woman slams her locker shut and butts in.

NOSY NELLY
I couldn't help overhearing, and
you know, you should probably go to
the hospital--

Kate grabs her bag and leaves.

105 **INT. KATE'S CAR - DAY** 105

Blinker ticking, Kate turns the corner onto Chad's street.

106 **EXT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - CONTINUOUS** 106

A cop car sits parallel-parked out front.

107 **INT. KATE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS** 107

Kate focuses on her breathing, counting under her breath.

KATE
One, two, three...

She slows down, looks at the car, bites her lip, faces
forward, hits the gas.

Down the street, she hits the brakes. She pulls a U-turn.

108 **EXT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - DAY** 108

Kate parks behind the cop car, cuts her engine. She gets out
and marches up to the front door.

109 **INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - DAY** 109

Two uniformed good-ol-boy police officers, MCDUGAL (30s) and
SALAMANCA (30s) sit, completely at ease, at the table. There
are some sample packets of protein powder on the tabletop.

Chad kicks back on the couch, and Kate, hands folded in lap, sits stick-straight beside him.

MCDUGAL

Tell you what, that year we went to State semi-finals, Chad here couldn't even tackle a 140-pound running-back named Ashley!

SALAMANCA

Sissy-boy name if I ever heard one. Ashley too.

McDougal hoots.

MCDUGAL

To be honest, we all thought Chad would grow up to be some kind of interior decorator or hair stylist, if you catch my drift. Now we're supposed to come round, checkin' he ain't a cold-blooded killer.

They both laugh, and Chad grins sheepishly, acting like he's in on the joke instead of a grown man being bullied in his own home. Still smiling, Chad turns to Kate to explain.

CHAD

It's to do with those girls from Columbia...

MCDUGAL

Not the country. That's what we thought at first, that we'd be going after some bad hombre pickin' off Spanish chicks. Columbia's some college, who knew?

Chad starts to interject.

CHAD

Actually, Kate here--

But Salamanca talks right over him.

SALAMANCA

Only college McDougal knows is A&M. Biggest Aggies fan who never set foot in a classroom there!

MCDUGAL

You bet your ass I am.

SALAMANCA

Anyways, it's likely nothing to do with Columbia, just a coincidence. Point is, guy who's doing it has a Mustang. Blue or purple or something. State sent us on a mission. Supposed to go round, checkin' out anyone with a car matching that description.

Salamanca studies Kate, unnerving her. At last, he breaks his gaze and looks at Chad, giving him a not-so-subtle nod of approval.

SALAMANCA (CONT'D)

How long you two been a thing?

Chad puts his arm around Kate, pulls her in, and kisses her on the cheek.

CHAD

A little over a month?

KATE

Three weeks.

SALAMANCA

Well, when you know, you know.

MCDUGAL

Ya done good, the both of ya.

A crackle on the radio, a static-y voice calling for back-up.

SALAMANCA

We best get going.

He holds up the protein powder samples.

SALAMANCA (CONT'D)

And thanks for these.

They see themselves out. Chad goes and locks the door.

KATE

Nice guys. Friends of yours?

CHAD

High school. They're assholes, but what can you do?

Kate stands up. She starts to black out again and steadies herself on the sofa's arm.

KATE

I think I'm gonna go lie down. I don't feel so well.

CHAD

Do you wanna eat something? Or I could make you a shake.

KATE

I'm not really hungry.

She fakes a big yawn.

KATE (CONT'D)

I just need some rest.

Dejected, Chad watches as she hobbles off, shutting the bedroom door behind her.

CHAD (PRE-LAP)

Kate?

110 INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - DAY

110

Kate, laying atop Chad's fully made bed, opens her eyes.

She rubs her face, disoriented. She sits up, and Chad hands her a protein shake, which she takes and sips tentatively.

CHAD

Post-nap snack always helps me avoid the crankies.

KATE

Thanks.

CHAD

So. Have you thought any more about what we talked about? Moving in here...

Kate clanks the glass down on the bedside table.

KATE

When have I had time?

He sits beside her, wraps his arm around her, nestles into her neck.

CHAD

I don't know. It's just... It'd be a good thing, a new chapter--

He nuzzles her neck, kissing it.

KATE

Stop it.

CHAD

What?

KATE

You're so pushy.

He pulls away.

CHAD

What? I'm trying to help you.

KATE

Yeah, you're always trying to
'help' me.

He's completely taken aback.

KATE (CONT'D)

Get my car towed, feed me, give me
rides, make me sell your stupid
protein powder. It doesn't matter
what I want, does it?

He looks wounded.

CHAD

Oh... What do you want?

She doesn't answer. Chad stands up, starts pacing, very
quickly works himself into a tizzy.

CHAD (CONT'D)

See, this is the thing. You're so
closed off. How the hell am I
supposed to know what you're
thinking? I just have to guess.

Kate's mouth remains clamped shut.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I've opened my home to you. I've
opened my heart. I want a future
with you, Kate. I can really see
that. But you...

KATE

This is just the way I am.

CHAD

The way you are? Look, if it's the
grief, I can help you work through
it.

(MORE)

CHAD (CONT'D)

My dad died when I was a kid, my mom's in a home, totally gone in the head, so I get it. I get how hard it is. I am here to help you.

He takes a moment to regain his composure.

CHAD (CONT'D)

By the way, have you gotten in touch with Molly yet? I think she's a sure sale... She'd be great for your downline.

Kate stares at Chad, saying nothing. Still looking him dead in the eye, she reaches over to the bedside table and swipes the glass over. It tumbles, splattering brown protein shake all over the beige rug.

CHAD (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you? Are you a child?

She stands up and walks out, making a point to step in the mess, tracking it across the room. Chad calls to her.

CHAD (CONT'D)

I hope you're getting a towel!

The front door slams shut.

111 **EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY**

111

Kate gets out of her car just as her father's truck pulls up. He hops out, wearing a big, confident grin. Kate glares at him.

DAD

Hey, sweetie.

She doesn't answer.

DAD (CONT'D)

How you holding up?

She ignores him and heads inside. But she can't shake him; he's right there beside her, keeping pace.

DAD (CONT'D)

I had a good day at work...

KATE

Good.

DAD

Yeah, it's good to feel needed, you know? The place is falling apart, but I'm gonna get it fixed up nice and new.

Kate sticks her keys in the front door.

DAD (CONT'D)

And I'm gonna start paying you back. Might not be before you leave, but I can always mail you checks or get the bank to do some kind of a transfer.

KATE

Cool.

112 **INT. KATE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

112

They step into the entry way and take off their shoes. Kate sets hers neatly on the rack. Her dad tosses his haphazardly on the floor, caked mud flaking off them.

DAD

It's got a lot of potential, this place... It's like, you remember that hotel where we stayed in Arizona when you were little? Your mom's cousin's wedding. We all drove out there, and you had that purple bridesmaid's dress--

KATE

I can't do this right now. I can't talk about Mom with you.

Kate leaves him standing there. He looks at the shoe rack, at her perfectly straight shoes, almost like he's noticing this difference for the first time.

After a moment, he picks up his own shoes, sets them neatly and squarely beside hers. He bends down again and tucks the laces inside.

113 **INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - DAY**

113

Kate opens her laptop and checks up on the internet forum. Another woman has been moved off the wait list. *Seriously?!*

No time to mess around. Kate finds all the necessary information (Name: CAMILA, Address: Houston). She picks up her phone and calls Chad.

KATE

Hey. I... I'm gonna come back over, okay? I'm... sorry. No, listen. I want to talk. In person.

She hangs up just as her dad knocks on the door.

DAD (O.S.)

Kate?

He opens the door a sliver, then all the way.

DAD (CONT'D)

I know you're busy now, but are you free tonight? I don't get paid til Friday, but if you'd front me, we could do the Chinese buffet? Beef and broccoli, your favorite...

Brazen, Kate doesn't minimize the browser, doesn't shut her laptop, doesn't turn around in her seat.

KATE

No. I already have plans.

He's genuinely disappointed, but he tries to hide it.

DAD

Oh... Do you maybe wanna go shooting then early tomorrow before we both go to work?

KATE

No. I really, really don't.

She stands up, grabs her keys, and pushes past him.

114 **EXT. ROAD - DAY**

114

A wide Texas sunset. Kate's clunker speeds down the deserted country road.

115 **EXT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - DAY**

115

Fading light. Kate parks out front, gets out, and strides towards Chad, who stands in the drive, arms crossed, leaning against his Mustang like he's James Dean.

KATE
Look, I'm sorry.

CHAD
Yeah.

KATE
I shouldn't have gotten mad. I know you're just trying to help me.

CHAD
Yep.

KATE
I should be grateful. I should be grateful that you're in my life, trying to make things better for me. And I'm sorry about your carpet. I'll pay to have it cleaned.

Chad soaks this in. Lost in thought, he gazes at the remains of the sunset, the magnificent orange and indigo hues. At last, he speaks.

CHAD
I hope this isn't weird to say, but this feels like a romantic movie. You rushing back here. The sunset. All of it.

Kate smiles weakly. Chad shrugs, clearly a bit disappointed she hasn't responded in the way he'd hoped, and heads toward the house. But then he stops on the doorstep, spins around.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Aren't you coming in?

116 INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

116

Kate and Chad, having missionary-style sex. Chad stops mid-thrust, brushes a piece of hair from Kate's face, and looks into her eyes.

CHAD
I love you.

Kate tenses. There's no escape; he literally has her pinned down. She shuts her eyes; she can't look at him for this.

KATE
I love you too.

Chad is too caught up in the moment to notice her reluctance, her aversion to eye contact, her lie. He starts pumping again, slower and more gently. Making love.

CHAD

Mmm... Now I can finally die happy.

117 **INT. CHAD'S DUPLEX - NIGHT** 117

Chad's snores are audible from the bedroom as Kate fumbles around, gathering up supplies. She puts on Chad's hoodie, makes her way to his bedroom.

118 **INT. CHAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS** 118

Kate sits down beside a sleeping Chad, the mattress creaking under her weight. His eyes flutter open.

KATE

Hey, babe. Can I borrow your car?

CHAD

Mmm... Can't sleep again?

KATE

Something like that.

Chad shuts his eyes.

KATE (CONT'D)

Actually, I'm just feeling... Well, I want to visit my mother's grave.

CHAD

It's late. Maybe I should go with you?

KATE

No, it's fine. I know the caretaker, he's a good guy. He'll look out for me.

CHAD

You sure?

She nods. He shuts his eyes. She carefully reaches over him and takes his phone from the night stand. She leaves her phone in its place.

CHAD (CONT'D)

Okay, just be careful, okay?

She turns to leave and he calls out:

CHAD (CONT'D)
Love you!

She pretends like she doesn't hear him.

119 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - NIGHT** 119

Kate sits in the car outside Chad's. On Chad's phone, she GoogleMaps directions to Camila's place. She sets the phone in the cup-holder and starts the engine.

120 **EXT. ROAD - NIGHT** 120

The blue Mustang, speeding past green mile marker signs. Houston: 42 miles.

121 **EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT** 121

A rundown apartment complex, box-y and characterless. The kind of place where broke students, low-level drug dealers, and blue-collar immigrant families live in tense, nothing-we-can-do harmony.

122 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - NIGHT** 122

Kate, sitting outside the apartment's gate in the Mustang, calls Camila's number (also found on Google). After two rings, someone picks up.

KATE
Hello. Is this Camila Gonzalez?

CAMILA (V.O.)
Yeah. Who's this?

KATE
I'm Molly from Food2Go. I'm trying to deliver your order, but I can't get into your apartment complex.

CAMILA (V.O.)
I didn't order any food.

KATE
Yeah, it says here one of your friends ordered it for you.

CAMILA (V.O.)
 Sorry, I think you've got the wrong
 number.

KATE
 A late night study treat, the note
 says. Brain food for Columbia.
 Columbia Law?

With this, Camila changes her tune.

CAMILA (V.O.)
 Oh! Cool. Hang on just a minute,
 I'll be right out.

Kate hangs up, puts up her hood, and gets out of the car.

123

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

123

Kate stands under a tree in a dark corner of the apartment
 complex. The Mustang is parked nearby.

Camila, dead, lays in a heap on the ground. Job done, Kate
 removes her gloves, places them in a trash bag, readies
 herself to leave.

And then: *Buzz*. Her phone. Unknown number. Kate's hands
 tremble. She hesitates before picking up.

KATE
 What? He what? ...Okay, was it a
 heart attack or...?

She pauses, listening to whoever's on the other end.

KATE (CONT'D)
 Yeah, okay. Okay. Shit. Okay, I'll
 head there right now.

She takes a few deep breaths, tries to calm herself down.

And then, from behind her, laughter.

Kate spins on her heels - in the near distance, two teens, a
 BOY and a GIRL (both 16), holding hands, run towards the
 tree, towards her. Towards the dead body.

Still on the pavement, the teens stop. The boy grabs the
 girl, pulls her into him, kisses her. The girl giggles and
 pushes him away. She clasps his hand and leads him forward.

This is bad.

Kate slings the bag over her shoulder and bends her knees, assuming a safe lifting position. She drags Camila's body through the dirt and grass and over to the parked Mustang.

She pops open the trunk with the remote key. The car beeps and the lights flash.

The teens jolt and then freeze, looking Kate's way. Kate drops Camila to the ground.

She steps around the car, squints at them in the darkness.

KATE (CONT'D)

What the hell are you looking at?

They don't reply.

KATE (CONT'D)

You shouldn't be out this late.

The boy, puffing out his chest, takes a step towards Kate. The girl utters a weak cry of protest. Kate ignores this show of machismo and turns her attention to the girl.

KATE (CONT'D)

Go inside. Get some sleep, read a fucking book. This might feel fun now, but he's gonna find a way to trap you, and then all your dreams will disappear. Except they won't. They'll still be in there, rattling around, driving you insane. And you won't have any way to realize them because you'll be stuck paying his rent and cooking his dinner and raising his fucking kids.

The boy takes a few more aggressive steps towards the car, towards Kate. He spots Camila's lifeless feet, poking out just beyond the back tire. He freezes.

BOY

Oh shit, is your friend okay?

Kate clenches her hands into fists, rocks on her heels, struggles for words.

KATE

...She's drunk.

The girl whispers from behind him.

GIRL
 Una puta loca. Just, just... Let's
 go. Jorge. Vamanos.

BOY
 No, she's--

GIRL
 Jorge, this bitch is fucking crazy.
 Let's go.

The boy hesitates, torn between his girl and his gut.

After a long moment, he backs down. Protective, he throws his
 arm around his girl's shoulders. As they slink off, he
 addresses the girl in a hushed but still audible voice.

BOY
 I think we should go back and check
 there's nothing weird...

GIRL
Shh.

BOY
 Seriously. I think--

GIRL
 You're stoned, Jorge. We smoked too
 much.

The boy glances back, locking Kate's eye, before disappearing
 around a corner.

Kate takes a deep breath, goes back around to the trunk, and
 hoists Camila's body inside.

124

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

124

Kate drives. She passes a speed limit sign: 65 MPH. She
 glances at her speedometer and taps the brakes, resetting the
 cruise control to 64. On the radio, an angry late-night
 political HOST (40s) rattles on.

HOST
 But when life gives you lemons,
 sometimes you've got to squirt them
 into other people's eyes. That's
 the controversial lesson our next
 guest wants to impart to us
 tonight.

(MORE)

HOST (CONT'D)

Let's welcome Kate Brady, a murderer who has gotten sloppy and who was nearly caught in the act by two stoned teenagers. Kate has to get to the hospital as quickly as possible, but she also has a body to rid off. If she stops to dump it, he will die. She stops, he dies. He will die. He will die. She can't stop. She can't stop. Step on a crack, break your father's break. Step on a crack, break your father's--

Kate switches the radio off. She counts to herself under her breath.

KATE

One, two, three. One, two, three.

125 **INT. HOSPITAL PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT**

125

Kate walks through the parking structure and towards the stairwell. She holds her phone to her ear.

KATE

Hey. Um, so I accidentally took your phone. ...Yeah, um, my dad had a heart attack and crashed his truck and he's in the hospital. Westville Memorial.

126 **INT. HOSPITAL ICU ROOM - DAY**

126

Kate stands in the doorway. The room is all white walls and artificial lighting. Her dad is in bed, hooked up to beeping machines. He looks weak, sallow in his blue hospital gown. She steps towards the bed.

KATE

Dad?

His eyes flutter open.

KATE (CONT'D)

You need to hang on, okay? I'm sorry for--

Kate's voice breaks with genuine emotion. She doesn't finish her thought. Her dad shuts his eyes, opens them again.

DAD
 ...I'm proud of you. I've never
 said it, but I am.

KATE
 I know.

DAD
 And I'm sorry about the...

KATE
 Meth?

DAD
 They said it probably had nothing
 to do with it, that my heart was
 bad anyway.

KATE
 Bad?

DAD
 You know, I didn't take good care
 of myself. But I'm gonna do better.
 When I get out of here.

A tired-looking ICU NURSE (50s) shuffles in, holding a
 clipboard.

ICU NURSE
 I'm sorry, but visiting hours are
 over.

KATE
 I... I'll see you soon, Dad.

He has already shut his eyes. Kate squeezes his hand, leaves.

127 **INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY**

127

Chad sits in a vinyl armchair, flipping through an old issue
 of Men's Health. He jumps up when Kate enters and envelops
 her in a giant bear hug.

CHAD
 I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I love
 you so much.

He releases her, and they sit side-by-side. They exchange
 phones.

CHAD (CONT'D)
 How's he doing?

KATE
He's talking.

CHAD
You know I'd love to go in and meet
him. I feel like he's a stranger to
me.

KATE
He is.

CHAD
I'd like to change that.

KATE
Visiting hours are over.

Chad puffs out his chest, looks defiant.

CHAD
Some of the nurses know me from
when I've been in here with my mom.
They'll make an exception.

He starts for the door, but the sound of a swallowed sob
stops him in his tracks.

KATE
Please, just leave it.

Chad, startled, backs down. He sits, takes her hand.

128 **INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT** 128

Chad and Kate sleep in awkward positions on the hospital
chairs. Out the wall of windows, the sky gradually lightens.

NURSE (PRE-LAP)
Excuse me? Miss. Excuse me?

129 **INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY** 129

Kate wakes. A morose-looking NURSE (40s) stands over her.

NURSE
Are you kin with Samuel Brady?

KATE
Yeah, I'm his daughter.

NURSE

Can you please come with me? Your husband can come as well.

KATE

He's not my husband.

CHAD

I can go with you--

Kate shakes her head, no. Chad knows better than to insist. Kate follows the nurse.

130 **INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS** 130

The nurse leads Kate to a door marked 'PRIVATE'.

131 **INT. HOSPITAL BEREAVEMENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS** 131

Kate steps inside. The nurse motions to a vinyl sofa.

NURSE

Have a seat. The cardiologist will be in to speak with you shortly.

Kate perches on the edge of sofa. The nurse leaves, shutting the door behind her.

There's a framed photo of flowers on the wall. A telephone on an empty desk. A box of Kleenex on the coffee table.

A soft knock and the **CARDIOLOGIST** (40s) enters, takes a stiff seat in the desk chair. He looks uncomfortable, unnatural in this environment.

CARDIOLOGIST

I'm very sorry--

KATE

No.

CARDIOLOGIST

But your father didn't make it. He lost consciousness, and we tried to revive him, but ultimately, we decided he wasn't worth the effort. You don't deserve a family, anyway. You've already made your choice.

Kate, dazed, looks down, smoothing her wrinkled shirt. She tucks a loose strand of hair behind her ear.

Snapping to, she looks up at the cardiologist.

KATE
Wait, what?

CARDIOLOGIST
He didn't make it. I'm sorry.

He lifts the box of tissues, hands it to her. She doesn't take it. He sets it back down on the coffee table.

CARDIOLOGIST (CONT'D)
If you need help with arrangements, there's a book of resources at the nurses' station. Telephone right here if you need to make any calls. Take all the time that you need.

He hesitates for a moment, like he's going to say something else, but he doesn't. He leaves.

Kate waits for a moment, gathers herself, and then stands up. She does some calf raises, a few lunges, some jumping jacks, and then reaches for the door knob.

132 **INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY** 132

Chad holds Kate in a tight hug, swaying from side to side. Tears run down his face onto her shoulder.

Her face remains stoic; her eyes dry. Still, she hugs him back, squeezes hard, her muscles relaxing, her body melting into his.

133 **INT. HOSPITAL PARKING GARAGE - DAY** 133

Kate's car, which Chad drove here, is parked next to the Mustang. Its tires sit on the white line. Entirely too close.

CHAD
Should we just take one car?

KATE
They charge like twenty dollars a day to park here.

CHAD
Are you okay to drive?

KATE
Yeah. Can I take your car though?
Less stressful.

CHAD

Of course.

KATE

Okay, I'm gonna run home to get some stuff, but I'll meet you at your place?

CHAD

You sure? I can come with you...

Kate shakes her head, dismisses his offer.

KATE

It'll only take a few minutes.

She tries to squeeze herself between the cars to get into the Mustang, but it's no use.

Chad jogs around to Kate's junky car, keys jingling. He calls to her.

CHAD

My bad, I'll move it!

134 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY**

134

Kate slows to a stop at a red light. She fights back tears, contorting her face. She breathes deeply, reaches up, yanks out an eyebrow hair, an eyelash, another eyebrow hair. She winces.

Honk honk. Kate whips around, and there's Chad, who's pulled up right beside her. He waves, makes a face, tries to make her laugh. When she doesn't, he smiles a pitying smile.

She turns away, stares straight ahead. When the light changes to green, Chad goes straight and Kate turns left.

135 **EXT. ROAD - DAY**

135

The Mustang cruises down the long, straight country road towards Kate's home.

136 **INT. CHAD'S CAR - DAY**

136

Kate glances in her rearview mirror, and then pulls onto the road's shoulder, slowing to a stop.

She unbuckles her seat belt and reaches for the door handle, but before she opens it, she steals one last glance in the rearview mirror to ensure the coast is clear.

A car - her car - approaches in the distance.

A buzz. Kate jolts - her phone vibrates in the cup-holder. She picks it up, looks at the screen: Chad. She answers.

KATE

Yeah?

CHAD (V.O.)

Everything okay up there?

KATE

Yeah, uh... I just, uh, I needed a minute.

The car draws nearer, and then pulls over behind the Mustang.

CHAD (V.O.)

Look, I know you wanted to go alone. But I just thought what kind of man lets his girl go off on her own right after... Well.

KATE

Oh, I was just gonna change clothes. I'm totally fine. You can just head home, and I'll meet you--

CHAD (V.O.)

I'm not letting you out of my sight, Kate. I'm serious. I'm here for you, one hundred and ten percent.

Kate grimaces and hangs up. She counts to herself.

KATE

One, two, three. One, two, three.

She clenches the steering wheel, her knuckles turning white. She steals another glance in the rearview mirror at Chad, who is looking straight ahead, straight into the Mustang. She sighs, turns the keys, puts the car into drive, and accelerates. Chad, a few car lengths behind, follows suit.

137

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

137

The Mustang pulls into the drive, followed by Kate's clunker. Chad and Kate park and get out.

She leads him towards the front door. Chad walks slowly, making a show of taking in the house, the surroundings.

CHAD
Hey, this ain't half bad!

His stomach growls audibly. Embarrassed, he covers his abdomen with his hand.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Maybe I should've swung by the store.

KATE
That's... yeah. Why don't you go get us some food? My tank needs to be filled, so maybe you could do that too. Two birds, one stone.

CHAD
No, it's cool. I'm sure whatever you've got here is fine.

Kate stops on the front porch.

KATE
You have my keys.

Chad hands them over. She unlocks the door. They step inside.

138

INT. KATE'S KITCHEN - DAY

138

Kate rummages through the cabinets. It's slim pickings. She finds a box of off-brand macaroni and cheese, sets it on the counter. She opens the fridge, in search of milk and butter.

Chad picks up the box, studies the nutrition label.

CHAD
Yikes.

KATE
What?

CHAD
It's just, I've already had two cheat days this week. Overdid it. I've gotta watch it, you know? Things can spiral.

He continues, more to himself than to her.

CHAD (CONT'D)
47 grams of carbs...

Kate slams the refrigerator door shut.

KATE
I'm not the one who's hungry.

Chad narrows his eyes and sets the box down again, the dried noodles rattling inside.

CHAD
I'm sorry. It doesn't matter. Let's eat this. You need to eat.

KATE
For fuck's sake, I'm not hungry.

Her eyes start to well up again. Chad pats his pockets, looking for something.

CHAD
Can I have my keys?

Kate stiffens.

KATE
What, you're just gonna leave me here?

Chad looks genuinely dumbfounded by this accusation.

CHAD
No, I told you, I would never do that. I have some protein powder in my trunk. If you can't eat, you can at least drink.

Kate, trying to hide her panic, opens the fridge again, sticks her head inside, and rummages around.

KATE
Isn't it bad to keep it in your trunk? The package says you should store it in a cool environment.

She grabs a half-stick of butter and sets it on the counter.

CHAD
It's fine. Can I have my keys?

Kate reaches into her pocket and pulls out the keys, but keeps a firm grip on them. She tries to maneuver around Chad.

KATE
I'll go get it.

But he steps in front of her, grabs her gently by the shoulders.

CHAD
You're acting weird.

She pulls back, out of his grasp.

KATE
I'm not acting weird.

A stand-off.

Chad breaks, reaches for her again, and wraps her in a hug.

CHAD
Babe, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. But
you're gonna get through this.
We're gonna get through this.

He releases her from the hug and holds her square by the shoulders, this time firmly.

CHAD (CONT'D)
But you cannot keep starving
yourself.

He reaches around and snatches the keys from her clenched fist.

139 **EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY**

139

Gravel crunching beneath his New Balances, Chad strides towards the Mustang. Kate bursts out the front door, a few steps behind.

KATE
No. Chad, just wait--

He presses the remote key and pops open the trunk.

He takes a step forward, and then another step. His eyes widen. He blinks, unbelieving. He closes the gap between him and the car, and then he stops.

CHAD
What the...?

KATE
One, two, three.

CHAD

Kate. What, what... What is this?

Kate draws her hand to her mouth. She bites down on her own flesh.

CHAD (CONT'D)

What happened? What happened? Tell me what happened.

KATE

...I don't know.

CHAD

You do know. You do know. Tell me.

She hesitates. She looks back at the trailer house, its dilapidated surroundings. The rusty refrigerator on its side. The lawn chair frame. The buzzards, circling overhead.

She proceeds.

KATE

I killed her.

CHAD

What? Like an accident?

KATE

No.

CHAD

I don't understand.

Kate squares up her posture. No turning back.

KATE

She took my spot at Columbia.

CHAD

What are you talking about?

KATE

I'm the Columbia Killer.

Chad starts to laugh like, this must be a joke. Kate waits for the shock to wear off, for him to realize she's for real.

His laughter slows. His face goes blotchy.

CHAD

Wait. You're serious...

Kate shrugs, sinking into herself.

CHAD (CONT'D)
How? ...How could you do this?

No answer.

CHAD (CONT'D)
...You've ruined everything.

KATE
I know. I'm sorry. I actually am...
you weren't awful, just... I'm
getting soft... I can't be soft.

CHAD
What are you talking about?

KATE
It wasn't supposed to happen like
this. The list... I'm not off the
list yet.

She takes a deep breath.

KATE (CONT'D)
Just... Stay here, okay? I'll be
right back.

Still in shock, Chad obeys. He rubs his face. He begins to
pace as Kate scampers off inside.

140 **EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY**

140

A moment later, Kate reappears from the front door, holding a
loaded pistol, pointed at Chad. Chad throws his hands up, as
boggled as he is terrified.

CHAD
Kate. What the fuck?!

He backs up against the Mustang, leans on it for support.

CHAD (CONT'D)
You don't want to do this.

KATE
Stop telling me what I want.

He lowers his hands to his sides.

CHAD
Look, don't. I'll... I'll take the
fall for you.

KATE
You'll what?

He takes a deep breath and speaks in a measured tone.

CHAD
Yeah, I'll... I'll say I did it.
I'll be fine in prison. I can work
out, do whatever. I don't have
anything out here anyway. I'm...
Just, just promise you'll come
visit me.

Kate stares at him for a moment. Her face breaks into a grin.

KATE
You expect me to believe that?

CHAD
I'm serious. I want you to go to
law school and have a good life.
That's all I ever wanted for you.
You know that, right?

Kate shakes her head.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I'm telling the truth...

He's not. His acting's not that good.

KATE
No. You never wanted any of that
for me. You wanted me to be your
perfect little protein-powder-
selling trophy girlfriend. Get
married, have your babies, stay
here forever and ever. That's what
my mom did, and look where it got
her. That's what every fucking
woman in this town does.

Chad's hand travels down the side of the car, and he grips
the door handle. Ever so carefully, he pulls on it.

But Kate's spotted him. Bastard thinks he can escape, drive
off into some movie sunset. She steadies the gun.

KATE (CONT'D)
Get your fucking hand off the door,
or I'll shoot it off.

Chad raises his hands up again. He's on the brink of tears.

KATE (CONT'D)
 Okay, then, if you'll take the
 fall. Let's do it. Go in the house.

He doesn't budge.

KATE (CONT'D)
 I said, go in the house.

His hands still up, Chad surrenders, walks cautiously towards the front door. Kate follows, a few steps behind, gun pointed at the back of his head.

141 **INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

141

Chad sits on the sofa. Kate, in the recliner, holds the gun, still aimed at him. With her other hand, she tosses over a pen and then a pad of yellow legal paper. Chad catches them, sets the pad steady in his lap.

KATE
 Write it down.

CHAD
 Okay. Okay.

KATE
 You murdered three women.

CHAD
 Jesus Christ. Three?

Kate doesn't dignify this with a response. Chad, hand shaking, puts pen to paper.

KATE
 You did it because you love me.
 Write that. You went online and
 stalked them, got their names and
 addresses. You did it because you
 wanted me to go to law school, to
 have the life I deserved.

He scribbles away.

KATE (CONT'D)
 ...Are you getting all this down?

CHAD
 Yeah, just, I can't write that
 fast.

KATE
Take your sweet time.

She kicks back on the recliner and watches him pen his ghostwritten confession.

142 INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

142

Chad, finished with the letter, meticulously tears the pages from the pad.

KATE
Fold it up.

He does.

KATE (CONT'D)
Now hand it to me.

He stands, hesitates, and then, seeing her nod, steps towards her. He's trembling, the papers crinkling. He reaches out and offers them to her.

KATE (CONT'D)
You're very sorry, aren't you?

She takes them with her free hand.

KATE (CONT'D)
For everything you did.

For the briefest of seconds, both of Kate's hands are occupied, one with the gun and the other with the letter - Chad seizes this opportunity. He lunges for her, pinning her onto the recliner.

Kate struggles, kicking and screaming. As they wrestle, an errant limb knocks over the urn. The urn crashes to the floor, the lid popping off, ashes scattering everywhere.

They both pause. Something snaps in Kate. She releases the papers. Her face falls pale. Her eyes well up. A sob catches in her throat.

KATE (CONT'D)
No! No, no, no.

Chad remains frozen. Kate slips out from under him and crawls to the ashes. She scoops them up with one hand, trying to return them to the urn. But much of it falls through her shaky fingers like sand.

Desperate, distraught, she sets the gun down on the floor, digs into the ash with both hands.

Chad, still atop the recliner, slowly, silently makes a move for the gun. He's almost there. Almost there. But he overextends himself - he and the recliner both topple over.

Kate snaps to. She rolls out of the way of the falling chair and moves for the gun before Chad can get it. In a panic, she grabs the trigger, pulls it.

A blast as it fires.

The bullet skims her knee and shoots through the wall.

She howls.

Chad crawls out from under the tipped-over recliner and instinctively reaches for her leg, trying to stop the bleeding with his hand, still trying, despite everything, to protect her.

Kate, breathing through the pain, grabs hold of the gun with both ash-covered hands, steadies it, looks down at Chad.

His hands are covered in her blood. He looks up, meeting her gaze. His eyes flash with recognition of what's about to happen.

CHAD

No. No, Kate--

Using all her core strength, she pulls herself upright, just like doing a sit-up, presses the gun to his temple, shuts her eyes, and squeezes the trigger.

143

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

143

Machines beep in a sterile white room, but at least this one has a window. The afternoon sun shines in on Kate, who is laid up in bed. SALAMANCA and MCDUGAL sit at her bedside. Salamanca has a clipboard, and he's taking notes.

KATE

I tried to break it off with him. Multiple times. He wouldn't accept it. He was very controlling.

SALAMANCA

Yeah, sounds like it.

KATE

He knew I'd been wait-listed at Columbia. But I didn't care. I knew I would get in next year. I even told everyone I was going to law school. It was inevitable, if I could just be patient. But he couldn't wait. He wanted to go to New York with me, start a new life.

MCDOUGAL

So he took matters into his own hands.

KATE

I was his ticket out. He waited until my dad died. Until I was completely alone. Isolated. Vulnerable. And then he gave me that confession letter. At first, I thought he was joking. Taking credit for something he hadn't actually done. Trying to scare me or blackmail me into loving him.

Kate starts hyperventilating. She's fighting off tears.

MCDOUGAL

Right. Take your time.

KATE

But then he showed me the body. In the trunk. I told him I was going to the police and that it was over between us. But he had the gun. He took me inside. Said he'd kill us both... He shot... But I jumped out of the way and he only got my... And then, he turned the gun on himself and... I tried to stop him--

Waterworks. Tears stream down her face. Real, guttural sobs. She's letting it all out now, the stress of the past weeks, months, her entire life. Salamanca and McDougal stand up, bow their heads respectfully.

SALAMANCA

Okay. You've been very brave talking to us today, Kate. We'll need you to come in for more questioning once you're outta here, but no rush. Just focus on healin' up.

MCDUGAL

Just so you know, we cleaned up
your house, so you ain't gotta
worry about that once you're out.
The blood and all...

Kate speaks through tears.

KATE

Thank you.

SALAMANCA

Yeah, the least we could do...

MCDUGAL

We all thought he was one of the
good ones. But Chad was a bad dude.
Deep down I think we always knew
it, but being a Christian, I try to
see the best in everyone.

SALAMANCA

To be honest, that day we came
'round, I knew something wasn't
right. I should've done something
then...

Salamanca starts to choke up and McDougal slaps him on the
back in an extremely heterosexual attempt at comforting him.

MCDUGAL

Alrighty, Kate. Take care.

They leave, and she's alone. Truly alone. The machines beep,
but otherwise the room is quiet. Kate snuffles, takes a few
deep breaths, counts aloud to herself.

KATE

One, two, three...

144

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

144

Morning light filters through the window. Kate pushes rubbery
eggs around her breakfast tray with a spork. Beside her, a
Southern Belle CASEWORKER (40s) sits with a file folder open
in her lap.

CASEWORKER

Because you don't have insurance,
we're gonna have to get creative.
We can apply for Medicaid to cover
some of it.

(MORE)

CASEWORKER (CONT'D)

And bankruptcy is always an option,
but if they knew I was recommending
that, I might lose my job. So shh,
don't you go snitching!

She giggles, trying to make light of the situation. Kate sets
down her spork and stares straight ahead.

CASEWORKER (CONT'D)

That's a last resort anyway, and
we're only just beginning. So what
I can do at this stage is help you
brainstorm. A lot of my patients
have had luck with crowdfunding.
Kickstarter, GoFundMe, all that. Do
you have a big social network?

Kate shuts her eyes, willing this woman to be gone.

CASEWORKER (CONT'D)

Kate? Kate...?

145 **INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY**

145

Kate, pushed in a wheelchair by an ORDERLY (20s), is handed a
bag with her personal belongings, including her phone. Kate
removes her phone - the battery's dead. She looks up at the
receptionist.

KATE

Excuse me, sorry, could you call a
taxi for me?

The receptionist sighs and picks up the phone.

146 **EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

146

The sun swelters in the sky, beating on the concrete. Under
an awning, Kate sits in the wheelchair, the orderly standing
patiently behind her.

KATE

You don't have to wait with me.

ORDERLY

It's hospital policy.

KATE

I can walk.

ORDERLY

It's just so we don't get sued.

Kate spots a black van with its blinker on, turning into the hospital from the main road.

KATE

Well, if it's any reassurance, I wouldn't sue. I'd offer to just call it even.

The orderly doesn't even crack a smile.

KATE (CONT'D)

You look familiar. Class of 2012?

The orderly shakes his head.

ORDERLY

I didn't go to high school here.

The black van pulls up. Kate rises and hobbles towards it.

147 **INT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY**

147

Kate plugs in her phone. She takes a look around. The bullet hole, spackled over. The recliner, upright again. The urn, back on its shelf. The blood stains are still lightly visible in the carpet, but someone clearly gave it their best shot.

Exhausted, Kate flops down on the sofa and falls into a deep, open-mouthed sleep.

148 **INT. KATE'S KITCHEN - DAY**

148

Awake from her nap, Kate stumbles into the kitchen and desperately checks the cabinets and fridge - nothing but condiments and moldy vegetables.

The butter she left on the counter is melted into an ugly blob. She sniffs it, grimaces. She picks up the macaroni box, studies the nutrition facts, hurls it against the wall. The flimsy cardboard bursts open and dried noodles skittle across the tile floor.

149 **INT. KATE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

149

Kate limps back into the living room. She flips over the sofa cushions and amidst the crumbs and detritus, she finds a few coins, shoves them into her pocket.

She checks her now-charged phone. There's a red notification dot on her voice mail icon. She slips on a pair of sneakers, grabs her car keys, and limps outside.

150

EXT. KATE'S HOUSE - DAY

150

Kate, hobbling towards her car, listens to the first message.

LEO (V.O.)

Kate, where are you? It's four o'clock. I Googled it and if you're actually vomiting blood, you might have Ebola, so--

Delete. And then another one from him:

LEO (V.O.)

Oh man, I just heard. Sorry you got shot and all. I know this is maybe not the first thing on your mind, but do you think you'll be back? Like should I hold a place in the schedule for you, or... Corporate's gonna be on my ass about this, so. Call me back when you get a chance.

Delete. And then the third one. A different VOICE, female, sophisticated, no trace of a Texas accent.

VOICE (V.O.)

Hello, Kate. This is Marian Simmons from Columbia Law Admissions. We heard about your tragic connection to the crime, and we would like to offer our condolences. We would also like to speak with you about a place at the school, provided you recover in time. We realize it's quite soon, but your attendance would be a nice way to honor the other victims, who were indeed less fortunate than you. Please call back at your earliest convenience.

Kate opens her car door, sinks into the drivers seat, smiles. She presses a button to replay the message, sets the phone in her lap, puts it on speaker.

The message plays again, to the wide world this time, and Kate sticks her keys in the ignition. She turns them, cranking the engine.

Grinding, grinding, but it just won't start.

FADE OUT.

THE END