

VERVE

POP

Written by
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OVER BLACK

Whistling wind... Faraway voices...

EXT. THE FORUM - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF A MASSIVE CONCERT

We're thousands of feet above the ground where we can see the stage... The people behind it and crowd in front of it.

Slowly descending to ground level, sounds become audible. First the loud-speakers, then the din of the crowd... Closer and closer to the ground, until, in one long unbroken shot --

We land on a high school couple, decked out in ALICE FOXX merch, intensely making out. We stay with their public display of affection for a few beats, PUSHING IN...

Until we push past them, floating our way through the crowd. A series of vignettes, our attention like the ghost of an ADHD voyeur, capturing every moment of interest --

A woman, hysterically crying as she runs from her friend. Weaving through the crowd, we leave her and pass --

A group of shirtless bros dancing to the pre-show music, having the time of their lives... Off their chest-bumping --

We're enveloped by a squad of girls: face-paint, tiny neon bathing suits, hundreds of selfies... We leave them --

And find a frustrated middle-aged man loading heavy cases of Smart Water behind a food stand... Until finally, we land on our little friend to be --

BENNY

Thirteen. Big toothy smile, clip-on fox ears, and a poorly fitting Alice Foxx t-shirt.

BENNY

I remember I was in third grade and Alice was doing a pre-show stream, talking about boy troubles right?

Rambling excitedly, a good two feet shorter than everyone, we don't see who he's talking to just yet.

BENNY

And at the time, I was actually having trouble of my own, I mean, for a third grader, lol, but anyways - sorry for saying lol that was weird - I put a quote in the chat, basically like, if you type in 'Believe in Yourself' and put it on top of each other and then capitalize the BE in the believe and the YOU in Yourself? It basically says 'Be You.' You know? Because you have to 'Be You.' Cause like, that's the only person you can be, you know?

(shakes his head, amazed)

And, I swear to god, Alice responded like RIGHT away in the chat.

We finally reveal the target of Benny's friendly diatribe; an OLDER TEEN on the outskirts of a large group of friends.

BENNY (cont'd)

Okay, favorite Alice Foxx song on three. One, two, three --

BENNY

TANGERINE!!

OLDER TEEN

I think we might be moving to a different section.

BENNY

...Okay, where should we go?

A guy with a BUZZ CUT from the group calls out --

BUZZ CUT

Yo who's your new friend?

BENNY

I'm Benny!

The group laughs at the older teen, who re-shuffles his position in the group. Benny, confused for a moment..

Realizes they were making fun of him.

Then, the stadium lights **DIM**.

And Benny's heart SOARS. Any hurt evaporates.

Flames shoot from the stage. While there's a buzz in the air, Benny's so excited he's almost unhinged.

Then, from the speakers... HER VOICE:

ALICE FOXX (O.S.)
This song's dedicated to anyone who
came here alone tonight.

The smoke... the lights... Benny in complete awe:

BENNY
Oh my gosh... *Oh my gosh...*

ALICE FOXX (O.S.)
(whisper singing)
*It's been a tough time... It's been a
tough time for a while now...*

Benny, already sobbing. Feeling so seen... So understood.

BENNY
(through tears)
Alice... Alice I'm right here...

Neon purple and turquoise blue flames give way to a
spectacular light show... AND **ALICE FOXX --**

ALICE FOXX
(singing)
*So you know I can't stay
quiet now...*

BENNY
(weeping/ yelling)
**SO YOU KNOW I CAN'T STAY
QUIET NOW!!!**

Steps onstage. The crowd loses it.

Mid 30s, Alice has bleached blonde hair, a deep cut leather-
sequin top, and fuck she's just so cool.

ALICE FOXX
(singing)
*It's been a rough ride...
So you know I won't back down now.
'Cause baby I'm still...*

Benny waits, anticipating her every move. Alice's voice gets
softer. Intimate. You can hear a pin drop.

ALICE FOXX (cont'd)
I'm still...

And SHE SHEDS ALL COMPOSURE! Her mania, pure magic --

ALICE FOXX
CRAZZZZZZYYYY!!!!

BENNY
CRAZZZZZZYYYY!!!!

Fire BLASTS from behind and dancers swarm the stage. Benny,
dancing now, fully going for it. People glance over, laughing.

ALICE FOXX
AND I'M STILL CRAZZZZZZYYYY!!!!!!

Then: Settles again.

ALICE FOXX (cont'd)
...About you.

Picks back up --

ALICE FOXX (cont'd)
AND I'M STILL SCREAMING!!!!!!

A pregnant pause... Then, her voice fragile and small:

ALICE FOXX (cont'd)
I love you.

The moment's crystallized stillness shattered by:

BENNY
I LOVE YOU ALICE!

Everything erupts. People cheer. Alice chuckles, hearing Benny's declaration loud and clear:

ALICE FOXX
I love you too, darlin.

This is narcotic for Benny, the best moment of his life.

ACROSS THE STADIUM

We see **RICK FERRARO**: 40s, an aggressive paparazzo aiming his long-lens camera at Alice. Slicked hair. Bad teeth.

RICK
I love you too, darlin...

He brings his camera up for another shot WE SMASH TO TITLES:

POP

INT. THE FORUM - BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

End of show. Alice's smile dissolves as she steps offstage. She's rushed by her manager/ older sister, **NICOLE**, 40.

NICOLE
Sounded great out there.

ALICE
Sounded like trash.

NICOLE
Oh stop.

ALICE
Sync was off.

NICOLE
Nobody could tell.

ALICE
I could.

NICOLE
Make-A-Wish people wanna say hi-

ALICE
Because the first thing I want to do
after performing in front of twenty
thousand people-

NICOLE
Alice come on it's for a good cause-

ALICE
Can we get rid of them?

NICOLE
You might want to keep your voice down-

ALICE
You might want to suck my dick.

NICOLE
I'll tell the dying sick kids you're
not feeling very well.

The two approach an exit, the fan's chanting increasing like
the sprockets of a social roller coaster...

ALICE
There's no other way out?

NICOLE
This is the other way.

INT. THE FORUM - FAN MEET AND GREET - AFTER SHOW - NIGHT

Benny squeezes past hordes of people awaiting Alice's exit.
He clutches a CD close to his chest.

BENNY
Excuse me, sorry-

Nearby, Rick commiserates with another photographer.

OTHER PHOTOGRAPHER
You've met her?

RICK
Alice? When we were both starting out, her team would tip me off. We'd see each other, say hi... Then some shit went down. Her team had a problem with the way I do my photos.

OTHER PHOTOGRAPHER
That's crazy-

RICK
It's photos like mine that made her in the first place.

Just then, Alice emerges from backstage, shepherded by Nicole and security --

OTHER PHOTOGRAPHER
Here she comes!

The crowd erupts. Rick steadies himself, waiting for his moment. Benny, jostled by the surging crowd calls out --

BENNY
Alice! Hey Alice!

But his timid small voice is no match for the thrashing wave of reporters and fans trying to have their moment.

REPORTERS
Alice! // Alice how was the show! When's the next album coming out? // Your mom would be so proud!

FANS
Alice it's me! // Over here honey! // Look we've got the same hoodie! // Your ex followed me on Insta!

ALICE
Thank you so much! Thank you!

RICK
ALI FOXX!

Rick SHOVES past Benny, knocking his CD to the ground, and gets on the step-and-repeat.

RICK (cont'd)
LET'S SEE THAT SMILE!

NICOLE
GET THIS FUCKING GUY OUTTA HERE!

Rick reaches out AND MOVES HER HAIR OUT OF THE WAY.

BODYGUARD
HEY!

Alice's BODYGUARD grabs Rick and THROWS him to the side.
Rick SMASHES his face against the metal rope stanchion --

RICK
The fuck man!

Benny strains for a better look --

BENNY
What's happening? What's happening?

Alice, moving towards her idling RANGE ROVER.

Rick recovers, wiping blood from his mouth as Alice's
Bodyguard tries helping him up --

RICK
Fuck off me!

Alice begins getting in her car, one of her label execs,
CARLOS, 30, behind her --

CARLOS
Can we get you a driver?

ALICE
I'm driving tonight.

CARLOS
We need you better rested for
tomorrow's show-

ALICE
Was there a problem with tonight's?

CARLOS
Honestly, wasn't your strongest.

With just a look, Alice slams her door and peels out.

Rick yanks a loose tooth from his mouth.

RICK
Showbiz! What it takes!!!

Benny glances down at his cracked, unsigned CD...

And does his best not to cry.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - SUNSET BLVD - MOMENTS LATER

Alice drives. That last comment nagging at her. She lights a cigarette. Up ahead, a sign for IN-N-OUT...

Fuck it. She pulls in line.

EXT. NEARBY STREET OFF SUNSET - NIGHT

Benny bikes through the streets, also miserable.

At that moment, Benny spots the SAME IN-N-OUT SIGN.

He pulls over. Locks his bike. Walks inside.

INT. IN-N-OUT BURGER - SAME

Benny enters and approaches the counter. He's helped by a heavy-set CASHIER behind the register. It's a busy night.

BENNY

I'll take a double double... Two orders of fries with cheese... A milkshake, vanilla but with like a little strawberry layer in the middle and a splash of chocolate on the top.

CASHIER

Sorry, what?

BENNY

I like it so there are little surprises, you know?

Then, from BEYOND THE CASHIER... He hears it:

A VOICE (O.S.)

Thanks, darlin.

Benny looks up. And, past the burgers and fries...

IN THE DRIVE-THROUGH WINDOW... It's her --

ALICE FOXX

The DRIVE THROUGH ATTENDANT passes Alice her food.

Benny watching, in awe.

DRIVE THROUGH ATTENDANT
I'm a- I'm a huge fan-

ALICE
I'm a huge fan of you.

Alice and Benny ALMOST make eye contact...

But then she drives away. Benny doesn't miss a beat -- grabs his milkshake, SPRINTS outside.

EXT. IN-N-OUT - OFF SUNSET - NIGHT

Alice looks around at the In-N-Out parking lot. So many people... All laughing with their friends... Keeps driving.

Benny sees her tail-lights turn a corner. JUMPS on his bike and rides after her car. At that exact moment --

RICK FERRARO

Grinning widely, also watches her leave the drive-through...

RICK
Gotcha.

Rick follows in his Honda. Benny, on his bike.

EXT. NEARBY STREET OFF SUNSET - SAME

Alice pulls onto a quiet street and parks her car.

BENNY

Riding his bike, mumble-rehearsing what he's going to say.

BENNY
Hi Alice! I'm your biggest fan and
I'll do anything for you!
(shakes his head,)
Too much... Too much...

BACK ON ALICE

Who dives into her In-N-Out bag, pulling out a greasy burger. She brings the burger to her mouth. Takes a deep bite... God. So good. She closes her eyes, savoring. Milky, orange mayo dripping down the side of her chin when **FLASH!**

Her eyes shoot open to SEE: A grinning, blood-caked RICK FERRARO. In front of her car, camera aimed directly at her.

RICK
STARS! THEY'RE JUST LIKE US!

She can't believe it. *How the fuck did he-*

RICK (cont'd)
That wasn't so bad was it?

Alice gets out of her car. Rick, backing up, getting shots.

ALICE
LEAVE ME ALONE!!!

She takes a SWIPE at the camera, nearly knocking it from his hands. He dodges it, condescendingly impressed.

RICK
Oh you gonna hit me? Do it baby! Hit me in the fucking face! Do it!

She takes another swing. He takes another photo.

DOWN THE STREET

Benny watches the conflict unfold, concerned.

RICK (cont'd)
We're gonna have enough for our own little spread!

Realizing this is hopeless, Alice cries out in frustration and marches back to her car. Rick, even more carried away --

RICK (cont'd)
AND YOU'RE CRAAAAAAZZZZZZZYYYY!!!

She turns the car on, but Rick steps in front of it, blocking her way, still blasting photos.

ALICE
FUCKING MOVE!

Benny, worried now, watching the whole thing... Rick, not budging, getting different angles.

ALICE (cont'd)
MOVE OR I'LL HIT YOU!

RICK
HIT ME BABY! I'LL BE FUCKING RICH!

ALICE
PLEASE!!! JUST MOVE!!!! MOVE!!!!

She backs up, he moves in front of her car again. She begins crying. Trapped. She can't handle it anymore.

ALICE
I'LL DO IT!

RICK
THAT'S A GOOD ONE!!!

He brings his camera up again. She puts her car in DRIVE --

ALICE
AHHH!!!!

RICK
AND YOU'RE SCREAAAMIIINNN!!!

And... GUNS the engine.

The front of her car SMASHES into his kneecaps, causing them to BUCKLE backwards with a loud --

POP!

Rick rolls over the side of the car, audibly gasping --

FROM BENNY'S POV

Falls off the car and CRACKS his head on the cement.

Benny watches, in astonishment. Can't believe his eyes.

Her car idles in the middle of the empty street.

And in the rear-view...

RICK

On the cement. Unmoving. A beat. *Is he...*

Then he stirs, bringing himself to his elbows. She snaps back to reality, exiting the car, approaching --

ALICE
I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, you
wouldn't move, I- I didn't know-

RICK
(a chortled wheeze)
...You broke my camera.

ALICE
I'll buy you a new camera- look- I'm
calling 911- we'll get you some help-
Can you stand up? Here-

And as she goes to help him... Rick... Starts *cackling*.

RICK
 (spitting blood)
 I'm gonna be so rich...

He lays on his back on the cement, losing it. Alice staggers backwards, climbing back into her car.

RICK (cont'd)
 Your life is over!!!

What she's done dawns on her...

RICK (cont'd)
 YOUR CAREER IS OVER!!!

He's right. This could end everything.

RICK (cont'd)
 I SEE WHO YOU ARE YOU FAKE FUCKING
 BITCH! AND I'M GONNA TELL EVERYONE!!!!

So... She decides.

Puts her car in REVERSE... And --

GUNS IT BACKWARDS!

RICK	ALICE
HEY!	FUCK YOU!!!!!!

He stumbles to his feet and her bumper SMASHES into his forehead -- His neck snapping with a sickening CRACK --

The car BUCKLES as it drives over his body.

For a moment, everything is still.

Quiet. Just her breath.

She peers all around her, with just her eyes...

Slowly getting her bearings...

A desolate street. Not a soul in sight. Until --

She looks to her side. And, standing there in shock:

A chubby little kid. In an Alice Foxx t-shirt.

BENNY

The two make eye contact. Benny manages a smile:

BENNY
Hi Alice.

ALICE
What-

Alice PANICS! SLAMS the gas --

ALICE (cont'd)
What- What- What-

Did she just imagine that? She drives fast, taking the corner at the end of the street with a SCREECH.

Benny stands there, watching Alice' taillights disappear.

He peers towards Rick's body.

BENNY
...Excuse me? Are you okay?

ANGLE ON: Rick's crushed head. It's shockingly gory. His head caved in, eyes popping out. Very dead.

The CAMERA by his side. Smashed. Sirens in the distance.

Spooked, Benny gets on his bike...

And rides away.

INT. ALICE'S CAR- NIGHT

Alice drives, hyperventilating. She pulls up to --

EXT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

And gets out of her car, running up the driveway. She begins pounding on the door. Nicole opens the door, startled.

ALICE
Wanna hang out?

Nicole looks at Alice: something's up.

NICOLE
I just put the girls to bed-

Nicole sees the damaged Range Rover: its bumper inverted.

NICOLE (cont'd)
What happened to your car?

ALICE
I hit a deer.

NICOLE
You... *backed into a deer?*

ALICE
It was just standing there. Behind my car. Maybe it was... suicidal.

NICOLE
Is the deer okay?

Alice bursts into tears. Ugly, hysterical sobs.

NICOLE (cont'd)
(hugging Alice)
Awww honey... It's okay...

ALICE
(sobbing)
It's not okay...

NICOLE
There's... actually a big deer problem in Los Angeles-

ALICE
It was a- it was an accident- it was- I didn't know what to do-

NICOLE
You didn't mean to-

ALICE
I didn't mean to-

NICOLE
(trying to make sense)
The deer was behind your car... And you... Backed into it...

ALICE
It wasn't- It wasn't a deer-

Nicole processes this. Alice, still crying.

NICOLE
What do you mean... it wasn't a deer?

ALICE
It- it was like... a person.

Nicole freezes.

NICOLE
Are they okay? Did they threaten to
press charges?

ALICE
N-no.

NICOLE
Well then it couldn't have been-

ALICE
He didn't threaten to press charges
because- because he couldn't.

NICOLE
What do you mean... he couldn't?

ALICE
Because he's...

NICOLE
Like-

ALICE
Like, yeah...
(off Nicole)
No more.

NICOLE
Where did this happen

ALICE
Near... The In-N-Out. Off Sunset.

INT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nicole and Alice sit beside a fire place.

ALICE
I was having a fucking burger okay?
I'm not really a vegan fucking sue me-

NICOLE
Where was his camera?

ALICE
It got smashed.

NICOLE
You're sure?

ALICE
(remembering Rick)
I'm sure.

NICOLE
Okay. Good.

ALICE
No! None of this is GOOD! I fucking
KILLED someone! I'm a murderer!

NICOLE
You're not a murderer- it was an
accident-

ALICE
It wasn't an accident! I made a
deliberate decision! I didn't want
him going around telling people what
I did- I'm a bad person-

NICOLE
You're not a bad person- there's no
such thing as a bad person-

ALICE
Yes! There is! I'm one of them!

NICOLE
Alice-

ALICE
You always hear about people doing
these kinds of things but you never
think you're gonna be one of them.

Nicole takes this in.

NICOLE
And... Did anyone... See?

Alice falters

NICOLE (cont'd)
Alice?

Still, nothing from Alice

ALICE
There was this- fan

NICOLE
Fan. What do you mean-

ALICE
Like- a fan- like- I don't know it
all happened so quickly-

NICOLE
Well-

ALICE
I looked over- and there's, like-
this kid- this fat kid- and he was
wearing merch and he-

NICOLE
What? He what?

ALICE
He said... Hi Alice. He looked over
at me... and that's all he said.

NICOLE
Hi Alice?

ALICE
It was fucking weird.

NICOLE
How did he say it?

ALICE
Like... *Casually*.

NICOLE
Did... You say hi back?

ALICE
No I didn't say HI back-

NICOLE
Well-

ALICE
I left- I drove away-

NICOLE
And you're SURE he saw?

ALICE
Pretty fucking sure.

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walls fully covered by Alice Foxx posters and memorabilia. Benny sits in bed, surrounded by six cats, watching an interview with Alice Foxx on his computer.

ALICE FOXX (V.O.)

(interview)

My fans are my family. When I go through things, they go through things. I'd do anything for my fans.

INT. BENNY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Benny creeps into the living room, awash in the TV's blue light. His GRANDMA watches TV from a very old recliner.

The local news is on: A helicopter shot shows the police, swarming around same area where Benny saw Alice kill Rick.

HEADLINE: "POLICE SEARCH FOR DRIVER OF HIT-AND-RUN"

Benny's eyes grow wide.

BENNY

(under his breath)

I'd do anything for you too...

INT. NICOLE'S GUEST ROOM

Nicole helps Alice into bed...

NICOLE

Listen. All the stuff you just told me? It's a story you made up.

(off Alice)

You're going to wake up tomorrow and everything is going to be just fine.

ALICE

We should cancel the after party tomorrow night.

NICOLE

No. Everything just like normal.

Nicole leaves. Alice stares at the ceiling.

EXT. NICOLE'S DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Alice's stares Nicole's driveway. Her car is gone.

INT. NICOLE'S OFFICE - INTERCUT

A West Hollywood office buzzing with activity. Nicole, sitting at her desk, answers her phone.

NICOLE

Hey baby.

ALICE

I came outside and my car-

NICOLE

Shop took care of it. Don't worry about a thing. Let's focus on tonight.

Alice nods. Maybe everything will be okay...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Benny stares at his phone where he composes a DM to Alice:

BENNY (V.O.)

"Hey Alice! I was the one who saw you kill that guy! But don't worry, your secret's safe with me! Love you!"

He sits in the audience of a talent show. Onstage, a group finishes performing a dramatic skit about date rape.

STUDENT ACTOR

In the hearkening daylight and meridian twilight.... The same holds true. No means no... No. No. NO!

The PRINCIPAL takes the mic --

PRINCIPAL

Let's hear it for the Drama Club and their important, cautionary tale.

Everyone claps. Benny examines his message... Deletes it.

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)

Next up, Benny Amigliano!

Benny startles from his seat and moves towards the stage.

Each step feels like it takes forever. He looks around, terrified. Begins sweating profusely.

BENNY

This show is dedicated to...

As Benny trails off, his eyes drift towards a student in the audience: The older teen he talking to at Alice's show.

This is **CHASE THOMPSON**, the school quarterback...

And Benny's life-long crush.

Benny nods to a nearby TEACHER... and Alice Foxx's music begins to play. He starts dancing.

Slowly at first then more emphatically. And Benny can't take his eyes off Chase. Then, a JOCK calls out:

JOCK
NICE MOVES!

Benny goes silent, all confidence: gone.

BENNY
Just kidding.

And Benny scurries offstage.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Benny walks down the hall, so embarrassed.

Up ahead, he sees Chase talking with a group. The group turns to see Benny looking. And Benny quickly walks away.

INT. EMPTY STADIUM - SUNSET

Alice walks through the empty stadium, the setup crew just getting to work...

NICOLE (O.S.)
Yo!

Alice turns to see Nicole, standing onstage.

NICOLE
How you doing?

Alice approaches Nicole, climbs up onstage with her help.

NICOLE (cont'd)
You okay?

ALICE
Why wouldn't I be?

Alice manages a smile.

INT. CITY BUS - NIGHT

Benny on his way to Alice's show.

He gazes at the stadium as it approaches.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Alice crouches backstage like a wounded animal. The lights dim. The pyrotechnics begin. Her cue.

But she doesn't move.

INT. THE AUDIENCE - NIGHT

A packed crowd. Benny, on tiptoes, watching the empty stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Nicole approaches Alice. Crouches down beside her.

NICOLE

The guy was a fucking lunatic and the world's a better place with him gone. You need to lock in right now okay?

Alice squeezes her eyes shut, face full of anxiety --

INT. ONSTAGE / AUDIENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Alice steps out, smiling broadly. Benny watches from the crowd, entranced. We're CLOSE ON Alice as she sings. Each camera FLASH triggers a FLASHBACK to last night --

FLASH the car smashes into Rick... *FLASH* Rick SHOUTING at her from the ground... *FLASH* Benny standing to the side...

She goes through the motions: Singing, dancing...

A smile spreads across Benny's face.

INT. THE FORUM - FAN BULLPEN - NIGHT

Show's over. Same meet-and-greet area as last night.

Benny hangs over the railing, anxiously awaiting Alice's arrival... Finally, Alice exits backstage.

Benny's eyes light up. The crowd erupts.

FANS
ALICE! OVER HERE! WE LOVE YOU ALICE!

She makes her way down the line, signing autographs and taking selfies. All smiles, like last night never happened.

HIGH SCHOOL GIRL
Alice my boyfriend broke up with me the same week Jake cheated on you!

ALICE
Wow!

People push and shove. Benny holds his position in the crowd. She reaches Benny. He hands her his Alice Foxx CD.

ALICE (cont'd)
(hardly glancing up)
Didn't know we still sold these...

BENNY
Sorry it's sweaty!

ALICE
(still not looking up)
What's your name?

BENNY
Benny?

ALICE
Love that name.

BENNY
It was my grandpa's before he died from chronic septicemia!

ALICE
Aw...

She signs his name and begins moving down the line.

BENNY
PS - I've been a fan of yours since I was three! Honestly, I feel like we're supposed to be friends!

ALICE
We are friends!

This is all Benny's ever wanted to hear...

But she's already moved on.

BENNY

Alice!

YOUNG MOM

Can you make it out to Heather?

BENNY

Alice wait!

She's almost too far... Benny panics.

BENNY (cont'd)

I saw what happened! Last night!

She keeps signing merch, not looking up.

ALICE

...Come to the show last night?

BENNY

Yeah!

Phew. Okay. Moving on.

BENNY (cont'd)

And I saw you kill that guy!

Over the chaos, nobody else hears it... But Alice sure does.

She looks up and sees BENNY'S round, sweet, smiling face.

Did she just imagine-

BENNY (cont'd)

With your car!

Nope. Thinking fast, with a teeth-clenched GRIN:

ALICE

Wanna come backstage?

BENNY

What?

Alice nods to her bodyguards re: the barriers.

ALICE

Can we move these?

Her security begin readjusting the railings. Others cry out.

BENNY

Seriously?!

OTHER FANS

What?! // Why's he get to go?

ALICE

He- He won! He won the contest!

Alice puts her arm around Benny as she leads him to the other side of the barrier. He FANGIRLS here.

BENNY

OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!!!

This is Benny's dream come true.

INT. BACKSTAGE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Alice shuffles Benny through the cavernous backstage; Benny, bewildered, in complete awe. A group of RECORD EXECs pass --

RECORD EXEC

Great show tonight Alice!

ALICE

Thanks guys!

They keep walking. She speaks in hushed tones. He doesn't.

ALICE (cont'd)

That's a very serious allegation. You can't go around saying stuff like that.

BENNY

I'm sorry.

ALICE

Especially when it's made up.

BENNY

But I saw you.

ALICE

No. You didn't.

BENNY

But you saw me.

Stops abruptly. All humor drops from her face.

ALICE

What do you want?

He looks frightened. An innocent kid.

BENNY
What do I want?

ALICE
Yes. What do you want?

Benny considers... Then --

BENNY
I want to be your friend.

ALICE
My... friend?

BENNY
Your best friend.

The door to her GREEN ROOM swings open.

SOMEONE
There she is!!!!

As Alice regains awareness and enters, she glances back at Benny: standing there, awkwardly shuffling his feet...

And gestures him in.

INT. GREEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

We see the green room in SLO-MO through Benny's eyes: An extravagant array of fancy foods... Beautiful people laughing and hugging... Free soda...

Alice bullshits with a bunch of industry people, over-laughing at jokes that aren't funny.

ALICE
So, I'm watching this cheesy movie last night... And- it was so dumb- basically there's this little kid who, like, witnesses a murder, right?

Nicole's face: *why are you talking about this right now?*

ALICE (cont'd)
And there's this big court scene... And the JUDGE calls the kid to the stand... And they literally have the kid TESTIFY. How dumb is that? I mean, that's not a thing right? Kids can't testify...

Alice's lawyer, **LEE**, 50s, chimes in:

LEE

Sure they can.

ALICE

What? No...

LEE

Kids can testify. Happens all the time. I mean, if they SAW the murder.

ALICE

So, like, what do you think you would've done if you did it?

LEE

I'm not following-

ALICE

In the movie! If you were the murderer, in the movie!

LEE

(laughing)

Jeez I don't know...

ALICE

How would you make sure the kid wouldn't, you know-

LEE

Buy him a car, take him to parties-

ALICE

Any other... Solutions?

LEE

(a chuckle)

That or you gotta kill the kid.

The last thing Alice wanted to hear.

BENNY (O.S.)

You guys talking about Legally Blonde?

The group looks down at Benny, mouth full of hors d'oeuvres.

LEE

(lowers voice)

Make-A-Wish?

Alice quickly decides to go along with this, speaking in hushed tones so Benny can't hear:

ALICE
 Yeah- he's uh- he's from Make-A-Wish.
 The foundation. This is for charity.

Nicole, in an adjacent conversation, overhears and makes a face. *What the fuck is she talking about...?*

LEE
 Oh my god...

BENNY
 What?

ALICE
 He doesn't know.

LEE
 I'm sorry bud.

BENNY
 (oblivious)
 It's okay.

A RECORD EXEC calls out from across the room --

RECORD EXEC
 Yo Alice, we still having that party
 at the crib tonight?

BENNY
 There's a party at the crib?

Alice's face: Oh no.

EXT. BACKSTAGE LOADING DOCK - LATER

Nicole and Alice approach the VIP loading dock.

And yeah, Benny's there too.

Alice's car pulls up. Benny gets in the passenger seat.

BENNY
 You have PINK SEATS?!

NICOLE
 Why is the Make-A-Wish kid getting in
 your car?

ALICE
 It was him.

NICOLE

What?

As Alice gets in, looks over, barely moving her mouth:

ALICE

He saw.

Off Nicole's horror --

INT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT

Alice drives, nervous. Her phone keeps buzzing: Nicole. She silences it. Benny, overwhelmed with excitement.

ALICE

You know, for me, it's like my fans and I have this secret between us -

BENNY

Well I mean especially now because of what I saw you know?

ALICE

Yeah... Exactly... So, I guess I just want to be clear... Uh- It's really really important that you don't tell anybody about this.

BENNY

I would NEVER tell anybody.

ALICE

Not your friends, or teachers, or, you know, the police-

BENNY

Not the police?

Alice realizes she's gonna have to break this down.

ALICE

Okay. Our friendship? It's like... WAY bigger than the police.

BENNY

Bigger than the police?

ALICE

You were right... We were MEANT to be best friends.

(MORE)

ALICE (cont'd)
 So no matter what happens, we're
 gonna keep each others secrets and
 we're gonna be best friends forever

BENNY
 You're just saying that.

ALICE
 No! I NEED you Benny!

BENNY
 ...I need you too.

Benny smiles broadly. Alice manages a smile back.

ALICE
 What's your address?

BENNY
 My address?

ALICE
 (trying to make it fun)
 I'm gonna drive you home!

BENNY
 What about... the party at the crib?

ALICE
 I'm sure your parents must be
 wondering where you are-

BENNY
 My parents died in a fire and my
 grandma thinks I'm asleep.

Alice looks over at Benny. Swallows. Here we go.

EXT. ALICE'S POOL - NIGHT

A full blown house party. Alice and Nicole speak in hushed
 tones beside the pool.

NICOLE
 So basically we're being blackmailed
 by a fourteen year old. That's kind
 of the headline here.

ALICE
 That's not the headline.

NICOLE
 Then what's the headline?

Alice shakes her head. Trying to spin this. Then:

ALICE

"Alice is being nice to a loyal fan because he is a sweet kid that deserves it"

Nicole gives her a look. Come on.

ALICE (cont'd)

...Subheadline: "Then because he likes Alice so much he'll never tell anyone about the whole car incident."

NICOLE

So definitely not blackmail.

BENNY (O.S.)

Alice?

They turn to see a nervous Benny.

BENNY

I accidentally got pee on the toilet seat because I forgot to lift it? But when I used the toilet paper it was like too thin and so I couldn't get it off? So I used all the little towels and put them in the bathtub.

ALICE

Awesome.

NICOLE

I'm gonna grab a drink.

BENNY

May I please have a Shirley Temple?

She stares at the kid. What the fuck. Then goes.

BENNY (cont'd)

(looking at the city)

So many lights it's like...

His voice affected, like he's imagining himself having a moment in a cheesier movie.

BENNY (cont'd)

A magical... Christmas tree.

(MORE)

BENNY (cont'd)
(turns to face her)
I keep thinking about what happened...
And I just think it might've been the
best thing that ever happened to me.
Because it brought us together.

ALICE
I'm... so glad it did.

He smiles broadly. She smiles back.

BENNY
I don't have a ton of friends.

She looks down at him, opening slightly. He IS just a kid...

ALICE
I don't have a lot of friends either.

BENNY
What about all these people?

ALICE
Lot of business partners. Fans
maybe... But... Not many friends.

BENNY
What about the nervous woman?

ALICE
Nicole? She's my sister. And my
manager.

BENNY
Do you feel sad?

ALICE
Sometimes I get lonely.

BENNY
No about last night?

Alice, caught off guard.

ALICE
Maybe lets play a game where we
pretend last night never happened-

BENNY
I just want you to know I think you
did the right thing. He was gonna
ruin everything. Everything you
worked your whole life for... So...
you shouldn't feel sad.

Cautiously, she nods and smiles. This actually feels nice.

BENNY (cont'd)
Even if his family is really sad.

PRELAP: Music, blasting from speakers.

INT. ALICE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A circle of people cheering.

We reveal BENNY; all out dancing in the middle. It's weirdly impressive. Alice stands watching, unsure what to do.

Carlos turns to her and says--

CARLOS
Get in there A!

When others realize she's there, she shifts her attitude to being charmed by the adorableness of this little kid.

Benny, perfectly lip syncing every word, directing his performance towards Alice, a big smile on his face.

CARLOS
Come on Alice! Get into it!

Realizing how many eyes are on her...

She begins mirroring Benny; the two performing an impromptu duet. Benny getting even more into it. He knows EVERY WORD.

They lock eyes. An unspoken contract between them.

INT. ALICE FOXX - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Alice begrudgingly tucks Benny into bed. She goes to leave.

BENNY
I sleep with your music on.

She turns, confused.

BENNY (cont'd)
I'd really like for you to sing me a song. That would be really nice.

She squeezes her eyes shut. Then, barely above a whisper:

ALICE
 (singing)
It's been a tough time...

BENNY
 Oh my gosh.

ALICE
*But you know I can't stay quiet
 now...*

He closes his eyes. She begins walking away.

BENNY
 Keep going please.

Alice reluctantly continues singing as Benny gets sleepier and sleepier and --

EXT. BACKSTAGE - MORNING

Alice walks with her posse. She notices an adorable kid standing alone, holding a CD. Feeling bad, she approaches.

ALICE
 Want me to sign that for you?

Then, from beside her --

A VOICE
 IT'S ALICE FOXX!

And almost immediately, she's SWARMED by TONS of little kids... Hundreds of little smiling faces. There's something horrifying about seeing them all together like this.

ALICE FOXX
 Alright everyone, okay now-

Alice' smiling face turns into panic as she realizes this is actually dangerous and there's no escape. She's surrounded.

LITTLE KIDS
 Alice! / I love you Alice! / Can you
 sign my CD? / Over here!

ALICE FOXX
 HEY! HEY! STOP!

LITTLE KIDS
 YOU'RE IN TROUBLEEEEE...

But they're swarming her... It's like she can't breath...

LITTLE KIDS (cont'd)
WE SAW WHAT YOU DID!!!!

INT. ALICE' BEDROOM - MORNING

Alice starts awake, panting, in a cold sweat, getting her bearings when --

BENNY (O.S.)
Nightmare?

Alice SCREAMS! Benny, in bed beside her.

BENNY
I made you some water.

Her nightmare: just begun.

EXT. ALICE'S MANSION

The sun just coming up. Her patio a mess from last night.

INT. ALICE'S KITCHEN

Alice stares out the window at Benny floating in her pool, sipping a Shirley temple. She's on the phone with Nicole.

NICOLE (PHONE)
The kid said he wanted to be your friend, right? Just give him the best day he's ever had, make him feel like he's your friend... Then, we're done.

ALICE
What if if he doesn't stop? What if he just keeps wanting more and more-

NICOLE (PHONE)
The kid hangs out with you all day... He can't say shit.

ALICE
He'll be an accessory...

NICOLE (PHONE)
What's he gonna say, 'I saw her kill someone and then spent the whole day with her?'

We PUSH IN ON ALICE...

NICOLE (PHONE) (cont'd)
Just give him the best day ever.

Then ON BENNY in the pool, waving....

EXT. POOL - DAY

Alice steps OUTSIDE, grinning at Benny --

ALICE
Wanna have some fun today?!

And over music, we CUT TO A MONTAGE OF BENNY'S BEST DAY EVER:

INT. ALICE'S BASEMENT - DAY

Benny tries on one of Alice's sparkly outfits.

ALICE
This is what I wore at the Grammy's
last year... Let's see some moves!
(off Benny's dancing)
You're such a good dancer!

EXT. DISNEY LAND - DAY

They skip the line at Disney Land together. Alice and Benny, drinking milkshakes, take a photo with Mickey at the front. Alice now genuinely enjoying his company.

Then, Alice notices two adults that seem to notice her too... They look different than fans. They look like cops.

And... they are: DETECTIVE KIM **DURANTE**, 40s, and DETECTIVE KEITH **HESTERMAN**, 50s. As Alice and Benny pass them --

HESTERMAN
Big fan.

Alice smiles back.

ALICE
Thanks!
(to Benny)
Alright lets go!

She shuffles off with an oblivious Benny.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - DAY

The end of a long day. Alice keeps glancing behind as they drive. A car's been following them for a while...

BENNY
Why don't you have a husband?

ALICE
(laughs)
Too busy for a husband.

She changes lanes and the car changes lanes too...

BENNY
But don't you want a family?

ALICE
Everything's work right now.

They pull up to a red light. The car pulls up as well.

BENNY
Well it must be nice having everyone
love you...

Durante and Hesterman from earlier. They smile and wave...

And when the light turns green, they turn right.

Alice watches them drive away.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Alice and Benny approach Alice's driveway. She glances in the rear-view: no longer being followed.

Nicole stands at the end of the driveway.

BENNY
Can we hang out just a little longer?

Alice looks to Benny. He smiles at her.

ALICE
You hungry?

His face lights up. They drive past Nicole.

Off Nicole, so confused --

EXT. IN N' OUT - SUNSET

Flanked by other cars and groups of friends, Alice and Benny chow down, laughing and having the best time. Benny turns on one of Alice's song. She turns it off.

BENNY

What?!

ALICE

I can't listen to my own stuff-

BENNY

Why?! It's the best!

ALICE

I'm off the clock.

Benny considers, then --

BENNY

I remember the first time I heard your music.

ALICE

When was that?

BENNY

I got home one day. And... All the police people and firemen were there. And they told me that my house had got on fire. The stove got broken. And mom and dad got hurt. Like, really hurt. And they weren't coming back.

Alice, startled by Benny's pivot.

BENNY (cont'd)

And when I was in this room that they took me in... Your song was playing. And the woman sitting at the desk told me your parents died when you were young too.

Alice looks at Benny, not sure what to say.

BENNY (cont'd)

Every time it started hurting real bad I put your music on... Didn't make the hurting go away but.... I'd think about how maybe... just maybe... somewhere else... you had the same kinda hurting too. And that made me feel just a little better.

Even though he's the witness to her murder...

Alice can't help but love this kid just a little. And Alice presses play on her song. Benny listens, beaming.

BENNY (cont'd)
This is what I've always wanted.

EXT. BENNY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Alice pulls up to Benny's house.

BENNY
Wanna come in?

ALICE
Benny I gotta get back...

BENNY
Please?
(smiling)
You have to...

Alice looks at Benny's sweet, smiling face...

INT. BENNY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Alice and Benny enter the cluttered house. Benny's grandma asleep on her recliner, TV on.

ALICE
Who else lives here with you?

BENNY
Just us.

They continue moving through the house.

INT. BENNY'S ROOM - EVENING

Alice and Benny enter his room. This is the first room of a mega-fan she's been in. Her face is everywhere. It's a lot.

BENNY
So... This is my room...

ALICE
Poster from my first show ever...

BENNY
I bet it was fun being my age.

ALICE
 It was fun. Then I started having to be
 this... other person... this...
 impossibly perfect person.

Alice notices a pinned up yearbook photo. It's Chase.

ALICE (cont'd)
 Who's this?

BENNY
 Oh, nobody...

ALICE
 Come on.

Benny hesitates, then --

BENNY
 Promise not to tell anyone?

ALICE
 Promise.

BENNY
 That's Chase. He's... the school
 quarterback. I don't know how to tell
 him. But... I think he's really cool.

Benny looks to Alice. She smiles at him.

EXT. ALICE'S CAR - EVENING

As Benny says goodbye to Alice by her car --

BENNY
 Wanna hang out tomorrow?

ALICE
 I wish I could buddy! I wish I could
 just spend all day going to Disney
 World and drinking special milkshakes-

BENNY
 What about next weekend?

ALICE
 We'll see!

BENNY
 I need your phone number!
 (passing his sharpie)
 Here.

He presents his forearm. She hesitates... then scribbles her digits on his small, hairless arm. Alice smiles and winks.

He attempts a wink back. And she drives off.

Benny, watching her go... Wow.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - EVENING

Alice drives, on a call with Nicole.

ALICE
It wasn't as bad as I thought.

NICOLE
Well. Kid's officially an accessory.
No way he can say anything now.

Alice hesitates a beat beat.

NICOLE (cont'd)
Alice?

ALICE
Maybe I'm being weird.

NICOLE
Weird about what?

ALICE
There were these two people we saw at
Disney Land that kep looking at us.

NICOLE
They're called fans.

ALICE
I thought maybe I was being paranoid
but I saw them again when we were
driving away.

NICOLE
You're being paranoid.

Alice nods, trying to believe her... But not so sure.

INT. BENNY'S SCHOOL - DAY

Benny walks through the cafeteria, FUCKING VIBING.

More connected to Alice's music than ever before...

ALICE (OVER HEADPHONES)
*I wanna dive in the ocean with you...
Whisper words that would only make
sense to you...*

While normally he'd feel unsure of himself, he has a newfound swagger. Then, he sees --

CHASE

Sitting at one of the tables, with a group of popular girls.
God. He's so perfect.

Benny steels himself and sits down. No big deal. He starts sweating. A couple girls make faces, noticing Benny.

CHASE
My parents are gonna be out to dinner
and they usually don't get home till
like way late...

MEGAN
Is there gonna be, like, beer and stuff?

CHASE
Obviously *Megan*.

BENNY
(a little too loud)
That's funny because I just became
friends with Alice Foxx.

They all look at him, confused by his non-sequitur.

CHASE
...What?

BENNY
Maybe we could come to your party.

MEGAN
What are you talking about?

BENNY
The pop star? Alice Foxx? Yeah, she's
my new best friend.

The kids look at him like there's something wrong with him.

MEGAN
Why are you lying right now Benny?

BENNY

I'm not.

The kids, weirded out by Benny's seemingly blatant lie.

CHASE

I've got lab.

BENNY

You don't believe me? This is her phone number. On my arm.

He presents his arm, the digits **filled in** to be more distinct. Everyone laughs at Benny as they get up.

BENNY (cont'd)

I could call her right now if you don't believe me.

Benny watches Chase leave with a group of football bros.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS - ALICE'S BUSINESS MEETING - DAY

Alice sits at the head of a long table, flanked by her whole team. She's in a groove. Nicole, holding court.

Alice's phone rings: UNKNOWN NUMBER.

She has a feeling who it is... Lets it go to voicemail.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Benny, calling Alice.

BENNY

(leaving a message)

Hey Alice... Just wanted to call and say hi. I was wondering what you're doing later today.

His voicemail continues over --

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Alice sings in the booth, unaware of Benny's voicemail.

BENNY (V.O.)

Nobody believes me. That... you're my friend. I was having so much fun when we were together that I forgot to post any pictures or anything.

INT. PE - DAY

While everyone else plays dodge-ball, Benny stands off to the side, scrolling through Alice's Instagram.

BENNY (V.O.)

Maybe you could come over later and we could come up with a fun dance or something...

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Back in the cafeteria. Benny finishes his voicemail.

BENNY

PS this is Benny.

He hangs up. Something isn't sitting right with him.

So... He calls again.

EXT. CAPITOL RECORDS - DAY

Benny gets out of an Uber outside of Capitol Records.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS - DAY

A trendy reception area. A **RECEPTIONIST**, 20's, sits at a desk facing the door. Benny enters, approaching.

RECEPTIONIST

Hi there!

BENNY

Oh hello!

RECEPTIONIST

How can I help you?

BENNY

I'm here to see Alice Foxx?

The receptionist nods, amused.

RECEPTIONIST

Well I'm so sorry, but I don't think she's in right now...

BENNY

Maybe you could take a message?

RECEPTIONIST

A message?

BENNY

And you can give it to her when you see her?

She smiles. This kid is adorable.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay...

She picks up a pen. He takes a beat, thinking... Then:

BENNY

Maybe say... I am really sad that you're not paying attention to me. I miss you a lot.

His voice cracks and he begins to cry.

BENNY (cont'd)

I just want us to be together again. You're the only friend I've ever. You're the only one that knows what it's like... I can't go back to just being by myself all the time.

Benny now full on sobbing. The receptionist comes around from the side of the desk and gives him a hug. He cries harder.

INT. THE EDGE DANCE STUDIO - DAY

A fully mirrored dance room. The choreographer rehearses a complicated series of choreography with her DANCERS.

Alice sits to the side, watching. Notices another call from the same number come into her phone.

She composes a text to Benny: "Benny! Super busy atm - hope you're well!"

Benny texts back immediately: "When can we hang out again?"

Alice: "Soon!"

Benny: "Wanna come over?"

Alice: "Cant! With my dancers"

And with that, Alice turns her phone off.

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Benny sits at his computer, depressed, watching an early Alice Foxx performance... She looks younger. And happier. Like this whole performing thing is still fun for her.

He watches the video carefully... Paying careful attention to her lead dancer... He gets up from his computer --

He starts and stops the video, teaching himself the dance moves. An idea forming in his mind...

INT. SUV LIMO - DAY

The backseat of a fancy limousine, Alice and Nicole sit beside each other.

NICOLE

Don't freak out but... A couple detectives reached out.

ALICE

What?

NICOLE

It's probably nothing but- they want you to come by the station.

ALICE

Nicole-

NICOLE

The guy got hit by someone on your security the same night... They're just doing their jobs.

ALICE

I'm not going.

NICOLE

(a beat, then)

This isn't Logan Paul's birthday party.

Alice looks on, unnerved, as the limo pulls up to --

EXT. JEFFERSON THEATER - JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - DAY

Streets crowded with people. Alice exits her limo, all smiles. People snap photos, frantically screaming her name.

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - AUDIENCE AREA

Audience members congregate as the show's staff wrangle them. A pimple-faced PA approaches someone we don't see.

PA

Sorry kid you've gotta be 18 or older
or have a parent's supervision in
order to get inside.

BENNY

My mom's inside already.

Benny smiles, looking up at the stage facing bleachers.

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - STAGE

Alice sits on a couch across from **JIMMY KIMMEL** at his desk.

JIMMY KIMMEL

Okay well I'm here with the great and
brilliant and beautiful Alice Foxx
who is back on tour --

While Jimmy talks, Alice makes a series of silly faces trying to humble herself. The audience eats it up.

JIMMY KIMMEL (cont'd)

She's got a show where she just makes
a bunch of... Funny faces... And...
that's the whole show. Let's watch!

The audience laughs, Alice humble-laughs, goes with the joke for a moment then gives it up:

ALICE

No no, fine fine, I'll be serious.
This um, this tour is super important
to me because we're exploring a
different approach to the music than
we've done in a while...

She scans the audience, making a big, virtue-signally display of connecting with everyone, fire-side chat style.

ALICE (cont'd)

I'm actually going back to my roots
in terms of...

As we scan our audience, we land upon a familiar face:

BENNY

Alice falters, not knowing how to proceed.

Benny waves, smiling broadly. *Holy fuck. He's here.*

JIMMY KIMMEL
...In terms of...

She snaps out of it, attempting to recover.

ALICE FOXX
In terms of just, I guess, the way
I've gotten so used to singing...

...Huh? The sound drops out and Alice can only focus on Benny's little face in the audience. WE CUT IN SLOMO --

ALICE speaking soundlessly, JIMMY asking questions, BENNY, eating it all up... BACK TO NORMAL SPEED.

JIMMY KIMMEL
Alright lets get some questions from
the audience!

Jimmy hops from behind his desk and makes his way up the staircase of his studio audience...

JIMMY KIMMEL (cont'd)
Who wants to be internet famous?

Hands shoot up. Including Benny's. Alice sweats. Feels like Q+A Russian roulette... A woman with GLASSES gets the mic:

GLASSES
Do you have any idea what your next
album is going to be?

Alice smiles, nodding....

ALICE
Such a great question...

She's completely thrown, can't take her eyes off Benny.

JIMMY KIMMEL
Such a great question that you might
have to wait on that one...

ALICE
Sorry what was- Oh why- why the
album- or, what's next? Yeah. Uh.
(keep it light)
Probably something about an ex.

The audience laughs. Phew. Close. Jimmy takes back the mic, deciding who to give it to next. Benny's hand still up --

Jimmy passes it to fan in an ORANGE HOODIE, Alice relieved, until -- BENNY REACHES FROM THE ROW ABOVE AND TAKES THE MIC.

JIMMY KIMMEL

Woah there-

BENNY

(blurting)

Hi Alice, my question is when do you want to hang out next?

The audience titters with laughter. In the --

CONTROL ROOM

Nicole tries to get them to pull away.

NICOLE

Let's move onto the next question.

BACK ONSTAGE

JIMMY KIMMEL

Friend of yours?

The audience, intrigued. Alice, rolling with the punches.

ALICE

Oh we go way way back.

BENNY

I'm her surprise guest!

The audience looks around, confused. Alice swallows. Jimmy clocks that she's feeling weird, begins moving on.

JIMMY KIMMEL

Wow! Some big aspirations here-

BENNY

I'm going to be her main dancer.

The audience titters with laughter. Jimmy goes with it.

JIMMY KIMMEL

What- what does that mean?

Repeating, matter of fact:

BENNY

I'm going to be the main dancer.

JIMMY KIMMEL
The... Main dancer?

BENNY
I'm going to be the main one.

ALICE
(laughing, covering)
Think he means he's gonna be dancing
up a storm in the audience-

BENNY
No I mean I'm going to be the main
dancer. At her concerts and stuff.

ALICE
Uh-

Benny flashes Alice a subtle but threatening look.

BENNY
Because I've just been having a
really hard time being on my own
lately, you know? Sometimes you see
things in life that make you really
need your friends. Terrible things.

Alice's face drops. Benny now full-on blackmailing her.

JIMMY KIMMEL
What... kind of things?

And before Benny can answer --

ALICE
It's true actually! Benny is... He
will be my... Main dancer!

The lights start feeling hot for Alice. All eyes on her.

ALICE
Because Benny is part of one of my all
time favorite charities, Make-A-Wish!

Jimmy now, confused. Benny too.

BENNY
You want me to... make a wish?

ALICE
(laughing)
You already MADE your wish!

Music starts. And Benny begins dancing...

His dance moves are startlingly odd. Spastic and awkward but also strangely inspired. Alice, in a panic, starts singing.

ALICE
(singing)
Show me what it feels like...

She continues singing but Benny's dancing is stealing the spotlight. The audience, now chuckling.

ALICE (cont'd)
(singing)
*I don't want to be let down
But I don't want to let you go
Maybe we can drive real fast
Or maybe we can drive real slow.*

VARIOUS PEOPLE WATCHING THE PERFORMANCE LIVE:

INT. BENNY'S HOUSE - SAME

Benny's grandma at home watching the TV.

She leans forward squinting... Her mouth drops.

INT. CHASE'S BASEMENT - SAME

Chase and football bros interrupt a game of flip cup --

FOOTBALL BRO
Yo isn't that your boy?

INT. POPULAR GIRLS HOUSE - SAME

A few of the girls from school also super impressed --

POPULAR GIRL
Oh my god.

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - DAY

We're back in the studio. The climax of the song.

Benny, going all out. His moves are passionate but over the top. Alice glances at Benny, trying to keep her composure.

ALICE
 (singing)
*Super flashy, superficial, show me
 what it feels likeeee...*

The song ends. Alice looks like she got punched in the gut, bracing herself for humiliation... **BUT THE CROWD LOSES IT!**

Alice looks to Benny, beaming, soaking in the applause.

BENNY
 Now we can hang out all the time!

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL STUDIO - GREEN ROOM - AFTER SHOW

Alice's private room at the studio. Benny sits there, wide-eyed, stuffing his mouth with hors d'oeuvres.

ALICE
 You can't just be the- the-

BENNY
 The main dancer?

ALICE
 That's not a thing! There's a whole selection process and-

BENNY
 I've been having nightmares!

ALICE
 Okay, Benny-

BENNY
 About that night! And if I don't spend enough time with you then maybe the secret will somehow slip out you know? Like, I'll have to talk to somebody about it and-

ALICE
 What are you doing right now?

BENNY
 What?

ALICE
 Okay, stop it, you know what you're doing Benny, you're not stupid-

BENNY
 I'm not stupid you're stupid-

ALICE

You're threatening me! You're saying if I don't do what you want me to do, you're gonna tell people what you saw! You're blackmailing me Benny!

BENNY

You KILLED someone! And I could tell people. But I won't. Because you're my friend. And friends spend time together. And friends sing, and dance together. And that's what we're gonna do together, too.

Alice tries to formulate a response.

BENNY (cont'd)

You sing all these songs about being lonely but the one time someone wants to be your friend you want to run away.

A knock at the door.

ALICE

Come in!

A STAGEHAND shuffles our TWO DETECTIVES, Hesterman and Durante into the room. Alice tries hiding her terror.

STAGEHAND

Alice, these two insisted they needed to talk to you.

DURANTE

Hey there, this is Detective Hesterman, I'm Detective Durante.

ALICE

Now's not really the best-

HESTERMAN

We've been trying to schedule a proper appointment but haven't been able to find a time...

They both clock Benny, awkwardly standing to the side.

DURANTE

Just have a few questions and we'll be outta your hair.

ALICE

Okay...

DURANTE

This is always an uncomfortable question in this situation... But could you walk us through where you were Friday night after your show?

ALICE

May I ask why?

HESTERMAN

We're trying to get a clearer picture of what happened and are hoping you could help-

ALICE

Am I, like
(laughing)
A suspect?

DURANTE

No no, we're just big fans and want to cover our bases. Remember what you did that night?

She looks at Benny, who stands behind the cops...

ALICE

I- I had a show that night.

HESTERMAN

What about after your show?

Benny's face: *This is really bad...*

ALICE

Afterwards?

She starts to sweat.

ALICE (cont'd)

After the SHOW?

DURANTE

...Yes ma'am.

ALICE

I mean I don't know... It was kind of a long night. Tough... To remember...

She's floundering. Her world closing in. Until --

BENNY

You were with me.

Everyone turns to Benny.

ALICE
This is... This is Benny. He's...
(a beat, then)
My main dancer.

Detective Hesterman squints at Alice.

DURANTE
That true?

ALICE
Mhmm. He's the best dancer I've ever
seen dance. In all of dancing.

DURANTE
Sorry I meant is it true that you
were with each other that night?

ALICE
Oh. Duhh. Jesus. I'm over here like
"Oh my god, music, dancing" meanwhile
there's like- a dead person on our
hands- Well not OUR hands but-

The detectives look at her, confused. Benny shakes his head
like, *what are you doing?* Alice regroups, somber.

ALICE (cont'd)
Yes, it's true.
(sanctimonious)
A big part of the foundation is doing
activities. With the children. Making
wishes come true.

Benny starts acting sick again. Carlos enters the room.

CARLOS
Everything alright in here?

DURANTE
We were just leaving.

Benny winks at Alice.

EXT. JIMMY KIMMEL LIVE - DAY

Benny and Alice exit the studio. Fans SCREAM.

Benny stops to sign an autograph for a LITTLE KID, only a
few years younger than he is. OFF ALICE WE CUT TO --

A MONTAGE OF BENNY'S DANCE GOING VIRAL

E! NEWS -- Two peppy E! NEWS ANCHORS address camera, referencing video of Benny's surprise appearance --

E! NEWS ANCHOR
The kid just stepped out from the audience and started dancing!

IMAGES OF BENNY appear onscreen --

E! NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
Turns out little Benny is part of the Make-A-Wish Foundation!

TIK-TOK -- A rapid series of random kids and celebrities also doing the same dance -- clearly doing it as a joke.

E! NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
And this... "unique" dance is catching on like wildfire-

BENNY'S SOCIAL MEDIA -- His follows rising from 27 to 600K.

E! NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.) (cont'd)
People are calling it "The Benny"!

RAPID FLASHES OF -- every Tabloid, Benny's face in Close-up - dancing. We END OUR MONTAGE WITH --

INT. BENNY'S HOME - NIGHT

Benny enters, his grandma sitting in her chair.

GRANDMA
I saw a boy... on the television. He looked just like you. He was singing a song... with that girl from your wall. He looked so happy.

Benny takes this in.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

High school students crowd around Benny. Kids bombard him with questions and he revels in the attention.

KID
What's it like being on TV?

BENNY
Awesome actually!

KID #2

I didn't know you were sick.

BENNY

Thanks Eric, just when I forgot I had a deadly disease.

KID #3

Can you do The Benny?

BENNY

I don't know-

ALL THE KIDS

DO THE BENNY!!!

Finally, Benny relents and "Does the Benny"

The kids all cheer. Then: Chase walks by.

Ennio Morricone wouldn't be too much here.

Chase smiles at Benny and ALSO DOES THE BENNY!!!

Benny's face: Holy shit.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM - DAY

The same rehearsal studio except this time, Benny is there too. The CHOREGRAPHER stands at the front of the room, running rehearsal. Benny, positioned as the... main dancer.

CHOREGRAPHER

Alright well let's get into our first positions and run it back again!

As the choreographer leads Benny and team through another dance, Nicole and Alice stand off to the side.

ALICE

We could keep putting him through rehearsals... hire a coach and... keep him in the background...

Benny calls out from across the room.

BENNY

Alice! Look at me!

He does a series of terrible dance moves. The choreographer and dancers look at Alice, confused what's happening here.

NICOLE

The kid is dragging us by our fucking labias.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS - DAY

Alice and Benny sit with Alice's entire team. Nicole looks on, nervous. Carlos jumps in:

CARLOS

So Benny, what kind of goals do you have long term?

BENNY

Be Alice's best friend?

CARLOS

What are your *long-term* goals?

BENNY

Be Alice's best friend *forever*.

Everyone laughs. Across the table Nicole confers with Alice.

NICOLE

You really want to let this kid control your career?

ALICE

You're the one that said I should try and become his friend.

Nicole gives her a look. Benny, shmoozing with the execs.

ALICE (cont'd)

He could tell.

NICOLE

We can do things too.

Alice looks to Benny. He smiles at Alice.

INT. CAPITOL RECORDS - HALLWAY - DAY

Benny and Nicole walk down the hallway towards the exit.

BENNY

Everyone is so nice here!

NICOLE

Yeah...

BENNY

Are they my friends now too?!

NICOLE

It doesn't really work like that-

BENNY

Why not?

NICOLE

I think you should be careful.

BENNY

(suddenly concerned)

Careful?

NICOLE

This is a dangerous industry.

EXT. CAPITOL RECORDS - DAY

Benny and Nicole exit.

NICOLE

I'm just gonna say this once. Because I like you. I actually like you a lot. You need to leave Alice alone.

Benny takes this in.

BENNY

Okay... Well... I'M just gonna say this once? YOU need to leave Alice alone.

Nicole stands there, shocked. And Benny gets in the car.

Alice exits the building.

NICOLE

We need to end this.

The two exchange a look. And Alice gets in the car.

INT. SUV LIMO - DAY

Benny and Alice sit in the backseat of an SUV Limo.

BENNY

So, like, you know how in your songs, you're always singing about like being yourself and stuff?

ALICE

Mhmm?

BENNY

Well I've been thinking, like, don't you think if you were being yourself then you'd just tell the police and stuff what happened that night?

ALICE

It's more complicated than that...

BENNY

But you're always saying, like, be yourself, no matter what the cost, like, wouldn't that mean-

ALICE

It's way different Benny... Sometimes in order to be yourself, you have to pretend to be someone else.

BENNY

Hm.

ALICE

(beat, then)

When does this end?

BENNY

When does what end?

ALICE

I have goals-

BENNY

Jail?

ALICE

Benny.

BENNY

Is jail the long term goal?

ALICE

No. Jail is not the long term goal.

BENNY

Then you know what we're gonna do?

ALICE

...What?

BENNY

We're gonna do a music video.

ALICE

What?

Benny shifts to full on, manic pitch mode --

BENNY

*You'll be a fox, because you're Alice
Foxx, and I'll be a cat because my
new name is Benny Katzz...*

WE BEGIN SEEING THE MUSIC VIDEO SHOOT AS IT'S DESCRIBED --

INT. STUDIO - MUSIC VIDEO SHOOT - NIGHT

An elaborate music video set. Think a Tim Burton-ized Billie Eilish music video. The design is extremely imaginative.

BENNY

*We're in a magical candy forest and
our animals are friends with each
other and we're basically prancing
around this forest....*

BENNY parades around the forest in a bizarre, spiky cat jumpsuit. Alice, prancing around in a full fox costume.

BENNY (cont'd)

*And we're best friends in the forest
because we are always fighting off
all the other animals.*

We watch as Benny and Alice, in dance moves, fight off a series of other dancers dressed as bears, lions, and wolves.

BENNY (cont'd)

*But then one day, all the animals
combine and form like one GIANT animal.*

We see this too, the animals all forming together...

BENNY (cont'd)

*And everyone is singing and
dancing... And then it's like --*

Benny sees something he doesn't like and calls --

BENNY (cont'd)

CUT! CUT!

Everyone stops what they're doing. The DIRECTOR calls out --

DIRECTOR

Benny you can't call cut-

Alice jumps in --

ALICE
HE CAN DO WHATEVER HE WANTS!

The Director, so confused. Benny, taking over --

BENNY
Alice you're a fox! You need to be
more prancy like a real fox!

ALICE
I'm being prancy-

BENNY
WAY prancier-

DIRECTOR
What are we-

ALICE
IT'S FINE! I'M PRANCING!

She completely surrenders to Benny's directing. The Director
throws his hands up, storming off set.

BENNY
Is everything okay? I was thinking
this could be a really fun time....

ALICE
Do you know how much all this cost?

BENNY
A lot?

ALICE
Yes Benny, a lot. And I had to
convince my record label that this was
a great idea. I had to explain to a
room of adults that all of us becoming
animals would be really cool.

Carlos, the head of the label approaches.

CARLOS
Quick word?

INT. STUDIO BACK ROOM

Alice and Nicole enter a backroom of the studio with Carlos.

CARLOS
Some people at the label reached out,
there's been complaints about Benny-

NICOLE
Complaints?

CARLOS
Look it's very nice what you did-
with the foundation and all that- but
what's going on here?

Alice glances to Nicole

CARLOS (cont'd)
Like... You know this isn't...
good.... Right? You know that?

ALICE
Look- we're- we're trying some new
stuff out-

CARLOS
Seeriously guys, what the fuck is
going on? We've got this kid ordering
everyone around- what is this?

ALICE
Can we tell you something that you
won't tell anyone else? Can you keep
like entirely a secret?

NICOLE
Alice come on- no-

ALICE
We're family right? The whole label?

CARLOS
Of course we're a family.

NICOLE
No- Not a family-

CARLOS
Are you in trouble?

NICOLE
We can't-

CARLOS
Okay then I'm shutting this whole
thing down.

ALICE
Nicole he could help! We can't do
this on our own!

NICOLE
No- Alice-

ALICE
I hit Rick Ferraro. I did it.

Carlos, processing.

ALICE (cont'd)
And... Benny saw.

CARLOS
I'm calling legal.

ALICE
(rambling)
He doesn't always want bad things
though, Like, he's actually a nice
kid, but I don't know if he actually
knows what he's doing too-

CARLOS
We need to tell the label.

ALICE
Well- Wait a second- that's- we can't
do that.

CARLOS
Well sorry but, yes, we have to- the
board needs to know about this-

NICOLE
Carlos hold on a second-

CARLOS
This is some serious fucking shit here-

NICOLE
This is obviously very delicate-

ALICE
You said we were family though-

Carlos begins backing out of the room-

CARLOS
I'm sure it will all be fine-

ALICE
No no hold on-

CARLOS
I can't believe I put my entire
reputation on the line for this, the
label is going to be ruined-

NICOLE
Carlos wait-

CARLOS
No I won't wait-

Carlos pushes past them into the

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Where Benny was waiting, watching the whole thing. Carlos
rushes by. A moment between them --

CARLOS
Excuse me-

And as Carlos rushes down the stairs --

Benny EXTENDS HIS LEG --

Tripping Carlos.

Causing him to plummet face first --

SMASHING his head at the bottom with a loud

SNAP

Benny looks down the stairwell.

Carlos, motionless.

Alice and Nicole, in pursuit of Carlos enter the stairwell.

NICOLE
CARLOS?!

BENNY
He fell-

ALICE
What are we going to do- people are
right outside-

BENNY
I did what you did! I did exactly
what you did!

A PA rushes out, into the bottom of the stairwell --

PA
Carlos? Oh my god, Carlos-

The PA opens the downstairs stairwell door --

PA (cont'd)
HEY WE NEED HELP IN HERE!

The Director and others rush out, kneeling to Carlos.

DIRECTOR
He's not breathing-

As everyone panics, Alice looks to Benny.

BENNY
He was going to tell.

Off Alice's horror, WE CUT TO --

THE FINISHED MUSIC VIDEO

As insane and magical and wonderful and weird as Benny
imagined it. WE PULL OUT TO --

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

A group of kids gathered around Benny, watching the video,
laughing and loving it.

CHASE (O.S.)
Benny!!!

Benny glances up to see Chase and a few FOOTBALL BROS.

CHASE
That music video was FIRE! The way
all the animals came together-

BENNY
You really liked it?

CHASE
What's Alice Foxx like?

BENNY
She's the best!

CHASE
We're having a party after the game...
Think you and Alice could come?

BENNY
Definitely!

EXT. CAPITOL RECORDS - DAY

Alice exits the recording studio and begins walking to her car. Benny's voicemail to Alice plays.

BENNY (V.O.)
(voicemail)
So yeah, the party is Friday and it's
gonna be really fun... Everyone's
really excited to meet you...

A MINIVAN with a woman and her kids slows down. They keep glancing at Alice. Finally, Alice spins around --

ALICE
WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU LOOKING AT?!

WOMAN
You're... Alice Foxx...

ALICE
NO I'M NOT!!!!!!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Benny sits in class, staring out the window. A knock on the door. The PRINCIPAL enters.

PRINCIPAL
Sorry to interrupt.
(turning to the class)
Benny? Can I borrow you?

BENNY
Sorry, Mr. Parker... I think the
library's upstairs.

Benny looks around to see if his joke landed. It didn't.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Benny exits the classroom. Two cops are there.

BENNY
What's this about?

They all begin walking down the hall.

They pass the Drama Students from earlier who "Do The Benny" to him... Realizing how cool this must look, being led down the hallway by two cops, Benny dances back to them.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Benny steps into the Principal's office. Detectives Hesterman and Durante sit there. Benny's face blanches.

HESTERMAN
Hi Benny.

DURANTE
Good to see you again.

BENNY
Good to see you... too.

HESTERMAN
Seems you've been busy.

PRINCIPAL
Wanna take a seat?

Benny looks around the room, uncertain.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - DAY

Alice drives. Smokes. Begins hyperventilating... Pulls over. And has a good old fashioned, full-blown panic attack.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - SAME

The Detectives and Principal sit across from Benny, playing CCTV footage of Benny at In-N-Out the night Alice hit Rick.

DURANTE
Can you tell us what you're doing in this video Benny?

BENNY
I'm getting my special milkshake.

DURANTE
Special milkshake?

BENNY
I invented it. It's a combination of all
the different flavors.

HESTERMAN
Weren't you with Alice Foxx that night?

BENNY
What?

HESTERMAN
When we talked to you and Alice, you
said you were with Alice Foxx.

BENNY
I know. I saw her after.

HESTERMAN
After...

BENNY
Yeah...

HESTERMAN
Where?

BENNY
What do you mean where?

DURANTE
Where'd you see her?

BENNY
After my milkshake...

DURANTE
Where though?

Benny thinks, then --

BENNY
...The foundation?

The detectives look towards the principal.

PRINCIPAL
We talked to your grandma and-

BENNY

(laughing, covering)
Oh I wouldn't listen to my grandma,
she doesn't remember stuff-

PRINCIPAL

There's no record of you being part
of the Make-A-Wish Foundation...
We've heard nothing about this
condition you've claimed to have.

BENNY

(confident)
Well did you talk to the nurse?

PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Becker hasn't heard anything
about it either.

BENNY

Oh. Shoot... I forgot. She doesn't
know. It's very sad so I actually
decided to never talk about it with
her... THAT was a big decision...

PRINCIPAL

Benny, it's important that you're
being totally honest with us here.

BENNY

Oh god-

Benny starts coughing and pretending to be sick again.

PRINCIPAL

No Benny- No. Stop.

He stops. Shrinks from the adults in the room.

PRINCIPAL (cont'd)

This is a very serious thing, to
pretend you're sick like that-

BENNY

Am I in trouble?

DURANTE

I think that depends on how honest
you are with us here today.

HESTERMAN

We have your tire tracks at the scene
of a crime.

BENNY

But I don't have a car...

They remove a picture of his bike. Benny, out of his depth.

DURANTE

Now. What happened after you bought this milkshake? And how did you first meet Alice Foxx?

Benny looks at the detectives. Tries to decide what to say.

BENNY

Our friendship's bigger than the police.

This doesn't fly. Not even a little.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Parent pickup line, Alice's car among the long line of cars.

Kids walking by take pictures and parents in their cars are equally shocked to see her. Benny approaches, apprehensive.

Who knows what he's told them...

INT. INSTAGRAM LIVE - NIGHT

An Instagram Live feed where we SEE ALICE in a low-ceiling rec room, surrounded by beer-drunk high-schoolers, everyone holding a camera light in her face...

INT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nicole sits at her counter, watching the live feed in horror. We INTERCUT WITH --

INT. HIGH SCHOOL PARTY - NIGHT

Alice shit-faced, in the middle of a swarm of teens. A staggering new low for Alice. Her phone rings: NICOLE.

ALICE

(answering)

NIC!!!!

Nicole, still watching the Instagram Live feed:

NICOLE

What the fuck is going on?

ALICE
I'M AT A PARTY!

NICOLE
I can see that! Five million other
people can see it too!

Alice, deliriously resigned to Benny's authority:

ALICE
IT'S NOT SO BAD!

NICOLE
You need to leave.

ALICE
I CAN'T! I HAVE TO DO WHATEVER BENNY
SAYS! HE WANTS ME HERE!

NICOLE
This needs to stop NOW.

ALICE
IT WILL NEVER STOP!
IT WILL NEVER STOP!!!

The kids all cheer, psyched.

KIDS
IT WILL NEVER STOP!!!

The line goes dead.

NICOLE
Hello? Hello?

ON BENNY thrilled to be the center of attention.

He looks at Chase who looks at him and quickly looks away.

AND WE DRUNKENLY SPIRAL THROUGH A RAPID MONTAGE OF ALICE'S
NIGHTMARISH HIGH SCHOOL PARTY --

Flip cup, beer pong, shots, spin the bottle...

She attempts to completely surrender to what's happening
here. OUR MONTAGE ENDS WITH: Alice and Benny, on the couch.

BENNY
P.S. I told them you could also come
to Jen's birthday next week. She's
obviously a huge fan.

ALICE

I've been thinking a lot about it and what if you and me just go back to how things were... Hang out here and there but, you know, we're okay with not seeing each other all the time.

BENNY

I'm gonna grab a Shirley.

ALICE

It would make me happy.

BENNY

You said you were my friend-

ALICE

I am your friend.

BENNY

...Then why are you trying to get away from me?

Alice can't take it anymore.

ALICE

Benny this is out of control-

BENNY

I've been a loyal Foxx-

ALICE

For a while I thought you actually cared about me, that you were the one person that actually saw me and understood who I was but now I realize you're just like everyone else.

Benny takes this in.

BENNY

What if... I just want to keep things the way they've been going?

Alice shakes her head. Her last resort.

ALICE

Then... I tell everyone you have a crush on Chase.

Beat.

BENNY

You wouldn't do that. No-one knows about that. That was a secret.

After a beat --

BENNY (cont'd)

Okay.

Benny starts towards the make-shift DJ booth.

ALICE

Wait- where are you going?
What are you doing?

BENNY

Something I should've done a long time ago-

Benny picks up the microphone, turns it on...

BENNY (cont'd)

Can I have everyone's attention?

ALICE

Alright, Benny, okay, please-

BENNY

I'm tired of carrying around this secret. I'm tired of the pressure.

Alice finally wrestles the microphone away from Benny and --

ALICE

Benny- STOP-

BENNY

Chase! I think you're really cool!

Alice is shocked. Everyone else is too. Chase laughs.

CHASE

I think you're cool too...

People chuckle, not following. Benny goes for it.

BENNY

Chase I'm in love with you! I have been since the third grade!

We see the kid's faces...

One person starts clapping. Then they all do.

Chase approaches. A look of intensity in his eyes.
 Is he going to punch him? Then --
 His eyes fill with tears... And he embraces Benny.

CHASE
 (whisper)
 I feel the same way...

And the two KISS!

Everyone applauds LOUDER! The football bros too!

CUT BACK TO REALITY

Chase stands there... Not on the same page at all.

CHASE (cont'd)
 You gotta leave man.

Kids start to laugh. A few "Do The Benny." And Benny realizes: *They've been doing the dance just to mock him.*

In horror, Benny runs past them, tears flooding his eyes.

EXT. CHASE'S PARTY - NIGHT

Benny sits outside Chase's party, devastated. Alice approaches. Sits beside him without saying anything.

BENNY
 Why do you like me?

ALICE
 What?

BENNY
 What do you like ABOUT me?

ALICE
 You're... smart... and funny... you know how to make a good milkshake...

BENNY
 I have something to tell you.

ALICE
 ...What?

He gulps. Eyes, brimming with tears.

ALICE (cont'd)

Benny?

Benny BURSTS OUT SOBBING --

BENNY

I'M BEING SU PENISED!

Alice can't help but laugh.

ALICE

W-what?

BENNY

I'm being... SU PENISED!

Then, what he means dawns on her in the most terrible way.

ALICE

Do you mean... Subpoenaed?

(Benny nods)

What- what happened?

BENNY

They came to talk to me...

ALICE

Who did?

BENNY

The detectives-

ALICE

What- what did you say?

BENNY

They knew I wasn't part of the foundation. They knew I wasn't sick or anything...

ALICE

Okay. So-

BENNY

I told them... that I tricked you.

ALICE

You... tricked me?

BENNY

That I made up the whole thing about being sick so that you'd be my friend. And they believed me.

(MORE)

BENNY (cont'd)
(he shakes his head)
But then they asked me where we went
that night... And... I got confused.
Because like what if I said one thing
and you said a different thing?

Alice nods, trying to understand what Benny is saying.

BENNY (cont'd)
So I told them that I wasn't going to
be saying anything else. And they
said that then I was suspended from
school. And I said that was fine. And
then they said that they were going
to have to su-penis me.

ALICE
Subpoena.

BENNY
For a depository.

ALICE
A deposition?

BENNY
That one.

Alice, processing...

ALICE
...When?

INT. NICOLE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nicole flips out in her living room, trying to make sense of
what Alice is saying to her....

NICOLE
MONDAY!?

ALICE
That's what he said.

NICOLE
Alice. This is everything we've ever
dreamed of. Since we were kids. This
is it. Here we are. And the career
you've built... It supports children
and families... This isn't just us
anymore. People's lives are at stake.

Alice listens, trying to make sense of this.

NICOLE (cont'd)
The kid fucking killed Carlos.

ALICE
He was trying to help-

NICOLE
There's something wrong with him.

ALICE
There's something wrong with me too.

Nicole shakes her head.

NICOLE
We don't know what he's capable of.

ALICE
What do you want me to do?

NICOLE
You don't have to do anything.

ALICE
I don't want to hurt him.

NICOLE
I don't want to hurt him either.

Alice makes eyes with Nicole.

NICOLE (cont'd)
But it's him or us, Alice.

Alice takes this in... And nods. An agreement.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT

Alice and Benny drive down sunset. Benny, completely oblivious to the conversation Alice has just had...

Up ahead, the sign for IN-N-OUT.

ALICE
Hungry?

BENNY
Trying to get skinny for all the dancing... I've been getting tired.

ALICE
Today's a cheat day.

Alice pulls in to the

EXT. IN N OUT - DRIVE THROUGH - NIGHT

They talk into the order box.

IN-N-OUT (O.S.)
What can I get you?

ALICE
What do you want?

BENNY
Salad maybe?

Alice looks back at the menu.

ALICE
We'll have two of everything on the menu, please.

BENNY
Alice what are you doing!?

ALICE
And two milkshakes. Vanilla on the top, chocolate on the bottom, and just a little bit of strawberry in the middle.

Off Benny, thrilled Alice knows his special shake.

EXT. IN-N-OUT - LOT - NIGHT

Surrounded by food, Alice watches Benny eat his burger. But Alice is too anxious to eat anything. Benny, food covering his face, waxes poetic.

BENNY
It's so cool they made all this for us. So many delicious ingredients...

He holds up the burger, examining it.

BENNY (cont'd)
Think about it. All these really smart people come together and are like okay we need to make this really amazing food. All the lettuce growers and all the best ketchup makers...

Benny seems taken by it for a second.

BENNY (cont'd)
 I wonder if they have a big meeting
 about it. I want to go to that meeting.
 (off Alice)
 Is it stale?

ALICE
 No. It's okay.

Alice looks at Benny and smiles.

ALICE (cont'd)
 Drink your shake before it melts.

Alice hits play on the stereo. One of her songs starts. But
 after a few moments, Benny stops the song.

ALICE (cont'd)
 Don't you want to listen?

BENNY
 It's okay. You're off the clock.

And Benny smiles at Alice.

INT. NICOLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nicole watches her two daughters "Doing The Benny". A
 darkness clouding her eyes.

INT. BENNY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Benny tries on different outfits in the mirror, getting
 ready for his big night. His Grandma calls out --

GRANDMA (O.S.)
 Benny?

INT. BENNY'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A HONK. Benny peers through the shades. Sees Nicole's car.

BENNY
 My friends are here...

Benny and his grandma share a smile.

EXT. BENNY'S DRIVEWAY - SAME

Nicole sits in her car, sick with guilt. Benny exits the house, psyched. Gets in Nicole's car.

BENNY
Where's Alice?

NICOLE
She's getting burgers!

BENNY
We had burgers yesterday...

NICOLE
She's getting some for the show!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL - ESTABLISHING - EVENING

Flocks of fans enter the stadium, ready for Alice's show.

INT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL - MAKEUP ROOM - SAME

Alice, swarmed with HAIR AND MAKEUP PEOPLE. She grits her teeth, takes a labored breath.

INT. DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A frenetic office. Law enforcement agents preparing to mobilize, Detectives Durante and Hesterman among them.

DURANTE
This calls for a special milkshake

INT. NICOLE'S CAR - NIGHT

Nicole and Benny drive down Mulholland Drive. Benny rides shotgun, feet on her dash. He tries making small talk.

BENNY
So... how many brothers and sisters do you have?

NICOLE
Can you take your feet off there?

Nicole glances in the rear-view. No-one behind her. Up ahead, an overlook above a sprawling Los Angeles.

NICOLE (cont'd)
Wait a second.

BENNY
What?

NICOLE
I think... Yes!

Nicole pulls over.

NICOLE (cont'd)
This is where Alice wrote HEARTBREAK.

BENNY
No... No way.

NICOLE
This is the spot...

Benny looks to her, not sure if she's being for real.

NICOLE (cont'd)
Jake had just cheated on her. Again.
And she was looking for somewhere to
clear her head. So she came up here.
(Benny, fascinated)
Every time we got stuck, I'd send her
here. "To the lookout," I'd say.

BENNY
The lookout?

NICOLE
That's right... Maybe it's just
superstition but... She's written
some of her best stuff up here.

BENNY
Magical maybe...

NICOLE
But... we've gotta get to the show.

BENNY
Wait- maybe I should go up there for
a second. For good luck, you know?

NICOLE
Right now?

BENNY
Maybe just really quick?

INT. ALICE'S GREENROOM - NIGHT

Alice's eyes are closed, listening to a guided meditation about self-love. A SOOTHING VOICE speaks:

SOOTHING VOICE (V.O.)
*Focus on a time where you felt guilt.
 Or shame. And I want you to tell that
 part of yourself "I accept you." That
 part of yourself you think nobody
 will ever accept. Speak to that
 part... "I forgive you."*

knock, knock, knock. Alice's eyes SHOOT OPEN

ALICE
 Yeah.

The CONCERT MANAGER pops his head into the room --

CONCERT MANAGER
 Team's ready for you.

ALICE
 Where's Benny?

CONCERT MANAGER
 Supposed to be here by now...

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT

Benny runs over to the ledge. Gravel skitters

NICOLE
 Careful up there!

Nicole grimaces at what she's considering.

INT. BACKSTAGE - SAME

Alice, trying to figure out where Benny is.

ALICE
 What about the car service?

CONCERT MANAGER
 They said the car was canceled-

ALICE
 What? What do you mean?

Alice has a thought.

ALICE (cont'd)
Where's Nicole?

CONCERT MANAGER
Nobody's been able to reach her.

Thoughts race through Alice's mind... She grabs her phone, begins calling. Gets Nicole's voicemail.

NICOLE - VOICEMAIL
Nicole Berkowitz. Leave a message.

ALICE
Nicole where the fuck are you?

The Concert Manager waits for Alice impatiently.

CONCERT MANAGER
We gotta start the show.

Alice falters.

CONCERT MANAGER (cont'd)
Let's go.

Alice takes a moment to internally PANIC:

FAST CUTS: THE MOMENT SHE KILLED RICK, THE MOMENT WITH CARLOS AT THE MUSIC VIDEO, BENNY'S FACE, AND --

Relenting, she begins to walk. Stepping --

ONSTAGE

Fog BLASTS. The crowd ERUPTS. The opening notes to her first song. We're TIGHT on her face, taking in the whole situation.

Then, Alice's focus turns to a kid in the audience...

Around Benny's same age.

We PUSH IN ON the kid's face...

His unconditional love... His smiling face... And its too much for her. She shakes her head. No.

And suddenly, she's moving towards the other side of the stage. Confused looks from the audience. She walks --

BACK OFFSTAGE

CONCERT MANAGER (cont'd)
Where are you going?

ALICE
I need my car-

CONCERT MANAGER
What are you talking about?

ALICE
MY CAR. I NEED IT.

The Concert Manager peels off, calling for help:

CONCERT MANAGER
(into her radio)
She's trying to leave! Alice is
trying to leave the venue!

Alice keeps moving, people panicking all around her.

INT. DETECTIVE'S CAR - SAME

Detective Hesterman and Durante weave through traffic, cop cars behind them, sirens blaring.

INT. BACKSTAGE LOADING DOCK - SAME

Alice rushes the area where VIP cars are kept --

ALICE
I NEED MY CAR NOW!

Fans outside the venue noticing a hysterical Alice.

Concert Manager, in pursuit.

CONCERT MANAGER
Yes, she's trying to leave, she's by VIP
parking, call security, call her manager -

ROADIE
They said no, they said no.

Alice sees the box of keys. Spots the KEY FOB for her car.

Grabs it. Rushes towards --

HER CAR

Alice SPRINTING, we can barely keep up. Paparazzi and concert organizers in pursuit, camera FLASHES our only light.

VOICES
ALICE!!! ALIIIIICE!!!!

Unknown voices chase her through the night as she gets in --
HER RANGE ROVER

The engine ROARS to life, headlights spin from their
housing. Engine in REVERSE, she peels out of the garage --

INTO THE ALLEY

She GUNS it.

Someone stands, blocking the EXIT GATE, waving to stop.

ALICE
MOVE! PLEASE MOVE!

They DIVE out of the way as Alice SMASHES THROUGH THE GATES!

BACK INSIDE ALICE'S CAR

Alice peels out onto the main road, trying to call Nicole --

ALICE (cont'd)
Come on... Come on...

BACK TO NICOLE

Her phone ringing. She silences it. Needs to follow through.

IN ALICE'S CAR

She drives, freaking out...

Goes to "Find My Friends" app. Sees Nicole's location.

She drives faster, tearing down the street...

INT. NICOLE'S CAR - NIGHT

Benny closes his eyes and mutters a wish to the imaginary
magic of the very precarious lookout...

BENNY
And please tell my parents in heaven I
said hello. And please let Alice have
the greatest show she's ever had...
And please make sure we stay best
friends forever no matter what.

Nicole, approaching Benny, takes a steadying breath

NICOLE
Okay... Okay...

Nicole places her hand on Benny's back.

BENNY
I think I feel the magic.

The two, now just inches from the edge of the steep lookout.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT

Alice comes racing up the street and sees Nicole's car.

She spins to a stop, gets out of the car --

ALICE
STOP! STOP!

BENNY
ALICE!

Alice rushes to Nicole and Benny.

ALICE
Are you okay?!

NICOLE
I was showing Benny your writing
lookout.

BENNY
Is it true? This place is magic?

Alice gives Nicole a look.

ALICE
Very magic-

BENNY
I knew it.

NICOLE
We're not gonna be coming back up
here anytime soon. This will be our
last shot in case we want to... Do
anything up here.

ALICE
We can't-

NICOLE
Alice this has gotten so far away
from us, if we don't do this now-

ALICE
This whole thing was a bad idea-

NICOLE
We don't have a choice-

ALICE
I'm tired of running and hiding and-

BENNY
What are you guys talking about?

Alice looks to Benny.

ALICE
Come on. We've gotta show to do.

BACK AT THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL

Fans in the audience, getting restless.

CROWD
(chanting)
ALICE! ALICE! ALICE!

BACKSTAGE

People freaking out, trying to figure out what to do.

INT. ALICE'S CAR - NIGHT

Alice drives fast, Nicole sits shotgun. Benny in the backseat, adrenalized. They fly past a couple COP CARS...

ANGLE ON THE COPS:

COP
(radioing in)
We've gotta a visual, Formosa...

They begin following Alice's car. Covertly at first then more and more obvious. Nicole and Alice notice.

ALICE
Hold on Benny...

Alice drives faster. The cops too.

They SWERVE through the streets, now in a full on car chase.

A HELICOPTER appears in the sky, following their movements, giving us a BIRDS-EYE POV of the situation.

IN THE CONCERT HALL

Durante barks orders over the radio.

DURANTE

Just pull her over! Pull her over!

IN THE BACKSTAGE WINGS

The Concert Manager briefs his SECURITY for Alice's arrival:

CONCERT MANAGER

When they get here, you shut the entrance, you make sure there's no way those cops get in...

BACK TO ALICE'S CAR

Alice Foxx Billboards fly by. Alice grips the wheel.

CONCERT MANAGER (V.O.)

I don't care WHAT they're accusing her of, we are not canceling this show!!!

She guns the engine and her car HOPS the curb, swerving towards the rear of the venue --

IN THE REAR OF THE VENUE

Security and Concert Staff greet Alice, Benny, and Nicole and rush the three of them from the car and --

INTO THE VENUE

Where they race through the wings --

INSIDE THE TECH BOOTH

The TECHNICAL DIRECTOR starts the show's lights --

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

We've got Alice in the wings, pre-show ignition in 10, 9, 8...

BACKSTAGE

We LAND ON BENNY... And as he takes in the scene around him, everything *SLOWS WAY DOWN*:

The panicking stage crew... The lights... The fans... And his idol. Her life, potentially ruined...

Something about it all feels different to him.

He gazes up at Alice... And takes her hand.

She startles, looking down. He speaks softly:

BENNY

...I just wanted you to like me.

ALICE

What?

BENNY

When you stopped responding to me... I didn't know what to do. And I thought... Maybe if people liked me like they like you... THEN you'd want to be my friend.

Nicole, rushes up to them frantic --

NICOLE

Alice, the cops. They know...
They know everything.

Benny, getting emotional now. Tears flooding his eyes.

BENNY

I'll do whatever you want me to do.
I'll say it was me. We can just tell the policemen that I did it. I stole your car and- And I hit that guy-

IN THE BACKSTAGE HALLS

Cops and Detectives PUSH PAST SECURITY getting closer --

MOMENTS LATER

Alice, trying to decide what to do. She looks to Benny.

ALICE

I'm not pretending anymore.
(to Benny)

And you don't have to do anything to make me want to be your friend. I'll always be your friend.

Benny's eyes now overflowing with tears.

BENNY

No matter what?

ALICE

No matter what.

And Alice takes a step from the wings --

NICOLE

Alice NO!

ONSTAGE

The crowd EXPLODES.

Alice, taking it all in.

And, after a beat, brings the mic to her lips:

ALICE

I haven't been truthful with you.

BACKSTAGE

Nicole realizes what Alice is about to do.

NICOLE

No no no no what are you doing-

BACK ONSTAGE

Alice, in full confession mode. Her fans look on, mesmerized.

ALICE

My whole life's been a lie. It's all
bullshit. I'm not this shiny person.

IN THE AUDIENCE

Fans look up, trying to follow.

A guy with BLEACHED HAIR to HIS BOYFRIEND --

BLEACHED HAIR

She loves these big build ups.

HIS BOYFRIEND

Really into this one...

ONSTAGE

Alice approaches her final confession.

ALICE

I'm a fucking mess. I have panic
attacks and low self-esteem... And I've
done terrible things. Unforgivable
things. A couple weeks ago-

Suddenly --

The stadium lights go DARK.

Alice, confused. The audience too.

Then, A FLASH OF LIGHT. More. Red, neon green, purple...

Bass begins to thump. The audience, who, moments ago watched with apprehension, nod their heads. The synth kicks in.

The audience getting more and more into it. Benny, then --

Steps onstage... And begins singing and dancing.

BENNY

(singing)

It's been a tough time... It's been a tough time for a while now...

The song our story began with.

BENNY (cont'd)

(singing)

But you know I can't stay quiet now...

Alice looks down at Benny, surprised.

BENNY (cont'd)

Come on. Just for fun.

She hesitates... Then, softly at first... Joins him.

BENNY AND ALICE

And you know I won't back down now...

They get more and more into it, building....

ALICE AND BENNY

'Cause baby I'm still...

Detective Durante shakes her head, out of patience --

DURANTE

Enough of this.

But ONSTAGE, Alice, in it, nods to Benny: *take it away...*

BENNY

I'm still...

And they both GO FOR IT! BELTING WITH EVERYTHING THEY HAVE!

ALICE AND BENNY

CRAAAAAAAZZZZZZYYYY!!!!

Alice and Benny SHOUT, holding the note --

The music, a mix between Alice's traditional Pop and a darker trap/dubstep sound... It sounds fucking amazing.

And suddenly, everything SHUTS OFF...

Except for a single stage light on Alice and Benny.

They settle. Relishing every moment...

ALICE AND BENNY
...About you.

And... THEY PICK BACK UP AGAIN!

ALICE AND BENNY (cont'd)
AND I'M STILL SCREEEEAAAAAAMING!!!!

SLO MO --

Fireworks explode behind them...

Alice and Benny, SCREAMING the lyrics in complete unison...

And, our detectives, emerging from the wings --

Everything settles. Return to NORMAL SPEED.

ALICE AND BENNY (cont'd)
...I love you.

The audience ERUPTS. The cops BREAK ONSTAGE. Alice and Benny share a smile... Finally feeling who they are to one another.

And as our story comes to a close, we begin moving our way through the crowd. Everyone, doing The Benny.

Then, we begin floating up...

Higher and higher...

Until all this is but a shimmer in the night.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END