

Dave and LAURA MILLER (35) lie close, covers tangled, proof the night was busy. They roll apart. Laura's hair falls perfectly into place, like she planned it. Dave's hair. . . not so much. They share a soft, playful kiss.

LAURA

I love you, babe.

DAVE

Love you too.

Laura looks for the clock, grabs it.

LAURA

Oh my God.

Laura leaps out of bed, darts into the bathroom.

LAURA (O.S.)

Gotta run, big client today!

DAVE

Running's good.

She reappears, rushing past him.

LAURA

Come on, I thought today was the big day for you.

DAVE

Yeah, yeah. Big day. Every day's a big day

Laura dresses quickly, heads out.

LAURA

Coffee and toast?

DAVE

Just coffee.

Dave comes in, already looking defeated.

LAURA

As requested.

She hands him a to go cup.

DAVE
Thanks, babe.

LAURA
Nervous?

DAVE
Nah... Just trying not to screw it up.
You guys want a ride?

LISA MILLER (15), dressed like a wannabe influencer, scrolls TikTok at the table.

LISA
No... Daddy. Danny's mom is driving us today.

DAVE
Good morning to you too, Sunshine.

BRYAN (12), (AKA BB), decked out in NBA gear, dribbles a ball softly under the table – thump, thump.

BRYAN
I hate Danny. He's a freak.

LISA
You are. He's cool.

LAURA
He's definitely tall!

BRYAN
Okay, okay. I'm just saying.

He dribbles the ball harder – thump, thump.

LISA
Stop it.

She tries to grab the ball and suddenly she and BB are rolling on the floor, clobbering each other to gain control of the ball, like a loose ball foul.

Right before it gets out of hand, MARIA (50's, warm, motherly) sweeps in, snatches the ball.

MARIA
No basketball, señor. Your mamá said.

She holds the ball over her head like a trophy.

DAVE

Maria's right. Danny's mom is waiting outside.

Maria lowers the ball.

MARIA

Don't worry, Señor Dave. You'll make it. And if not! Fake it. That's what men do best, no? Just smile that smile. Nobody can say no to Señor Don Perfecto. Big brain, big heart. That's better than big wallet.

Dave smiles, a little bolstered.

MARIA (CONT'D)

And Señor Dave, don't forget! Tell Lilly I say hello, and remind her: Spanish Harlem this weekend. Volunteering, sí? No excuses.

DAVE

Got it. I'll remind her. Hurry up kids.

LISA / BRYAN

Bye, Mom! Bye, Dad!

DAVE

Have a great day.

The kids grab their bags, head out.

KIDS (O.S.)

Good luck with your meeting today, Dad. You rock!

INT. INTERIORDESIGN DESIGN STUDIO - DAY

3

Dave enters, is met by LILLY (mid-20s) -- French, hot, sharp.

LILLY

You're late for someone pretending to have it all together.

DAVE

Good morning to you too, Lilly.

LILLY
 Sorry, five hours of sleep. The
 turmeric didn't work.

DAVE
 Yeah, when you have it in a martini.

LILLY
 It was worth a shot.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

4

Dave drops into his chair, opens his laptop. Empty project
 folders, unpaid invoices glare back.

DAVE
 Oh... Maria says hi. And don't forget
 the "Spanish Harlem Charity" date!

LILLY (O.S.)
 She never lets me off the hook.

She comes into his office.

LILLY
 No one called.

DAVE
 No one ever does.

LILLY
 You have a brand! But you don't have a
 vision. And you definitely don't have
 a plan.

DAVE
 One out of three. That's something.

LILLY
 But having a brand makes the other two
 something we can still shoot for and
 work on.

DAVE
 Next time I'm talking to my banker,
 I'll--

LILLY
 --Didn't you just talk to him?

DAVE

Let's change the subject.

LILLY

Did you talk to Laura about college tuition?

DAVE

Throw gasoline on the fire, why don't you.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Lisa's almost done with high school. And BB's not far behind.

DAVE (CONT'D)

College basketball...Full ride. One kid paid for.

LILLY

That's your Plan A?

Plan B should be... Talking to your wife before she finds out!

DAVE

No Lilly... Plan B is... To pull this whole **INTERIORDesign** miracle off without Laura knowing.

LILLY

And this time, when the banker wants answers... My French flirty attitude won't help.

DAVE

That guy liked you. He definitely liked you.

LILLY

Who doesn't?

DAVE

But he wants to see dollars!

LILLY (CONT'D)

Speaking of dollars...I went hunting.

DAVE

Good for you...you have a date?

LILLY

Craigslist...First I was looking for a date, but then it hit me, and I started to check the job offers. Job one: "Need interior designer to set up my Tribeca apartment. Must bring own screwdriver."

DAVE

Sounds glamorous.

LILLY

Job two: "Closet cleaner for creative couple. Good salary, bad closet." That one's almost poetic.

DAVE

You're kidding, right?

LILLY

We can't live off vision alone, mon chéri. Bills don't care how creative you are.

DAVE

Now you sound like Laura.

LILLY

At least until something real comes through.

DAVE

Fine! But if I end up polishing someone's shoes in Tribeca, I'm blaming your French optimism.

LILLY

Deal! When we're rich again, you can thank by letting me light up a cigarette!

DAVE

We never going to be that rich!

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

5

Dave types away, lost in spreadsheets and design mockups. Lilly's voice hums faintly in the background as she scrolls Craigslist. She dials a number, listens, then hangs up, exhaling. Finally, she spots something.

LILLY (O.S)

Gotcha!

She jumps up, grabs her notepad, and rushes into Dave's office, energized for the first time all morning.

LILLY

First job confirmed! Tribeca, spoiled Upper East Side girl needs help furnishing her apartment. Tomorrow at 9am!

DAVE

Wow... the beginning of the end. Maybe it's time to sell. Heading to the deli. Want anything?

LILLY

Caesar salad. Light dressing. Merci.

DAVE

Anyone calls, tell them I'm in a meeting.

EXT. WEST VILLAGE, DELI STREET CORNER - DAY

6

Dave exits the deli, balancing a smoothie, salad, and iced coffee. He nearly collides with STEVE CHAIN: Mid-20s, impossibly handsome, selfish charm radiating off him.

DAVE

Oh, sorry! My bad.

STEVE

No big deal. City sidewalks.

They pause, sizing each other up.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Sorry, again. Do I know you? You look really familiar.

STEVE

I doubt it. I don't usually hang out around here.

He pulls out a sleek metal business card. Just a chrome slab with a QR code.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Steve Chain.

DAVE

Dave Miller.

He slides it into his wallet, hands Steve one of his own cards. Classy, heavy paper stock. But not metal.

STEVE

Interiordesign, huh. Maybe I'll give you a call.

Steve's phone BUZZES.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'll call you.

He answers.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hi Mom. Dad....I know you're both on the line. Yes, I can hear you....I landed two days ago. Jet lag's brutal....I'm working.

STEVE'S DAD (O.S.)

Hiding in New York City? You need to get a life!

STEVE'S MOM (O.S.)

We are sick and tired of all the scandal! It's embarrassing. that's not how we raised you!

STEVE'S DAD (O.S.)

When I was in your age, I had a business, a family, a house and the whole nine yards.

STEVE

Here we go again...that was your chosen life, not mine.

STEVE'S DAD (O.S.)

Alright! Now it's time for you to make a choice!

STEVE'S MOM (O.S.)

Steve, you breaking my heart.

STEVE

I'm sorry, mom!

STEVE'S DAD (O.S.)
 Sorry dos not cut it.

STEVE'S MOM (O.S.)
 10 Days... starting today.

STEVE
 10 days. For what?

STEVE'S DAD (O.S.)
 To prove you can stand on your own. A
 real job. A real deal. Something built
 without our name.

STEVE
 10 days? You're giving me 10 days to
 be a success? And what if I fail?

STEVE'S MOM (O.S.)
 We cut you off. But if you do succeed,
 then you come home and take over the
 business.

STEVE'S DAD (O.S.)
 We'll finalize everything when we're
 in the city.

STEVE'S MOM (O.S.)
 This is a choice, son.

The line goes dead.

STEVE
 I can be a success!

He hangs up, and his phone buzzes with another call.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Hello, Steve Chain!

MARCO (30s), is on the line.

MARCO (O.S.)
 Yo, Stevie! Where you at, man? Party's
 already goin' on! Come on, don't make
 me send someone to drag you out.

STEVE
 Not tonight, bro.

MARCO (O.S.)
 Why... it's the hottest party in town.
 A List Manhattan bro!

STEVE
 No... I gotta get serious!

MARCO (O.S.)
 What... Is that Steve Chain talking?
 Can't give up the good life!
 Remember...

He ends the call.

FLASHBACK - STEVE'S HIGH-LIFE MONTAGE

1. Steve on a yacht, champagne spraying, girls on each arm,
 laughing like he owns the world. His phone BUZZES.

MARCO (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Stevie! Where you at, man?

STEVE
 Saint-Tropez baby... living it up.

MARCO (O.S.)
 Nah, bro. Forget that. The real
 party's here in the Southampton! You
 know what they say...

Steve hesitates. Grins.

STEVE
 ...the party starts when Steve Chain
 walks in! but not today bro!

MARCO
 What happened?

STEVE
 Send me the location!

CUT TO:

EXT. SOUTHAMPTON VILLA, HELIPAD - DAY

7

A helicopter lands. Steve steps out, sunglasses on, like
 royalty arriving. Marco greets him, hyping him up, leads him
 into the mansion.

INT. SOUTHAMPTON VILLA, STEVE'S ROOM - DAY

8

Steve dabs on cologne, checks his cufflinks, smooths his perfect hair, examines his perfect smile.

STEVE

Showtime!

EXT. SOUTHAMPTON VILLA - DAY

9

Chaos. Champagne towers, flashing lights, music blasting. Steve descends the stairs into the madness, instantly mobbed. Girls on him, people chanting his name.

Then, camera flashes. Paparazzi swarm the party, shouting questions, snapping nonstop.

PAPARAZZI

Steve! Over here! Are you the new king of design? Who's paying for all this?!

Steve throws his arms wide, soaking in the chaos, trying to laugh it off. But for a beat, behind his shades, panic.

MONTAGE - HEADLINES AND SOCIAL MEDIA FEED

- "Steve Chain: Heir to Furniture Empire Spotted at Lavish Party!"

- "The Chain Legacy in Trouble? Wild Night Raises Questions."

- "From Boardrooms to Bottle Service: Steve Chain's New Business Strategy?"

Images flash: Steve clinking glasses, money raining down, champagne spraying, paparazzi flashes burning his grin into tabloid infamy.

BACK TO SCENE The camera holds on Steve, still smiling, surrounded, his mask slipping.

FINAL IMAGE - MUSIC PLAYING - (SONG: "SOMETHING IS WRONG IN THIS PICTURE" BY ELA WARDI)

Marco still hyping him, girls still clutching him, but the cameras don't lie: This is the scandal that's going to cost him his fortune.

END FLASHBACK:

RETURN TO PRESENT:

Steve struts down the block, phone still in hand, mask back on, like nothing ever happened. He exhales, slipping the phone into his pocket. Something falls. A flutter of white against the pavement. He looks down. Dave's paper business card. Steve crouches, picks it up, turning it over in his hand. He studies it, the edges worn, the name catching the sunlight.

STEVE

This can't be a coincidence... that's fate.

He grabs his phone, dials the number on the card.

LILLY (O.S)

INTERIORDesign, how may I help you?

STEVE

Hi, this is Steve. Steve Chain. May I speak to Mr. Dave Miller?

LILLY (O.S)

Oh... I'm sorry, Mr. Chain, but Mr. Miller is not in. Can I leave a message?

STEVE

Yes! Please say hello from Steve Chain, the guy he bumped into outside the Deli. I gave him my business card. I'll be waiting for his call!

LILLY (O.S)

No problem, Mr. Chain. When Mr. Miller arrives, I will pass on the message.

STEVE

Thank you, ah... Lilly?

LILLY

Yes, Lilly....goodbye, Mr. Chain.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, OFFICE - DAY

10

Dave is back at his desk, still holding Steve's metal business card. Lilly walks in.

LILLY

Salad success?

DAVE

Yeh... Salad success!

LILLY

Are you O.K.? You're staring at that thing you're holding like it's radioactive.

Lilly grabs her salad, waiting for an answer.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Believe it or not, someone did call. Said he was asking for you.

DAVE

O.K. That's good.

LILLY

Where have you been? You shouldn't have taken the private jet to get me a salad from my favorite spot in Paris!

DAVE

I got stopped. Or. . . discovered.

LILLY

"Discovered" like you got scouted? or "discovered" like your fly was down?

DAVE

I ran into a guy. Steve Chain,

LILLY

Steve Chain? That's the "someone" that called a few minutes ago.

DAVE

He called?

LILLY

You know that guy?

DAVE

We just exchanged business cards after we almost ran in to each other!

Dave hands over the sleek metal card to Lilly. She takes it, scans the QR code with her phone.

LILLY

Now that's a fancy business card.

She reads out loud, after the scan on her phone

LILLY (CONT'D)
Steve Chain. Vice President,
International Furniture Inc.

DAVE
Since when did business cards turn
into space tech?

LILLY
(she hands him the card)
You do know we're in 2025, right? You
better not go full Mel Gibson in
Forever Young just because you missed
the memo.

DAVE
Forever old-school. My bad.

Dave tosses the card on his desk like he doesn't want to be
infected by it.

LILLY
Who is this Steve Chain?

DAVE (O.S.)
I don't know, I just met him.

LILLY
Haaa... What's the catch? You think he
wants to offer something?

DAVE
I think he's dangerous. Dangerous in a
good way. You know... we call our
friends dangerous in NYC, if they're
some kind of troublemaker, in a good
way again.

LILLY
(eyes widening, while thinking how
much she likes bad boys)
I do...pardon!

DAVE
What?

LILLY (CONT'D)
I don't mind dangerous, as long as it
pays the bills. Do I have to tolerate
(MORE)

LILLY (CONT`D) (CONT'D)
his attitude? I'm already worried
about mine.

DAVE
He´ s very charming. Dramatic. Wildly
confident. And possibly the human
version of a Greek
sculpture...dangerous!

LILLY
If he brings budget, I´ll buy glitter.

Dave hesitates. Conflicted, but curious.

DAVE
Call him. Let´s set up a meeting.

LILLY
Tomorrow 2pm?

A long beat. Dave exhales. Part nerves, part excitement. He
glances at the sleek metal card again, the engraved QR Code
catching the light. Something about it feels like opportunity
...or trouble. Maybe both.

INT. STEVE´S LOFT - NIGHT

11

Soft jazz hums, from a turntable. The space is sleek,
curated. Too perfect to be accidental. Steve is handsome, a
born deal-maker hiding behind his playboy grin. He lounges on
his couch, scrolling through his phone.

VOICEMAIL PLAYS ON CELLPHONE SPEAKER

LILLY (O.S.)
Hello Mr. Chain, this is Lilly from
INTERIORDesign. Dave Miller´s
assistant. Just calling to set your
appointment for tomorrow at 2pm.
Please let us know if there´s any
change. Thank you, and have a great
day.

STEVE
Lilly from Interior Design... Polite
voice. Probably French. Or hot. Maybe
both.

He pockets his phone, smirking. Then leans forward, pats his
neighbor's dog, Buddy, who seems to like and fallow him all

the time. Once in a while, Steve dog sits, obviously to cover up his loneliness.

STEVE (CONTD)
We're not losing the empire, buddy.
Not today.

He grabs a cigar, lights it with flair and exhales like a man who has already closed tomorrow's deal.

FADE OUT.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, LOBBY - DAY

12

Steve, now in sleek designer shades and a suspiciously effortless outfit, enters the meeting room where Lilly is waiting. Lilly eyes him over her glasses.

STEVE
Hey, hey - **INTERIORDesign!** You guys
look so official.

Lilly greets him while walking him into the meeting room.

LILLY
You must be Steve?

STEVE
You must be Lilly. You're prettier
than your sarcasm suggested.

LILLY
I'll pretend that's not deeply
confusing. This way please, Mr. Miller
is waiting already!

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, MEETING ROOM - DAY

13

Dave stands by the conference table, trying just a little too hard to look cool. Lilly leads Steve inside. The energy shifts, a mix of curiosity and ego.

DAVE
Hey... Mr. bump-in, ha ha ha!

STEVE
Oh... I'm so sorry again! Had a little
flashback, ha ha.

DAVE
We start over. Welcome to
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)
INTERIOR Design, Robert.

STEVE
Thanks for having me. And Steve is
fine! Dave? Lilly?

DAVE & LILLY
Yes, sure!

DAVE
Let's talk business.

Dave and Lilly take a seat, while Steve slouches into the
chair like it's a sun bed.

STEVE
Yeah...let's talk fabulous business.

Lilly rolls her eyes.

LILLY
Do you even know what our company
does?

STEVE
Not a clue. But it has potential. I
figured I'd find people who know how
to make "potential" into "profit."
That's you two.

Dave exchanges a glance with Lilly.

DAVE
So you're serious? You're not just
here to play dress-up CEO?

STEVE
Mostly not.

DAVE
Alright, gentlemen and lady, after
clarifying all the details, let's
start fresh tomorrow.

Dave looks towards Lilly, trying to catch an O.K.

DAVE (CONT'D)
A new collaboration..., a new business
partner.

LILLY
Ooh la la...champagne?

DAVE.
We drink after the first paycheck
clears...hopefully soon!

LILLY
Of course we so.

STEVE
Fair enough! But when that happens,
I'm buying the bottles.

They all laugh.

INT. MILLER'S HOME, - NIGHT

14

Maria clears the dinner table while Lisa and Bryan finish
dessert. Laura sits at the table, relaxed. Laptop open. She
looks up as Dave comes in.

MARIA
Good day?

DAVE
The best.

Maria nods, satisfied, and heads upstairs toward her room.
The house quiets. Laura and Dave drift into the living room -
their nightly ritual. A moment to rewind. Laura looks at him.

LAURA
So... how was he?

DAVE
What... who?

LAURA
Steve Chain.

Dave laughs, settling beside her with his drink.

DAVE
Oh - Lilly! You two are the real
Gossip Girls.
(then)
You should have your own show.

LAURA
Mhmm. And?

DAVE

He's got ideas. And attitude. But...I think there's something there.

Laura studies him, she knows that look.

LAURA

Is that your heart talking - or the empty bank account?

Dave doesn't answer.

LAURA (CONT'D)

And honey... you should talk to BB.

DAVE

Why? Something happen?

LAURA

No. Just a feeling. Every time he's got a game, he keeps looking at the door. Like he's waiting for you to walk in.

DAVE

That hurts!

LAURA

I always make it to the big ones. I've got my schedule figured.

DAVE

Of course you do, and I admire you for that. I'll talk to him. First thing in the morning.

LAURA

No! Don't. You know Brian's not a morning person. Just... Catch the right moment, will you?

DAVE

Alright!

LAURA

And speaking of timing... Lisa still doesn't know which college she wants. She's got a couple of invites already. But honestly, whatever she chooses, the fees are pretty much the same everywhere anyway.

DAVE
I'll talk to her. You're not
worried... are you?

LAURA
No. Not at all. Love you.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, MEETING ROOM - DAY

15

Lilly stands in front of a whiteboard. Steve paces, pitching ideas like a talk-show host on espresso. Dave rushes in. He listens in at the meeting room door.

STEVE (O.S.)
Everything here screams... safe.
Where's the drama? The energy?

LILLY (O.S.)
Safe keeps the lights on.

STEVE (O.S.)
Safe doesn't go viral, darling. And
what if we launch with a drag brunch?
INTERIORDesign gets signature!

LILLY (O.S.)
We're not designing for RuPaul.

STEVE (O.S.)
That's a shame. That brunch would
trend.

Dave enters the room as if he just arrived. Enjoying the show.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, MEETING ROOM - DAY

16

DAVE
Hey guys - sorry I'm late. Crazy job
in Tribeca.

Dave grabs a seat.

That's worth a reward, Lilly. Did I
miss something?

LILLY
Oui- he...

STEVE
Yes- excuse you...

DAVE

Guys, guys - Let's focus.

LILLY

Okay, Dave. So - Mr. New Business Partner here, is suggesting a drag brunch.

DAVE

Like we're designing for RuPaul?

STEVE

See? He gets it.

DAVE

For once, we take the risky way. Let's do the drag thing.

LILLY

You've both lost your minds

DAVE

Let's just hope the risky way isn't a dead end.

MONTAGE - THE PITCH COMES TOGETHER

The trio works fast around the table. Sketches pile up: HUMAN SPA ROOMS, DOG SPA STATIONS, SHARED SPACES. Words appear on paper and whiteboards - HUMANS. DOGS. SPA. SALON. BEAUTY. WEST VILLAGE. LOCAL. LIFESTYLE. Product ideas take shape: shampoo bottles, towels, candles - minimal, stylish, functional. Dave sketches instinctively. Steve paces, firing ideas. Lilly edits, cuts, sharpens. A clock ticks. Pages stack. Ideas lock. On the board: ONE EXPERIENCE - HUMANS & DOGS. They stop. Look at it. This works.

END MONTAGE

DAVE (CONT'D)

Alright guys... I gotta run. My boy's got a basketball game, and this time, I'm not gonna miss it.

He grabs his coat, waves, and heads out. Lilly gathers her notes. Steve helps, scooping up sketches and empty cups.

STEVE

You live in the city?

LILLY
Of course. Soho.

STEVE
Hey, that's my direction. Took the subway today. Working class style.

LILLY
You're adventurous... huh

STEVE
Come on, let's walk. We'll call it "team bonding."

LILLY
Fine. But no small talk about wallpaper or the wether

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT

17

The city hums, taxis honk, lights flicker, steam rises from the pavement. Lilly and Steve walk side by side, a mismatched duo finding their rhythm.

STEVE
I'm hungry. You?

LILLY
Starving...

STEVE
Perfect! Just around the corner, best tacos in town, and the world's best margaritas.

LILLY
Oh... You're lucky. I love margaritas.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

18

Lilly and Steve sit at a corner table. Low neon lights, loud music, chaos all around. Two giant margaritas land.

STEVE
To team bonding. The good kind.

LILLY
If this is "team bonding," I'm suddenly pro-new business partner.

STEVE

Thank you Lilly. I believe my fortune
has just been saved.

EXT. SOHO STREETS - NIGHT

19

A few margaritas later. They stroll home through the quiet
Soho streets.

LILLY

That's me.

STEVE

Lucky building.

LILLY

Maybe take the subway again tomorrow -
You make "working class" look almost
charming.

STEVE

Almost? I'll take it.

They stand for a beat, looking at each other. That unspoken
something hanging in the air.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Bonne nuit, Lilly.

LILLY

Good night... Mr. Steve Chain!

EXT. SUBWAY, - NIGHT

20

Dave rushes up the subway stairs. He checks his watch, 7:04
PM.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL, GYM - NIGHT

21

Dave hurries into the gym, but the bleachers are empty. A
janitor sweeps up.

DAVE

I'm Dave Miller. My son, BB--

JANITOR

--You missed a good one. Your boy...
He's got game.

He calls Laura. No answer.

INT. DAVE'S HOME - NIGHT

22

Dave walks in.

DAVE

I know, I know...almost home, honey.
Okay, okay.

He hangs up, exhales, and steps inside. The dining table glows under soft light. Laura, Maria, Lisa, and Bryan are gathered around it. Dinner's over. Laughter fills the room. Dave's plate waits, empty but ready.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Oh, buddy! I'm so sorry. I was running
as hell, but missed the train!

He rushes over, swept into the warmth and chatter.

LISA

Dad! You missed it! BB was the star!

LISA (CONT'D)

Lisa marks an "L" on her forehead.

Loser... still!

MARIA

Like a big star! Basketball star!
LeBron! Boom!

LAURA

Yeah... he kicked some serious butt
tonight.

Dave crouches beside Bryan, who's glowing with pride and trying to hide it.

DAVE

I'm really sorry, buddy.

BB

It's okay, Dad. I know you got a lot
to do.

LAURA

Alright guys, school tomorrow. Time
for bed!

MARIA

Come on, chicos. teeth brushing time!

Bryan and Lisa jump up, racing down the hall.

DAVE

Okay, kids! I'll be right with you in a bit!

MARIA

Good night, mis amores. And "Mr. Always-Missing-TheGame", next time, run faster okay?

INT. BRYAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

23

Bryan's half-tucked in bed, scrolling on his tablet. Dave leans against the doorframe.

DAVE

Big star like you should be asleep by now.

BB

Just watching the highlights. You could've seen it live, if you ran faster.

DAVE

Ouch... You calling me slow again?

BB

Not slow, just, not the quickest. Every time you get here, you're out of breath, like phew!

DAVE

I get it. So what do I do, coach?

BB

Be smarter. Leave earlier, or take the shortcut by the park.

DAVE

Smart kid. Maybe I should start listening to you more.

BB

You should!

DAVE

Hmm... Maybe tomorrow morning, you and me, quick run. See who's really the slow one.

BB

Sure, Dad. If you think you can keep up?

DAVE

Night, champ. Proud of you.

BB

Love you, Dad.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, FRONT DESK - DAY

24

The studio hums with early energy. Lilly is already at her desk, typing rapidly. A thick, luxurious envelope sits beside her. Embossed in gold: "**Claude & Marcel Beauty & Spa Line for Humans & Pets**".

Steve and Dave come in. Lilly looks up, spotting Steve first.

LILLY

Bonjour, Steve.

STEVE

Morning, beautiful.

LILLY

Morning, boss.

DAVE

Boss? That's a new one!

STEVE

Don't get too comfortable... Big boss!

LILLY

Speaking of big, today just got bigger.

She gestures toward that thick, golden envelope on her desk, then casually slides it towards him.

DAVE

Oh wow...very shiny!

LILLY

Remember Claude and Marcel? The
(MORE)

LILLY (CONT'D)
freaky, glamorous business couple?

DAVE
Who?

LILLY
You designed their first shop, a couple years ago.

DAVE
Humans And Pets Spa? That smelled like Dior and sausage?

LILLY
Yes!

DAVE
What about them?

LILLY
They're launching a whole new beauty line. Big party. Friday. You're invited. Plus one.

Dave opens the envelope, elegant invite, shiny details.

LILLY (CONT'D)
Rumor has it... They're going international! They'r looking for fresh creative partners, to create a whole image for all Stores worldwide.

DAVE
So...I should go and pitch?

LILLY
Just show up. Don't be a salesman.

STEVE
Wait, plus one?

LILLY
Oui.

STEVE
Guess that means we're going!

DAVE
What? No...I was going to ask...

STEVE

Laura?

DAVE

Yes.

STEVE

Dave...think about it! This is a golden chance to present m as your new business partner.

DAVE

Fine, but you're not allowed to embarrass me.

STEVE

Please. I'll be fabulous! These guys will love me. Sorry Dave, but speaking of embarrassment...maybe we should take YOU shopping first.

LILLY

Oh mon dieu...good call!

DAVE

Shopping is fine with me, but let's concentrate on real work...shall we?

INT. INTERIORDESIGN, MEETING ROOM - DAY

25

The energy has shifted, notebooks closing, the sound of laughter and relief after a long brainstorming session. The energy is fading. It's time for a break.

LILLY

Lunch break?

DAVE

Good idea. I'm going to surprise Laura, and have lunch uptown.

LILLY

That's cute. See? Romance isn't dead, it's just starving.

DAVE

Later, alligator.

STEVE

That guy's got range. Meetings to marriage in during lunch break... Ha!

LILLY
Watch and learn.

They head toward the door together. Just as they reach it, Steve's phone BUZZES. He glances at the screen, "MOM Private Airport Teterboro."

STEVE
I have to take this.

He answers.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Hi Mom. Hi Dad....Yeah, I heard, jet just landed....Waldorf Astoria for one night only...aha! Sunday brunch at the House...Hamptons?...Heading to the subway now! Meet you and dad at the bar, ok?...Yes mom...subway!...OK, you can send the car. Bye, bye. I love you too.

LILLY
Waldorf. Hamptons. You are RichieRich rich!

STEVE
Reformed rich class. Subway to Waldorf Astoria... ha ha!

LILLY
Let's keep it that way, humble looks good on you.

EXT. WALDORF ASTORIA - DAY

26

A sleek black car glides to the curb. Steve steps out, freshly pressed, confidence restored.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, LOBBY - DAY

27

Steve approaches the FRANKLIN, the front desk agent (30S) at the front desk.

STEVE
Franklin, it's been a minute.

FRANKLIN
Good to see you, Mr. Chain.

STEVE
My parents checked in?

FRANKLIN
Yes, Mr. Chain. They're waiting for you at the bar. If I may say, they seem nervous.

STEVE
Aren't they always?

FRANKLIN
Unusually so, sir.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, PEACOCK ALLEY - DAY

28

The bar glows gold, mirrors, marble, and murmurs of old money. MR. ROBERT AND MRS. GUILIA CHAIN, (mid-60s), are the embodiment of old money.

They spot Steve.

GUILIA
Oh, Stevie! You look tired, and pale.

STEVE
Hi, Mom...good to see you too!

Steve and his dad exchange a familiar "here we go look" while hi is hugging his Mom.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Hi dad, good to see you. You look great!

ROBERT
You look tired.

STEVE
Working hard. Isn't that what you wanted?

ROBERT
Working, huh? That's a first.

STEVE
You gave me the countdown, You'll just have to wait til it's over to see if I survive.

GUILIA
Speaking of the countdown-

ROBERT
The contract. Read it. Sign it.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Who's hungry?

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, LEX YARD RESTAURANT - DAY

29

Steve and his parents have lunch.

Steve's phone BUZZES.

STEVE
Gotta run! Back to business!

ROBERT
What about the contract?

STEVE
Won't matter if I don't focus on
business, right?

GUILIA
Good point. Are you coming to the
Hampton's?

STEVE
I might...will let you know!

INT. LUX LIVING MAGAZINE, LAURA'S OFFICE - DAY

30

Dave comes into her well-appointed office.

LAURA
What a surprise.

DAVE
I thought... maybe lunch? Just you and
me?

LAURA
That sounds... lovely. Give me five
minutes, I'll grab my bag.

EXT. UPTOWN CAFE - DAY

31

A chic but relaxed uptown spot. Dave and Laura finish lunch.

LAURA
Someone's charming today.

DAVE
Trying to keep up with my wife, that's all.

LAURA
Oh! I almost forgot. I got nominated for Editor of the Year. If I win, they're offering me a partner spot.

DAVE
That's amazing.

LAURA
Thanks. You're taking this surprisingly well, because you know that means less mom around!

DAVE
You should go for it. I gotta run. We've got a pitch to finish before tomorrow.

LAURA
I'm gonna have an espresso! You go, Babe... And kick some ass.

DAVE
Love you.

LAURA
Love you too.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN STUDIO - DAY

32

Lilly paces in front of the door, checking her watch. She pulls the invitation from her bag. Reads it again. She checks her phone. Calendar. Time.

LILLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No. No... I read it European. DAY. MONTH. YEAR. Here it's month. Day. Which means... TONIGHT. Okay Guys... Good news, or bad news first. Bad news. Always bad news first. Okay guys... you need to move your asses home... because.

The door swings open. Dave and Steve step in, mid-

conversation.

DAVE

Hey Lilly! Sorry we're late! Traffic.

STEVE

Brought you a coffee.

LILLY

Forget traffic. Forget coffee. You two need to go home get dressed up and look fabulous!

LILLY (CONT`D)

You two are going to Marcel and Claude's launch party tonight!

STEVE

Tonight? As in tonight tonight?

LILLY

Yes! And Dave... No old-school West Village 90's vibes, okay? Put on something sharp. 2026. Fresh. Fabulous. International.

DAVE

No pressure, huh?

LILLY

Oh, there's pressure. This event could put us on the map for life! The Bad Business Boys! Go sparkle! Hey Steve!

STEVE

Yeah, Cherie?

LILLY

Dave's happy to have you on board!

STEVE

Is he?

LILLY

So am I.

INT. DAVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

33

Dave opens his closet.

He pulls out a velvet jacket. Frowns. A turtleneck. Throws

them on the bed with other rejects.

DAVE
 Seriously. Why don't I own anything cool?

Lisa comes in surveying the chaos.

LISA
 Whoa. Who died?

DAVE
 The cool me! Big party. Important people. I need to look... successful. Or in Lilly's word, fabulous.

LISA
 So... not like you?

Lisa picks an outfit for him.

LISA (CONT'D)
 This with the navy. No belt. You're not a magician.

DAVE
 You're hired. No allowance this month though.

LISA
 Save it for shopping, Dad.

DAVE
 Hey, you okay, sweetie?

LISA
 Yeah, I'm alright. Just... stuff.

DAVE
 Lisa?

LISA
 It's Danny. He's acting... weird lately.

DAVE
 Danny? That little Danny, the kid who thinks he's a Harlem superstar because he rides the 6 train three stops too far?

LISA
He's not a superstar, Dad.

DAVE
He calls himself a DJ.

LISA
He IS a DJ. He's... trying. he's gonna
"blow up soon."

DAVE
Sweetheart, every teenage boy with a
laptop thinks he's about to blow up.

LISA
Maybe. But he's just stressed, and
maybe I'm stressed. I don't know. The
worst is, he's becoming a gangsta
wannabe, and I hate that. When I
mention it, he gets mean.

DAVE
Danny's number please.

Dave grabs Lisa's phone.

LISA
Dad... what are you doing? Stop it,
I'm not a baby anymore, I can handle
it myself.

She snatches the phone back.

DAVE
You know... you can talk to me, right?
About anything. Boys. Bad choices.
Boys who ARE bad choices.

LISA
I know. Thanks, Dad.

EXT. WEST VILLAGE, PARTY VENUE - NIGHT

34

A black car glides to a stop outside, an ultra-stylish
converted brownstone, glows with golden light. Dave and Steve
stand at the entrance. The noise of the party hums behind the
doors, low, electric.

STEVE
You ready?

DAVE

Not at all.

STEVE

We're in this together man! Partner.

DAVE

Yeah. Together, partner.

STEVE

And by the way...you look fresh, not fabulous like I do, but fresh!

INT. PARTY VENUE - NIGHT

35

VOICE (O.S.)

Dave? Dave Miller?

Dave turns. Marcel and Claude glide over, effortlessly chic.

MARCEL (30s), magnetic, self-possessed.

CLAUDE (30s), strikingly handsome in an unconventional way.

MARCEL

Dave darling! It's been forever.

He steps in close and pinches Dave's jacket like it's couture.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

Oh wow... what happened? Did Lilly finally buy you your first fashion magazine? Good girl.

DAVE

Guess I clean up once a decade.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

The plus one?

CLAUDE

Gosh...look at those cheekbones. Like a moisturized Greek statue, with a lifetime membership to the world's best spa.

STEVE

Guess I'll take that as a compliment.

Claude and Marcel are literally falling in love a little.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hi... I'm The moisturized plus one and Dave's business partner. Steve Chain!

MARCEL

Good looking and funny

CLAUDE

INTERIOR design with cheekbones like that? It's over. We're ruined.

They all laugh. The tension melts into easy charm.

STEVE

Pleasure. I've heard incredible things about you guys. I mean, about your SPA for Human and Pets, and all the amazing products!

MARCEL

Thank you darling!

CLAUDE

You... Steve Chain. You are not fashion, you are couture. And that's what we are achieving. National and international.

Dave is thinking, that this can't be easy as that. It feels like, they got the Job already.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

business partners...huh!

DAVE

We...uh, we work well together.

STEVE

Let's call it... partners with benefits...ha ha!

CLAUDE

(he hands them two champagne with a eye tweak)

We love partners, and we so love benefits darling!

MARCEL

Now come...you must meet our investors. They simply must meet you! Both of you of corse.

They lead Dave and Steve into the glittering crowd.

DAVE

What the hell just happened?

STEVE

I think... we become partner, and not just business wise, if you know what I mean!

Steve seems to be fine with marcel and Claude's misunderstanding. Not only that, he's starting to think, that this could be the opportunity to get the Job for Safe.

INT. PARTY VENUE - NIGHT

36

The music dims, lasses clink. The crowd shifts as Claude and Marcel climb a small stage with a finest champagne in hand

MARCEL

Mesdames et Messieurs! Beautiful people!

CLAUDE

Thank you all for being here tonight. This isn't just another party.

Claude and Marcel, they love the drama, that's why they finish each other's Sentence to keep the tide high!

MARCEL

This is a moment. A shift. Claude & Marcel are going international... yeh baby!

CLAUDE

And with expansion comes reinvention.

MARCEL

Which is why we've invited some of the most exciting creative minds in the city to join us tonight.

CLAUDE

You know who you are!

MARCEL

And if you're not sure, you better figure it out fast.

CLAUDE

3 companies we're testing. 1 project.
1 shot.

MARCEL

Show us what you've got. Win the
contract, and be part of the Family:
Claude & Marcel Beauty & Spa Int.

CLAUDE

Our investors are watching, so don't
just design...go spread some love and
dazzle.

The spotlight lingers briefly on Dave and Steve. Marcel winks when he's pronouncing LOVE... Dave gulps, then forces a smile. Steve grins, thinking this can only end in trouble, big mess.

CLAUDE & MARCEL

(in sync)

Let the games begin! And remember...
we do love all of you, no matter what.
Cheers and let's get wild tonight!

INT. PARTY VENUE, DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

37

The crowd has exploded into dancing. Lights pulse over dancing Queens and Kings. Champagne flows, and very much in Dave's glass. He is in the middle of it all. Laughing, loose, freer than he's felt in years. His tie is undone, shirt slightly wrinkled. He's tipsy, riding the high.

DAVE

This is incredible! Are you kidding
me?!

He spins around, toasts the air, laughs again. Two guests clink glasses with him, bemused by his energy. Across the room, Steve leans against a column, still sharp and composed. He scrolls his phone, smirks, then types something. ****DING.**** A reply. He reads it and chuckles quietly.

DAVE (O.S.)

Steve! Stevie! Where you goin'?

Steve walks over, holding his coat.

STEVE

Can I leave you alone? You seem to
have a good time!

DAVE

That's right...these are my people! We speak the same language. And I feel good.

STEVE

You do look ahh... very social.

DAVE

Me? I'm fabulous. This is the best night I've had in, like in ages...

STEVE

Yeah...I guess your buttons are too.

Dave looks down. His shirt is half-messy jacket crooked. He shrugs.

DAVE

I'm a vibe. Go, go... text your mystery friend.

STEVE

Alright then... I'll see you tomorrow at the studio. Try not to end up in a dark whole, if you know what I mean!?

DAVE

I'll make no promises!

Steve disappears through the crowd. He checks his phone again another message comes in. We see "Lilly" on the screen.

STEVE

Oh my God, you wouldn't believe it. Yes, yes... O.K. Will call you when home?

EXT. PARTY VENUE - NIGHT

38

Dave stumbles out. He waves erratically for a cab.

DAVE

Yo! Yellow car! Taxi! Help a fancy man!

A cab slows down. He climbs in.

DAVE (CONT'D)

One oh five McDougal Street.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

39

Lisa sits at the table in her school uniform, half-awake, scrolling her phone. Dave stumbles in.

DAVE

Lisa!

LISA

Dad!

DAVE

Morning, sunshine! Don't you ever forget to have fun. That's it...yeh..that's the secret. Right?

LISA

Right!

DAVE

I want you to have fun, and I want you to be happy...ok?

LISA

Ok! Are you happy Dad?

DAVE

Couldn't be happier. I have you. Sometimes someone shows up, and something inside you just wakes up again.

Maria appears in the doorway.

MARIA

Lisa, you're up early.

She looks at Dave, clearly just getting home.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Buenas noches, Mr. Miller. Sleep well?

Dave lifts a weak hand in greeting.

DAVE

Working on it.

Maria turns toward the stairs and calls up:

MARIA

Bryan, wake up! School... Vámonos!

Maria exits. Dave pushes himself off the counter and heads toward the stairs, slow, dragging. Bryan comes down at the same time, ready for school.

BB

Hey dad..You missed our run this morning.

DAVE

Yeah... I know. I know, buddy.

Dave turns, and collides with Laura coming down the stairs. She's fully dressed for work.

LAURA

Morning, babe.

DAVE

Morning, darling.

LAURA

Missed you last night. I called... twice. Couldn't sleep.

DAVE

Sorry. I'll talk to you later, hon. My head's exploding.

Laura crosses to the counter. leaves a note beside a green juice bottle.

LAURA

Drink that when you wake up, it'll help. And don't forget to pick up your suit from the cleaners.

EXT. MILLER HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - DAY

40

Laura loads the kids into the car.

LAURA

Okay! Seatbelts, And nobody forget, big event Saturday. I mean it.

INT./EXT. NY CITY STREET, DRIVING - DAY

41

Laura drives through morning traffic, headset in, already in work mode. She checks her watch, then taps her phone, speaker on.

LAURA

Hi, Grace... Tell the layout team I'll be in by nine-thirty. And make sure the new spread for LUXE has the updated credits. I don't want that mix-up again.

INT. LUXE LIVING MAGAZINE, LOBBY - DAY

42

Polished marble floors, cascading greenery, and the steady hum of creative chaos. Laura strides through the revolving doors, coffee in hand, ready to conquer the day.

LAURA

And remind me, I need to call Lilly today. She's invited to the event Saturday.

She heads toward the elevator, already planning the day.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN - DAY

43

Lilly is already at her desk, typing with purpose, coffee within reach, her expression a mix of focus and "do not disturb." The front door swings open. Steve enters.

STEVE

Good morning and bonjour, angel.

LILLY

Good morning, Steve. And don't think you can call me every time you can't sleep. I'm not your sleep sitter.

STEVE

Harsh, but fair.

She finally glances up, and squints toward the hallway.

LILLY (CONT'D)

By the way... Where's Dave?

STEVE

Well... I guess he finally released his inhibitions last night.

LILLY

What does that mean?

STEVE

Let's just say, the man needed a
(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)
 little fun.

Dave walks in, disheveled.

DAVE
 Don't ask.

LILLY
 You smell like regrets and rosé.

DAVE
 Accurate.

Steve sips from Lilly's coffee.

STEVE
 I'm calling it. We're officially
 fabulous now.

LILLY
 God help us all. Mon dieu

Lilly stands at the whiteboard, arms folded, blocking the light like a stylish storm cloud. The office phone rings. Lilly and Dave exchange a surprised look. Lilly picks up.

LILLY (CONT'D)
INTERIORDesign... Lilly...

Hi!

She listens. A smile creeps in, despite herself.

LILLY (CONT'D)
 I heard...

INT. CLAUDE & MARCEL'S STUDIO SHOP - DAY

44

Marcel holds the phone, relaxed, charming. Behind him, Claude casually pets Yin and Yang, their chihuahuas.

MARCEL
 Just checking if our favorite party
 animal survived the night.

CLAUDE (O.S.)
 Is he alive? Tell me he's alive.

LILLY
 He's... Vertical.

MARCEL

Good. Then he should come tonight.

LILLY

Tonight?

MARCEL

Family and friends dinner. Very small.
Very relaxed.

CLAUDE

Very emotional!

MARCEL

It's a goodbye dinner, actually. We
leave for Europe... As soon as we lock
in the right partner.

(then, casual)

Do you remember last night's
announcement darling?

You can almost hear Dave swallows thru the phone. Thinking,
how he supposed to party two nights in a row

MARCEL (CONT'D)

Bring the good-looking plus one. Your
Partner... Steve?

Claude shoots him a look.

CLAUDE

Oh come on... he's name is Steve
Chain. Almost jealous... Mr. Chain!

STEVE

I'm sensing a theme.

A beat.

LILLY

I'll let them know.

MARCEL (O.S.)

And Lilly... You are more than welcome
beautiful!

LILLY

Oh... Marcel darling. I would love to
come. See you tomorrow then!

She hangs up. A short silence. Then Lilly turns sharp now,

energized.

LILLY (CONT'D)

All right, party people. You seem to have had a beautiful night, but Claude and Marcel, they're all about business.

Dave and Steve flinch like busted teenagers.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I relieved an email... Yesterday at 3:16 am. Test job. Real deal. They want concepts by Monday.

Dave drops into a chair. Steve drags another one over and plops down beside him.

STEVE

Now that's what I call... Work hard, play hard.

LILLY

Yes... Your right Steve. That's how New Yorker do business. The City that never sleeps!

(a beat)

You know what that means?

Dave looks at her, kinda hangover again, after that phone call.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Those "family and friends" dinners! That's where... Real business starts!

Steve nods, impressed.

STEVE

She's right.

Dave exhales, half-laughs.

DAVE

Of course she's right!

Dave moves to the whiteboard, already grabbing a marker.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Alright. Let's work.

Steve tosses his jacket over a chair, leans in. Dave is suddenly wide awake. The Trio fall into motion, faster, sharper. Focused. Hungry. They can almost smell it now. Opportunity.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Monday? That's like... Three days from now.

STEVE

Plenty of time, if we cancel sleep. Will do then... When we're rich.

Lilly opens her laptop and clicks dramatically.

LILLY

Listen to this: "We're selecting three finalists. We expect vision, boldness, and fabulousness. Show us who you are."

DAVE

Why does that sound like a RuPaul challenge?

LILLY

Oh... And small detail. The email said: "We loved meeting you...
BUSINESS BOYS

A long pause. Dave and Steve exchange a glance.

STEVE

WOW

DAVE

They think we're...? Oh... They got me wrong!

STEVE

Dave... Why did Claude and Marcel get you wrong?

DAVE

I think, I said something like... eh we're partners. The new "BUSINESS BOYS" in town.

LILLY

Okay...That make seance now! They think... You Dave, and... You Steve,
(MORE)

LILLY (CONT'D)
are partner. As in LOVE... Partner!

DAVE
We need to clear it up?

LILLY
No. No... You should lean into it. I'm serious. They adore you together. If this is what gets us the job. Who cares?

STEVE
That idea came to me at the event, but right now, it feels kinda tricky and weird!

LILLY
There you go Dave. Steve thinks business for ones!

DAVE
What about Laura... What about the Kids? They all know each other. Laura is one of there business Partner.

LILLY
Dave... Don't be so naive. Do you know how many married people have a boy or girlfriend... Gay!

DAVE
So... We're doing this? Fake couple?For the good of the studio, Steve?

STEVE
What ever keeps my fortune save

LILLY
Your what? Whatever! We... I mean YOU should play along, and give them the picture they want to see. And **INTERIORDesign** will survive, or even become a big Player in this selfish, provocative, fabulous...

DAVE AND STEVE
O.K....we get it!

STEVE
Success over pride... I like that one.

LILLY

That's funny, Steve! Keep that one for after Pitch Party!

DAVE

Time to get fabulous, professional, and GAY.

Lilly grabs her laptop and stacks a few sample books with authority.

LILLY

All right guys. I'll handle the logistics, emails, and mood board prep. And you... Dave. Go home. Get some rest. Laura will be thrilled to see you with less espresso in your bloodstream. Spend some quality time with your actual family. And you, Steve...

STEVE

Me?

LILLY

Yes you... I can't believe, I'm saying that, but let's work on a "Ru Paul" pitch as you said in first place. Ready?

STEVE

Born ready Cherie!

LILLY

See you at Dinner tonight! Will send you the Location.

DAVE

Okay. Later.

Lilly and Steve lean over the table and get to work, heads down, focused, moving like a real team. Dave already on his way home.

EXT. NYC STREETS - DAY

45

Dave walks through the city, phone in hand. He dials Laura. No answer. BB. Nothing. LISA. Voicemail. He keeps walking, thoughts drifting. Marcel and Claude. Their rise. The buzz. Business is moving somehow, it feels real finally. design finally feeling real. Dave smiles, proud, inspired. He grabs

his phone for one more call. Home.

INT. MILLER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

46

Maria answers, cheerful, already halfway out the door.

MARIA

Hola, Mr. Miller!

DAVE

Hey, Maria. Where is everybody?

MARIA

Kids out. Laura busy. I'm heading uptown.

(a beat)

Spanish Harlem... Volunteering.

DAVE

Of course you are. Have a good one.

MARIA

Always... By Mr. Miller

She hangs up. Dave pockets the phone, keeps walking, as he realizes, how many blocks he's been walking without notice. He stops. looks up. UNION SQUARE.

DAVE

OH... The Dinner!

He turns toward the subway entrance then and freezes. Across the square. His daughter Lisa. All dressed up. Hair curled. Makeup done. Date-level effort. She's with Danny, and some wannabe Gangster rapper/ dancer DJs / kids. loud clothes, big gestures, harmless bravado. Dave ducks instinctively behind a BIG WOMAN loaded with shopping bags. He peeks. Still there. The BIG WOMAN turns.

BIG WOMAN

What's wrong with you?

DAVE

Sorry! Uh... people shopping research!
I'm checking your big bags... I
mean... bags. Big bags. Just- Never
mind.

The woman squints.

BIG WOMAN

My what...? You better get out of here.

She grips her purse tighter.

BIG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Seriously... Run!

Panicking, to be spotted by his daughter Lisa. He slides away awkwardly. Dave now hides behind a STREET MAP, trying to follow the Kids. When they drop their skateboards, and took off, Dave finally gives up hiding. He watches from a distance. Almost waves.

DAVE

Shit... shit... Shit.

A subway rumbles below. Dave checks the time.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Okay. Enough stalking.

He heads down the subway stairs. Dave glances back toward the square one last time. Lisa and Danny on Skateboards laughing. The train arrives. Dave steps on. The doors close. Only then does he look up at the map. Wrong train. Dave exhales, amused.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Of course.

He leans back, relaxed, still smiling. Dinner ahead. When he finally made it home. He text Lilly: Hey... Sorry! I'm running late. Getting ready now. You and Steve, can handle meanwhile.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN - DAY

47

Sketches, mockups, screens - aligned. Finished.

LILLY

Wow. That was hard.

STEVE

RuPaul himself would faint if this doesn't win.

INT. INTERIORDESIGN - DAY

48

Lilly and Steve finish packing their things. Steve waits near

the door, scrolling his phone. The OFFICE PHONE BUZZES.

LILLY

Is that... who calls the landline?

She picks up.

LILLY (CONT'D)

INTERIORdesign, Lilly speaking.

LAURA (O.S.)

Hi Lilly, it's Laura.

LILLY

Oh! Hi, Laura. What's up?

LAURA (O.S.)

Just wanted to remind you about tomorrow's event. The award night. Hope you'll be there.

LILLY

Of course I will, and congratulations, Laura really. It's amazing.

LAURA (O.S.)

So... How's Dave doing?

LILLY

He's good. Focused. Something's finally happening for him. You know... with work. Actually, we'r having a business dinner just this evening. Marcel and Claude? The couple with the beauty products.... West Village!

LAURA (O.S.)

Oh... I know Claude and Marcel. That's great. Okay, see you tomorrow Lilly... you'r coming right!

LILLY

Oui... See you at the event then.

She hangs up, grabs her bag. The Landline rings again.

LILLY (CONT'D)

You've got to be kidding me...

She picks up.

LILLY (CONT'D)
INTERIORDesign, Lilly speak...

MARIA (O.S.)
 Hola Chica! how are you, mi amor?

LILLY
 Hola Maria! Good, how are you, Mama!

MARIA
 Calling to make sure you're on your way to Spanish Harlem.

LILLY
 Yes! I'm actually heading out now!

Lilly is locking at Steve, trying to get an O.K. while on the Phone with Maria.

LILLY (CONT'D)
 Maria... Can I bring a friend with? Steve, would be glad to help. Less time, more hands!

MARIA (O.S.)
 Si, Si... Your friends, are my friends. You don't have time? No after volunteering Margarita?

LILLY
 All details when there. See you in a bit.

MARIA (O.S.)
 Wait... I think... Mr. Miller is cheating on Laura.

LILLY
 What? Maria... No! Why do you think that?

MARIA (O.S.)
 I heard him talking. Laughing, like a man hiding something. And I know when something is wrong. He is taking care of himself, even going for a run early in the morning with BB. shaping his old Body! Dios mio!

Lilly softens, gentle but firm.

LILLY

Maria... Dave loves Laura... Truly.
He's just inspired again, focused.
It's not another woman, I promise.

MARIA (O.S.)

You promise Lilly?

LILLY

I promise. We'll talk when I get
there... Okay?

MARIA (O.S.)

Okay. See you soon.

Lilly hangs up.

LILLY

Wow... Alright. Let's go. And Steve!
You'r volunteering in Spanish Harlem!

Steve nods and follows her out saying.

STEVE

Is everything okay?

LILLY

Will tell you on the way!

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

49

Lilly and Steve stand close, holding the same pole. They talk quietly, animated. Faces close. The train slows. They exchange a look.

EXT. SPANISH HARLEM, SUBWAY STATION - DAY

50

Lilly and Steve step out onto the street. Bright murals, music drifting, food carts sizzling. Lilly adjusts her bag and Steve shields his eyes from the sun. They take two steps, when Lisa practically bumps straight into them. She's fully done up: curled hair, heavy makeup, a cute date-night outfit. WAY too much for "volunteering." She freezes.

LILLY

Oh wow... For Maria's volunteering,
you do have a lot of makeup on,
mademoiselle.

LISA
(teen attitude)
I'm not going to volunteer.

LILLY
Oh?

LISA
I have a date. With Danny. He's DJ'ing
up here.

STEVE
Hi. I'm Steve Chain! Your dad's
partner.

LISA
Uh-huh.
(To Lilly, already moving past
Steve.)

LILLY
Lisa... does your dad know you're
here?

LISA
He doesn't need a map of everywhere I
go.

LILLY
Right. I'm not your mother, but i'am
calling this out!

LISA
You'r really not my mom.

A beat. Lilly holds her gaze.

LILLY
Call me in two hours. If you're still
uptown, you're coming downtown with
us. Deal?

Lisa sighs annoyed, but she respects Lilly.

LISA
Fine. Au Revoir, Lilly... Bye, Steve
Chain. Nice meeting you... finally.

Lisa drops her Skatboard.

LILLY
Go. But watch yourself.

Lisa pushes off, gliding away. Steve watches her, protective.

STEVE

That...didn't look like a harmless date.

LILLY

It never is at that age. Come on, Maria's waiting.

EXT. SPANISH HARLEM, COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

51

Lilly and Steve cross the street toward the lively community center. Music, murals, kids shouting, the usual chaos of Spanish Harlem. Suddenly, Maria bursts out of the front doors, emotional, animated, hands flying everywhere. She spots Lilly and immediately rushes to her. Maria grabs Lilly's hands, flustered, upset, words spilling out too fast to follow. Steve stays a step behind, startled. Lilly pulls Maria aside, calming her. Through quick gestures and hushed whispers, Lilly explains: Dave and Steve were mistaken for a couple in the business world, and the studio is letting the misunderstanding help them win the pitch. Maria freezes. Her eyes widen. She looks at Lilly, then slowly at Steve.

She gives Steve a long, dramatic once-over. IMPRESSED.

MARIA

You... you are an angel sent by heaven
You will save this family, Mr. Chain.

Steve blinks, unsure but flattered.

STEVE

Uh... I'll try.

Maria nods like this is destiny, then waves them inside with urgent, bossy energy. They follow Maria into the lively chaos of the community center.

THE SAME - NIGHT

52

The sun is low. The street is alive. Kids run across a small concrete soccer court. Laughter. Shouting. A loose, joyful chaos. Steve is in the middle of it. Not great. Not terrible. Clearly trying. He kicks the ball - misses. The kids GROAN, then laugh.

KID

Come on, Steve!

STEVE

Hey... Europe has different rules.

He jogs after the ball, already winded. On the sidelines, Lilly stands with her bag. She wasn't looking for him, until she found him. She watches. Steve trips over the ball. Falls. The kids cheer. He throws his arms up in defeat, laughing at himself. Then he helps one kid up. High-fives another. Listens when a third one talks - really listens. Lilly smiles. Soft. Unguarded. For a moment, she just watches him be... good. Steve finally looks over. Sees her. Grins.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I'm clearly winning.

LILL

Steve!

She gestures to her watch.

LILLY (CONT'D)

We have to go. Now.

The kids protest.

KID

Already?

STEVE

They're very persuasive.

LILLY

Me to!

Steve sighs, nods.

STEVE

Alright. Alright.

He hands the ball to a kid.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Same time next week?

The kids CHEER. Steve jogs over to Lilly. They walk a few steps together.

LILLY

You disappeared.

STEVE
I got tackled by a ten-year-old. Pride
didn't survive.

She laughs. They stop at the corner.

LILLY
Okay. I'm heading home to get ready.

STEVE
Same.

A beat. A look. Something unspoken.

LILLY
Don't be late.

STEVE
I WON'T

They split. Lilly walks off, lighter. Steve watches her go.
Then turns the other way, already pulling out his phone,
already behind schedule. Life resumes.

INT. TRIBECA APARTMENT LOBBY - NIGHT

53

The sleek, quiet lobby of a luxury building. Steve strides
in, phone in hand, distracted but upbeat. He stops dead.
Robert and Guilia sitting at the Lobby near the desk like
they own the place. Because they do. Steve blinks.

STEVE
Mom... Dad? What are you doing here?

GUILIA
You weren't answering.

ROBERT
So we stopped by. And 1st look at our
property!

Steve looks around, confused.

STEVE
You... You stopped by my apartment?

ROBERT
Which one is this again?

STEVE
Tribeca.

GUILIA

Ah. Yes. Of corse... Tribeca. The one with the doorman who never smiles.

DOORMAN

I heard that Robert

STEVE

I'm actually running late for dinner.

MR. CHAIN

Another dinner? Another city... You've had more dinners than conversations with us.

GUILIA

Don't worry honey... We won't stay long.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

54

Steve moves fast. Jacket off, shoes kicked aside. His parents settle in comfortably. Too comfortably.

ROBERT

This is not a "Chain Interior" Sofa...? Why?

STEVE

Because... I like this one... That's Why Dad!

GUILIA

That's what worries us.

(a beat)

It's actually...it's pretty!

Steve disappears into the bedroom.

STEVE (O.S.)

I really have to go.

ROBERT

You always have to go. But you never seem to arrive.

Steve steps out. Towel around his waist, wet hair.

STEVE

Believe it or not. This dinner is important. 10 Days ultimatum at work!

ROBERT

You did get this wrong sun. It's not a dinner ultimatum.

STEVE

Dad... I almost forgot your incredible seance of humor

GUILIA

Are we invited?

(a beat)

Oh Steve darling...the driver is running late. Waldorf...thanks honey!

Steve hits the FDR, cuts over to the West Side Highway to make up time. He drops his parents off.

STEVE

I'll call you tomorrow.

ROBERT

Don't forget, otherwise we'll stop by.

Steve blow a kiss. Mr. and Guilia exchange a look.

GUILIA

He's in love.

ROBERT

Or in trouble.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

55

Warm lights strung through olive trees. TUSCANY-IN-THE-CITY. Champagne flows. Guests laugh. Servers glide. Lilly steps in, dressed beautifully. A bit late, a little breathless. Before she can orient herself, Marcel and Claude appear.

MARCEL

Lilly... There you are!

CLAUDE

We thought you got lost in Europe.

LILLY

Almost.

Air kisses. Warm. Effusive.

MARCEL

Dave and Steve?

A micro-beat. Lilly keeps it light.

LILLY

On their way. They should be here
anytime soon!

Marcel grins, already teasing.

MARCEL

You know... Dave surprised everyone
last night.

LILLY

Oh?

CLAUDE

The man can DANCE.

Lilly laughs, genuinely surprised.

LILLY

Shut up... Dave?

MARCEL

I swear. Very smooth. Very confident.

CLAUDE

D.D.Q... Dave Dancing Queen

They all lose it - overlapping laughter, half-finished
sentences, hands in the air.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

I didn't see that coming. And Steve...

MARCEL

Everybody loved him.

CLAUDE

I was hoping to dance with him again.

MARCEL

But he disappeared early.

CLAUDE

Very rude.

They laugh. Lilly smiles. Very proud. Two San Francisco guys,
handsome, very relaxed, came to say hallo to Dave and Marcel
just at the right time. They rescue Lilly without knowing.
Obviously, happy to meet again!

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Oh... Hey! San Francisco in the House!

They hug, and kiss, while Claude is still singing "San Francisco in the House"

MARCEL

Sorry darling... catch you later. Let me know, when Dave and Steve arrive! We'd like to introduce you guys to friends from San Francisco!

LILLY

Oh no... don't be sorry. And yes, I will let you know! We love San Francisco...

MARCEL

In the meantime... Champagne darling.

He presses a glass into her hand.

CLAUDE

Grab some Antipasti.... Best Italian in town right now!

They vanish back to their guest and friends. Lilly exhales. She pulls out her phone. TEXT FROM LILLY: "Where are you??" No reply. She types again. TEXT TO STEVE: "Please tell me you're close." She looks up. Marcel is already scanning the garden. Lilly panics. She ducks behind the bar. The bartender turns.

BARTENDER

You don't need to hide. You look amazing... You'r O.K.?

LILLY

Oh... Mercie!
(a beat)
I... I'm not hiding! It's... The shoes.

The bartender hands her a new glass champagne with a wink and a nod. Lilly peeks out. Too late. She bumps into a Server. Glasses clink. One crashes. Silence.

CLAUDE

Lilly?

Lilly ducks into a group of guests mid-laughter, blending in.

Smiles. Pretends to belong. Across the garden, Marcel and Claude are deep in conversation with two startup founders – intense, animated. Numbers. Big ideas. Lilly watches, impressed. This is real. Deals happening. Opportunities closing.

Her phone BUZZES.

TEXT FROM STEVE: "Running late. Very late! SORRY."

She winces.

TEXT FROM Dave: "Almost there."

Lilly scans the entrance. Nothing. She takes a sip of champagne. Then another. Music swells. Laughter grows. Time passes. Lilly is officially stuck – waiting, hiding, watching business happen without them.

She looks toward the gate again. Still no Dave. No Steve. Just Tuscany. Just champagne. Just opportunity slipping by.

EXT. TUSCAN-STYLE RESTAURANT, BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

56

The backyard garden hums with life – music pulsing, laughter drifting through warm night air. Small clusters of beautiful, interesting people everywhere: designers, founders, friends, investors. Lilly stands near the bar, phone in hand, pretending she's totally fine.

TEXT FROM Dave: "Almost there."

She exhales. Takes a sip of champagne. Then another. Marcel and Claude weave through the crowd, arms full of beautifully wrapped gifts – bottles, boxes, ribbons. The spoils of a successful night trailing behind them. They stop at Lilly.

MARCEL

Ah... Lilly! There you are, darling.

They shift the gifts between them, laughing.

LILLY

Looks like a very good night.

MARCEL

The spoils of love and business.

CLAUDE

We'll call it the night. Our Driver is waiting already.

MARCEL

Yes... We need to start packing.

MARCEL (CONT'D)

This one... Needs a month just to decide, what shoes to bring.

CLAUDE

This is absolutely not true! Six weeks. Minimum.

MARCEL

Tell Dave, we said hello.

CLAUDE

And a sweet hallo to gorgeous Steve.

LILLY

I will.

MARCEL

We'll talk business again very soon.
And hey... Friends. Family. Partners.
Welcome to the family, Lilly.

They air-kiss her, warm and effortless, then drift out through the garden gate, still laughing, already half legend. Lilly watches them go.

Steve appears at the entrance. Gucci jacket. Gucci loafers. Out of breath. Late. He clocks Lilly's face instantly.

STEVE

Oh my God. Lilly! I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry. My parents showed up at my apartment... Just appeared!

LILLY

Okay... That's actually so sweet!

STEVE (CONT'D)

What started with a "how are you son", turned into "future, legacy, heritage, responsibility" conversation. It ended, with me giving a ride to the Waldorf Astoria. Exhausting!

LILLY

Being a terrible agent tonight. That's exhausting!

They laugh. Lilly tells Steve, all about her hiding, glass breaking, and crashing strangers talk, to sneak a conversation between Claude and Marcel and the to fancy start up guys from San Francisco. They share more Laughter. They share flirty moments.

STEVE

So Marcel and Claude left there own dinner party first?

LILLY

Yes. That's so them. That's what fancy New Yorkers do. They pay the bill, hug everyone, and say... "You guys party. Have a great night. We love you"

STEVE

That is... Aggressively classy.

They laugh when they spot Dave. He arrives, slightly ruffled, glowing, in a ridiculously good mood.

LILLY

WOW! At least one of us looks happy.

DAVE

Hi Lilly, Hi Steve. I'm sorry for the delay. I had an unwanted city roundtrip. And a big woman. Ahh. never mind! My man, very sharp in that Gucci as always. And Madamoselle Lilly... You look stunning.

LILLY

Who are you, and where is my boss, Dave Miller?

STEVE

We keep this one!

DAVE

Thank you, Steve!

LILLY

If you're looking for Claude and Marcel? They left.

DAVE

Actually I bumped into them around the corner.

STEVE

You did?

DAVE

Yep! They said, they have a huge to-do list.

A Server passes. Dave grabs champagne and two bites.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Also, they said, I have incredible dancing skills... Can you imagine, me?

LILLY

Okay... What else did they say?

DAVE (CONT'D)

We'll be pitching.

STEVE

Great news Dave. That's amazing.

LILLY

Are you kidding me... That's unbelievable! Deadline?

DAVE

They will let us know! There are two other Company's, who will be pitching as well.

LILLY

Let the games begin.

Dave grabs a napkin, wipes his mouth, suddenly focused.

DAVE

Okay. Here's the plan.

EXT. TUSCAN-STYLE RESTAURANT, BACK GARDEN - NIGHT

57

The garden has softened into candlelight and laughter behind them. The TRIO step out together.

DAVE

Alright, let's call it a night, guys! Steve... Can you give me a ride? I'm officially done with subways for today.

STEVE

Of course. No problem... Lilly?

LILLY

No, no! It's fine. You..."Love Birds"
go. I'm good.

STEVE

You sure?

LILLY

Yeah. I want to walk. It's good for
the pitch... Inspiration. See you
tomorrow, business boys!

STEVE

Tomorrow!

She walks away. Steve claps Dave on the shoulder.

STEVE (CONT'D)

We can do this, man. I'm positive.

DAVE

We need this.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So let's not screw it up.

MONTAGE - SATURDAY - "THE PITCH MACHINE"

- A COFFEE CUP slams beside an open LAPTOP. On screen:
"CONCEPTS DUE MONDAY."

- Dave sits alone at the table. Notes everywhere. Rereads the
same paragraph. Again. Checks his phone - a FAMILY PHOTO.
Locks it. Keeps reading.

- LILLY storms in, hair still damp, already in charge. Drops
PRINT-OUTS and SKETCHES onto the table.

- STEVE paces, phone to his ear. Low voice. Polite.
Controlled. "Of course. I'll circle back." Hangs up. Doesn't
love it.

- LILLY leans over the board, thinking. Without realizing it,
slips an UNLIT CIGARETTE between her lips. Doesn't light it.
Writes anyway.

- Dave steps to the WHITEBOARD. Hesitates. Then writes big:
"WHO ARE WE?"

- QUICK CUTS: Mood boards. Color swatches. Texture samples. A timer app counting down. Lilly's fingers flying across a keyboard. Steve stops pacing - watches Dave. Dave sketches something unexpectedly good.

- ON THE BOARD: "WHY US?" - "WHAT'S THE STORY?" - LILLY circles "STORY." Twice. - STEVE starts to speak - stops himself. Listens.

- A PRINTER ERUPTS. Pages spit out fast. A growing stack: "PITCH DECK - v1" - "v2" - "v3".

- Dave wipes his mouth with a napkin. A leftover habit. Locks in.

FINAL BEAT:

The three of them at the board. No posturing. No pretending. Working.

END MONTAGE.

INT. MILLER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

58

Dave is at the stove. All calm, apron on, jazz playing. He's actually cooking. Pots bubbling, vegetables chopped with surprising skill. It feels like the first normal evening in a long time. The door swings open, and BB, flushed from basketball, drops his bag.

BB

Yo! Dad? Are you... making dinner?

DAVE

Yes I am, sir. Chef Dave is back in the building.

BB

Whoa. Smells awesome.

Dave tosses pasta in the pan.

DAVE

What's up, buddy? All good?

BB

Yeah. School... Practice.. Kinda wiped.

DAVE

Yeah, I figured.

Dave grabs plates. BB follows, automatically helping, setting the table. They work in quiet rhythm. Comfortable and familiar.

BB

Coach says I'm getting faster.

DAVE

That's great, and coming from the pickiest coach ever, that's a big deal.

BB

A guess so. By the way... Where's Mom?

DAVE

She's running late tonight. Business dinner. Her California boss is in town. Something about L.A.

BB

For what? Is she in trouble?

DAVE

No... Awards stuff. Magazine things.

BB

Oh... Okay!

DAVE

And your sister has a date with...
Danny.

BB

Yeah. Unfortunately.

DAVE

So... It's me and you dining tonight!
Father-Son quality time!

Dave hands Bryan a spoon for a taste curiously waiting for BB's answer

DAVE (CONT'D)

So buddy... What' up with the girls?

BB

Nothing really. Although... there is this girl.

DAVE

Oh! Talk to me... Who is the very lucky one? Is she your girlfriend?

BB

She's not my girlfriend. But I kinda want her to be. But I'm not sure she even knows I exist. Her name is Maya Ward. We use to play together when we were little... I don't think she remembers.

DAVE

If she doesn't... she will!

Dave hands Bryan a spoon with for a taste, curiously waiting for BB's answer.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I'm listening.

BB studies him, then squints. They stand side by side at the counter, casually tasting the pasta as they talk. A natural father-son rhythm forms. Laughter here and there, BB poking fun at Dave's "fancy cooking," Dave nudging him with the spoon. It's easy, warm, the kind of everyday closeness they haven't shared in a long time. Then a beat... Returning them to the moment.

BB

Yeah... You look different lately. Like... Fresh! Did you put lotion on?

DAVE

Maybe. Little upgrade.

BB

Keep it Dad. It suits you.

DAVE

Alright, chef's assistant, take out the trash for me?

BB

Knew there was a catch.

EXT. MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

59

BB steps outside... and freezes. Lisa is backed against a car, her boyfriend Danny: (17, tall, athletic, good looking, but with that "trying way too hard" swagger. Private-school

kid acting like a Harlem gangster, a wannabe DJ who's deep into the persona. He crowds her space, and leans in too close, trying to kiss her. Lisa keeps pushing him back. Bryan's eyes go wide.

BB
HEY! Get OFF her!

Danny turns as Bryan runs and shoves him.

DANNY
Yo! Chill Bro.

BB
She said NO!

Danny rolls his eyes.

DANNY
She's being dramatic. We always...

LISA
Danny...Go home!

Danny mutters, gets in his car, drives off. Lisa turns on Bryan, furious, embarrassed.

LISA (CONT'D)
What was THAT?!

BB
Defending my sister! He's a jerk! I told you he's a freak!

LISA
I can handle myself!

She storms toward the house.

BB
Lisa!!!

LISA
Go ahead! Tell Mom and Dad! Like you always do!

She disappears inside, slamming the door.

BB
That's NOT what I do... I'm your brother!

INT. MILLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

60

Dave is at the counter, wrapping up leftovers and wiping down the table. The final touches of a calm evening. The back Door swings open. Lisa rushes in, tense, avoiding eye contact as she heads straight for the hallway.

DAVE

Oh hey, sweetheart! If you're hungry,
there's... Okay! Love you to Sunshine!

EXT. LUX INTERIOR MAGAZINE OFFICE - NIGHT

61

The office floor is nearly empty now. Lights dimmed and Screens asleep. Laura's Boss, from Los Angelas, "Mason Price"(50's): California ease, big white smile, and a sun kissed skin. A Man with the confidence, of someone, used to being listened to. Ones or twice a year, he checks in with the NYC Office. This Time is special visit. The Gala/ Award Venue. Mason lingers nearby, checking his phone like time is optional. He knocks very smooth on Laura's glas door.

MASON

Hungry?

LAURA

Starving.

MASON

Good... I'm staying at The George.
Great restaurant. Even better bar.

Laura grabs her coat and bag and shot's her laptop. She reacts immediately. New Yorker instinct.

LAURA

Of course you are. I love The George.
We actually host a few magazine events
there sometimes.

MASON

Now I finally know, where all my money
goes. At this point I should own the
place.

EXT. NYC MIDTOWN - NIGHT

62

Laura and her Boss Mason, walk side by side, easy,
professional, but something softer slipping in.

MASON

You always work this late?

LAURA

Yes... No, only when it matters.

MASON

That's an "always!"

Laura smiles. Doesn't deny it.

INT. THE GEORGE HOTEL, RESTAURANT - NIGHT

63

A tall, model-type Host, guides Laura and Mason through the crowded restaurant. The atmosphere buzzes, elegant, expensive". Beautiful people. Low laughter. Soft lounge music and voices, are filling the high ceiling. They're seated. Wine poured. Plates arrive and Conversation flows, magazine talk, design, and of course the Award Gala preps. Laura loosens. She hasn't laughed like this in a while. Time passes unnoticed. Empty plates are cleared. The wine bottle remains almost empty.

MASON

Dessert?

Laura considers it, then smiles.

LAURA

I'll rather have a nightcap.

Mason doesn't hesitate and call's up one of the server.

MASON

Perfect Call!

INT. THE GEORGE HOTEL, LOUNGE - NIGHT

64

They move through softly swaying bodies, past a DJ spinning upbeat lounge music. Laura and Mason sink into a corner booth. Drinks arrive. They clink glasses. Laura and Mason talking, laughing, leaning in. Sipping laughing again. Loose and comfortable now. The kind of easy chemistry that sneaks up on you. Mason laughs, shakes his head.

MASON

To Laura Miller... Future award winner, and hopefully... Future partner.

Laura laughs despite herself tipsy and very flattered.

LAURA

Oh my God... that actually sounds very good when you say it like that.

MASON

It sounds even better on paper. In fact... Anything sounds better on paper.

He pours the last drops into their glasses.

MASON (CONT'D)

I didn't fly in from L.A. just for the wine.

LAURA

I was wondering how long it would take before you said that.

Mason leans in, conspiratorial.

MASON

Excuse me... I'll be right back.

He slides out of the booth and disappears into the crowd.

She looks around. A group of friends laughing too loud. A couple leaning in close. Someone telling a story with wild hand gestures. For a brief moment, it feels familiar. Laura smiles to herself. A quiet ache. Something she didn't realize she missed. Mason returns, sliding back into the booth.

MASON (CONT'D)

I've got something I want to show you.

LAURA

Now?

MASON

Trust me... you'll love it!

She hesitates, then nods.

INT. GEORGE HOTEL, ELEVATOR / HALLWAY - NIGHT

65

They laugh, a little unsteady. Walking close. Not touching. The elevator doors open.

INT. MASON'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

66

The door closes behind them. Quiet. City light spilling in

through tall windows. A modern expensive carefully chosen interior. Shoes kicked off. Jackets tossed. Not sexy, just end-of-night messy. Mason pours two drinks, overly confident.

MASON

I always knew one day we'd end up celebrating like this.

Laura laughs, really tipsy now. Mason grabs a tablet from the desk. They sit closer now, not intentional, just natural.

MASON (CONT'D)

You know... I keep thinking about the award.

LAURA

I'm just nominated.

MASON

You're winning.

Laura doesn't argue. She stirs the ice in her glass.

MASON (CONT'D)

And when you do... Things change.

He grabs a tablet from the desk, and turns it toward Laura

MASON

Look!

ON SCREEN — MAGAZINE COVER MOCK-UP: **Laura Miller: Bold Powerful Unmistakable**. Laura keeps looking at the screen. A long beat. Laura's smile softens.

LAURA

Oh wow...

MASON

That's our anniversary cover.

LAURA

You don't waste time.

MASON

I never have...

(beat.)

You know, I've always liked you.

LAURA

Mason... You're on your fourth

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
marriage. You like Women. You were
flirting with Grace... My assistant.
Remember?

Mason laughs, unoffended. They're close now. A brief,
impulsive kiss. Light. Clumsy. More momentum than intent. He
pulls back.

MASON
You won't just be featured. You're
going global, Laura! Covers. Travel,
Paris. Milan. Tokyo. This is your
world now.

Laura listens as Mason keeps going.

MASON (CONT'D)
Running rooms. Running people. Running
a interior design world.

A beat. Mason watches her reaction. proud, already
celebrating. Laura keeps looking at the screen. She nods.
Something in her expression shifts. Not fear. Recognition.
Silence for a moment.

LAURA
That's a lot... Running.

MASON
It's freedom. The word lands wrong.

Laura looks at the screen again. Then past it. Out the
window. The city. Endless. Loud. Something shifts. She steps
back.

LAURA
You know what?

MASON
What? You'r in?

LAURA
I'm gonna go home.

Mason blinks, surprised, but not shattered.

MASON
Home?

LAURA
Yes Mason... Home.

She grabs her coat. Thinking of her family, and how she misses them, specially Dave. Taking this offer would tear them apart for good.

MASON
Are you serious?

LAURA
Absolutely. Thank you so much for this wonderful evening, and for believing in me... BOSS!

She heads for the door. Then turns around!

LAURA (CONT'D)
Oh... By the way.. I'm running a family. After the award gala... I'm taking a couple of weeks off. Paid holidays.

MASON
I don't like it... but you do deserve it, Laura.

Laura exits. Mason watches the door close. Shrugs. He picks up his phone.

MASON (CONT'D)
Hey, darling... Yeah, I'm at The George. You coming over?

INT. MILLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

67

Laura comes in.

LAURA
Hi darling!

DAVE
Is that my wife talking, or a cosmopolitan?

LAURA
Long day, crazy night.

DAVE
Saved some dinner for you.

LAURA

Too nervous. Need to work on my speech. Oh, before I forget... The magazine invited Claude and Marcel to the gala tomorrow. Some "international spotlight" thing. They're not nominated, but they're mentioned as locals going international, because everyone knows and loves there concept.

DAVE

Oh... Pressure's on. Okay. Well, we're prepared, and tomorrow? It's not about them and us. It's about you. Come on. Let's work on that speech.

DAVE (CONT'D)

You're gonna win, Laura. You're the best at what you do.

LAURA

You're being really sweet.

DAVE

I love you. And I'm proud of you. Always.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

1. Dave and Laura go through her speech, crossing out lines.
 2. Dave's phone keeps lighting up beside him. 3. Quick flashes of texts from Lilly and Steve reacting to the news about Claude and Marcel attending the gala. 4. Dave tries to hide the phone, typing fast between Laura's sentences. Laura notices. A tiny flicker of hurt.

END MONTAGE:

LAURA

Everything okay?

DAVE

Yeah. I'm fine. All good!

Maria enters, carrying two bright piñatas and a stuffed tote bag. She stands in the doorway like she's walked 20 miles.

MARIA

Ay, what a day. I am exhausted. But I promised Lisa I'd get some cheering
 (MORE)

MARIA (CONT'D)
stuff for BB's big game!

She shuffles toward her room.

LAURA
Maria... Tomorrow after breakfast?
Shopping, okay?

MARIA (O.S.)
Sí, Sí! Good night!

EXT. NYC STREETS, TRIBECA - NIGHT

68

Steve walks through the streets. His phone rings. He checks the screen. It's Marco.

STEVE
Yo, Marco.

MARCO (O.S.)
My man! Where you been all week? You vanished. And don't tell me you're OUT tonight?

STEVE
I'm out. OUT-OUT!

MARCO (O.S.)
Ooooh... There's a woman involved. I can hear it, bro.

STEVE
No... I mean, maybe.

MARCO (O.S.)
There it is! My boy finally fell! Who is she?

STEVE
Night, Marco.

He hangs up. His phone rings again. He checks the screen: MOM & DAD - THE HAMPTONS.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Hi Mom. Hi Dad.

GUILIA (O.S.)
Hallo my Darling! When are you coming out to the house? Everyone misses you!

MR. CHAIN (O.S.)
A little party never hurt nobody, son!
Get over here!

STEVE
I know, I know. I'll see. Have fun,
you two.

GUILIA (O.S.)
Did you sign yet?

STEVE
Food night

INT. MILLER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

69

Dressed for work, Dave blends a green smoothie. Bowls, fruit, and a small breakfast spread are laid out neatly. Lisa comes in, grabs a glass of juice.

LISA
BB is up?

DAVE
Not yet. Morning to you too,
sweetheart!

BB comes in, sleepy.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Here he is. Morning, champ.

BB
Morning.

LISA
Sorry about yesterday.

BB
Oh. Uh... Hey! Yeh, okay!

LISA
I was a brat. You were... Actually
being a good brother.

BB
Yeah well... Someone had to stop Danny
The Freak.

LISA
Don't call him that.

BB

Sorry.

LISA

So, big day for you too, huh?

BB

Maya's coming. With her mom.

LISA

OMG! My little brother is in LOVE.

BB

Stop it. Maybe.

LISA

I'm gonna help you. We're gonna make you look and act fire.

BB

...Thanks.

DAVE

Alright, people! Tonight is your mother's big night. We show up. We support her. We smile. We behave. Yes, that includes you, BB.

BB

Born behaved!

DAVE

We're picking up the outfits your mom reserved. You two get yourselves together. Maria?

Maria enters, holding a giant bag of random things and a huge smile.

MARIA

Today is BIG day! The Queen Laura Miller will shine! And you, Mr. Miller. You are looking like a very good man today.

Dave laughs, embarrassed.

DAVE

Morning, Maria.

MARIA

I cannot wait to see the outfits. We celebrate your wife! And maybe I buy myself something nice too.

DAVE

Maria, Laura reserved something for you as well!

DAVE (CONT'D)

Alright everybody, let's go! Let's make this evening perfect for mom.

INT. SOHO DAY SPA - DAY

70

Lilly gets a manicure from a NAIL TECH (30S) in zen-like spa.

Her phone buzzes. She grabs it instantly, almost smudging the nail polish. It's Steve. FaceTime request.

LILLY

No no no, not video, Mon dieu! Just call, idiot!

She declines, then he immediately calls Audio. She answers.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Bonjour, monsieur Steve!

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT, DAY

71

Steve, freshly shaved, stands shirtless in front of his closet.

(Crosscut as needed)

STEVE

Hey. So... Funny thing. I'm not officially invited tonight.

LILLY

Of course you're not. It's a magazine gala, not Coachella.

STEVE

Right, right. So... I was wondering... Are you going with someone?

NAIL TECH

Don't move.

LILLY
What do you want, Steve?

STEVE
I want to be your plus one.

LILLY
Hm... You ask like a man who thinks he
already knows the answer.

STEVE
Do I?

LILLY
Yes... You can be my plus one Mr.
Chain!

STEVE
Then I'll pick you up at six!

LILLY
Six o'clock. Don't be late. Actually,
don't be too early either. French
women don't like to be rushed.

STEVE
I'll be exactly on time.

INT. SAK'S FIFTH AVENUE STORE - DAY

72

Weekend chaos. Crowds. Jazz. Shoppers everywhere. Dave,
Maria, BB, and Lisa weave through the aisles.

LISA
Ugh, I hate Saturdays here. It's like
every Manhattan mom showed up at once.

BB
Thank God Mom reserved everything. Or
we'd be here till Christmas.

DAVE
Alright, We try things on, they fit, we leave. No drama. The
Associate approaches, bright, polished, welcoming.

ASSOCIATE
Mr. Miller? We have your family's
selections ready in the fitting rooms.

He beams at Maria.

ASSOCIATE (CONT'D)

And this is for your fitting Señora

Maria blushes proudly.

MARIA

Ay... gracias.

They head to the fitting rooms.

LISA

Dad! Are you... Like... Actually Gay?

Dave freezes. Every shopper within a five-rack radius stops and looks.

DAVE

Lisa! Volume down. And no... I'm not.
It's... Business. It's complicated.

BB

Yeah, Dad. You kinda walked into that one.

Dave exhales, mortified.

DAVE

Can we please just try the outfits on
and get out of here?

Maria pats Dave's chest lovingly.

MARIA

So brave, Mr. Miller. Very brave.

They all head into their dressing rooms.

INT. SAK'S, FITTING ROOM - DAY

73

A quick MONTAGE, Fast, stylish, chaotic: - Lisa steps into a fitted dress. BB rolls his eyes, then gives a thumbs-up. - Dave in a blazer. Maria fixes his collar like she's preparing a groom. - Maria twirls in her outfit. Lisa gasps: "GUAPA!" - BB in a suit, standing stiff. Maria spins him. He blushes. -

BACK TO SCENE: They gather in front of a full, length mirror. All looking surprisingly coordinated.

BB

So... Did you guys, like, have to hold
hands or kiss or something?

DAVE

No! No. Absolutely not. Well, not yet!

LISA

Dad... Stop it! No pictures in head.

They all crack up. A weirdly perfect moment of bonding.

EXT. SAKS - MORNING

74

They step out of Saks. All four wearing matching oversized designer sunglasses, they definitely did not need. Everyone is laughing.

LISA

Hey Dad! Thanks for shopping! this is just fabulous. Ha ha!

Maria BURSTS into loud cackling laughter. Lisa covers her face, dying. BB almost swallow's his soda. Dave throws his hands up.

DAVE

Okay, everybody stop bullying me.

They all LAUGH as they cross the street together. A chaotic, newly-bonded little family.

INT. MAGAZINE GALA VENUE - DAY

75

A massive, elegant event space being transformed for tonight. Florists rush. Technicians adjust lights. Catering sets tables. Controlled chaos. Laura strides through it. Clipboard, headset, confidence. She's the boss here. People look to her for answers.

LAURA

No lilies on the main stage. Too strong. Switch to hydrangeas, please. Thank you.

She moves on.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Warmer on table section B... yes, like that. Perfect. Thank you.

Her phone Buzzes. "1 NEW VOICEMAIL, Dave." She hesitates...Then presses play.

INTERCUT WITH Dave'S VOICEMAIL - AUDIO ONLY

DAVE (O.S.)

Hey babe... Just checking in. We're at Barney's.

(then)

I know, I know, don't panic, we got the outfits. See you tonight. You're gonna kill it.

Laura listens, frozen in place. Behind her, Staff buzz around. People greet her:

STAFF #1

Congrats, Laura!

STAFF #2

Big night! We're rooting for you!

STAFF #3

The nomination is huge. You must be thrilled!

She smiles politely, automatic, hollow.

LAURA

Thank you. Thank you... Thank you.

As the greetings fade, she stands alone in the massive venue, suddenly very small. A moment. She pockets her phone and forces herself back into work mode.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Okay! let's run the AV check one more time! Doors open in four hours, people. Let's move.

She walks off, efficient, perfect, and quietly aching.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

76

Steve adjusts his jacket in the mirror, sharp, confident. Buddy, on the couch, watching like a tiny, judgmental security guard.

STEVE

Alright, Buddy... Let's go get the girl. The Pitch? That one's already in the bag.

Buddy gives one approving "boof," approving or warning, hard to tell. Steve grabs his phone and types a message.

ON SCREEN — TEXT TO Dave:

"Hey partner, see you at the gala." He pockets his keys, nods to Buddy, and heads out the door.

EXT. LILLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

77

A car pulls up. Steve steps out, Sharp and confident. He looks up... Freezes. Lilly steps outside. She looks Stunning. Effortless. They both pause, a quick, electric beat.

STEVE

Wow.

LILLY

Careful... It's just a business event.

STEVE

Right... A very and extremely dangerously nice business date.

Steve opens the car door for her. Their fingers brush, tiny spark. She slips into the seat. The door shuts. A breath. Both pretending it's nothing, it's not.

INT. MILLER HOUSE - NINT

78

A sleek Magazine Town Car waits outside. BB, Lisa, and Maria come down the stairs, dressed to perfection. Dave looks up, stunned.

DAVE

Wow... Okay. You three look unreal.

MARIA

Gracias, mi amor.

Dave checks his phone, a text from STEVE: "See you at the gala, partner." Two phones buzz at once. Lisa glances at hers. a text from Danny. She smiles, tucks it away, calm. BB looks at his phone...and freezes.

INSERT: TEXT FROM MAYA

"Hey... Didn't really want to go with my mom tonight, but now I do. C ya BB!" BB's heart almost stops. He shows the message to Lisa, panicked.

BB

She's gonna be there... I'm... I'm gonna die.

LISA

BB... Hey. Look at you. You're gonna be on fire tonight. Trust me.

BB

What if she thinks I'm stupid?

LISA

You are stupid. But you're sweet, funny, and not terrible-looking. Now breathe, idiot.

Dave claps his hands, trying to marshal the chaos.

DAVE

Alright. Let's go, people. Your mom's big night. We show up, we behave, we make her proud.

MARIA

Sí. Tonight, we shine.

BB adjusts his blazer, hands shaking. Lisa nudges him gently.

LISA

If you panic, stand near me. I'll signal you.

BB nods, grateful. They step toward the waiting car, a nervous, excited, imperfect little tribe.

EXT. MAGAZINE GALA - NIGHT

79

Red Carpet. A blinding wall of flashbulbs. Photographers shouting over each other. The city vibrating with money, style, and ego.

MONTAGE - QUICK CUTS:

- Influencers posing like it's the Met Gala. - A B-list actor waves too long; no one cares. - Fashion editors glide past in oversized sunglasses. - REPORTERS into mics: "We're live at the New York Living Awards, the design industry event of the year..."

CUT TO: Claude & Marcel arrive like royalty. Matching tuxes, dramatic scarves. Flashbulbs explode.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

"Claude! Marcel! Over here!" "Yes! Hold that, gorgeous!"

They pose, preen, blow kisses. Owing the carpet.

CUT TO: Mr. and Mrs. Chain. Elegant. Effortless. Recognized instantly by the press. Flashes pop.

REPORTER

East Coast legends! Over here!

GUILIA

This city works us too hard.

They wave politely, unaware their son will be here tonight. Excitement building. Music pumping. A massive banner stretches above the entrance: *NEW YORK LIVING DESIGN OF THE YEAR AWARDS*

The cameras turn as a sleek black town car pulls up. Dave, Maria, Lisa, and BB step out, instantly swallowed by flashbulbs.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Mr. Miller! Big night for your wife!
Is she winning tonight? Family photo,
please! Right here!

Dave straightens, smiling nervously. Lisa is already posing, perfect angles for every shot. Maria absolutely lives for the attention, chin high, radiant. BB freezes. Across the way, at the regular entrance, MAYA stands with her mom. She spots him. He spots her. Their eyes lock. She looks impressed. BB forgets how to breathe. Lisa nudges him, sharp but soft.

LISA

Relax. You're fine.

BB swallows, nods. Barely. They move forward together as photographers keep shouting, cameras flashing in a frenzy. Another sleek car pulls up. The photographers swivel instantly, sensing fresh meat. Flashes erupt, as Steve steps out first, sharp, confident.

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Steve! Steve Chain! Over here! Are you
here for business or pleasure tonight
Who's the girl, Steve?

Steve winces, forces a polite smile. Then Lilly steps out. The cameras go crazy. More flashes. More shouting.

PHOTOGRAPHERS (CONT'D)

Whoa...! Stunning! Who is the Girl?
(MORE)

PHOTOGRAPHERS (CONT'D)

Your Girlfriend? One more! Steve, look this way!

Steve places a hand on Lilly's back, guiding her forward.

STEVE

Not tonight, guys. Not here to party.
Have a good night.

He ushers Lilly forward, escaping the barrage. Lilly leans in, whispering as they walk.

LILLY

You really are a popular.

STEVE

Tonight I'm not. Tonight I'm just your... "Business date."

Lilly laughs, tries to hide how much she likes that. They step off the carpet, heading into the venue, lights flashing behind them.

INT. GALA VENUE - NIGHT

80

The doors sweep open. Music, chatter, champagne trays, glittering lights. Steve, Lilly, Dave, Maria, Lisa and BB spill inside with the crowd. Maria immediately grabs Lilly in a hug.

MARIA

Ay, Dios mío, look at you! So elegant.
You are so beautiful mira!

Lilly laughs, flustered but glowing. Nearby, Lisa and BB exchange a look, then quietly slip away toward a waiter carrying champagne flutes.

LISA

Two each. Confidence juice.

BB clinks his glass nervously, while looking out for MAYA. Across the lobby, Steve gently tugs Dave aside behind a tall floral display.

STEVE

Okay. New problem. Claude and Marcel... are here, as we already know!

DAVE

Yes, this is *design*. This is
press. They're VIPs. Of course
they're here.

STEVE

And they do believe, we're "partners.
And they know you're married to
Laura...right?

Dave swallows, dread building.

DAVE

Yes...they know...Oh... I think I know
where you going with this!

STEVE

They will think, you're cheating on
her.

DAVE

That's insane, why would they think
that?

Lilly, mid-conversation with Maria, overhears that. She
turns, strolling over, calm but direct.

LILLY

Dave, Steve is right, I mean...If they
think you two are together, then
technically you're cheating.
Emotionally, or logistically, or...
Whatever this chaos is.

Dave covers his face. Steve groans.

DAVE

Oh God...

STEVE

We have to talk to them. Before they
talk to Laura.

LILLY

Yes. Please. Do that. Before this
becomes a headline or a TikTok
montage.

Maria lets out a delighted loud laugh.

MARIA

Ay! Drama already! I love this family!

Steve straightens his jacket, trying to regain control.

STEVE

Okay. We find Claude and Marcel,
clarify everything. Then you Dave, go
and find Laura. No disasters.

LILLY

You two saying "no disasters"
guarantees a disaster.

Dave and Steve exchange a doomed look. They all begin moving deeper into the venue. The women amused, looking out for Claude and Marcel. The kids slipping further toward the champagne table, the men walking around, trying to handle the whole situation.

INT. GALA, LAURA'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

81

The door closes behind Laura, the noise of the gala muffles instantly. Laura finally exhales. A Makeup artist finishes dusting the last bit of powder on her cheek.

MAKEUP ARTIST

All set, you're up in five! And Laura,
you look amazing, for what it's
worth... You're definitely going to
win.

LAURA

Thank you dear.

The makeup artist slips out, leaving Laura alone. Silence. Laura faces the mirror, a perfect, powerful woman staring back at her... But her eyes betray exhaustion and something deeper. She leans closer, whispering only to herself:

LAURA (CONT'D)

You can do this. You've worked too
hard... For too long. This is your
moment. Your night.

A shaky breath. Another.

LAURA (CONT'D)

And after tonight... I have to figure
out how to get my family back. Before
I lose them completely.

She straightens her shoulders, forcing confidence back into her body. A light knock at the door.

STAGE MANAGER (O.S.)
 Laura? You're up.

Laura stands. One last look at herself, strong, fragile, determined.

LAURA
 I'm ready.

She opens the door and steps into the Spotlight.

INT. GALA, BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

82

Laura stands alone for a moment, glowing under the corridor lights. A breath. A decision.

LAURA
 Let's go!

She opens the door.

INT. GALA, MAIN BALLROOM STAGE - NIGHT

83

A blast of applause greets her. Spotlights sweep across the room as Laura steps onto the stage, poised and sparkling with controlled nerves. She reaches the podium, smiles at the sea of faces, her world.

LAURA
 Good evening, everyone... And welcome
 to the New York Living Awards.

Applause. The Miller's: Dave, Maria, Lisa and BB in the audience. Watching her with pride.

LAURA (CONT'D)
 Tonight, we celebrate the beating
 heart of this city. Design,
 innovation, and the people who shape
 the places we call home.

A beat

LAURA (CONT'D)
 New York creates energy... But family
 sustains it. Some of the most
 extraordinary talent we honor tonight,
 began right here, as locals, as
 (MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 dreamers, as neighbors. Our designers
 build more than spa and beauty
 products. They build connection. And
 connection, at its core, is family.

A subtle shift moves through the room. Near the back, a guest glances at his phone. Another screen lights up. Then another. ON A PHONE SCREEN - Two men at an angle. A caption already circulating: "Dave Miller spotted tonight." Comments climbing fast. Guests glance up from their screens. Eyes drift toward Dave...then Steve. Laura continues her speech, radiant and unaware. The applause that follows lands a fraction off.

INT. GALA, BALLROOM - NIGHT

84

BB wanders through the shimmering ballroom, slightly buzzed, trying to look sober. He clutches a half-empty champagne glass. He spots MAYA sanding near the entrance with her mom. She looks beautiful, calm, totally out of his league. BB freezes. She notices him. Smiles.

BB
 Hey... You made it!

BB almost forgets how to speak.

MAYA
 Yes... Since you've said that you are
 going to be here!

She smiles, hoping that Bryan is noticing her call

BB
 Yeah... Uh... Yeah. You look... Uh...
 Nice.

Maya laughs. Kind, not mocking.

MAYA
 Thanks. You too. I'm happy that I get
 to join my mom tonight, and congrats
 to your mom!

BB shrugs, trying to seem cool, failing.

BB
 Yeah. Big night for my mom.

A small, quiet beat. sweet, awkward, teenage.

BB (CONT'D)
Well... I'm glad your here. Would you
like to dance?

MAYA
Would love to!

A quick check with her mom, and the two hit the dance floor. BB clears his throat, pretending confidence he absolutely does not have. They dance and get closer with each step.

BB
Um... Hold one sec, okay? I'll... I'll
be right back.

Maya nods, smiling.

MAYA
Sure.

BB turns, and freezes. Across the room, he sees Lisa. She's talking to Danny. Danny leans a little too close, Lisa stiffens.

He hands his champagne to a random passerby and storms toward them, suddenly fueled by heroic, drunken purpose.

BB (CONT'D)
Hey! You.

Before Danny can turn fully, BB punches him. A small gasp ripples through the nearby guests. Danny stumbles back, grabbing his jaw.

DANNY
What the hell, man!

LISA
BB!! What are you doing?!

BB points at Danny.

BB
He's a jerk! Lisa! Tell everyone!

The crowd begins to form a circle. Whispers spreading.

Maria walks the gala floor, casually checking if she can spot any celebrities. She smiles, then heads for the bar and picks up a small tray of drinks for her and the kids. She turns back toward them, and freezes. A crowd is forming around BB

and Danny. The energy has shifted.

MARIA
What the hell's going on?

Maria takes one step forward... Then stops, realizing something bigger is unraveling.

MARIA (CONT'D)
Oh Dios mio... It's time! Maria is gonna fix this!

INT. GALA, SIDE BALLROOM - NIGHT

85

Laura's speech continues onstage, echoing across the vast room. At the back of the ballroom, far from the lights, Lilly, Steve, and Dave stand together, watching her.

LILLY
She's really good up there.

Dave nods, eyes fixed on his wife.

DAVE
Yeah. She always is.

Steve leans forward, squinting toward the stage.

STEVE
You know Claude and Marcel go on right after her, right?

Dave stiffens immediately.

DAVE
Oh God! Right.

A quick, meaningful beat.

STEVE
Maybe we should get closer. If we're right there when they come down, smile, say hi. Besides, we might score few points.

Lilly exhales, nods. She grabs a champagne and drop the empty glass in ones beat.

LILLY
Right. Act normal. No panic.

DAVE

Yeah... Yeah. Good idea. Let's move
before she finishes.

They start weaving through the crowd, toward the front.
Unknowingly walking straight toward the chaos already brewing
with the kids.

INT. GALA, MAIN STAGE - NIGHT

86

Laura smiles, energized.

LAURA

And now, it is my honor to welcome two
men who embody everything New York
design, fashion and beauty stands for.
Local visionaries who built an
international brand without ever
losing their roots, or their heart.

Applause swells.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Please join me in celebrating our
featured designers tonight. Claude
Martin and Marcel Novak!

The crowd erupts. Cameras flash. Claude & Marcel rise like
royalty, blowing kisses, waving dramatically. They ascend the
stage.

CLAUDE

Laura darling... thank you!

MARCEL

New York looks beautiful tonight,
almost as beautiful as our host!

The crowd laughs. Laura smiles politely, but something
catches her eye. From the height of the stage lights, She
sees the commotion, can't really believe what she sees.
Applause continues for Claude & Marcel behind her, as Laura
slips quickly offstage.

INT. GALA, SIDE OF BALLROOM - NIGHT

87

Laura pushes through guests, still glowing from stage lights,
still holding her note cards. She reaches the kids.

LAURA

BB! Lisa! What's going on here? Are
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
you drunk?

BB
Yes... Maybe. But that's not the
point! this one I a jerk. Mom! That's
what's going on.

LAURA
What jerk? What are you talking about?

BB
He forced... kiss... or whatever, the
other night...
(turns to Lisa)
... And she said NO! And he wouldn't
stop!

DANNY
No, I mean yes... and i...

LAURA
You... I'll get back to you later!

Danny backs off, instead explaining himself to more trouble.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Somebody tell me what happened. Now!

BB's courage surges again. He blurts it out.

BB
He tried to kiss Lisa the other night.
She said NO, and he kept trying.

Lisa's stomach drops.

LISA
BB! You promised you wouldn't tell Mom
or Dad!

Laura snaps her gaze to Lisa.

LAURA
Lisa... Is that true?

Lisa freezes. That's her answer. Laura turns back to BB.

LAURA (CONT'D)
When? Where?

BB

That night we had Dad's homemade pasta. I went out to take the trash and I saw them. Lisa said no. He didn't stop.

Danny tries again, eyes wide.

DANNY

Mrs. Miller, I'm so sorry. I, I... I love Lisa. Lisa, I love you!

LAURA

Oh... For God's sake Danny.

LISA

I love...

Before Lisa confesses her love back, Dave arrives breathless. last words in his ear are.... love you Danny!

DAVE

What's going on... what's happening! Are we in West Side Story? Fist fights, love confessions, drunk kids?

LAURA

You're asking me? Your son is drunk. Your daughter is keeping secrets. Danny, is trying to kiss her when she says No. Dave... where were you?

DAVE

That's a very good question, Laura! Where were you?

LAURA

How did we miss all this? You're supposed to keep an eye on them tonight!

DAVE

BB... seriously! Drunk?

BB

Yeah... Kinda. But I'm handling it pretty good, right?

DAVE

Wow. Yeah. What's going on with you lately? Those DJ amigos on the Upper
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)
East Side? They're not good news.
You're a good boy, act like one.

Danny nods, embarrassed.

DAVE (CONT'D)
And Lisa, sweetheart. It's not a crime
that your brother stepped in. If you
didn't want to tell us, at least you
had him. Like you're mom and I used
to. Right, Laura?

Claude & Marcel glide over, glowing from the stage lights.

CLAUDE
Oh! THE BUSINESS BOYS! Dave! Steve!

MARCEL
Dave! Steve! You two are trending.

CLAUDE
(turning his phone towards them)
Careful. You're about to kick us off
the throne.

ON THE SCREEN – the blurry photo. Notifications exploding.

MARCEL
New York never sleeps darling!

Lilly freezes. Steve's eyes widen in horror. Laura's jaw
drops open. Bryan and Lisa jump in, frantic.

LISA
Okay... NO... Wait, it's not...

BB
They're NOT... It's... It's
complicated.

Too late. A voice booms from behind them:

ROBERT
Steven... You're GAY?!

Steve turns, horrified. His elegant, wealthy parents stand
there.

STEVE
No... no! I'm NOT gay!

Laura steps forward. Takes Claude's phone. ON THE SCREEN. The blurry photo. Notifications exploding. She exhales, almost relieved.

LAURA
Is that why?
(A beat.)

LAURA (CONT'D)
Is that why you've been acting
strange? Is that it?

LISA
Mom... they're just pretending!

BB
Yeah... For the pitch! It's business!

CLAUDE & MARCEL
Pretending...?

MARCEL
For US?

Laura gapes at Dave. Dave gapes at Steve. Lilly gapes at everyone.

ROBERT
Steven... are you GAY?!

The word slices through the room.

STEVE
o! No - I'm not gay dad.

GUILIA
Honestly...I always suspected it. The
skincare routine alone.

STEVE
Mom...

MARCEL
Oh no, darling. We chose you for your
work.

A beat. Dave blinks.

DAVE
Wait... we're still pitching?

MARCEL
Monday morning

CLAUDE
New York... never sleeps

They glide off. The music swells, and everything feels exposed.

INT. GALA - MAIN HALL - NIGHT

88

ROBERT
What is happening here?

Everyone speaks at once.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
That's enough!
(Silence crashes down.)
Enough dancing around this.

GUILIA
See? Your father's right. First you said it was a pity... didn't you honey?

ROBERT
The Countdown... Contract are signed.

LILLY
Pity... Contracts? Wow... Je suis stupid.

STEVE
No, that was before I- I didn't- I mean, I-

Lilly turns to leave - then stops. Looks back at Laura.

LILLY
Laura... Dave loves you. Only you.
(a beat)

LILLY (CONT'D)
If there's love here... it's your's and Dave's.

Lilly walks away. Laura holds her gaze. Something shifts between them. She turns to Dave trying to say something but she walks away.

LAURA

I gotta go back to work... guests,
clients.

Steve moves after Lilly. Two steps, tree Steps. She doesn't look back.

GUILIA

Steven?

ROBERT

Son!

STEVE

Mom. Dad. Not now... I'll call you.

He walks away. Still composed, still striking, but broken. Across the room, Dave watches him go.

DAVE

STEVE!!

Steve lifts a hand, a small wave without turning. He keeps walking. Dave gathers BB, Lisa, and Danny.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Alright. Let's go home. Danny... You need a ride?

DANNY

Yes, sir. Thank you.

DAVE

Let's go.

Slow, tired as a unit. Dave and the Kids are leaving the Event. BB slips an arm around his father, still a little drunk. Dave steadies him instinctively, brushing a hand through his son's hair with a quiet half-smile. Maya lingers near the edge of the Ballroom. She blows a kiss towards BB. Tippy blowing a kiss back, safe at his dad's arms. Lisa and Danny walk side by side, very close. She's checking his bruised eye as they get closer.

Champagne, laughter and Cameras flash near the stage where Claude and Marcel pose with their award, glowing beneath the lights. FLASH. FLASH.

INT. GALA - FOYER - NIGHT

MIA, Laura's assistant (20S), arranges stylish designer swag

bags on a display table. Maria approaches. Mia checks her tablet, nods, and shows Maria.

MARIA
Ay... fancy fancy.

INT. GALA, MAIN HALL - NIGHT

90

Maria crosses the hall, heads toward Laura.

MARIA
I'm gonna head home in a cab, okay?
Don't work too long, honey!

Laura nods, appreciative.

EXT. WALDORF ASTORIA - NIGHT

91

Maria exits a cab and approaches the entrance. A doorman steps forward politely.

DOORMAN
Good evening, ma'am. How may I help you?

MARIA
I'm a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Chain.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, HALLWAY - NIGHT

92

Maria walks down the quiet hallway, stops at the suite door, smooths her coat, and knocks, firm but polite.

GUILIA (O.S.)
Oh my God! More champagne?

Maria listens.

GUILIA (O.S.)
Stop it, you silly boy!

ROBERT (O.S.)
Yes, I'm your silly boy!

INT. CHAIN'S SUITE - NIGHT

93

Guilia -- in a negligee -- opens the door. Maria stands in the doorway, and she can't help see Robert, his robe half open.

MARIA

Good evening. Dios mio, or should I say good morning? I'm Maria, the Miller's housekeeper.

Robert cinches his bathrobe shut. The Chains stare at her, confused.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Sorry to interrupt, but this an emergency.

GIULIA

Emergency? Come on in, dear.

ROBERT

Champagne?

MARIA

I could use a tequila!

Giulia lights up.

GIULIA

Of course, dear!

ROBERT

Oh, I'm Robert. And this is Giulia.

He hands her a drink.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

So Maria... What's the emergency?

THE SAME - LATER

94

Giulia hugs Maria.

GIULIA

I think I made a mess.

ROBERT

Giulia...

GIULIA

No. This was my fault.

GIULIA (CONT'D)

The ten days wasn't meant to hurt him.
(MORE)

GIULIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It was meant to slow him down. To make him look at people. At life. So he wouldn't grow up thinking the world owes him something...when in truth, he owes so much.

MARIA

Well... our people already think that will last forever.

GIULIA

Do they?

MARIA

Oh yes. But I have a plan.

She takes some hotel stationery and a pen and starts sketching.

INT. CHAIN SUITE, DOORWAY - NIGHT

95

Giulia and Robert bid Maria farewell.

ROBERT

It was a pleasure. This plan is going to work, for sure.

GIULIA

This is going to be so much fun!

ROBERT

Our driver will take you home safely.

GIULIA

See you tomorrow, dear, and drink some water! It help with the headache!

INT. MILLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

96

Sunday music plays. Dave is making breakfast. Coffee is brewing, pancakes, eggs, and a hangover drink. Lisa and BB sit at the counter.

LISA

Morning Dad!

DAVE

Morning, sweetheart. How are you?

LISA
I've had better mornings.

DAVE
Wanna talk?

LISA
Danny's really sorry, Dad. He was pretending to be someone he's not. All that fake "Spanish Harlem", "tough guy" stuff. I knew it wasn't him... Now he knows it too. He has another shot. I love him.

DAVE
Okay.

LISA
Oh, The DJ from the gala last night? He saw Danny DJ a couple months ago. He's a booker. He offered him a spot in his DJ agency. Real, legit gigs!

DAVE
Good for him.

BB stumbles in wearing sunglasses, holding his head.

BB
Never will I ever drink again.

BB (CONT'D)
Oh, by the way! When did Mom even come home? I was texting with Maya last night...She said, the moms were still talking, so she was gonna take a cab home. Mom must've come in super late

Dave hands him a glass.

DAVE
Drink that. Now.

LISA
She's still sleeping. I heard her come in around five. Anyone hear or see Maria? Should we check on her?

The kitchen door opens. Maria enters, hungover.

MARIA

Buenos días, Señor Miller... Buenos días, niños! Champagne and tequila... Es un killer!

Dave's phone begins to ring and he answers.

DAVE

Hey, Lilly. What's going on?

INT. LILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

97

Lilly sits wrapped in a blanket, exhausted.

LILLY

Just got a call from Claude and Marcel's assistant.

DAVE (O.S.)

Their assistant?

LILLY

Yeah. She said they want to meet today. 4:00 PM. Central Park. The place they walk their dogs. They want to see the Trio. You, me and Steve. Something about being "inspired by the dogs for the upcoming product line. It sounded important.

DAVE (O.S.)

OK. 4:00 PM Central Park then. You tell Steve?

LILLY (CONT'D)

I will inform Mr. Chain. You know me, always professional.

INT. MILLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

98

Dave lowers the phone. Everyone looks at him. Maria sips her hangover drink, barely awake. Saying to herself and recognizes, how Business People react fast making plans!

MARIA

Now that... That was fast

INT. LILLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

99

Lilly paces, wrapped in a blanket, clutching her unlit cigarette like a life preserver.

LILLY
 OK... OK... Just call him. It's fine.
 Totally fine. Business. Only business.

She dials before she can change her mind. ON SPEAKER: One ring. Two rings.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Steve Miller... Uh... Lilly, Hi! I was... I mean, I was hoping you'd call.

Lilly freezes like a deer in headlights.

LILLY
 Oh... NO! I mean... Hi Steve! I'm calling for "business" Strictly business!

She winces at herself. Hard.

LILLY (CONT'D)
 Claude and Marcel's assistant called. They want to meet today. 4:00 PM. Central Park. With the dogs.

A tiny beat. Steve smiles softly on the other end.

STEVE
 Right. Business. Got it. I'll be there.

Lilly collapses onto the couch, relief flooding her body.

LILLY
 OK great perfect thank you bye!

She hangs up so fast the phone almost slips out of her hand. She throws the unlit cigarette proudly into the garbage.

LILLY (CONT'D)
 Professional. I'm...extremely professional.

INT. STEVE'S APARTMENT - DAY

100

The door swings open. Steve stumbles in, completely emotionally wrecked from the night before. His dog, Buddy, lifts his head from the couch, confused.

STEVE

Buddy... Buddy, we need to talk.

Steve collapses onto the floor beside him, dramatic and defeated. Buddy sniffs his face.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I know, I know... I look terrible. But listen... I've never-never ever-felt like this before.

Buddy tilts his head.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I can't stop thinking about her. Lilly! Her hair... Her eyes... Her voice... That little annoyed face she makes when she's pretending she's not nervous.

Buddy nudges him. Steve nods like that was deep advice.

STEVE (CONT'D)

And I'm not giving up. Nope. I'm gonna fix this. I'm gonna fight. I'm gonna win her back.

He sits up straighter, determined.

STEVE (CONT'D)

And YOU, my friend, are coming with to a business meeting.

Buddy blinks.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Yes. Business. Central Park. 4:00 PM. Claude and Marcel want to meet the trio: Dave, Lilly and me.

(A beat.)

STEVE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

And you... You'll be part of the product line. Your'r basically essential for the pitch!

STEVE (CONT'D)

See? He agrees.

Steve takes a deep, centering breath, ready for whatever comes next.

INT. MILLER KITCHEN - DAY

101

Dave pours himself coffee.

DAVE

Alright, guys. I gotta go. Sorry... No family Sunday today. Pitch stuff.

LISA

It's okay, Dad.

BB

Yeah. Go save capitalism.

Dave smiles, grabs his things, and exits. Maria claps softly once.

MARIA

Niños... Ven aquí. Two minutes.

Lisa and BB exchange a look. They step closer. Maria lowers her voice, dramatic, serious.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Last night... I met important people.

BB

Like... Important like MI6?

Maria lifts her chin, elegant.

MARIA

Que... No! People like friends at the Waldorf Astoria.

Lisa's eyes widen. BB nods slowly.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Today we help love. We help family. And we fix whatever disaster you all created last night. Be nice. Be on time. And no one tells your parents.

LISA & BB

OK... What's the plan?

MARIA

This is Mission "Domingo".

INT. LAURA & DAVE'S BEDROOM - DAY

102

A phone VIBRATES under pillows. Laura groans, half-buried, blind-searching. She finds the phone, squints. Several missed calls and unread messages. She taps a voicemail.

GWEN (O.S.)

Hi, this is Gwen, assistant to Mr. and Mrs. Chain. We're trying to confirm today's magazine appointment. Please call back.

Laura sits up.

LAURA

Oh my God... No. No, no, no.

She rubs her temples, swings her legs out of bed.

INT. MILLER KITCHEN - DAY

103

Maria, Lisa, and BB sit at the table, laughing quietly. Coffee. Pancakes. Chaos aftermath. Laura enters with messy hair, with her phone in hand, still trying to figure all the missed calls and messages.

LAURA

Good morning... Hey kids... Hey Maria

LISA

Mom, you look terrible. Hangover cure?

She slides Laura a glass. Laura drinks it like medicine.

LAURA

Okay... Feels good already! where's Dad?

BB

He left. Said he had a meeting.

Laura freezes.

LAURA

A meeting? On a Sunday? What is it today?

She checks her phone again.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I have one too.. Alright then! Family
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
 Sunday officially canceled. I need
 coffee... And a new brain!

She puts a bite in her mouth, and walks up to get ready for the Interview Meeting with the Chain's at 4:00 PM Central Park. Enough time to pass the office for more information and preparation.

INT. MILLER'S HOUSE - DAY

104

Laura grabs her bag, still half-hungover, already in work mode.

LAURA (O.S.)
 Okay guys! I'm out. I love you.

The front door closes. Maria watches the door for a beat. Calm. Focused. The plan is officially in motion. She turns to Lisa and BB.

MARIA
 Okay, Niños. Mission Domingo starts
 now.

Lisa and BB straighten up instinctively.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 One hour. Go get ready. I make the
 calls. We meet back here.

She lowers her voice, sincere.

MARIA (CONT'D)
 We fix family today.

Lisa and BB nod. No jokes. They're in.

CUT TO MONTAGE:

— Lisa and BB in their rooms, getting dressed. Laughing again. Teasing. The sibling bond is back. — Maria at her closet, choosing carefully. She pulls out a classic trench coat. A hat. Buttons the coat with purpose. — Maria on her phone, pacing slightly as it rings.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, CHAIN SUITE - DAY

105

Giulia and Robert sit at a pristine table. Coffee. Notes neatly arranged. Calm elegance. Giulia answers her phone.

GIULIA

Maria...

– Maria smiles. This is already working. – Giulia listens closely, nodding. – Robert leans in, intrigued. – Giulia scribbles a note, excited.

GIULIA (CONT'D)

Perfect. We'll be there.

– Maria hangs up. Exhales. Confidence. Pride. – Dave on the subway, texting while grabbing folders from his bag.

ON SCREEN – Dave'S TEXT: "Heading to the office to grab the pitch map. If there's anything else, text me. See you at Central Park, 4:00 PM"

– Steve reads the text, already dressed, energized. – Lilly tying her shoes, phone in hand, focused. – Maria checks the time.

MARIA (V.O)

Mission Domingo is underway.

END MONTAGE.

INT. LAURA'S OFFICE – DAY

106

Laura rushes toward the door, bag over her shoulder, phone in hand. Focused, determined and still a bit hungover but functional. She reaches the door than stops and turns back. Something is missing. Her eyes land on the Award that's still sitting on her desk. Elegant, golden, unmistakable.

LAURA

Oh shit... It's not that I care this much!

She turns back, grabs the award, tucks it carefully under her arm.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET – DAY

107

Laura bursts out of the building, waving frantically.

LAURA

Taxi! Taxi!

A cab screeches to a stop. She jumps in.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Central Park. West side please.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - SUNDAY AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

108

Laura rushes into the park, award wrapped in her coat. She scans the area confused. No crew. No assistant. No photographer.

LAURA
Okay... Where is everyone?

She spots two elegant figures waving enthusiastically from a distance. Giulia and Robert Chain. Impeccable and relaxed, beaming. Laura's face shifts, surprise, then professional charm. She hurries toward them.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Oh. Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Chain. So good to see you!

They air-kiss warmly.

GIULIA
Laura! Darling! You look wonderful.

ROBERT
We're so glad you could make it. We know... Sunday is family day, but it's kinda family meeting!

Robert winks at his wife Giulia. Laura glances around again.

LAURA
Oh, No... Sunday, Monday! And yes... The Magazine, is one big family. So... Where's the rest of the crew? And Gwen? I was hoping to meet her.

Giulia and Robert exchange the slightest glance. Smooth, and controlled, they trying to keep the conversation rolling, till Maria and everyone else arrives.

GIULIA
Oh, she's on her way. Things always run a little... Let's say, creatively on Sundays.

ROBERT
Tell us, how did the gala event end up to be last night? You were
(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 spectacular. And by the way...
 Congratulation on your Award Dear.

Laura relaxes a beat, slipping into conversation.

LAURA
 Thank you. It was a lot, but good.
 Really good, and all our Guest were
 happy and entertained.

GIULIA
 Oh... Your Award! We will have our's
 in the middle of the Hallway counter,
 so everybody see' it!

They walk slowly together, buying time. Three elegant figures
 moving deeper into the park. The plan is already in motion.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

109

Lilly walks briskly toward the park, phone to her ear,
 speaking to her family in Paris, like she usually always dos
 on Sunday.

LILLY
 Oui, oui, je sais. Je vous rappelle
 plus tard, d'accord? Je vous aime.

She hangs up, exhales focused, composed. Suddenly...

STEVE (O.S.)
 Buddy! Buddy! Come here! Buddy!

The neighbor's large Rhodesian Ridgeback barrels past Lilly,
 nearly knocking her over.

LILLY
 Hey...!

Steve runs up, breathless, mortified.

STEVE
 Oh my God... I'm sorry, I'm so sorry!
 Buddy, stop!

He looks up.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 Lilly!
 (A beat.)
 (MORE)

STEVE

I'm sorry... For the ten-thousandth time? Who's counting, right?

Lilly studies him. Calm. Controlled.

LILLY

You know... It's funny... Pity people really don't count.

Steve swallows. He wants to respond.

STEVE

Lilly, I...

LILLY

Save it for after the pitch.

She gestures toward the dog.

LILLY (CONT'D)

And hey... Smart move bringing your dog. You better watch him!

STEVE

Buddy... hi's name is Buddy. I'm Dog sitting.

LILLY

Claude and Marcel's chihuahuas, are not your lunch, ok? You are so beautiful Buddy!

Steve cracks a small, relieved smile.

STEVE

Ok... Let's do this! I'm ready.

Lilly turns, already walking.

LILLY

Good. Let's go.

They move forward together, professional, unresolved. They spot Dave walking couple steps ahead! They Call after him and he stops.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Dave!

Dave slows, turns as Lilly and Steve catch up.

DAVE

Hey.

STEVE

Hey, man.

LILLY

Sorry, running late. You good?

DAVE

Yeah. You?

LILLY

As good as it gets!

A beat. They fall into step together. Dave lowers his voice.

DAVE

Quick question Lilly! Have I ever met Claude and Marcel's assistant? I just don't want to be rude if so!

LILLY

No... So didn't I. Didn't even know they had one.

Dave exhales, relieved, then frowns slightly.

DAVE

So why didn't they email you? That's... Not like them.

STEVE

Let's not worry about assistants. Let's focus on Claude and Marcel and their beloved chihuahuas! Right Buddy?

LILLY

Again... can't believe I'm saying this, but Steve is right!

She keeps walking. The park opens up ahead.

LILLY (CONT'D)

And do me a favor. You two... Hold back a little, will you?

Steve nods. Dave nods.

LILLY (CONT'D)

They're still pissed about missing
(MORE)

LILLY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
dinner, and pretending-gay story.

DAVE & STEVE
(in sync)
Fair... Very fair!

LILLY
Good. Then let's not give them
anything else to hate, but something
they love!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

110

"The TRIO" continues forward, focused, aligned. Buddy trots a few steps ahead, proud, tail high. As they disappear deeper into the park.

ANGLE ON: ANOTHER PATH

Maria enters the park with Lisa and BB. Lisa is on her phone, laughing softly, clearly talking to Danny. BB walks beside Maria, thoughtful.

BB
Maria, have you ever been in love?

Maria smiles, gentle.

MARIA
Of course, mi amor. Ángel... His name
is Ángel!

BB
What happened?

MARIA
He's watching me from heaven. He
always does! And you? What's with that
girl... Maya?

BB
Maya is... Mi corazón.

He shows Maria a picture of Maya on his phone. She smiles gently, genuinely happy for him.

MARIA
Oh... Qué guapa. Maya is a very
beautiful girl. And she looks smart
too.

MARIA (CONT'D)

When you see love... you have to catch
it fast. Ve con Dios, amor!

Lisa finished her call with Danny, as she catches Maria's
last words.

LISA

Obviously... I'm pretty good at
catching fast!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

111

A dog bursts through the park at full speed. Buddy, Steve's
Rhodesian Ridgeback on a mission and unstoppable.

STEVE

Buddy! Buddy! Come here! Buddy!

Joggers scatter. A stroller swerves. Behind him, Lilly runs
fast, focused and panicked.

LILLY

Steve! Steve!
(then)
This is not happening...!

Her eyes scan ahead. Dread.

LILLY (CONT'D)

This is how headlines are born, Steve.
And this is a bad one.

Buddy suddenly stops, his tail wagging. Ahead of him stand
Giulia and Robert.

GIULIA

Oh hi, Buddy... Good boy. Did you miss
me? Did you miss the morning run?

Buddy melts with a full body wiggle. Steve skids to a stop.

STEVE

Mom? Dad? What... What are you doing
here?

He turns and sees Laura standing nearby.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Hi, Laura. Did I miss something here?

Lilly finally reaches them, hands on her knees, gasping.

LILLY

Hi... Hi Laura. Hello Mr. Chain. Hello Mrs. Chain.

GIULIA

Oh, you must be Lilly. You're beautiful. Much better than the pictures.

LILLY

Uh... Thank you? It's so nice to meet you.

ROBERT

Please. No Mr. and Mrs. Chain! I'm Robert.

GIULIA

And I'm Giulia.

STEVE

Okay. Can someone please tell me, what is going on?

Dave arrives, slightly out of breath.

DAVE

Wow! Steve, your dog is really fast.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hey, Love!

DAVE (CONT'D)

Oh... Hi again. Mr. Chain, Mrs. Chain!

ROBERT

David? Call me Robert

DAVE

Robert... What a coincidence, huh? Almost like an after-party. Speaking of party... Where are Claude and Marcel?

DAVE (CONT'D)

What?

LAURA

Dave... I don't think this is a
(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
coincidence.

Lisa and BB run in.

LISA
Mom!

BB
Dad!

LISA
Oh... Hi Mr. and Mrs. Chain!

ROBERT
Robert.

GIULIA
Hi Lisa! Call me Giulia.

STEVE
Lisa, BB, these are my parents, Robert
and Giulia. Do you know what's going
on here kids, because....

MARIA
I take the blame. Mi culpa!

GIULIA
No... That is all my fault! Maria! You
look amazing. You really do! for two
hours of sleep, Champagne and tequila!

ROBERT
So good to see you again.

They hug Maria warmly, like old friends.

MARIA & GIULI & ROBERT
Family first.

STEVE
Whoa, whoa, whoa... Maria! I mean,
hugging is beautiful! Someone has to
explain, what the hell is going on?!

Everyone talks at once. Overlapping voices. Hands in the air.
Dogs tugging leashes, kids chiming in, and parents reacting.

Total chaos. BB tries to explain something to Dave. Lisa
talks over him, while Maria gestures wildly, apologizing and

defending at the same time. Giulia and Robert smile – confused, amused, like there watching a movie in their private cinema. Dave attempts to calm the group. Lilly stands slightly apart, elegant, composed, and as always in such situations, a unlit cigarette in hand. Too much. Laura finally snaps.

LAURA

Okay... Stop. Everybody. STOP. I haven't said a single word yet. And somehow, i'm already the villain. I never asked anyone to pretend. I never asked anyone to be someone they're not. But suddenly, I get this feeling like, "Oh Laura, she's successful now. She's serious. She's no fun." Do you know how hard it is, to always be the responsible one. The one holding everything together? You miss one party. One joke. One stupid dance... And suddenly, you're not fun anymore.

BB

You do snore hard, when you drink wine! that's funny, Mom.

LISA

And you dance ridiculously, but only, so Dad doesn't look ridiculous alone.

LAURA

Thank you. See? I'm hilarious.

She turns to Dave.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I didn't stop being fun. I just got tired.

DAVE

Laura... You are the best thing in my life. Not just because you're funny, it's because, you're fun to be with... And I'm really sorry. I took that away from you.

LAURA

I love you, baby. And by the way, Lilly... I've always wanted to ask you something. Are you ever going to light up that cigarette?

LILLY

It's just something I can hold onto.

STEVE

You can hold on to me!

LILLY

Do I need a contract?

STEVE (CONT'D)

No. I had it in my hands. I read every word. And for the first time in my life... I didn't sign something just because I was supposed to. I'd rather lose everything than lose you.

LILLY

I don't want to be the reason you resent your life.

STEVE

You're the reason I finally want one.

LILLY

I love you.

STEVE

Good. Because I'm already terrible at pretending otherwise.

MARIA & GIULIA & ROBERT

Mission Domingo. Work's perfectly.

Steve pulls Lilly a little closer. Then he turns to his parents.

STEVE

So... We still have three days to go, right?

ROBERT

Yes.

STEVE

Perfect. I feel... Changed. But not "sell-the-yacht" changed.

GIULIA

That is a very big change for him so far.

ROBERT

Son... If you want to prove something now! You don't have three more days.

Steve freezes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You have a lifetime.

That lands.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Boyfriend. Husband. Father, and as a Grandfather.

STEVE

Okay. But just to be clear. I still love the yacht.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

112

The Miller-Chain Group, moves through the park as one. Lisa walks ahead, texting Danny, smiling to herself. BB walks beside Maria, the two in quiet conversation. Steve and Lilly walk arm in arm, close and unusual relaxed, while Buddy trots proudly between them, leash loose. Laura and Dave trail slightly behind, bickering softly like they used to. Giulia and Robert stroll at the back, elegant, amused, taking it all in. They continue down the path.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK, NEARBY PATH - DAY

113

Two Chihuahuas appear. Tiny, dramatic, good smelling and overdressed. Behind them, Claude and Marcel. With shades on, they walk like fashion royalty. Claude stops.

CLAUDE

Marcel.

Marcel follows his gaze. Ahead, the Miller-Chain family. The vibe, the laughter, the dog... The unity.

MARCEL

Well... That explains everything.

They watching Buddy and the Chihuahuas noticing each other. A brief standoff, then, tail wagging. Sniffing, instant peace.

CLAUDE

See? Good taste recognizes good taste.

They near each other.

STEVE

Oh... Hey you! LAURA

Claude! Marcel... You look fabulous.

DAVE

Funny running into you here.

MARCEL

Funny? No... Perfect.

CLAUDE

This... This is what a good pitch looks like. Individuals become family!

STEVE

So... Monday?

MARCEL

Monday.No pressure. Your lives depend on it.

They all laugh. The "TRIO" is forcing it. Claude and Marcel continue walking, Chihuahuas leading the way.

CLAUDE (O.S.)

Oh, and start planning the goodbye party.

MARCEL (O.S.)

We're leaving the country for a while. Business... International Baby.

They all watch them go. Dave looks around at everyone.

DAVE

Okay. That felt important..

EXT. UPPER EAST SIDE STREET - NIGHT

114

The Millers walk together, relaxed and bounded. Steve and Lilly, stroll arm in arm, Buddy happily trotting between them. Giulia and Robert, follow behind, unhurried, elegant, enjoying every step.

Maria and The kids trail nearby, laughing, phones out, finally at ease. Giulia looks around, content.

GIULIA

So... How about lunch? Or
dinner?Whatever this is now.

ROBERT

And some Champagne to celebrate this
wonderful day... Is it to early?

LILLY

Champagne doesn't have a schedule!

BB

In my case it does.... about twenty
years from now!

LAURA

Smart Kid!

They continue walking together toward the the Waldorf
Astoria.

INT. MILLER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

115

Maria preps breakfast. The kids come downstairs.

MARIA

Buenos días, niños. Beautiful day,
yes?

BB

Yeah... I slept like a baby.

MARIA

Of course you did. Champagne sleep is
the best sleep.

LISA

Oh... sorry Maria. Good Morning.

MARIA

Phone away. Life is happening.

LISA

Sorry.

Danny and I fell asleep together.
Maria freezes.

MARIA

What?

LISA
FaceTime, Maria. FaceTime.

MARIA
Ay, Dios mío... Okay. Okay. Modern
love.

LISA
Where's Mom? Is she gone already?

MARIA
No, no. Your mother has a to-do list.
And today... I'm on it. We're having a
girls' day. Lunch. Shopping. Nails.

BB
New fun Mom.

Dave enters, jacket on, keys in hand.

DAVE
Morning, kiddos. Morning, Maria.

MARIA
Good morning, Mr. Miller.

BB
Dad... Who's taking us?

DAVE
I am.

LISA
And Mom?

DAVE
She's still in bed. Oh... I told her,
you'd bring her coffee and breakfast.

BB
Us? But dad... We're running late.

Maria already planned. She grabs a tray, starts plating with
authority.

MARIA
I take care of it. Go, go! No worries!

DAVE

Thank you so much, Maria, for everything!

He heads toward the door, then stops, when Maria call's after him.

MARIA

Go get that pitch thing, Mr. Miller!
As I always say, you are the Don of this family. You always were.

DAVE

See you later, Maria. And you two ladies have fun today!

MARIA

Thank you... we will!

Maria looks at the breakfast tray, proud. She walks up to Laura. They start the Girls Day, with a long easy breakfast.

INT. STEVE'S TRIBECA LOFT - DAY

116

Soft morning light fills the Tribeca loft. Expensive, calm, and beautiful. Two beautiful people lying in bed. close, peaceful. Then...

ALARM (O.S.)

Good morning, Mr. Chain. Today is going to be a great day. Better than yesterday. You are stronger than yesterday. You will be more successful than yesterday. Today... you will achieve all your goals. It's Monday 7:30 a.m. This is your wake up call.

Lilly's eyes snap open. She sits up fast, hair everywhere, looking around the room.

LILLY

Steve...? Steve.

The alarm keeps going.

ALARM (O.S.)

Good morning Mr. Chain. Work hard now, Mr. Chain, so you can play hard later. This is your wake-up call.

LILLY

Steve... Steve! Who is that?

Steve groans, half-asleep, pulling the pillow over his head.

STEVE

Oh no...

LILLY

What do you mean "oh no"?

STEVE

It's... My alarm/ motivation.

LILLY

That's your alarm?

STEVE

It motivates me.

LILLY

Your alarm talks to you?

STEVE

It's... Affirmations.

ALARM (O.S.)

You are doing great today Mr. Chain.

LILLY

Mr. Chain. You are very handsome today. You are more handsome than yesterday.

STEVE

I need to make it stop!

LILLY

Mr. Chain...

Steve groans and laughs despite himself. Lilly crawls back under the covers with him. For a moment, the alarm keeps talking, unheard.

LILLY (CONT'D)

Okay. As much as I love your motivational cult voice... I really have to go.

STEVE

No... Don't leave.

LILLY

I need to go home. Change. Have a proper French coffee to be prepared for the big pitch!

She kisses him, and slips out of bed, grabs her things, and heads toward the door.

LILLY (CONT'D)

I'll see you later at the office.

STEVE

You are so beautiful Lilly...

LILLY

And Steve... Turn that thing off. before it starts yelling at you!

ALARM (O.S.)

Mr. Chain, you are capable of greatness

STEVE

Yeah... I know. Thank you!

MONTAGE - PITCH PREP

117

- Dave straightens his jacket in the mirror. Calm. Grounded. Ready.

- Steve strides through the West Village. Stylish. Focused. GQ energy.

- Lilly slips on her coat. Cigarette unlit between her fingers. She checks herself in the mirror. Grounded. Ready.

END MONTAGE

INT. INTERIORDESIGN STUDIO - DAY

118

The studio is bright, calm, expensive, but lived-in. Mood boards, fabric swatches, samples, folders. A "real" creative space. Dave stands at the main table with the pitch materials. He looks different today, grounded and ready. The door opens. Steve enters. Sharp, GQ-level confident. A new energy in him. A beat later. Lilly steps in. Elegant, focused, with a cigarette (unlit, as always) between her fingers.

DAVE

Hey.

STEVE

Hey!

LILLY

Bonjour!

A small beat, the three of them together again. Not chaos. Not fighting. A team, the "TRIO". Dave gestures to the folders like they're sacred.

DAVE

Okay... Last stop, before Claude and Marcel.

Steve nods, glances at Lilly. A quiet "we're okay" look. Dave sees it. Of course he does.

DAVE (CONT'D)

All right! Before we do the fancy walk-and-talk... I just wanna say something!

Steve and Lilly pause, to give there full attention to Dave.

LILLY & STEVE

Okay!

DAVE

No matter how this pitch goes... Whether it's local, international, or nothing at all! I'm really happy the two of you are in my life. Steve... You went from a total stranger to a close friend.

STEVE

Same here man!

LILLY

Bien sûr... Of course!

DAVE

Okay.... You two ready? Come on, lovebirds.

LILLY

Excuse me.... love what?

STEVE

A gentleman never shares.

DAVE

All right. Save the romance, for after
the pitch!

He heads for the door. Steve and Lilly follow, aligned and energized.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Let's go, and get our lives changed.

INT. CLAUDE & MARCEL BEAUTY & SPA FOR HUMANS AND PETS - DAY 119

The "TRIO" pitches. Dave leads, confident and grounded. Steve jumps in, sharp and all passionate. Lilly fills the gaps intuitive, precise. Claude and Marcel sit back, impressed. Their Chihuahuas, sit upright on designer chairs, watching like tiny judges.

CLAUDE & MARCEL

This is working.

INT. NAIL SALON - DAY 120

Laura and Maria sit side by side. Feet soaking. Hands wrapped in foil. Designer shopping bags stacked everywhere.

LAURA

I forgot how good this feels.

MARIA

I never forgot.

They laugh.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA, LOBBY - DAY 121

Robert and Guilia follow a bellman who's carrying their elegant suitcases. Giulia types on her phone.

INSERT - PHONE, To MARIA: "It was a joy meeting you darling."
Another message to STEVE: "Go get the job... And the girl!
Love, Mom."

INT. CLAUDE & MARCEL BEAUTY & SPA FOR HUMANS AND PETS - DAY 122

The pitch wraps. A charged silence.

CLAUDE

Wow... That's the vision I'm talking
about! It's yours... It's yours!

MARCEL
 Our products. Your vision.
INTERIORDesign is in charge of the
 U.S. market.

CLAUDE
 Welcome to the family. Champagne!

DAVE
 Thank you.

A quick glance at his phone. He smiles.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 I promised my son I'd be at his
 basketball game tonight.

STEVE
 I would love to see him play!

LILLY
 I would too. Very much.

MARCEL
 Your son, BB? I can't believe how tall
 he's gotten. He was this big when we
 first met.

CLAUDE
 I haven't seen a basketball game in a
 long time. Our flight's at ten. Plenty
 of time. We cheer first.

MARCEL
 Absolutely. Deal's closed.

Claude pours champagne. Glasses clink. They drink. Steve's
 phone BUZZES. INSERT - PHONE (TEXT) GIULIA: "Darling, will we
 see you before we leave?" Steve types. STEVE (TEXT) "Not
 sure. Heading to a basketball game."

Another text pops up. ROBERT (TEXT) "NBA? Knicks?" STEVE
 (TEXT) "No, Dad. Even better. BB, Dave's son."

ROBERT (TEXT) "I don't care what time it is. I haven't seen a
 game in years. Send the address." Steve smiles.

STEVE
 Mom and Dad, Robert and Giulia are
 coming to see the game!

CLAUDE

Then let's go. I want to see this
future super star.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GYM - NIGHT

123

The stands are full. Dave. Laura. Steve. Lilly. Maria. Lisa.
Maya. Danny, Giulia and Robert, clapping already. BB runs
onto the court. The entire group rises, cheering.

LAURA

That's our boy.

BB looks up, sees them and smiles. The whistle blows. The
game begins.

FADE OUT.