

THE WAY IT IS

Written by

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INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM WITH ENTRANCE -- EVENING

A couple's first place--nicely appointed, comfortable, a place that began with hand-me-downs and gradually became their own as salaries and time together increased.

But bare spots are notable, as though furniture has been removed. A vase of dead roses on a sofa table rises from behind the couch. Next to it, a photo of YASMINE (34, vulnerable but too often admired for being "tough") and CANE (38, self-serving but decent enough to let guilt affect his judgment), smiling as she shows off her engagement ring.

EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

Cane attempts to parallel park and blocks traffic. Annoying BEEPS. He squeezes in but not without bumping the car in back.

INT. APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Yasmine pulls wine from a rack and sets it next to two wine glasses on the coffee table.

EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

Cane crouches next to the car behind his and rubs a scuff from the bumper. He checks his watch and the crowded street, and decides to let it go.

Cane stands. He's dressed to dine fancy--an expensive overcoat, open to reveal dress pants and a gorgeous cashmere sweater. He locks his car with his fob and walks. His phone rings; he answers.

CANE

Miss me already?... Oh no... You
just want to meet me at the
restaurant then?... Perfect... see
you at eight...I love you.

Cane approaches an apartment building and uses a key to enter it.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A key turns in the lock of a side table drawer. Yasmine withdraws the key and hides it.

HALLWAY

Cane walks toward his old apartment.

LIVING ROOM

Yasmine surveys the room. Satisfied, she approaches a mirror.

HALLWAY

From the apartment next door, MRS. EDSON (81) sticks her head out, sees Cane. WHEEL OF FORTUNE opening music filters from her apartment.

CANE

Hello, Mrs. Edson. How are you this fine evening?

Mrs. Edson scowls, slams the door. Cane shakes his head.

LIVING ROOM

At the mirror, Yasmine appraises her simple T-shirt and skirt. Is it the right look?

A thought intrudes. She spins to return the wine glasses to the cabinet and move the wine to a less conspicuous location.

Back at the mirror, she practices disinterest. The lock on the door turns. Yasmine whirls around.

Cane enters.

YASMINE

Breaking and entering? Mrs. Edson's probably got the cops on the line right now.

CANE

(checks his watch, laughs)
Nope. *Wheel of Fortune*.

YASMINE

I can call the cops myself.

CANE

Sorry, not that kind of visit.

YASMINE

Too bad--you would've made my night. How's your mom?

CANE

Almost fully recovered, thank god.

YASMINE

I really wanted to visit after her surgery... I sent flowers.

CANE

That was nice. Thank you.

(beat)

I thought you weren't going to be here.

YASMINE

I... I wanted to see you.

CANE

Is everything okay? You're okay?

YASMINE

Using a key makes it seem like you still live here.

Over the next line, Cane removes the key from his keyring, hands it to her.

CANE

I'm sorry. I'll be quick.

YASMINE

You don't have to.

CANE

Give it back?

YASMINE

Be quick.

Yasmine observes as Cane walks the room, taking in what he left behind, noting the engagement photo is still on display.

CANE

It looks exactly the same.

YASMINE

You thought I'd redecorate?

CANE

No, I just thought... It's so familiar, that's all.

YASMINE

I like it that way.

CANE

Yeah. So...

YASMINE
So...?

CANE
Where is it?

YASMINE
Where's what?

CANE
The stuff you wanted me to pick up.

YASMINE
Oh! The box is in the bedroom.

Yasmine turns toward the bedroom. When Cane doesn't follow, she turns back.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Did you leave your car running downstairs? I haven't seen you in months. You can take your coat off.

Cane hesitates, then removes his coat and puts it on the back of the couch. Yasmine reacts to his clothes.

CANE
I thought you'd want me out of here.

YASMINE
No... it's good to see you.

CANE
Yasmine...

YASMINE
I like the beard. You look distinguished.

CANE
So everybody says. What does that even mean?

YASMINE
That you've succeeded in drawing attention from your receding hairline.

They laugh. She appraises him. Motions for him to follow. When he doesn't move:

YASMINE (CONT'D)
It's heavy.

Cane follows her reluctantly into the bedroom.

BEDROOM

YASMINE (CONT'D)
It's more than the beard. You look nice. You have somewhere to be.

CANE
I have plans, yes.

YASMINE
Plans. Does she know you're here?

Cane's face twists with discomfort.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
I'm not a threat to her, am I? Or did you show up here with the hot beard wearing my favorite sweater because you wanted--

CANE
Nothing. I wanted nothing. I like this sweater, too.

YASMINE
You're sure it's not a little test to make sure you're doing the right thing? You know what that sweater does to me.

CANE
I forgot.

YASMINE
Forgot it was your "blow me" sweater.

CANE
Like you said, it's been months. Come on Yasmine, where's my--

YASMINE
We can play if you want. For old time's sake. You can pick the game. The cop, the zookeeper--

CANE
Jesus, Yaz. Stop it.

YASMINE
You called me Yaz. You're thinking about it.

CANE
Old habit.

YASMINE
Like the sweater? But still...
(she moves closer)
It's not a bad idea.
(closer)
Is it?

In trying to evade her, Cane sits on the bed. He's responding to her, dammit. He rises, frustrated.

CANE
Just get my stuff.

Satisfied she's gotten to him, even a little, Yasmine pulls a box from the closet and hands it to him.

CANE (CONT'D)
You call this heavy?

Yasmine laughs and shrugs. Cane takes the box into the living room. Yasmine follows.

LIVING ROOM

Cane drops the box on a chair and opens it.

CANE (CONT'D)
I left this much stuff here?

YASMINE
Maybe you wanted a reason to come back.

CANE
Or I just packed fast.

YASMINE
Couldn't wait to get out.

CANE
Didn't want to make things any more painful for you.

YASMINE
Do you mean that?

Cane pulls out a Christmas ornament.

CANE
My Christmas ornaments. I forgot about these.

YASMINE
You would have remembered at
Christmas.

CANE
If I got a tree.

YASMINE
(suspicious)
Why wouldn't you get a tree?

CANE
I guess no reason.

YASMINE
Maybe you don't want to remember
all the fun we had getting our
trees. Or all the fun we had under
the trees.

CANE
You were always more into Christmas
than I was.

YASMINE
That's not true. You were just more
into me.
(beat)
I kept the little snow globe from
Aspen.

CANE
You're the one who loved it.

YASMINE
Because it was our first vacation.
We didn't even ski.

CANE
Keep it. My BU shirt! Where'd you
find it?

YASMINE
Under the bed.

CANE
Under— How did it— Oh, when we
used it for— You're giving me our
wedding toast glasses?

YASMINE
What am I going to do with them?

CANE
They're crystal. Use them.

YASMINE
Like on a date? They're jinxed.

CANE
Well I can't use them either.

YASMINE
Sure, you can. "Darling, these were supposed to be my wedding toast glasses, but why let virgin crystal go to waste? Let's toast to out with the old, in with the new."

Guilt crosses Cane's face.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
That wasn't funny. I'm sorry.

CANE
How about you donate them?

Yasmine grabs the wine.

YASMINE
How about we use them now?

CANE
That's probably not a good--

Yasmine already has a corkscrew.

YASMINE
Come on. We're grownups. It seems right. Closure.

While she opens the bottle, Cane checks his watch.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
You are in a hurry.

CANE
One glass.

Yasmine pours wine into the wedding toast glasses.

YASMINE
What do we toast to? Fidelity?

CANE
(rising)
I don't know why I thought we
could--

YASMINE
No, no, no, no, no, we can. Come
on, come on. That just slipped out.
I'm feeling nervous or something.
Sit.

Cane sits. Yasmine sits next to him.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
To friendship. And eight good
years. They were good, right,
until...

CANE
Yeah.

They toast in silent acknowledgment of better days.

YASMINE
And the sex wasn't just good, it
was great, right?

CANE
...Yeah. Yeah, it was.

YASMINE
Fucking fantastic.

CANE
Yeah, but sex isn't--

YASMINE
Which was your favorite?

CANE
I don't want to talk about this.

YASMINE
Just tell me. The teacher, the
zookeeper, Dr. Love Machine--

Cane smiles despite himself. Yasmine smiles because she got
him to smile.

CANE
Cops. Cops was my favorite.

YASMINE
I knew it. Me too.

They smile at a memory and Yasmine struggles to figure out how it all went wrong.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Would it have made a difference if
I changed my mind about the puppy?

CANE

What? No. Did you?

YASMINE

Because that really was an unfair
question, me being a vegetarian and
everything. You know I have the
utmost respect for Shakespeare.

CANE

You're a writer. How can you not?
The fact that his work exists--still
exists--is mind-boggling.

YASMINE

But isn't life just as much, if not
more, mind-boggling?

CANE

Let's not rehash it.

YASMINE

And without life, there can't be
art.

CANE

Puppies don't create art.

YASMINE

...So what if it wasn't a puppy?
What if it was a baby?

CANE

It was never supposed to be-- it was
just for fun. I just didn't expect--

YASMINE

My answer to be different from yours?

CANE

No matter what your answer was, we
still wouldn't--

YASMINE

So right now, today, what would you choose to rescue from fire, terrorism, and certain destruction-- the world's only surviving copy of the complete works of Shakespeare or a baby?

CANE

I don't know.

YASMINE

But probably the Shakespeare?

CANE

I don't know. Probably.

YASMINE

Because he's such a fucking genius.

CANE

It's the history, the... it's like the Taj Mahal of literature.

YASMINE

What if it was your baby?

Cane downs the rest of his wine, makes a face because who downs wine? This is uncomfortable.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

What if it was your baby with her?

Cane gets up, rummages through the box. Yasmine stands behind him with her glass.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

"I do desire we may be better strangers."

CANE

What?

YASMINE

You don't even recognize Shakespeare when you hear him? But somehow my whole future depended on my answer.

CANE

It didn't. And you have a lot of future left.

YASMINE
Without you.

Beat.

CANE
But not alone, Yaz, I promise.

YASMINE
You can't promise. Lots of women
end up alone.

CANE
But they're not you.

YASMINE
I can be alone. I just don't want
to be unloved. If I had a baby, I
wouldn't be unloved. And I sure as
hell wouldn't sacrifice it for
Shakespeare.

Cane takes her hands.

CANE
Hey, you're not unloved. At all.
What happened with us does not
define your whole life.

YASMINE
But we were my whole life.

CANE
Just a part of it, honey.

YASMINE
Honey?

Cane's face: Fuck. Where did that come from?

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Is she honey, too, or something
more special? Sweetcakes or Dew
Drop, maybe.

CANE
Seriously, Yasmine, just a part. A
blip, really, when you look at the
big picture, the eighty years
picture. It's like one tenth. A
dime. Nothing.

YASMINE

At our age, eight years is not a blip. It's an investment. And maybe you hit a little recession and you bailed out right when the market's about to surge. You don't know.

CANE

I do. I do know.

Cane does one big, final search through the box.

CANE (CONT'D)

Where is it?

YASMINE

It's not in there?

Yasmine sets down her wine glass, as if she's going to look in the box herself. But she doesn't.

CANE

You know damn well it isn't.

YASMINE

Don't get testy.

CANE

I want the ring. You said you were ready to give it back. I don't care about any of this shit.

YASMINE

How bad do you want it?

CANE

What do you mean?
(realizing)
Oh no...

YASMINE

Treasure hunt!

CANE

No treasure hunt. Just give it to me.

YASMINE

But you love a good hunt.

CANE

I don't have time.

Yasmine shrugs, clocks Cane checking his watch. Cane looks halfheartedly under a couch cushion.

YASMINE
Cold, cold, cold.

Deep down, Cane can't resist the challenge. He searches a little harder like someone who has lived there and knows the hiding places.

Yasmine is amused and throughout this entire hunt sequence she teases him with "Cold," "So cold," "Fucking Siberia."

Cane runs into the kitchen, Yasmine following.

KITCHEN

Cane searches recklessly, clattering and clanging. He digs through all the canisters and flour flies into his face.

It's a familiar game, and it's obvious, even in Cane's frustration, that he once enjoyed this very much, might even be enjoying it a little now, if not for the circumstances. Yasmine enjoys watching.

CANE
I'll find it.

YASMINE
I hope so.

Cane goes back to the living room, Yasmine following.

LIVING ROOM

Cane looks around for somewhere he hasn't searched yet. He heads to the bedroom. Yasmine follows.

BEDROOM

Yasmine watches Cane dig in pillow cases, under the bed, etc. His frustration grows.

CANE
Give me a hint.

YASMINE
(seductively)
It's in very familiar territory.

CANE
But I looked-- Oh my god.

Cane takes a step toward her.

YASMINE

Warmer.

Cane gestures toward her lower body.

CANE

It's--

YASMINE

Come on. Find it.

CANE

Just give it to me.

YASMINE

You're no fun anymore.

CANE

I didn't come here to have fun.

YASMINE

I know you came for the ring, but if a little fun is the price you have to pay...

CANE

Yasmine--

YASMINE

I told you, it's the sweater. Come on. "Officer, you don't mean you intend to strip search me?"

CANE

I definitely don't intend that.

YASMINE

Good things come to those who seek.

CANE

I can't.

YASMINE

Can't? I know for a fact you can, but I know you like it when I beg. Ooh, be that sexy Southern cop--

CANE

I'm not gonna--

YASMINE

"You've got some big rough policeman hands... Pretty please be gentle with me."

She's gotten to him. Cane abruptly reaches up her skirt. Yasmine has a sharp intake of breath.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Hot. Burning hot.

CANE
I don't feel anything.

YASMINE
I do. Don't stop.

Her hand slides to his crotch, an attempt at luring him into familiar role-playing.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
"Now you're looking harder,
Officer."

Cane's hand grabs hers. Overcoming desire, he removes her hand and backs off.

CANE
You lied.

YASMINE
We were playing! You didn't really
think I could clench a ring in
there all day?

Cane wipes his hand on the shirt and heads toward the living room. Yasmine follows.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Either you haven't learned much
about women or you just wanted to
do it. ...Do it again.

CANE
Give me the ring, Yasmine.

YASMINE
Miss Manners says I don't have to.

CANE
But you said you would.

YASMINE
Why? So you can give it to her?

CANE
...Because it was my mother's, and
I want to keep it in the family.

YASMINE

I am your family. I miss them.

CANE

I know. It's—

YASMINE

Julia sent me a birthday card last month. She misses me, too.

CANE

She'll come around.

YASMINE

We had lunch. She called you her ex-brother.

CANE

It doesn't matter. She doesn't have to— It's fine with me if you and Julia are friends but I just worry... that it's a way of hanging on.

YASMINE

To you?

CANE

Yeah. Like your novel that's what, like 80,000 pages because you can't let go of the characters.

YASMINE

I did. I ended it.

CANE

You did not.

YASMINE

The main character gets his balls caught in a shredder and dies. You wanna read it?

CANE

Where is it?

YASMINE

On my laptop. In the bedroom. Come on, I'll prove it.

CANE

The ring. No more games.

YASMINE

You love games.

(off his exasperation)

Okay, but there's something we need to talk about first.

CANE

It's all been said. Let's move on.

YASMINE

That's what I'm trying to do!

(beat)

I'm sorry. I'm getting ahead. So I wasn't just asking about the Shakespeare hypothetically, you know. I am going to have a baby.

CANE

What the-- You know what. That's great. That's what you always wanted. And if I couldn't be the one--

YASMINE

You wanted it, too.

CANE

You're happy about it, right?

YASMINE

Of course! We wanted a family.

CANE

Past tense.

YASMINE

"When the time is right."

CANE

Is that what this is about?

YASMINE

No. Kind of. The time wasn't right. Then. For you. But now? You still want kids, don't you?

CANE

Yaz, I'm so happy for you and...

YASMINE

You, Cane. Who else would it be?

Panic hits Cane's face. He looks her over.

CANE

We broke up months ago.

He points to indicate she has no baby bump.

YASMINE

(laughs)

Oh you thought--? There's no baby yet, but that's what I want to talk about. I'm hoping you'll help me with that.

CANE

What? How?

YASMINE

You know... the usual way.

CANE

You don't mean--

He can't say it. He makes a gesture to indicate sex.

YASMINE

That would be easiest.

Cane throws his hands up.

CANE

Are you crazy?

YASMINE

What's crazy about wanting what you always promised we'd have? What we'd have already if you hadn't made me--

CANE

I didn't make you do anything.

YASMINE

But at the time, I made it very clear that I wanted to keep the baby. Our baby. And you made it very clear that you did not. So--

Yasmine takes a deep breath, twists her fingers--not gonna go there. She must stay calm.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

I know that deciding to have a baby with your ex six months after he left you for someone else isn't the way things usually go--

CANE

Never go.

YASMINE

Okay, but just listen... I'm not asking to get back together. If things changed and we could amicably co-parent, great, but I'm not asking for that.

CANE

Yasmine. I'm with someone else.

YASMINE

But you want me. I know what it feels like when you want me and that felt like--

CANE

I'm with someone else.

YASMINE

I know, but/

CANE

/It's/

YASMINE

/things could/

CANE

/serious.

YASMINE

Serious.

CANE

Yeah.

YASMINE

I would never tell her.

CANE

That's what you think I'm worried about?

Beat.

YASMINE

Last night, I had this dream that you left a cup of scalding hot coffee on the bed. It was about to spill on me and I screamed for you to help. But you just stood there.

CANE

And what happened?

YASMINE

I got burned.

CANE

It didn't even happen, and you're mad at me.

YASMINE

Maybe I just got used to you pretending there was no danger. "You're just being paranoid, Yaz. Everything's fine." You're a terrible liar.

CANE

I would save you from burning.

YASMINE

Then here's your chance. Because you owe me, Cane. It's a simple trade: do this little thing to make things right and I'll give you the ring.

CANE

What little thing?

YASMINE

You know... knock me up again.

Long beat.

CANE

Are you seeing someone? Maybe you should see someone.

YASMINE

Don't say "should" to me and don't imply that wanting what you took from me means I'm not being rational. My god, should is one of the rudest words in the English language. Don't "should" me.

CANE

Okay. I'll should myself. I should go.

YASMINE

You're not even giving it any thought.

CANE
I don't have to.

YASMINE
I've just lived with the idea
longer/

CANE
/It's not a good idea./

YASMINE
/I'm more used to it. I shouldn't
have sprung it/

CANE
/It wouldn't matter how you did
it./

YASMINE
But I wanted an honest
conversation. I didn't want to just
seduce you/

CANE
/what makes you think you could
have/

YASMINE
/I wanted you be part of it/

CANE
/seduced me?

YASMINE
I'm sure you recall how very good I
am at seducing you. But I wanted to
do it right.

CANE
Right?

YASMINE
Together. A joint decision.

CANE
I appreciate that, I do. I'm glad
you asked me/

YASMINE
/I respect you too much not to/

CANE
/but the answer is no.

YASMINE

Come sit with me and think about it.

CANE

My answer won't change. It's gotta be no/

YASMINE

/Gotta be? Why does it/

CANE

/So please, please, and I'm serious, where is the ring?

YASMINE

You still need to find it.

CANE

I give up.

YASMINE

You give up too easily.

This accusation hangs for a beat, until Cane angrily gets up and starts checking everywhere, throwing cushions aside, knickknacks, etc. A temper tantrum.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey, stop!

Cane arrives at the side table and tries the drawer Yasmine locked earlier.

CANE

Why is this locked?

YASMINE

It's not in there.

CANE

We don't lock this drawer.

YASMINE

We don't live here anymore.

CANE

Where's the key?

YASMINE

I haven't been in that drawer in months. I forgot it was even locked. It's not in there, I promise.

CANE
Where... is...the key?

YASMINE
I don't know, Cane. Maybe it's with
your ring.

Exasperated, CANE exits into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Cane heads straight to a drawer and opens it. A hammer.
Yasmine appears in the kitchen door way.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Cane!

Rage across his face, Cane pulls the hammer from the drawer
and pushes her aside to go back to the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Cane heads to the locked table, Yasmine right behind,
frantic. Yasmine sets her wine glass on an end table.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
What are you doing with— You
can't!

CANE
Then open it.

YASMINE
We bought that table on the Cape!
Remember from that old guy with the
Mickey Mouse birthmark. You can't--

CANE
It's half mine. I can do what I
want.

YASMINE
You gave it to me, and your stupid
ring isn't in there.

Cane raises hammer.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
No! Don't! Cane, don't! I swear!

CANE
Last chance.

YASMINE

I swear on your mother's grave it's
not--

Hammer comes down on the table. Cane bangs at the lock.
Yasmine desperately claws at him.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

No! No! You have no right! Please!
No!

Cane destroys the table.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Cane!

Yasmine has lost. She pauses to catch her breath. Cane stares
at the table, the lock broken. He's no longer hammering, but
a banging sound continues. It's Mrs. Edson pounding on their
mutual wall.

MRS. EDSON (O.S.)

Is somebody getting killed in
there?

Yasmine moves to the air vent, speaks into it. Cane reaches
for the drawer.

YASMINE

We're fine, Mrs. Edson. Cane and I
are just having um... a little
disagreement.

MRS. EDSON (O.S.)

I thought that scoundrel moved out.

YASMINE

He's just visiting.

MRS. EDSON (O.S.)

Well, keep it down! I can't hear
the bonus round!

YASMINE

We will. Sorry.

Yasmine turns to see Cane half pointing a gun at her. It was
in the drawer.

CANE

What's this?

YASMINE

My vibrator. I live alone now,
remember.

CANE

This isn't our-- This is real. Do
you even know how to use this
thing?

YASMINE

You pull the little trigger there,
and it sends you straight to
heaven.

CANE

You know this is more likely to be
used on you?

YASMINE

That's how masturbation works,
yeah.

Yasmine shrugs, takes the gun from him and drops it out of
sight on the sofa table behind the couch.

CANE

You didn't want to-- You would
never--

YASMINE

Why? So you wouldn't have to live
with how you wrecked my life?

CANE

But if you were-- Maybe you should--
Maybe talking to someone would
help.

YASMINE

Spare me the pep talk. Empathy was
never your strong suit.

CANE

Nothing is worth it. I'm not worth
it.

YASMINE

You're right. ...I wouldn't.

CANE

Good.

YASMINE

Even though I was angry and alone
and my world just dropped out.

Guilty beat.

CANE

I'm just going to... put this away.

Cane exits with hammer.

KITCHEN

Yasmine yells after him.

YASMINE (O.S.)

That's right. Just walk away. JUST
WALK AWAY! THAT'S ALL YOU KNOW HOW
TO DO!

Guilt plays on Cane's face as he replaces the hammer.

LIVING ROOM

Mrs. Edson bangs on wall. Yasmine bangs on the wall herself
as she yells into the vent.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

No need to call the police yet,
Mrs. Edson!

The end table. The toast glass teeters with the vibration,
falls, and smashes the floor.

Glass pieces scatter. Yasmine drops to her knees, sadly
fingers the pieces. Her plan isn't working, and she was so
sure it would.

Cane enters from the kitchen, stops short, takes in the
scene. He feels something.

CANE

Stop. You're going to cut yourself.

Yasmine accidentally cuts herself.

YASMINE

Ow! That's sharp.

CANE

Dammit.

Cane exits back to the kitchen. Yasmine sucks her finger.

KITCHEN

Cane wets a cloth and finds Band-Aids then returns to

LIVING ROOM

Cane kneels next to Yasmine.

CANE

Let me see.

YASMINE

It's fine.

CANE

It's dripping.

Cane takes her hand and looks at it.

CANE (CONT'D)

I don't think you need stitches.

YASMINE

I can take care of myself.

CANE

Just let me...

Cane washes the wound. He's so gentle. This isn't lust; he cares and she knows it. This scene stirs something in them both. Visible. Palpable.

CANE (CONT'D)

Gotta make sure there's no glass
in there.

He continues washing. It's intimate. He remembers this.

YASMINE

I really can take care of myself.

CANE

I know.

YASMINE

I never would have done it. I just--

CANE

I know.

YASMINE

I will be a fit parent. I can take
care of a baby. By myself.

Cane puts a Band-Aid on her hand.

CANE
There. All better.

Cane doesn't let go of her hand. Yasmine holds it, then slides her other down his chest.

Cane reacts instinctively and before he realizes what he's doing, they're sharing a long kiss. It's so natural, he forgets himself. He pulls away.

CANE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

YASMINE
Me?

CANE
You tricked me! You're trying to trick me!

YASMINE
Tricked-- Like I used witchcraft to lure your tongue into my mouth?

CANE
Familiar neural pathways. You're taking advantage.

YASMINE
Habit again? That's the convenient excuse of the evening. And yet after eight years of familiarly fucking me, you broke that habit with surprising ease. Your neural pathways must have exploded.

CANE
It wasn't easy, if you want to know. I practically had a nervous breakdown.

YASMINE
Maybe you should have seen someone.

CANE
I did.

Beat.

YASMINE
Really? You went to therapy?

CANE

Yeah.

YASMINE

Another thing you kept from me.

CANE

It just didn't seem like something--

YASMINE

Because you talked about me.
Because you said to a therapist
what you couldn't say to me.

CANE

I'm only telling you because it
helped.

YASMINE

It helped because it gave you the
courage to dump me. Bam. Miracle
cure.

CANE

Nobody gets "cured." They just have
stuff to work out.

YASMINE

Or work out of their life.

CANE

They don't tell you what to do.
Just help you figure it out. Maybe
it could help you.

YASMINE

I've already figured it out. I know
what I need.

CANE

I'm not available. I'm just-- Not.

YASMINE

A piece of you.

CANE

Babies aren't magic, Yaz. They're
demanding. All-consuming. No more
spontaneous trips to the Cape. No
more attending every rally and
fundraiser from here to Toronto. No
more naked weekends.

YASMINE
I got no one to be naked with.

CANE
You will.

YASMINE
I'm not afraid of commitment.

CANE
A lifelong commitment.

YASMINE
Like marriage?

CANE
You want to be sure.

YASMINE
I am. I was.

CANE
And all your outside interests?

YASMINE
I'd have the baby.

CANE
You'll need something else.

YASMINE
Are we talking about you or me?

CANE
You know what I mean. One day, it's
"let's volunteer at the zoo" and
the next it's let's sponsor some
third world family. And in between,
it's kids with cleft palates and
tsunami orphans.

YASMINE
The kids. I want to help kids. And
I have the energy to keep up with
one.

CANE
Anything new since I saw you last?

YASMINE
Endangered rhinos.

CANE
Rhinos? Who cares about rhinos?

YASMINE

Obviously not someone who'd wring a puppy's neck for Hamlet. It's called a passion for life. I feel things.

CANE

A baby will be just one thing.

YASMINE

This child would be my passion. And if I need help, I'll get a nanny. A male one, so even if you do decide to come around, you won't be interested. Men are only as faithful as their options. You taught me that much.

CANE

I had other options, you know. This wasn't a serial thing.

YASMINE

Of course you did. Men have all the options.

CANE

I never wanted to hurt you. It hurts me to see you hurting.

YASMINE

(glances at his arm)
Your heart must have fallen off your sleeve on the way in. All those messages. "Please think about it, Yaz." "Why would you even want that ring now?" "It would mean the world to my father." Not once how are you? How are you doing? How's the cat? How bad could you have really felt? How bad do you feel now?

CANE

I'm not good with pain. Acknowledging it. Inflicting it. But I know what I did. And I feel bad about it. Really bad. I want you to be okay.

YASMINE

Sounds like guilt, not concern.

CANE

You don't just stop caring after eight years.

YASMINE

Then help me, please. You don't want to sleep with me, fine. Take your phone in the bathroom and open PornHub.

CANE

That's not what you want.

YASMINE

I want you to fuck me silly, but I have a syringe and I'll take a fresh sample if that's the alternative.

CANE

It isn't.

YASMINE

I'll beg you. Like I've never begged before. I'll grovel. I'll get on my knees, and while I'm down there, I'll prime the pump.

He wants her to, but--

CANE

Stop it.

YASMINE

Why? You always liked it when I--

Oh, and he still does. This game is too familiar, and it's taking so much for him to resist.

CANE

Just stop.

YASMINE

We were good. Great. You said so.

CANE

You'll meet someone else. I'm jealous of whoever that guy might be.

YASMINE

That's such a bullshit breakup line. How can you be jealous of someone who could have been you?

(MORE)

YASMINE (CONT'D)

"I wouldn't step foot in Paris, but I'm so jealous you get to go."

CANE

It's hard to be the person who doesn't like Paris, when everybody else has so much fun there.

YASMINE

It's still bullshit, pardon my French.

CANE

It won't be when you find the right person.

YASMINE

I did find the right person.

CANE

There can be more than one right person.

YASMINE

There isn't time! You can wait thirty more years and still end up with a brood of kids, but I can't.

CANE

Not thirty, but some.

YASMINE

Okay, let's say against all odds, a guy who's got all his teeth, a steady job, and no murder victims or hairball collections hidden in his closet, spots me in the latte line and decides he can't live without me. And I say beggars can't be choosers, so we date for six months, and he takes me to McDonald's and pops the question. We have a year engagement—I know compared to our four-year engagement, that seems quick, but this is a fantasy—and we get hitched. We wait at least a few months before trying to get pregnant, and how old am I then? And that's if I settle for any available dick tomorrow.

CANE

It's not impossible.

YASMINE

Yes, it is! Guys run like hell from women like me. We tick so loud, their ears are clanging before we've finished our first drink. We reek of desperation—desperation that smells like crazy. Desperation that you sprayed me with. And unlike you, I don't get to push a reset button with someone younger. I should not have to be starting over! I should not have to worry I'll end up like that bitter woman next door.

CANE

She's not bitter. She's lonely.

YASMINE

What's the difference? Don't you see? More men would date me with a baby than without. Oh my god, I hate myself for being so desperate I don't even recognize myself. Fuck biology. Just fuck it. Why did it all turn out like this, Cane? Why?

He does feel bad. So bad. That's why he's still here.

Cane gets up, sits on the couch, pours wine in the remaining toast glass, drinks, holds out the glass to Yasmine.

She joins him on the couch, takes a sip of the wine, hands the glass back. Hands touch. They kiss. The kiss escalates, and she removes his sweater. It's familiar, easy. And yet...

Cane breaks away.

CANE

No. No. No. I can't. I can't.

YASMINE

You can. You were.

Cane rises, walks away. His bare back faces her.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Cane's face: puzzled, before it dawns what she sees—or doesn't. Yasmine rises, inspects Cane's back, touches it.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

It's gone.

CANE

Yeah.

YASMINE

You just... erased it.

CANE

It was way more painful than an eraser. Worse than getting it.

YASMINE

Then why— She made you. She couldn't stand the sight of it.

CANE

No, no, I— I was never completely sold on it.

YASMINE

You were when we picked them out. Because we felt like it was fate, all the little bits of happenstance that brought us together. Oh my god, we were sooo in love. So impulsive.

CANE

So drunk.

Cane puts his sweater back on.

YASMINE

It was something permanent. It felt like commitment. I'm not getting rid of mine.

CANE

Yasmine... I can't. For half a lunatic second back there, I felt like maybe— But I can't.

YASMINE

Trust that impulse. Bring back that lunatic thought.

CANE

No. I mean, sure I can picture myself. Someday. I don't know why but I picture smoothing a little girl's hair and just feeling like, this overwhelming surge of protection.

YASMINE

I'll name her after your mother, I promise I will.

CANE

The time has to be right, Yasmine. Not like this.

YASMINE

The time is right. This time, it's right.

CANE

You can't just wish it.

YASMINE

Like I don't know that? Stars, railroad tracks, turn your necklace around, coins, stupid candles. I was the same as any other girl, I wished for happy ever after and Prince Charming. And I got you, so I know you can't wish. Nobody gives you anything unless you take it.

Cane's phone buzzes. He checks it, a text from her. He responds quickly.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Your plans?

CANE

Yeah, but...

YASMINE

You want your ring.

CANE

I was going to say I don't want to leave you like this.

YASMINE

What do you care? This is nothing compared to when you really left, so there is no like this, there is only like that. And you didn't care then.

CANE

Yes, I did! I care and I want to help, but not like— Give me a minute, okay?

Cane heads to the bathroom.

BATHROOM

Cane pees. Then pulls out his phone. He does open Pornhub. Then a video... It's Yasmine, naked. Sexy. He still has this. He watches, conflicted.

YASMINE (O.S.)

Cane? Should I come in there?

Cane takes deep breaths until he's composed. Closes the video. Zips up. Exits to

LIVING ROOM

Cane paces rapidly, looks at his watch. The clock is ticking and he needs to find a way out of this.

CANE

Okay, let's talk about this.
Reasonably. You want a baby? Okay.
Okay. Let's be logical. What about
a sperm bank?

YASMINE

So I can browse through
applications like I'm picking out a
sweater? No red hair, check, at
least a 1400 SAT score, check—

CANE

See? See? I only got a 1200. You
don't want me.

YASMINE

A 1200?

CANE

Time for Plan B.

YASMINE

How did I not know you got a
fucking 1200?

CANE

I don't really brag about it.

YASMINE

But you're like a financial whiz
freak.

CANE

800 math.

YASMINE

And four—

CANE

You've seen the way I spell. Or don't.

YASMINE

Which I excel at. We'll balance each other out.

CANE

Genetics can be tricky.

YASMINE

STEM skills are all that matter now anyway.

CANE

I bite my nails. You hate that.

YASMINE

You have no nails left to bite.

CANE

Do you want a girl with no nails? Forget mother/daughter manicures.

YASMINE

More money for the male nanny.

CANE

I have poor hand-eye coordination.

YASMINE

That's what video games are for. You're not making a very good case. If you want to convince me, maybe talk about your pacing.

CANE

I don't pace.

YASMINE

(WTF face)

You pace when you're on the phone. You pace when we're waiting for our reservation. You pace until I finish my YouTube workout. You're pacing right now! It's like you're always waiting for something.

CANE

Usually you! Taking an hour in the bathroom, or hogging the TV, or being late while you run one more errand.

YASMINE

Which was half the time picking up chocolate milk or Oreos or beef jerky for you!

CANE

I hate being out of staples.

YASMINE

Except you never notice when we are.

CANE

Were. And is lack of observational skills something you want to pass on to a child?

YASMINE

I'll steer her away from detective work, even though she'd be way smart enough for that shit.

CANE

You'd have to give up cursing.

YASMINE

You don't think I can fucking do that?

They laugh together.

CANE

I'm a slob. Look how neat this place is now. You can't scream at a kid to clean the bathroom.

YASMINE

I'll get a maid.

CANE

You never got me a maid.

YASMINE

You're a grown boy. She'll be too busy studying her spelling to clean.

CANE

Or learning how to cook. Lean Cuisine isn't a proper diet for a child.

YASMINE

Hey, I made Thanksgiving dinner that year our flights got canceled.

CANE

You opened a canned ham. Ham. On Thanksgiving.

YASMINE

I made fucking meat for you.

CANE

See, I'm not appreciative. Add it to the list.

YASMINE

The list is stupid, because you didn't list any of your good qualities. Maybe she'll sing like you, and I'll feel like you're here. You remember birthdays and anniversaries...

YASMINE looks toward the roses on the sofa table.

CANE

Those roses are very dead.

YASMINE

I know. I just haven't been able to...

CANE

I got it.

CANE gets up, takes the vase into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

More deep breaths. Cane throws the flowers in the trash. Rinses the vase, leaves it on the counter. Checks his phone. Text from Amy: "Leaving now!" Another deep breath.

LIVING ROOM

YASMINE pours herself more wine. CANE returns.

CANE (CONT'D)

There. Okay?

CANE takes a sip of the wine she's poured. Resolves.

CANE (CONT'D)
I should really get going. So,
please, can you get the ring?

YASMINE
What? No.

CANE
All the stuff we were just talking
about...

YASMINE
Was just stuff.

CANE
We came to an understanding.

YASMINE
No.

CANE
Yaz... You're free to find the
person you're meant to be with.

YASMINE
You're selling soulmates? Nobody's
perfect.

CANE
Perfect for you. And in the meantime,
if you want someone to sleep with, it
doesn't have to be me.

YASMINE
God, this has nothing to do with
sex! You know, for one day, I want
to be a man. I'd take my car to the
shop and not be treated like an
idiot, and I'd bench press a couple
hundred pounds, and pee standing up
to prove it's really not that hard
to hit the bowl, and eat whatever I
want, and walk around without a
shirt and jerk off in the shower. I
might even want to get hit in the
balls just to see what all the wah-
wah-wah is about. But mostly, I'd
want to see how it feels to be so
obtuse about having all the power.

CANE

You could've left! You could've left any time! If you weren't happy with the way things were going, or we weren't moving fast enough, you could've walked out the door! Why didn't you?

YASMINE

You know, if you Google "why won't he marry me," there are scads of women crying all over the internet about their long-term stalemates. They're not very good company on nights when you're trying to convince yourself that your boyfriend really is working late.

CANE

I did work late a lot of—

YASMINE

They want to know if they should give their boyfriends ultimatums or not bother and just leave. Some cheery Mary Poppins always pipes in to say she knows how hard it is, she appreciates their pain, but she walked away and now she's married and happy and appreciated and life is fuckall great.

CANE

So why—

YASMINE

Because I was different. I had the ring. I was one step ahead of all those sad dreamers. You weren't ready yet, but you gave me your mother's ring, and you promised. I thought that meant something.

CANE

It did.

YASMINE

Well, none of those posts I read said anything about a statute of limitations on promises made under duress.

CANE

It wasn't under—

Yasmine silences him with a hand.

YASMINE

Don't. Don't even. You had the decency not to do it until I stopped sobbing every day, but I still know that's why you did it. Answer the real question: if you didn't mean it, why didn't you leave?

CANE

I did.

YASMINE

Sooner! If you were so unhappy, what kept you here? The sex was too hot? You liked Lean Cuisine by candlelight? Guilt? Or there was just no better alternative?

CANE

It was just—

YASMINE

Just what?

CANE

Just not the time.

YASMINE

I should warn her, let her know that she's young now, but you'll suck the life out of her dreams and leave her shriveled and useless. That I loved you, and you made me suffer because you didn't have the decency to LET ME GO!

Mrs. Edson bangs on the wall.

MRS. EDSON (O.S.)

Hey!

YASMINE

You're a coward. A little boy. A selfish, petulant child who can't see past tomorrow and what dessert mommy's packing in his lunch. You act like you have feelings, but they're so locked up inside your stupid ego, you wouldn't recognize love if God himself was blowing you to kingdom come.

(MORE)

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Who cares about a future when you can live in the moment and everybody will accommodate you? You don't care about a future, but I do.

Anger boils over on Cane's face. He jumps up, hurls the toast glass at Mrs. Edson's wall. Shattered glass cascades.

CANE

I do care about a future! That's the whole point!

Mrs. Edson bangs on the wall.

MRS. EDSON (O.S.)

This is your last warning!

More broken glass. Yasmine stands over the pieces, then falls to her knees in front of them, defeated and sad. She picks up a shard.

CANE

Don't. You'll cut yourself again.

A glistening shard. Yasmine holds it out, not as a weapon but as a symbol of thoughts now as clear to her as the piece of crystal in her hand.

YASMINE

A thousand little cuts. That's what it was.

CANE

Put it down.

YASMINE

You want a future.

CANE

Yes.

YASMINE

Just not with me.

CANE

No. God help me, but no.

YASMINE

Why?

CANE

I just knew.

YASMINE

How? How?

Cane can't answer.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

We make good money. You're not traumatized by divorce. You're not secret gay. Your dad and your sister love me. I'm sexy as fuck, there wasn't another woman until... oh.. my god. It's not the time wasn't right. I'm not right.

CANE

I was happy with you.

YASMINE

But not happy enough.

Again, words don't come.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

There must be something I could've done.

CANE

You did everything, Yaz. You made a home out of this apartment. You laid my clothes out when I was running late. You left hot notes in my suit pockets. You made me feel loved.

YASMINE

Why wasn't that enough?

CANE

I don't know.

Long beat.

YASMINE

Were you ever planning to marry me?

CANE

I think so.

YASMINE

When did you know?

CANE

Maybe a little at the engagement party.

YASMINE

That was four years ago!

CANE

I got cold feet.

YASMINE

You don't get cold feet at an engagement party. Normal people wait until the wedding.

CANE

But once you're engaged, you think about things. Forever things. Can you really live with a night person when you're a morning person, or can you stand knowing every time you bring home chicken wings, you're going to get a look? Can you accept you'll always have to watch football alone or the constant battle over the AC?

YASMINE

I get cold.

CANE

You start thinking about those things and if you can live with them.

YASMINE

And decide you can't, but you'll deal—for today. And tomorrow. And a month. And eight years.

CANE

I never thought of it like that.

YASMINE

One day at a time, but not forever.

CANE

I always thought we'd get married. Eventually.

YASMINE

But we didn't. Tell me why.

Cane mentally debates what to say.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Just tell me the truth.

CANE

I... I keep thinking of my father the last day of my mother's wake. He wouldn't leave her. He told us to go, and he wouldn't leave, so Julia and I sat in the alcove until morning when they finally told him he had to. We practically had to pry him off the coffin. He was broken in a million pieces—sharp-edged, jagged pieces.

The glass on the floor. The glistening piece in Yasmine's hand. She sets it down, rises from the floor to sit.

CANE (CONT'D)

It was the most crushing thing... but I still knew right then I wanted to love someone who could break me like that.

YASMINE

(fingering her bandage)
Isn't it enough to be that for someone else?

CANE

Yaz, I love the way you throw yourself into everything you do. You have more energy than I'll ever have. You feel everything so deeply. You have a good heart.

YASMINE

Not anymore. My heart's no good anymore.

CANE

Yes, it is. You don't know how not to feel intensely. All of this here, now, this is pretty intense.

YASMINE

I'm extreme, you're saying.

CANE

In a good way. That's how things get done, when somebody grabs on. And man, it sure could make things exciting.

YASMINE

Extreme is exciting, but you don't want to marry it.

CANE

Imagine finding someone else who sees a monthly events calendar as a to-do list.

YASMINE

Kids have that kind of energy. I imagine us with that little baby. Or a smart little four-year-old who already knows how to read and impresses us with his big words. "Mommy, I have a proposition for you. If I fastidiously clean my room, will you contemplate chicken fingers for dinner?"

CANE

Four years old and he's got a better strategy than me. And a better vocabulary.

YASMINE

Because he's perfect. And I want him, Cane. I can be alone if I have him.

CANE

And I know you won't give up, but without me.

YASMINE

But with you is the whole point.

CANE

Even if I wasn't with someone else, I'm just not ready—

YASMINE

Not ready. Your battle cry. "I'm not ready." Sometimes people aren't ready for shit. Not ready to bury the hatchet, or leave their stupid job, or see a doctor about their headaches. And they wait and wait and wait until it's too late.

CANE

I still have time.

YASMINE

Yeah, mine. The time you took from me. The child you took from me. So you owe me this.

CANE

No, sweetheart, I fucking don't!
Things ended. Relationships end. And
I'm sorry about the timing, and I'm
sorry your biological clock doesn't
have a snooze, and I'm sorry you
don't see that we're both better off.
But you have to understand. You could
be perfect. You could want nothing,
give everything, be waiting naked on
your knees every night when I come
home from work gnawing on a turkey
leg, and it wouldn't matter! You
aren't the one! You aren't, and you
never will be! I'm sorry, but that's
just the way it is.
That's it! I feel bad about all of
this, believe me or don't, but an
apology's all you're getting from me.

YASMINE

It's not enough.

CANE

You were never gonna give that
ring, were you?

YASMINE

I made you an offer. And you didn't
take me seriously.

CANE

It wasn't a serious offer.

YASMINE

I'm not sure entirely how, but I
failed you. I failed at being
someone you could love or spend
your life with. But I won't fail at
this, I promise. Think of all the
guys out there who are fathers and
don't even know it. Their lives
don't change at all. You'll never
hear from me. I won't ask for
money. I won't ask for anything.
You'll never even know.

CANE

I'll know.

YASMINE

No! No, you won't. I won't even
tell Julia. I'll move away.

(MORE)

YASMINE (CONT'D)

It'll be like you made a sperm bank donation.

CANE

I would never do that.

YASMINE

I mean no high SAT score but look at you. You're gorgeous, and you give great hugs, and you can run a mile in six minutes. And you do love Christmas no matter what you say, you always offer to drive on road trips, and you wrote a song about me once. They don't care about that stuff on sperm bank forms. The stuff that makes you who you are. And you loved your mother. Do you know how many guys trash talk their mother like she's some girl they just threw away? A guy who loves his mother is so special. You'll be a great father.

CANE

Someday.

YASMINE

No. Some excuse will always hold you back. I'm doing you a favor.

CANE

Yasmine, listen to me. I know you and your mother never had the greatest relationship/

YASMINE

/I will be nothing like my mother/

CANE

/but I worshipped mine. When I gave you her ring, it meant everything I said it did, but... things change.

YASMINE

You changed.

CANE

Okay, I changed. But keeping my mother's ring won't change me back. Do the right thing. Please. My stomach hurts to think about you selling it, or—

YASMINE

I told you I would keep it in the family.

CANE

I'll buy you a new one if that's what you want!

YASMINE

Buy someone else a new one!

CANE

But I already promised— I don't want to do that.

Long beat.

CANE (CONT'D)

I'm gonna go.

YASMINE

You already promised what, Cane?
(off Cane's "fuck" face)
Go ahead.

CANE

When you said you were giving it back... I promised her... we'd...

YASMINE

Oh my god. Your plans. The sweater.

CANE

I didn't mean for it come out like that.

The shattered glass.

YASMINE

She can break you.

CANE

Listen. I was a shit. All right? I was a shit. I could have handled this all so much better. I should have ended things with you before I ever—

YASMINE

Oh, but why, Cane? What if it didn't work out? Whatever would you have fallen back on?

CANE

You need to know none of it was planned. It just happened. Once we knew... I mean I told her that I needed to make a clean break before we could even—

YASMINE

You didn't even test drive? Wow. That must be what sharp, shattering love feels like.

CANE

I never wanted to hurt you. You get that, right? Is at least that much clear?

YASMINE

Crystal.

Long beat as Yasmine contains her devastation, and Cane debates one last try. He goes for it.

CANE

So one last time. For your sake, too, please. Don't hold on to the bitterness.

Yasmine won't answer or look at him. He checks his watch; ring or no ring, he needs to go now.

CANE (CONT'D)

Okay, keep it. It doesn't matter, just keep it.

Cane reaches toward his coat on the back of the couch.

CANE (CONT'D)

God, Yasmine, did you really think this was gonna work?

YASMINE

You gave me the ring and I kept my end of the bargain. I could have tricked you, forgotten a few pills, you know, because I'm so busy all the time. We slipped up once. I could have made it happen again and this time refused to—

(deep breath)

But one step at a time, you said. We're not ready, you said. "Once we're married, it'll be different.

(MORE)

YASMINE (CONT'D)

We'll be ready for a family then."
And I believed you! Without any
Shakespeare to save, I went along!

CANE

No, no. It wasn't like that. We
agreed. You know we did. You can't
just rewrite—

YASMINE

No! No! I was ready! You were the
one. You weren't ready. When the
time was right, you would be. But
it never was.

Yasmine grabs the gun off the sofa table, points it at him.
Her demeanor changes; she's playing a cop. Maybe she does an
accent, maybe the Southern one. Cane drops the coat.

CANE

What the—

YASMINE

"You didn't just run that red light
back there, did you?"

CANE

Hey, that's not--

YASMINE

"I'd think you'd best keep your
mouth shut, son."

CANE

Yasmine. Put the gun down.

YASMINE

"I'll do the talking. You're a
handsome one, aren't ya? Get out of
the car."

Yasmine advances on him, and he drops back onto the couch.

CANE

Yasmine--

YASMINE

"Drop your pants, and maybe you
won't get a ticket." Oh! Do you
want me to get the handcuffs?

CANE

Yasmine, listen—

YASMINE advances more.

YASMINE

"Take them off or I'll let the guys at the big house handle you." Come on, get into character.

CANE

I can't even--

YASMINE

"Now! Or I'm gonna call Bubba for backup, and he won't be so nice." Say "Oh don't do that!"

CANE

Don't--

YASMINE

"Say it!"

Yasmine shoves the gun in his face.

CANE

Don't... do that.

YASMINE

"Then take off your pants!"

Cane reaches for his belt buckle, then stops.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

"Come on!"

CANE

You don't want it like this.

YASMINE

What are you talking about? We love it like this.

CANE

But if we're making a baby... shouldn't it be more special?

YASMINE

This is special. It's your favorite.

CANE

I mean romantic--

YASMINE

Romantic?

CANE
Yeah, a fire and flowers, and
candles. I could say I'm working,
and we could go back to Cape Cod—

YASMINE
Aspen.

CANE
Anywhere you want.

Yasmine backs off, lowers the gun.

YASMINE
You'd lie to her? Say you're
working?

CANE
Just this once.

YASMINE
I think Aspen. When it's snowing.

Cane gets up.

CANE
It'll be perfect. Why don't you get
your calendar, get the ring, we'll
pick a date—

At "ring," the gun rises again.

YASMINE
"Down on the seat. Take off your
pants, you slimy fuck."

CANE
But we just agreed not now—

YASMINE
"No more not now. I've had enough
not now out of you."

CANE
But I mean—

YASMINE
"Take them off!"

Cane reaches for his belt buckle, then stops.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
"You think I won't fucking shoot?"

Sound of a gun cocking. Cane unbuckles and unzips his pants.

CANE
I don't even think I can--

YASMINE
"Do it!"

Cane slides his pants to his hips; he wears boxers.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
"That's it."

CANE
I can't.

Yasmine slides her hand into his shorts to grab him. He's hard; she smiles.

YASMINE
"You underestimate yourself. I knew
you'd find it in your best
interests to cooperate."

Yasmine starts to work him. Cane's phone rings.

CANE
Yasmine.

Cane glances toward the phone but Yasmine shakes her head.

YASMINE
"Show some respect. Call me
officer."
(continues to work him)
"Yeah, now you've got it. That's
gooood. Things will go so much
easier for you this way."

CANE
Yasmine.

YASMINE
"Officer."

With the gun pointed on him, Yasmine climbs on top of Cane.
The phone continues to ring.

CANE
Officer--

Yasmine guides him into her, moves up and down.

YASMINE

"Oh. My. That's a good boy."

CANE

Please take that gun out of my face.

YASMINE

Oh, sorry, does it make you nervous?

CANE

Yeah.

YASMINE

Silly. It's not even loaded, see?

Yasmine pulls the trigger. The gun clicks, empty. Cane comes violently in relief and release. Yasmine follows. The phone rings one last time then goes silent.

Long beat where neither speak.

Finally, Yasmine gets off Cane, falls back on the couch. Cane pulls up his pants.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Cops never gets old.

Cane can't speak, his face a mixture of shock, relief... Yasmine laughs.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

So good, you're speechless.

CANE

I thought you were gonna blow my brains out.

YASMINE

Was I that convincing? You never said the safe word.

(on Cane's disbelief)

I admit I wasn't sure you'd be up for it, but once you kissed me when I cut myself and on the couch...

CANE

But I—

YASMINE

Thank you, Cane. I mean it. I know you didn't want to cheat again and I'm really, really sorry for that.

Cane gets up.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Do you want more wine? I have other
glasses.

Cane gets up slowly, collects his thoughts. Picks up his box.
Yasmine gets up.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
You're not leaving? Don't leave.

CANE
I'm going!

YASMINE
I could make food. I have Lean
Cuisines. Like old times. Please.

Cane looks at her but can't summon words.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Okay. Next time, maybe?

Cane drops the box. Yasmine jumps, surprised.

CANE
I don't want any of this.

YASMINE
But it's what you came for.

CANE
Give it away. Throw it out.

YASMINE
(shrugs)
I'll store it in case you change
your mind.

Cane walks toward the door.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Wait.

Cane stops, turns back. The ring is in Yasmine's hand,
holding it out to him. Cane can't sort his feelings over the
violation: anger, guilt, shame... lust?

CANE
I'm not coming back here. Ever.

YASMINE
A baby might change the way you
feel. But I won't push, I promise.

Cane doesn't respond.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Come on, take it. A deal's a deal.

Cane doesn't move.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
I'll put it in the box. For real.

Yasmine walks toward the box. Cane suddenly grabs her wrist.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Ow!

Sexual tension roils but also something darker. It would be easy for Cane to stay. But he lets her wrist go, grabs the ring, and heads to the door.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
Cane!

Cane exits. Yasmine's distraught, but then... she remembers. She plops on the couch, puts a pillow under her hips, gently places a hand on her abdomen and leaves it there. Still.

HALLWAY

Cane walks slowly, his face unreadable as he tries to process the last hour. His phone rings. He stops, looks back toward Yasmine's door, pauses...

LIVING ROOM

A knock on the door.

YASMINE (CONT'D)
It's open!

Mrs. Edson enters.

MRS. EDSON
Are you okay, honey?

Yasmine laughs through disappointment at it not being Cane.

YASMINE
I think I will be.

MRS. EDSON
Okay, then, I'll get out of your hair.

Mrs. Edson turns toward the door.

YASMINE

Wait...

Mrs. Edson turns back.

YASMINE (CONT'D)

Would you like a cup of tea?

Mrs. Edson and Yasmine smile at each other.

END