

THE ART OF EATING ICE CREAM

Written by

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SCENE ONE

EXT, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

AERIAL MONTAGE OF EDINBURGH IN EARLY MORNING

KELSIE MCDUNN V.O.

(*Heavy Scottish Accent*)

The American cartoonist, Charles Schultz, put it this way: "Life is like an ice cream cone. You have to lick it one day at a time..."

CUT TO:

EXT, KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

The shop has a eclectic, steam-punk vibe.

KELSIE MCDUNN

So, what's wrong with wanting to ensure the daily lick is a moment ya don't easily forget, one that's absolutely breathtaking! That is, of course, assuming ya have the sense to breathe...

A single patron, wiry, nervous, is tapping her pen on the table, poking at a carefully built beehive hairdo.

CUT TO:

INT, BACK ROOM OF THE EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

CU: KELSIE MCDUNN IN PROFILE. SHE LEANS FORWARD IN A WHITE LAB COAT, WEARING AVIATOR GOGGLES AND HOLDING AN EYE DROPPER OVER A VAT OF SOMETHING.

Several drops of dark liquid fall into the vat before the roar of the machine stops. A taller, substantial woman with tattoos running down both arms and wild, curly hair points to the front, voice low:

KATIE SHYLES

Kelsie! I've been callin' ya for five minutes! That *lady* is here!

Kelsie stares blankly.

KATIE  
Ya know--the *socialist*!

Kelsie pulls her goggles up.

KELSIE  
*Socialist?*

KATIE  
Remember? The one with the hairdo?  
She keeps pokin' at it with her pen  
as if she's afraid it'll jump off  
her head and just...run away.

KELSIE  
Wait! Ally Duncan...I was supposed  
to meet with Ally Duncan today!  
(*Glances at the clock*). Auk-I need  
to finish this batch. Tell her I'll  
be out in five. Give her a scoop of  
ice cream on the house...

Katie shrugs, turning to go. She flips the machine back on.  
Kelsie screams over it, pulling her goggles down.

KELSIE  
AND SHE'S NOT A SOCIALIST! She's a  
*social media influencer with over a  
quarter million followers!* The hair  
may be a bit much, but know it's  
her trademark...

KATIE  
(mumbling as she goes)  
Aye, it may be her mark alright,  
but ya wouldn't catch me tradin'!

FADE TO:

SCENE TWO

EXT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

CU: APPLE WATCH FACE. THE TIME IS 10:28

Ally Duncan slams the spoon into her ice cream dish and jerks  
up as Kelsie rushes out, flinging her goggles back at Katie,  
who is standing just outside the door.

ALLY

(meeting Kelsie's eyes)  
 Twenty-eight minutes, Ms. McDunn!  
 Twenty-eight minutes you've kept me  
 waiting! I should've left *LONG* ago!

KELSIE

Oh, but I'm so glad ya didn't, Ms.  
 Duncan, and by the way, welcome to  
 the Emporium--I just love your  
 hair! How was the ice cream?

Ally narrows her eyes. She slowly eases back into her chair.

ALLY

Your ice cream is the only reason I  
 stayed, but the names seem...odd.  
 Why is this one called *Moon Mint  
 Marble*? What's in it?

Kelsie eyes flash with excitement.

KELSIE

Ah! Lucky you! Moon-Mint Marble is  
 one of our favorite flavors! We  
 start with the smoothest Dutch  
 mint. We add just a dash of  
 eucalyptus, dandelion, a pinch of  
 melon extract, and we swirl it  
 around flowing fingers of rich,  
 Belgian choc--

Ally cuts her off.

ALLY

Well, it's just short of  
 phenomenal. It's smooth, rich,  
 and...well, *unique*. By the way,  
 who comes up with these outlandish  
 names? *Banana Booty in Barnacles*...

KELSIE

That'd be me--with the help of my  
 manager, Katie. *Banana Booty* is  
 another of our favorite flavors! It  
 takes traditional banana split  
 flavors like caramel, chocolate,  
 and strawberry, and whips them into  
 a light, creamy banana yogurt base  
 with hints of cherry, and bits of  
 shortbread--that's the barnacles.

Ally seems unimpressed. She frowns down at the menu.

ALLY

You don't serve anything...  
*ordinary* here, do you?

Kelsie is unapologetic.

KELSIE

Why would people want to come here if we're *ordinary*? We're a boutique, not a franchise. We focus on *EXTs*, like extreme, extravagant, and exceptional. We want every dessert we sell to be a mind fantasy! A flavor-filled dream! A *raucous party for the taste buds!*

Ally holds up a hand.

ALLY

Let me get this down...*raucous party for taste buds*... So, ya want to define ice cream as a phenomenon--an extraordinary culinary encounter. Is that how you would put it?

KELSIE

Well, I like the phenomenon part! A true masterpiece of flavor occurs when ingredients no longer hide behind each other, but find harmony, a sort of yin and yang for the taste buds.

ALLY

You speak like ice cream is a religion.

KELSIE

It depends on what you mean by the word. Anything directly touching the senses can be uplifting.

Ally continues to stare, as if weighing the words.

ALLY

But, *why*? You're the daughter of Hamish McDunn.

KELSIE

I am. But everything you see here I've created on my own, without any help from Hamish or H&S Energy.

Kelsie leans in.

KELSIE

Don't forget, I'm a Rhodes Scholar and the youngest graduate ever from *Le Cordon Blue*, the top Culinary Arts school in London. I've my own credentials, and I'm not here to discuss H&S. I understood this interview was about ice cream.

ALLY

Of course, dear! I don't doubt your credentials. It's just I'm confused by your choice.

KELSIE

And why is that?

ALLY

Well, H&S Energy is one of the biggest industrial success stories in Scotland, yet here you are, Hamish McDunn's daughter, in an eclectic little shop--

KELSIE

Emporium.

ALLY

Sure--little *emporium*, scooping out little dishes of...ice cream.

KELSIE

Aye. You've painted the picture nicely. In a world of dark news, with frenzies of negative focus, and a sea of people running so hard that they've lost track of where they're going, a rich man's daughter chooses to put *her* efforts into bringing the world a bit of good news. She brings a smile on a spoon; a moment of innocent delight that give ya a reason to get up and have at life again!

Ally looks down, swipes at her tablet, jots a few things down, then looks back up with a sigh.

ALLY

So, no regrets about your father turning leadership of H&S over to your brother?

Kelsie signals Katie, who's been listening at the door. She hurries toward them with a small dish of ice cream, mouthing the word *Snapdragon*. Kelsie touches Ally's arm.

KELSIE

None (*her voice has a tone of finality*). Now, let me grab ya a pint of *Banana Boat*. While I do, I'd appreciate your thoughts on a new flavor we're introducing. We call it, *Snapdragon*.

Ally raises an eyebrow.

ALLY

I'm the first to be tasting this flavor?

KELSIE

Absolutely!

ALLY

I'll be brutally honest.

KELSIE

Aye! We want no less. The name tells ya what ya need to know... Think soft gingerbread with a hint of kick and a tang not unlike that of Asian sweet and sour.

Ally tastes a small bite of the yellowish dessert.

ALLY

You do have an unusual ambiance here. I'd say it combines elements from a steam-punk museum and a curio cabinet. The lab coats add a nice touch as well.

Ally takes a second, larger spoonful. She rolls the ice cream around in her mouth, closing her eyes.

KELSIE

Well? What do you think of the flavor? While ambiance is important to us, flavor is our crown jewel.

ALLY

(eyes still closed)  
I think I...I think I will be visiting again, Ms. Kelsie McDunn  
(her eyes open) *Frequently!*

Katie, still standing behind Ally, gives Kelsie a thumbs up.

SLOW PULL TO CU OF REMAINING ICE CREAM IN THE DISH

FADE TO:

SCENE THREE

EXT. SMALL BAKERY SHOP IN FRONT OF A BUS STOP, OLD TOWN,  
EDINBURGH

SLOW PULL OUT FROM CU OF PICTURE PAINTED ON THE WINDOW OF A  
QUAINT CORNER BAKERY

Kelsie exits, rushing toward a double-decker bus that has  
just pulled up to the curb. She has a cell phone to her ear.

KATIE (VOICE ON PHONE)

She's gone viral! *Do I need shots?*  
That's about right for a socialist,  
always socializing!

KELSIE

You're killing me, Katie. No, ya  
don't need shots! She wrote an  
article, that's all! It was about  
our Emporium. The *article* has gone  
viral, meaning thousands of people  
have downloaded it. We've got to  
start considering how we'll handle  
the increase in traffic.

KATIE

Well, If you say so...and by the  
by, I believe I've been advocatin'  
for us to hire more help for awhile  
now. Why are ya listenin' to a  
socialist and not me?

KELSIE

(Sighs)

For heaven sake, Katie, Ally Duncan  
is a conservative, not a socialist.  
Listen, I'm on the bus right now. I  
should be there in fifteen or so.

KATIE

Aye. Got it. Oh! I almost forgot... There's a wee girl askin' for ya. She's ordered five dishes of ice cream so far, some of our most unusual flavors, but she refuses to speak to anyone but the *legendary Kelsie McDunn*.

KELSIE

Those were her exact words?

KATIE

Aye! She uses a lot of big words. Kind of like you.

KELSIE

But why is she in the shop? We don't officially open until noon.

The phone goes silent.

KELSIE

Let me guess--you let her in.

KATIE

Well, ya should have seen the poor thing--all forlorn out there on the steps! She's a girl on a quest, and I take note of that kind of thing. But she won't tell me a word. I'm just on of the mere mortals it would seem.

KELSIE

By '*mere mortals*' ya mean you and your huge staff?

KATIE

Aye. Me and the minions... *I hope they're not goin' viral...*

CUT TO:

SCENE FOUR

INT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

PAN OF ECCLECTIC INTERIOR. A YOUNG GIRL IS SEATED ALONE AT A HIGH COUNTER ALONG THE BACK WALL.

Isla Meikle fingers her hair, her black leather jacket unzipped, revealing a dark unicorn t-shirt. Kelsie enters, bag in hand, nods at the girl, who regards her coolly, then disappears into the back room.

KELSIE

Ah! We're already two minutes late opening. Would ya mind putting these away? I'll handle the spices.

Kelsie shoves the spices in a cabinet already full to bursting. She ducks into the bathroom, leaving the door partially open.

KELSIE

(talking softly)

So, that's her, the one so anxious to see me--leather jacket and all?

Katie pulls unusual roots and vegetables out of the bag.

KATIE

(also speaking softly)

Aye. What gave it away--the demonic unicorn?

The toilet flushes. Kelsie exits the bathroom, taking a quick moment to wash her hands, then pulls on a lab coat.

KELSIE

That and the fact she's the only customer out there. I'll get the sign and the door.

She re-enters the shop area, flips the open sign on and unlocks the door. She heads back to the girl.

KELSIE

Hi! (Extends hand.) Kelsie McDunn.

ISLA

I am...I'm Isla.

Kelsie eyes five stacked ice cream dishes beside Isla. The girl awkwardly takes Kelsie's hand, her own a bit sticky.

KELSIE

Wow! Seems you've been doing a bit of sampling today! So, what do ya think? I want your honest opinion.

ISLA

I only do honest... I'd say unique.  
Amazing. I'm impressed.

KELSIE

Glad to hear it! When ya savor a  
unique flavor, magic happens. Taste  
buds come alive, putting your brain  
on notice.

ISLA

*On notice?*

KELSIE

Aye. The brain hollers down: *what's  
this grand sensation?* And the taste  
buds answer, *I'm not sure. It's  
this frozen wonder on my spoon! But  
I like it!* The brain logs the  
memory, and suddenly, *ya notice  
that ya can't wait to come back.*

Kelsie smiles, but Isla just stares, eyebrows slightly  
raised. Kelsie decides to take a different tack.

KELSIE

*Isla.* That's an unusual name. How's  
it spelled?

Isla takes a last bite of ice cream.

ISLA

Well, it's spelled I-S-L-A, kind of  
like isle with a 'la' at the end.  
It's Scottish Gaelic.

KELSIE

I believe you're right. In fact, if  
I'm not mistaken, the name comes  
from the west coast. In Gaelic, it  
means *island*. It originated on the  
Isle of Islay. Were ya born there,  
or have ya ever been there?

Isla tilts her head back slightly.

ISLA

Not born there, but I have been  
there. A few times in fact. The  
island isn't much, but it does have  
a kind of rugged beauty.

Dad's a bit of a naturalist--  
especially when it comes to the sea  
and islands. How do you know so  
much about my name?

KELSIE

Well, names, you see, are a *thing*  
of mine. I hunt them down, along  
with stories and recipes. It's how  
we create our magical flavors.  
Which flavor is your favorite?

Isla sits up straight, looking over the empty glass dishes.

ISLA

Hmmm... I'd have to say Chocolate  
Unicorn--it's like a tutti-fruti  
that refuses to grow up.

KELSIE

Great description! What a wonderful  
way with words! Can we use it?

ISLA (GIVING A SHRUG)

Sure. Now, I've got a proposal...

Isla rummages through her bag. Katie tries to look busy so  
it's not too obvious that she's eaves-dropping. At length,  
Isla pulls a notebook out of her backpack, opens it, and  
pulls something out of the center zipper pouch.

ISLA

Here ya go. The offer is in  
perpetuate...or perpetuity. I get a  
bit confused with those two.

Isla pauses, waiting to see if Kelsie will jump in and  
correct her. She doesn't.

ISLA

Anyway, I mean to say that part of  
the agreement is ongoing as long as  
we both agree. Here's the first  
payment. Don't worry, it's real.  
It's from my account at the Bank of  
London. I'll pay the same sum every  
six months, with a yearly bonus of  
half of one check.

Kelsie's eyes widen.

KELSIE

Isla, this check is for *six  
thousand pounds!*

Isla grins.

ISLA

Aye. It is. And it's just to start.

Kelsie throws a glance at Katie, whose eyebrows are raised.

KELSIE

That's a lot of money. What kind of *in perpetuate* project are we talking about?

ISLA

Uh, let's say a good friend is in a tough career that requires him to maintain a certain image. But he's *lapsing*. Something has gone wrong and I need someone who can get him back on his game. I think that person is you. I've been watching, and you're the kind he'd go for.

Katie snorts, covering it up with a forced cough. Kelsie just stares at the girl, trying to take in her full meaning.

KELSIE

*Lapsing? The kind he'd go for? Are you meaning what I think you're meaning, Isla?*

Isla closes the notebook and puts it back into her pack.

ISLA

I don't know. I don't know what you're thinking. But *lapsing* is pretty self-explanatory. It means going backwards, losing focus. I need someone to catch his eye.

KELSIE

You want me to *date* your friend? And you want to pay me for it.

ISLA

Essentially correct. Uh, and...my friend also happens to be my Dad.

Katie lets slip a snicker. Kelsie's mouth is ajar, trying to process this information. Isla doesn't even seem to notice.

ISLA

Oh, and the deal will also include free ice cream...for when my brain notices I want it.

Katie knocks over a straw container, but Kelsie ignores the distraction, not breaking eye contact with Isla.

KELSIE

Isla, I'm a business owner with what I'd hope is a trendy, if unusual, ice cream emporium--not an Escort service.

ISLA

Aye, but before ya say no, hear me out. Mother died before I turned one. Since that time, it's been me and dad. That's almost sixteen years I've been handlin' him.

KELSIE

You're soon to be seventeen, then?

ISLA

Actually sixteen, but dad claims I was handling him even when I was in the womb, so the math's a bit off.

Kelsie takes a long, slow breath, staring at Isla.

KELSIE

I'm sorry to hear about your mother, Isla, but this is outside of my area of expertise.

ISLA

It's outside of everyone's area of expertise, *including mine!* Kelsie, ya don't have to do anything! Just one date! If you're done after that, we part ways and you keep the six thousand pounds.

KELSIE

So, why do you think one date with me is going to change whatever is going wrong with your dad? In fact, what exactly is going wrong that has you so concerned?

ISLA

He's not dating! His last rumored woman was a year ago! Now he just toys around with stocks at his broker house and plays golf.

She leans in conspiratorially.

ISLA

Last week, he even wore the plaids, caddy cap and all! He looked like a wee goose! The gossip--well, *it's just not good*. They think he's losing his edge.

Kelsie opens her mouth to speak, but has no words. Isla leans in.

ISLA

Kelsie, I know ya can't fully understand right now, but it's a single date and I'm convinced you're the only one who can pull it off! Believe me, from the day I fought my way out of the womb, I've had challenges--but this one...I can't solve it myself!

Isla wipes a sudden tear. Kelsie glances at Katie, who mouths; "*fought her way out of the womb?*"

ISLA

So, Kelsie; Ms. McDunn...Have we a deal or no?

Kelsie takes a deep breath.

KELSIE

God's truth, Isla, I've been trying to stay with ya, but I'm not even sure how much of this I follow...

ISLA

What's there to follow? There's a lot of money on the table, six thousand pounds, and all ya have to do is go on one date.

KELSIE

But what if it doesn't work as you suppose, Isla? What if he still likes his stocks and playing golf in his plaids?

ISLA

Then I've truly lost him and I don't know where to turn.

Kelsie ponders over the words as if searching for an exit.

KELSIE

I know it must be lonely for you.

ISLA

Aye.

KELSIE

You can come around the shop any time to try our flavors. I may even put you to work. You have a talent for naming.

ISLA

(smiles)

I'd like that.

After a long pause, Kelsie sighs and gives her head a shake.

KELSIE

I guess I could go on one date...  
But that's it. Are you good with that? And I don't need your money.

Kelsie tries to push the check back over to Isla, but she refuses to take it.

ISLA

I am, and a deal is a deal. The cashier's check is in your name. It's already come out of my account. Now, to my plan: I'll tell Dad that I need him to work with ya to design a new flavor for my upcoming sixteenth birthday. You do design specialty flavors, right?

KELSIE

Sure. We often design specialty flavors for specific occasions.

ISLA

Good. Besides a naturalist, Dad's a foodie, so he'll be all over that. This is when he'll ask you out.

KELSIE

You know this?

ISLA

I do. Just...be yourself. (She stands and holds her hand out awkwardly. Kelsie hesitantly takes it.) It has been a pleasure negotiating!

Kelsie and Katie watch Isla leave.

KELSIE

I feel absolutely dizzy. What just happened?

KATIE

I'd say you just signed up for a six thousand pound blind date!

KELSIE

Aye. I did. Why did I do that?

KATIE

'Cause, you've got a soft heart, Kelsie McDunn. Besides, I'm sure you're dead curious as to who's the father of that one! I mean, she's fought her way out of the womb!

Kelsie shakes her head, breaking into a more gentle smile.

KELSIE

Aye. She was something...Well, back to business. I'll have a go at accounting while you stock the counters.

Katie nods, musing over something.

KATIE

Ya know, we could call that birthday flavor *Womb Raider*.

KELSIE

Katie, you're terrible!

CUT TO:

## SCENE FIVE

EXT. CANNONGATE KIRK BUS STOP, EDINBURGH

Kelsie exits a red, double-decker bus. Among the chaos of fighting her way to the sidewalk, she hears someone calling her name.

PEE WEE

Kelsie! Hold up!

She glances back and sees a girl in jeans and an odd combination of sweaters maneuvering her way around the crowd, trying, unsuccessfully, to refrain from hitting them with her rather hefty backpack.

PEE WEE

Sorry! Oh, sorry! ...Hi, Kelsie! I didn't knock anyone over, did I? Where's the Rover?

The two fall into step, heading toward an alley called *Bakehouse Close*.

KELSIE

At home. I needed the steps today.

Kelsie points at her tracker watch. Penelope chuckles.

PEE WEE

Yeah. You track those. I just try not to step on anyone with mine.

Walking at a fair clip and chatting, they dip under the Baker Close tunnel, heels echoing against the cobblestones.

PEE WEE

Hey, d'ya know that over there was once a notorious tavern known as the *Cock and Trumpet*? You can still see the insignia carved above the door. They speak of a list kept there called the *Ranger's List* that listed ladies of the night and what their preferences were.

Kelsie is reminded of the conversation with Isla and her declaration that she was not a female escort.

KELSIE

That's an odd bit of trivia. I thought you were going to say that over there was where they filmed "*Sailor and Commander*."

PEE WEE

Aye, I was gettin' to that! I'm wondering if ole' Capt'n Mcleod stopped in to see the list!

KELSIE

Capt'n McLeod? No! He's not the type.

PEE WEE

Ah! You've fallen for him, have ya?

KELSIE

Possibly...Everybody, I think, needs a *Capt'n McLeod* now and again, if only for the dreaming. In my dreams, he's a gentleman.

PEE WEE

(laughs)

Not mine! To me, he's a rogue with a woman in every port. I'd have been on the list just to try to snag him! ...Did you know, Robert Louis Stevenson frequented this street? Ah, to live a life of adventure!

KELSIE

What, life's not adventurous enough for you and Jenna?

PEE WEE

Aren't you the funny one! Anyway, this is me. Hey, we're havin' a *Sailor and Commander* binge-fest Friday. Wanna come over?

KELSIE

Thanks, but I've a mountain of laundry not two days from taking over the city.

Pee Wee gives laughs and waves, angling away.

FADE TO:

SCENE SIX

INT. EIGHTH FLOOR OF THE PARK, EDINBURGH

CLOSE UP ON ANTIQUE-LOOKING ELEVATOR DIAL SHOWING THE ELEVATOR CAR COMING UP. IT STOPS AND THE DOOR PULLS BACK

Kelsie steps out, fishes for her key while walking to the corner flat. She unlocks the door and steps inside. As she flicks on the light, a quick pan of the room shows the Apartment to be quirky/elegant, with a Meticulous kitchen, wood floors, mahogany bookshelves, a fireplace with an ornate mantle, and a large bay window with window seat.

Kelsie gathers a few items of clothes from the back of a dark, leather couch, and off the floor as a thin, well trimmed cat, jumps down from a dark wood hutch. The cat arches its back, brushing up against Kelsie's leg. She picks it up, walking to the window seat, and sits, uncomfortably on the edge.

KELSIE

So, Gray Beard, you going to be my sea Cap'n tonight?

The cat just purrs, disinterested. Kelsie sighs.

Aye. I thought so...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

SCENE SEVEN

EXT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

Katie stumbles up, a steaming cup of coffee in one hand, the other one fishing in her coat for the key, then, looking up, she realizes the shop is open. She pushes inside.

CUT TO:

POV KATIE SEES THAT KELSIE AND ISLA ARE ALREADY THERE

Kelsie looks up from polishing the napkin dispensers. To the far end of the counter, Isla is sitting, sipping from a teacup, a small plate in front of her with remnants of a bagel. Katie pushes through the door and stops.

KATIE

Well, you're up bright and early!  
Workin' on a new flavor?

KELSIE

No. Just wanted to get a jump on the day. I've bagels in the back. Come on.

Kelsie motions for Katie to follow, heading to a small counter in the back where a bag of bagels and tub of cream cheese are laid out. Katie glances a last time at Isla before joining her in the back room.

KATIE (LOWERING HER VOICE)  
 So, our new patron seems to be  
 settlin' in just fine. Is this  
 going to be every morning now?

KELSIE  
 I can't say. When I got here, she  
 was already sitting at one of the  
 outside tables, sipping coffee.

KATIE (CRACKING A SMILE)  
 Ah! Ya made her use a tea cup.

KELSIE  
 Ya know my rules, Katie. I had  
 bagels dropped off. She said she  
 came to let me know that her dad  
 plans on stopping by today. I said;  
 "I look forward to meeting him,"  
 and she said; "*Well, just be ready*".

KATIE  
*Just be ready?* What is that  
 supposed to mean?

Isla sticks her head around the corner.

ISLA  
 It means *expect the unexpected*.  
 Thanks for the bagel, I'm off. Good  
 luck!

Kelsie waits to hear the front door close before turning to  
 Katie.

KELSIE  
 Is it just me, or is she making  
 this sound like an audition?

KATIE  
 I was goin' to say execution, but,  
 of course, this is Isla we're  
 talkin' about.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP ON THE WALL CLOCK SHOWING THE TIME IS NOW 3:47 PM.

Two women, a man in jogging attire, and a mom with three kids  
 are finishing their treats while Kelsie and Katie, in lab  
 coats, are cleaning off counters and restocking straws and  
 spoons, speaking together in low tones.

KATIE

So, what do you think? Is the  
mystery date fella a no-show?

KELSIE

It's not a date at this stage,  
Katie, and I don't know. He could  
have come and gone. I'm not gonna  
fret about it.

Katie looks up from her spoons, her eyes widening.

KATIE

Wait--there was a wiry fella. He  
must have been pushing seventy,  
with sunglasses and a raincoat!  
Just glad he was all buttoned up...

KELSIE

Katie!

As if in response to Katie's joke, the front door bell  
jingles and a old man walks in. He has a worn hat, thick  
spectacles that distort his eyes, and matted gray hair. Bushy  
eyebrows are just visible over the top of dark glasses and he  
is wearing a ragged leather flight jacket. He shuffles  
forward using a cane, as if he is partially blind, stopping  
at the counter. Kelsie moves toward him.

KELSIE

The stools are quite high here at  
the counter. Could I lead ya to a  
lower chair?

OLD MAN

No, no...I can manage.

The man feels the stool with his hand, then slowly, with  
great effort, slides onto it. He sits, panting for a moment.

KELSIE

Are you alright, now? Could I get  
ya a glass of water?

OLD MAN

What be the charge for it?

KELSIE

Oh, I think we could spring for a  
water... Maybe give me a smile.

The old man proffers a genuine smile.

OLD MAN

Aye, (gives a crooked grin). I can do that. I hear ya have the best ice creams in Edinburgh. Could a poor, wee beggar bother ya for just a spoon's size taste?

KELSIE

A poor, wee beggar with no funds I suppose.

OLD MAN

Aye. That's the poor part I's told ya about, lass.

KELSIE

We might could manage a small cup. What flavor?

OLD MAN

I ask ya for your favorite now--not the favorite of the place, mind ya, but you, your personal favorite.

The man's crooked smile widens. Kelsie looks down the bar to Katie, who shrugs. She gives the old man a tight nod. He leans forward.

OLD MAN

And I want to know the name of it. I've my reasons for asking.

The man seems oblivious to anything around him as Kelsie gets him a small dish of ice cream.

KELSIE

Here ya go. We call it *Maple Cinnamon Twist*. Let me know if we live up to the billing.

Katie touches the ice cream spoon to the back of the man's hand and moves his other hand to the edge of the bowl.

OLD MAN

Oh, I think I like it already!

The man gives a slow nod and begins to sample the ice cream, savoring it slowly and smacking his lips. He then takes a moment to drain his water glass, wipes his mouth, and waits patiently. Kelsie comes back over.

KELSIE

So, how did we do?

OLD MAN

Ah! That was...a rare treat! And it won't go unnoticed, I tell ya. Thanks for the kindness.

He pauses, sliding off the stool with effort.

OLD MAN

Now, could I ask a last favor, luv?

KELSIE

What's that?

OLD MAN

Could ya walk me? Just to the corner, mind ya.

The old man fumbles with his cane. Kelsie sighs, then looks to Katie with a helpless grin.

KELSIE

Alright. Come on, then...

Kelsie walks around to the man, touching his arm and finding that it is not as wiry as she expected. She leads him to the door and holds it open. Katie watches as the two go past the front window. Just around the corner is a large limousine. A tall, well-dressed chauffeur jumps out as they approach, runs around, and opens the door for the old man. Kelsie stares, open-mouthed, as the old man suddenly transforms. He straightens, loses his shuffle, and tosses his cane into the back seat. He sheds the oversized coat and hands it to the chauffeur. Looking back, he motions for Kelsie to follow as he quickly ducks down into the limousine. The man's physique is that of a healthy, middle-aged man, not an old codger. The chauffeur also motions to Kelsie.

CHAUFFEUR

Madame? Please...Alec is waiting. He does not wish be discovered.

KELSIE

Alec? Discovered?

Kelsie pauses a moment, then, ever so cautiously, climbs in. The chauffeur closes the door and hurries back to the driver seat. The "old" man sitting beside her has already shed his glasses and is busy peeling off the gray hair and eyebrows. He places them in a compartment under a lit tray in front and begins using tissues and alcohol to remove a thick layer of make-up.

KELSIE

You want to tell me what's going on?

The man glances over as he continues to reveal more of his face, which Kelsie finds vaguely familiar.

ALEC

Apologies for the deception, Ms. McDunn, but it was necessary. I have business to discuss with you, business that would only be hindered by the paparazzi.

KELSIE

*Paparazzi?*

Kelsie looks desperately to the chauffeur.

CHAUFFEUR

Meet Alec Meikle, Ms. McDunn.

Color drains from Kelsie's face. Her voice softens.

KELSIE

*Alec... 'Captain and Commander' Alec Meikle?*

Alec turns to look at her, a bemused smile on his face.

ALEC

You make me sound like an epic.

KELSIE

Sorry, I, a... Well, we don't get many...of your profession in our Emporium. If you had let me know, I could have taken steps--

Alec cuts her off with a smug grin.

ALEC

That's exactly what I didn't want. If the paparazzi got wind that I'm here, we wouldn't be able to have this pleasant conversation.

KELSIE

It's a *pleasant* conversation?

CHAUFFEUR

Do ya wish me to drive for a spell, Mr. Meikle--the car is already attracting interest?

ALEC

Sounds good, James. And Ms. McDunn, I did feel the conversation to be pleasant.

Kelsie's eyebrows raise.

KELSIE

Well, then, if you felt it...Your chauffeur is named *James*?

ALEC

(still somewhat bemused)  
He is, and judging from your still bewildered look, I'd say I've got some patching up to do.

The car pulls away from the curb. Alec wipes his face with what appears to be a steaming towel.

ALEC

I thank you for the ice cream, Ms. McDunn. It was heavenly. But I did not come to the shop to sample your ice cream. I stopped by at the request of a friend.

Kelsie's chin tilts upward.

KELSIE

*A friend?*

ALEC

Well, maybe a bit more than a friend. She--

Kelsie interrupts him.

KELSIE

*You're Isla's father.*

ALEC

Her father? Well...

Alec tries to skirt the issue, but seeing that Kelsie isn't buying, he gives the charade up and just nods sheepishly.

KELSIE

I have a few questions, Mr. Meikle. First, why have I been kidnapped. Second, why have I never heard that you have a daughter?

Alec seems momentarily taken back.

ALEC

Well, Ms. McDunn, I wouldn't say you were *kidnapped*. You were *invited* to join us by my Chauffeur.

KELSIE

Who promptly drove off.

Alec opens his mouth to speak, then closes it, the grin returning.

ALEC

Alright. I'll give you that one... The general public do not know about Isla for her own protection. Tell me, Ms McDunn, if you were an international icon and had a daughter, would you want to parade her to the public? Would you let the paparazzi stalk her like a pack of wolves and drag her name through the tabloids?

Kelsie thinks for a moment.

KELSIE

No. I suppose not.

ALEC

No, you don't have a daughter, or no you wouldn't want her face on every tabloid?

KELSIE

Well, both.

ALEC

Good! We're making progress. Now, my daughter seems quite taken with you. What is it, exactly, that you agreed to with her?

Kelsie takes a deep breath, thinking how to respond.

KELSIE

Uh, she came in, sampled some of our flavors, then talked to me about designing a flavor for her upcoming birthday. She wanted me to speak with her father about it.

ALEC

She didn't tell you who her father was?

KELSIE

No.

Alec looks up at the rear view mirror, catching the chauffeur's eye.

KELSIE

Listen, Mr. Meikle, I know very little about Isla--only that she's ...concerned. Maybe you should speak with her.

ALEC

That's the problem, Ms. McDunn. Isla doesn't just speak to people. She manages. She manipulates. I'm hoping to determine what's behind this latest fascination with ice cream. What did she say? Did she tell you what she's worried about?

KELSIE

Well... She said you were lapsing.

ALEC

*Lapsing?*

KELSIE

Yes. That's the word. She said you were disappearing to London, checking stocks, and playing golf in the plaids no less.

Alec chuckles.

ALEC

Aye. She hates those. That's all?

KELSIE

She said it was affecting your work and she seemed to think that if we met, it would change things.

Alec sucks in a deep breath but doesn't say anything. Kelsie waits, but when a long moment passes, she looks over, pasting a smile on her face.

KELSIE

Well, it was nice to meet you, Mr. Meikle. Isla is a wonderful girl. Do you mind pulling over to curb and let me out?

Alec doesn't seem to catch Kelsie's request.

ALEC

Isla is a wonderful girl. I love her, despite her... eccentricities. Listen, I'm late for a screen-test but I'd like to discuss this a bit more. Could we have dinner tonight?

Kelsie narrows her gaze. Alec jumps into the pause.

ALEC

I know Isla probably paid you, or tried to pay you--.

KELSIE

She tried. I refused. She tried harder. She was quite insistent, but I haven't cashed the check.

Alec shrugs.

ALEC

By all means, cash it. In fact, if I thought you needed the money, I'd triple it. But I know who you are... Come on, Kelsie McDunn! It's only dinner.

KELSIE

And this was only a walk to the corner.

Alec's eyes spark.

ALEC

Okay. I deserved that. Let me make it up to you. I'll be by at 7:00 PM in my gullwing. I'll wait for ten minutes. That's about how long it takes before I start drawing attention.

KELSIE

*Gullwing?*

ALEC

It's a silver colored Mercedes--a sports car that has doors that open up instead of out.

Kelsie studies Alec.

KELSIE

You're serious, aren't you? You don't even know where I live.

ALEC

I am and I do. We'll dine at my place. (*He raises a hand.*) Don't worry. I know the reputation that has been created for me. I'll have a full culinary staff there. We won't be alone.

James pulls the limousine over to the curb and Kelsie gets out. She bends down and looks back into the limousine.

KELSIE

It's a free country, Mr. Meikle. You're welcome to park where you want. I won't be waiting at the door and come running if that's what you're asking.

ALEC

I would certainly hope not...  
Goodbye, Kelsie.

Kelsie nods, giving a curt smile, then steps away from the car and starts toward the Emporium. Alec watches her go. He glances back over at his chauffeur.

ALEC

Well, that was certainly not what I expected.

CHAUFFEUR

Aye. But she has spirit, sir.

ALEC

That she does...

CUT TO:

SCENE NINE

INT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

Katie is pacing the floor near the window, obviously worried as Kelsie comes in.

KATIE

What corner were ya walkin' him to?  
You've been gone twenty minutes!

Kelsie cuts her off.

KELSIE  
It was *him!*

KATIE  
*Him* who?

KELSIE  
Well, certainly *not* an old man! He walked to a limousine, threw his cane aside, and climbed in, taking off his make-up!

KATIE  
No! The fraud!

KELSIE  
More important, than that, it was *Isla's father!* And guess who her father is?

Katie raises an eyebrow. Kelsie looks around the shop. There are only three other people--a boy looking at his phone while wolfing down a small cone, and a couple with signature sundaes. Kelsie motions Katie into the back room.

KELSIE  
Her father is *Alec Meikle!*

The words spill out as soon as they are past the door frame. Katie's head jerks up, her eyes wide.

KATIE  
*ALEC MEIKLE?!* The Captain from--

Kelsie desperately throws a hand over Katie's mouth. She leans out of the doorway to check if anyone heard. Katie lowers her voice to a whisper

KATIE  
You're sayin' the Alec Meikle from '*Sailor and Commander,*' is Isla's father, and he was in *our shop?*

Kelsie vigorously nods.

KATIE  
Well, spill it girl! What'd he say?

KELSIE

He wants me to cash Isla's check  
and play along I think. He invited  
me to dinner.

Katie's eyes open even wider.

KATIE

To dinner? ...Well?

KELSIE

I don't know. I have nothing to  
wear.

KATIE

Kelsie! *It's Alec Meikle!*

KELSIE

I know! He said he'd pick me up in  
his fancy Mercedes at 7:00. He  
already knows where I live.

KATIE

And you're gonna be ready! Now,  
get! You've got shopping to do,  
girl! I'll hold the shop down.

KELSIE

I can't push that off on you!

KATIE

You already did! Now get movin'!

Kelsie still seems a bit shell-shocked, but lets Katie push  
her on past the counter. She walks to the door.

KELSIE

You sure you'll be alright?

KATIE

I'm sure. Now go!

Kelsie finally leaves. Katie watches after her a moment, then  
mumbles to herself.

KATIE

*Alec Meikle...*Who would have  
thought. I didn't even know he had  
a daughter...

FADE OUT.

## SCENE TEN

EXT. front entry of the park, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

FADE UP ON THE APARTMENTS, CAMERA SLOWLY FOCUSES IN ON A CORNER BAY WINDOW TWO FLOORS UP. KELSIE STANDS AT THE WINDOW HOLDING HER CAT AND TALKING ON THE PHONE.

CUT TO:

INT. INSIDE KELSIE'S APARTMENT AT THE PARK.

KELSIE

Ah, you're a life saver, PeeWee! I can't believe you dropped everything just to help me... Absolutely! I owe ya one.

Kelsie puts down the phone while patting her new outfit. She strokes her cat (Grey Beard) and stares out the window. The sun is just beginning to set. Putting the cat down, she grabs the outfit and disappears into her room.

CUT TO:

Coming out of the room with her new outfit with matching heels, she fights to get her second dangling diamond earring on. She slips on a matching diamond bracelet and pendant. She goes to the window. A silver Mercedes has pulled up outside. She looks down at the cat.

KELSIE

Well, this is it. Wish me luck, Grey Beard!

The cat just stares. She grabs a black coat and purse and heads toward the door, shouting over her shoulder.

KELSIE

If I'm not back by midnight, come after me Grey Beard... Otherwise, you'll have no-one to feed ya.

The cat, settled itself onto a cushion at the edge of the bay window, seeming only vaguely interested.

CUT TO:

## SCENE ELEVEN

INT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

Katie is just finishing up with a customer as Isla walks in and takes a seat. Katie eyes her a moment, then walks over.

KATIE

Well, Ms. *Meikle*; that was a bit of a bombshell.

Isla can't help breaking into a quick grin.

ISLA

I warned ya.

Isla's outfit is a smash-up of Goth and fandom. Katie notes that she seems to identify with the anti-hero.

KATIE

That ya did... Are ya busy tonight? I could use a hand.

ISLA

Just for the night, or are ya offerin' me a job?

KATIE

You tell me.

ISLA

I'm up for the job.

KATIE

You got it. You'll have ta learn flavorin' from Kelsie, but I can teach most else, and ya get my sparklin' personality for free.

ISLA

How can I refuse? ...So, how did it go with dad?

KATIE

Go? Oh, ya mean the part where your dad dressed up like a beggar and turned out to be *Alec Meikle*? It must have gone pretty good. He asked her to dinner.

ISLA

*At the castle?*

KATIE

Castle? They say every man's home  
is his castle, but you're tellin'  
me your home really is a castle?

ISLA

Aye. Fa'side, south of Wallyford.

Katie raises an eyebrow.

KATIE

Oh, Kelsie's gonna love this!

The front front bell clinks. A middle-aged, beefy man with  
wavy black hair and a trim beard enters.

KAYCEE

Uh, hey luv...A minute?

Katie looks over. Seeing who it is, she sighs.

KATIE

Make it quick, Kaycee. I'm at work.

Kaycee hesitates, then begins to stammer his request.

KAYCEE

I, I'm not goin' ta lie to ya,  
Katy. I'm short, an-and rents due.

KATIE

You've been short since I've known  
ya, Kaycee. I told ya last time--no  
more loans.

KAYCEE

I, I've paid 'em back, haven't I?  
Please, Katie! I-I've been sober  
now near t-two months.

KATIE

So, yer finally givin' the stuff  
up, or is it ya ran out of cash?  
No, Kaycee. You've got stand on yer  
own feet! Now, say goodbye to Isla.

Kaycee wipes his hands on his jeans.

KAYCEE

I'm givin' it up this time. I am!  
And it's 'cause of you, Katie. All  
'cause of you. ...Can ya spare a  
smile pint of ice cream? It helps  
with the cravin'...

Katie eyes the man a long moment, then stomps over to the below counter fridge, grabs a packaged pint, and shoves it at the man

KATIE

There. Now. You go on. If you're still sober come May, we'll talk.

KAYCEE

May?

KATIE

May. Eight months should be enough to wash the demon out of yer soul.

Katie's fierce gaze gives Kaycee no room to parlay. He nods at Isla and leaves. Isla turn toward Katie.

ISLA

Was that your boyfriend?

KATIE

Aye, he was once. Now, he's a boy, and he's a friend, but I'm not sure the two words will ever be spoken together again.

ISLA

He seems to like you.

KATIE

Oh, he likes me. Question is, how much? If he'll put the bottle away for me, I may give him a second look. It's not like there's a pack of men tryin' to bust down my door.

Isla gives a short giggle.

ISLA

I like bein' around you, Katie. Ya say what ya think.

KATIE

Well, I'm always straight with my friends. I've never been big on calculatin' costs. When ya start as low in the barrel as I did, there's not much further down ya can go.

ISLA

Well, you're not low in my barrel, and "thanks!"

KATIE

For what?

ISLA

For counting me as a friend.

KATIE

Of course we're friends! And as friends, we've got a shop to clean!

CUT TO:

SCENE TWELVE

EXT. CASTLE PROPERTY, EAST OF EDINBURGH,

The Mercedes turns down a long drive heading toward a striking lit castle. As they stop in front of the massive castle entryway, Alec raises the car doors.

ALEC

She's a beauty, isn't she?

KELSIE

Oh, aye. Did ya say ya filmed here?

Kelsie nods. Everywhere she looks, the view is breathtaking.

ALEC

(Slow glance, lost in memory)  
I fell in love with her almost immediately. That's why, when she came on the market a few years ago, I bought her.

KELSIE

*Bought her?* So, you own this place?

ALEC

Aye. Lock, stock, and barrel.

Alec grins, escorting her up the stairs and through the huge wooden doors. The castle inside is equally grand. Kelsie struggles to take it all in. Alec lets her wander a bit, then directs her toward the dining room. She is seated in a high-back chair next to him. Almost immediately, attendants begin serving soup.

KELSIE

I feel I'm in a fairy tale.

Alec grabs a dinner roll.

ALEC  
Perhaps you are.

Kelsie's eyes the furnishings, leaving long pauses between bits of conversation.

KELSIE  
Is everything here this grand? It must take a fortune to keep this place heated, lit, and cleaned.

ALEC  
Aye. One of the less fortunate truths about owning a castle. We allow school tours on Wednesday and Thursday mornings to help with costs. The rooms upstairs...well, there are quaint nooks and a few elaborate bedrooms to accommodate the tour, but a lot of it is more tradition living quarters. Isla's favorite spot is upstairs, though; the lookout from the old turrets.

KELSIE  
Of course! What girl wouldn't want her own towers?

Kelsie begins to sample the soup and a roll. Alec has mostly completed the course, making good use of pauses. He wipes the corners of his mouth with a linen napkin.

ALEC  
I'm not able to stroll around town, as you can imagine, and I've been determined to keep Isla out of the limelight, as we've discussed, so I guess I wanted home to be a bit of a world to itself. I've tried to make Isla happy here.

(Servers begin clearing away the soup and laying out the second course.)

I've had top notch tutors and a variety of engaging cultural experiences brought in. But lately, it doesn't seem enough for Isla. I put her in a small private school hoping it might give her new chances for social interaction, yet she seems bored with the schools and has made few, if any friends. Why do you suppose that is?

KELSIE

I don't know. She's very bright. Maybe the school, the other kids don't keep up with her.

Alec straightened.

ALEC

Well, I know I can't keep up. She's getting more difficult every day-- constantly moody or angry and trying to manage my every move.

KELSIE

Don't let her. As for the moodiness, it's typical at her age.

Alec looks up, his eyes narrowing. Kelsie takes a bite of salad, then pauses.

KELSIE

Isla's a girl who's starting to see the cracks in the world. You're no longer infallible. Your attempts at education can't keep pace with her whirling mind. She's bored. She's lonely. She's not sure where she fits in.

ALEC

I've given her everything.

KELSIE

You've given her a showpiece--a castle filled with expensive relics and priceless art. She's in her teens! She doesn't want to be hidden away anymore in your museum!

ALEC

You're opinionated. I like that.

KELSIE

*Really?* My two brothers don't. Anyway, point is, I know what I'm talking about. I came from a rich father and a grand house as well.

Alec studies her. There is a long silence as the salad course begins to disappear.

ALEC

Fact is, I agree with you. You've got the job.

Alec turns back to his dinner plate as if the matter is finished. Kelsie looks up, open mouthed.

KELSIE

*The job?*

ALEC

Aye. I want you to be her mentor.

(Kelsie almost chokes.)

Hear me out, Kelsie. Yes, Isla's bright, creative, entrepreneurial, which is why I think she sees herself in you. You're much the same and a perfect mentor for her.

KELSIE

Well, thanks for the veiled compliment, but I'm trying to start a business, Alec! Right now, we're fighting to stay alive. You may not know what that's like, but it doesn't leave much time for mentoring headstrong teenage girls!

ALEC

What if I endorse your ice cream?

Kelsie, who was just winding up, stops cold. She eyes him.

KELSIE

You would endorse my ice cream?

ALEC

*Sure.* If Isla wants to be involved in your venture, I say, let her be involved. Besides, I've tasted your ice cream. You do remember that?

KELSIE

And?

ALEC

To be fair, I haven't tasted finer in all the Isles. I insist you let me triple Isla's offer. *Deal?*

Alec gives a boyish grin. Kelsie seems to have been hijacked by the smell of the main course, a cranberry trout dish with seasonal vegetables. She studies the plate a moment, and takes a quick bite.

KELSIE

This is good. Could I see the recipe?

ALEC

Ah. You like it! This recipe came from my private collection.

KELSIE

*Private collection?*

ALEC

Aye. I've a private collection. I've collected recipes from all over the world. It's a hobby.

Kelsie takes another bite, chewing slowly before looking up.

KELSIE

How many recipes do ya have?

ALEC

In the hundreds. I pick them up as I travel. This dish, for example, comes from a little place called *Nora's Fish Creek*, in the American state of Wyoming, near a grand park called *Yellowstone*.

KELSIE

Are all of them main course dishes?

ALEC

No. Soups, salads, entrees... desserts. But you're changing the subject. I asked if we have a deal.

Kelsie softly bites her lip.

KELSIE

You're persistent, I give ya that.

ALEC

Oh, I haven't even started. Right now, I'm still being charming.

Alec takes another bite, offering a sheepish smile.

KELSIE  
Okay, so what, exactly, do you  
consider to "mentoring?"

ALEC  
Nothing crazy. Spend time with her--  
-maybe hire her at the shop.

KELSIE  
That's doable.

ALEC  
I'd want you to teach her your  
craft--how to run a small business.

KELSIE  
Harder, but possible.

ALEC  
Lastly, play along with her--let  
her think her scheme is working.

KELSIE  
And what does that entail?

Alec shrugs.

ALEC  
You go out with me a few times.  
Maybe visit me on a shoot. It'll  
keep her out of my hair.

(Kelsie takes another bite, considering.)

Alright...I'll throw in tonight's  
recipes. Even the dessert.

Kelsie looks up, a smile beginning to cross her face.

KELSIE  
How about access to the private  
collection.

Alec pushes back from the table, shaking his head.

ALEC  
Oh no! Not the whole collection!  
Maybe a few select recipe's...

Kelsie's smile grows.

KELSIE  
Now we're negotiating...

FADE OUT.

SCENE THIRTEEN

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY CAFE, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

CAMERA FADES IN TO CLOSE UP OF A BIRD, SINGING ATOP THE SIGN OF A LOCAL CAFE CALLED *CITY CAFE*.

Kelsie exits the cafe carrying a coffee and a bag of bagels. She stops, looking up to find the bird. The bird flits away. Watching it, a slow, dreamy smile creeps across her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

Katie and Isla sit at one of the outside tables as a bus pulls up. Kelsie steps off.

KATIE  
We about gave ya up!

Kelsie's smile is impenetrable.

KELSIE  
And me bringing you pastries and  
breakfast bars from City Cafe!

Katie and Isla delightedly dig into the bag. Kelsie eyes a large vase of flowers beside Isla. Isla takes note.

ISLA  
Oh, these aren't for me! They're  
for you. Here...

Isla hands Kelsie a plain manila envelope. Kelsie lifts the vase, looking for a card. Katie hands it to her.

KATIE  
We read it for ya. Congratulations!

Kelsie ignores her, reading the card. Her smile widens.

KELSIE

So, Isla, looks like we have need of a new Emporium associate. How would you feel about working here?

ISLA

Uh... If you're offering me a job, Katie already beat ya to it. I worked last night and I'm pulling a split shift today.

Kelsie raises her eyebrows at Katie, who merely shrugs.

KELSIE

Well, then let's get some glasses filled to half with water and distribute these flowers.

Kelsie is heading toward the door carrying the manila envelope. She unlocks it, then beelines to the back and opens the envelope. There is a typed itinerary with a hand-written note and a plane ticket. Katie slips in, trying to read over her shoulder.

KATIE

What is it?

Isla waltzes in with a flower in a glass of water. She puts it on the bench near where Katie has dropped the City Cafe bag and fishes out a pastry.

ISLA

Dad's invitin' her to his set in Ireland. It's what he usually does when he's... interested.

KATIE

A *movie* set?

Isla heads exits to the shop. Kelsie looks at Katie.

KELSIE

First, you could have asked me about hiring Isla. Second, you don't need to be reading over my shoulder. I'll turn him down. It's too early to leave you and Isla.

KATIE

No! Ya should go! We'll be fine. Ya need the break, Kelsie, and it's Alec Meikle on a movie set!

Kelsie eyes the plane ticket, then looks up at Katie.

KELSIE

I'll be gone two days. He has me leaving Monday and returning late Wednesday. Are you sure, Katie?

KATIE

Aye! (smiles broadly) And we'll expect pictures of that film set!

FADE OUT.

SCENE FOURTEEN

EXT. WORKING CLIPPER SHIP, DUBLIN BAY, IRELAND

CLOSE UP OF THE BOW OF A WOODEN SHIP, CUTTING THROUGH WATER, THROWING SPRAY TO EITHER SIDE.

We hear a click as the frame freezes.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLEEK MOTOR BOAT, DUBLIN BAY, IRELAND

Kelsie is looking on her camera screen to make sure the picture turned out. A young crew pulls the motor boat along side of the clipper ship. A rope and wood plank ladder is let down from the deck. Kelsie and three shorter people dressed as leprechauns begin to ascend the ladder when one of the men reach up and give Kelsie a pinch. The other two find this hilarious. Kelsie spins, raising her camera and clicking.

KELSIE

That's for the harassment case. You lot behave or I'll have a word with your guild representative.

The leprechauns immediately quiet down, mumbling, "Sorry." A young, thin man with gold rimmed glasses smiles down at Kelsie, helping her onto the ships deck. He leads her toward the bow of the ship.

ROBERT (ALEC'S ASSISTANT)

Well, Ms. McDunn, seems you made it past the perils of our leprechauns, so let's get you to your vantage point on the tower. I don't think I've ever seen them handled so decisively. I'm Robert, Alec's assistant.

KELSIE

The tower?

ALEC

Yes, that's what we call it, though it's really just an observation platform built on top of the Captain's quarters.

KELSIE

When Alec said he'd be filming in Ireland, I didn't expect it to be on a ship!

ROBERT

Yes! Exciting, isn't it? Alec is a genuine mariner. He probably could Captain a ship like this if he wanted to. He loves the sea and always opts for live ocean filming over studio sets.

Kelsie glimpses Alec, in a chair getting his makeup and costume fine-tuned. Up a short ladder, a portly man with a beard is chatting with a man holding a camera, while two others sitting in high director chairs are discussing something on a clipboard. Robert leads her to a small stool near the back corner.

ROBERT

Of course, Alec wanted the actual Tall Ship, the Endurance II, but filming conditions and insurance made that difficult, so we had to settle for this replica. Can I get you anything? Coffee? Tea?

Kelsie is too busy trying to take in all the activity around the crowded deck to respond.

KELSIE

All this for just a travel advertisement? Where did the leprechauns disappear go?

Robert proffers a boyish grin.

ROBERT

Well, it's a spoof on tourism ads in general, reminding people that no-one can poke fun at the Irish like the Irish.

It'll first air at WTB in London, then become a key element of Irish tourism promotion online...Oh, and there are the leprechauns, just returning to their boat. They're cutting it close! This is one of the shots where they ram the ship.

KELSIE

*Ram the ship?*

ROBERT

Not literally. Special effects scenes will be done on our water set, on a tug anchored in the bay, but approach shots and cutaway shots are all done here.

A tall, thin man shouts into a megaphone as Alec walks toward the ship wheel in full Captain regalia. He glances up toward the platform, giving Kelsie a quick smile and wave.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Places! We go in five!

Kelsie can't seem to take her eyes off the Captain's wheel. The sails are unfurled and the clipper ship picks up speed, making the ride more choppy and throwing sprays of mist up over the bough. Kelsie grabs for a makeshift handrail. The leprechauns race the speed boat to a point about half a mile away and turn it back around to point toward the ship. Robert hurries away. There are shouts of; "Action! Rolling!" The crew becomes instantly quiet and still.

ALEC

Cap'n Deaglan McFarrell at the wheel. What a trip we have planned for today--and what a ship to get us there! You'll find no finer in all the isles. This be an exact replica of Ernest Shekelton's "Endurance!" From the wood planking to the white, furling sails, she's a true beauty!

Cameras are in motion. One is hanging on a boom out over the water. A camera behind Alec raises up and swivels to get shots of the decking, lines, and mast. Alec leaves the ship wheel as another sailor comes up behind him. He walks slowly toward the ship's railing, hands clasped behind his back.

ALEC

What be our destination ya ask?  
Ireland, my friends...

The very name is enough to conjure  
images of wee folk, mermaids, and  
fairies; pots of shining gold, and  
shades of green beneath the rainy  
forest mists...Aye, the Emerald  
Isle--a dream to behold!

Kelsie grins at the sudden mastery Alec shows in his role.  
He's every bit as good as she imagined. He reaches the ship  
rail and places a hand on it, letting it brush the burnished  
wood lightly as he makes his way toward the bow of the ship.

ALEC

We'll discuss Irish traditions, the  
beloved rituals of a people that  
have had immense--

At that moment, the ship gives a violent rock. Kelsie is  
grateful she had hold of the rail, but Alec is not so lucky.  
Having avoided putting direct pressure on the railing, he's  
suddenly thrown off balance and crashes against the railing.  
It promptly gives way, sending him plummeting into the sea.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

*Man overboard!*

DIRECTOR

*Cut! Cut!*

The director doesn't even seem to notice Alec has fallen.  
He's shouting over a walkie-talkie.

DIRECTOR

*What the hell? The ship movement  
was way too early! The leprechauns  
hadn't even started their approach!  
...I don't care! Get Cage on it!*

Alec bobs up as a tethered lifesaver is thrown overboard near  
where he fell.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

*...He's up! Skiff in the water!*

Kelsie watches, her heart racing a bit. The motorized skiff  
comes up behind Alec and he's pulled onto it, a sopping mess.  
As he's brought back to the ship and clamors on board, a  
scurry of activity is already focused on repairing the rail.  
Alec's make-up and costume team meet him, along with the crew  
EMT, who Alec promptly waves off.

## ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

All right--shows over! We need to be ready for retake in twenty-five minutes and counting! We're already pushing against lunch!

Alec is shivering a bit, but smiling and joking with the crew. He looks over, giving Kelsie a thumbs up. At the costume area, a tri-fold screen is set up and he begins stripping his clothes off. As he steps out from behind the screen to grab his back-up shirt, coat, and knickers, Kelsie can't help but notice his strong muscled back. Robert makes his way back up toward her.

## ROBERT

How are you getting on, Ms. McDunn? Alec wanted to make sure you know he's fine. One of the challenges of filming at sea is that you often end up in the sea at some point.

## KELSIE

What happened?

## ROBERT

Well, the ship rocked way too early--it was supposed to come a good two or three minutes later, giving Alec time to grab hold of the rigging, and the cameras to record the high speed approach of the leprechauns.

## KELSIE

And why are the leprechauns ramming the ship?

## ROBERT

I don't know--because it's in the script? No, seriously, leprechauns are known for being somewhat loose cannons. Seeing a modern speed boat clues people in to the fact that this isn't a period piece, but a spoof, and the scenes where the boat plows right through the ship's hull should be fun and unexpected.

## KELSIE

It won't hurt the ship or the speed boat?

ROBERT

Nope. Everything will be done with CGI and special effects. The speed boat and ship never even touch. After the ship lurches and we see the leprechauns speeding away, making rude gestures, Captain McFarrell says something like: "*Now for one of the greatest Irish seafaring traditions...Abandon ship!*"

Kelsie gives a light chuckle.

ROBERT

Anyway, It'll probably be another hour before lunch. Sure I can't get you anything?

Kelsie gives a tight smile and a quick shake of the head. Robert trots off again, and she looks back to where the set people are still repairing the ship.

CUT TO:

SCENE FIFTEEN

INT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN EDINBURGH

Katie is restocking ice cream flavors in the ice cream bar while Isla is wiping down a table.

KATIE

Oh, Isla, ya know that lad I spoke about, the one who plays cricket, or rugby, or somethin' like that? Well, he's comin' in later tonight. His name is Aryan and we should see him around seven.

ISLA

He's gonna be workin' here?

KATIE

Aye, I think so.

Isla gives her a questioning look.

ISLA

Does Kelsie know you're hirin' another employee?

Katie flashes her a devious smile, heading toward the back room to put pints of ice cream in the back freezer.

KATIE

She will. I'm savin' her the agony of making yet another decision.

ISLA

And I'm sure she'll love ya for it. Sounds like something I might do.

Katie leans out from the back room.

KATIE

Hey, Aryan's easy on the eyes, so I expect ya to be nice. *Be normal!*

ISLA

But I'm not... And why should I care that he's easy on the eyes?

Katie sighs.

KATIE

Just don't chase him out in the first five minutes, okay?

Isla shrugs, glancing up at the clock. Katie turns, mumbling to herself.

KATIE

Maybe the reason will come to ya...and maybe it won't...

FADE TO:

MONTAGE OF THE CLOCK FACE, HANDS MOVING TO 7:12.

As the bell rings, Aryan, out of breath, rushes in, his hair wet and clothes disheveled. He looks wildly toward Isla.

ARYAN

*My good woman, could you give me the time?*

Isla raises her eyebrows, pointing at the wall clock.

ISLA

The clock is right there. Clocks tell time... Are you Aryan?

Aryan grins, holding out a hand.

ARYAN

I am--and thanks for the intuitive reminder about clocks. So, off we go! Take me to your leader!

ISLA

My *leader*? Katie is *not* my leader, and by the way, I am *not* your woman. You seem...*confused*.

ARYAN

Really? You seem...*lovely*. What did you say your name was?

ISLA

I didn't say, but it's Isla, and I've been told to be nice to you, and to try to be normal.

ARYAN

And which of those do you think you've been doing?

Isla gives him a dour look and turns to yell into the back.

ISLA

Katie! Aryan's here!

ARYAN

Uh huh... Look forward to working with you, Isla!

ISLA

Sure. I'll grab my aspirin.

Katie comes out from the back, wiping her hands on a towel.

KATIE

Oh, hi Aryan.

Isla throws Katie a punishing gaze as she escapes into the back room. Aryan stares after as if shocked.

ARYAN

I've met friendlier wolverines!

KATIE

Met our dark unicorn, did ya?

Aryan is still staring toward the back room.

ARYAN

What's her name? *Island*?

KATIE

Isla, I-S-L-A, and you're late.

ARYAN

Sorry. It was a day! Practice went over--I barely had time for a shower, then I was chasing the bus, trying to throw on clothes...

KATIE

Well, kudos for gettin' your clothes on, but I expect my employees to be on time.

Katie throws Aryan a punctuating glance.

KATIE

Now, go help Isla in the back with the dishes.

Aryan saunters off toward the back. He mimes ripping his shirt open while mumbling, with feeling; "Agony!...Agony!"

CUT TO:

SCENE SIXTEEN

EXT. COBBLED STREET IN FRONT OF HAWKSMOOR RESTAURANT, DUBLIN

Kelsie steps out of a taxi in front of a formidable, columned building and makes her way up short set of marbled steps. She enters through a set of massive doors into a space of iconic elegance. The sign over the door reads *Hawksmoor*. The afternoon sun is fading. Alec appears shortly after her, out of breath.

ALEC

Sorry. (He takes a moment, panting, bending forward.) My ride from the marina had engine trouble... I jogged the last mile.

KELSIE

(*gazing around, slightly dazed*)  
Apology accepted. This place is ...*beautiful*. I'd love to hear it's history.

Alec gives a quick smile.

ALEC

Aye! The Hawksmoor is rather an institution around here. They've some very tasty Irish dishes and amazing desserts. The restaurant, you see, is fairly new, but the building has a rich history in Dublin. It was originally the home of the National Bank.

Alec ducks and puts on a pair of dark sun glasses as he notices a guest point his way. The hostess hurries him toward a private corridor leading to a private dining room with several tables. They are led to the only table with a full place setting on it.

ALEC

Thanks, Monica. Is Davis ready? Ask him to bring the Chablis. We should be ordering soon.

The Hostess gives a nod and leaves. Kelsie lags. The room has dark, greenish-blue paneling, gold highlights, accent lights, and tasteful decor. Alec removes his sunglasses, directing Kelsie to her seat. Within minutes, the matre 'd enters the room with a bucket of chilled Chablis and tall leather portfolios.

ALEC

Is there something you would recommend tonight, Davis?

DAVIS

Well...My choices would always be either the Chateaubriand, or the Dublin Bay Monk Fish. The Sourdough with Glenilin butter is just out of the oven and pipin' hot. And for dessert, the Peanut Butter Louis, or Pineapple Upside-down Financier.

Alec looks over to see what Kelsie is interested in, but notes she's still visually exploring the room. He smiles.

ALEC

Perhaps give us a few moments.

Davis nods, smiling, and quietly exits the room. As soon as the door closes, Alec turns to Kelsie.

ALEC

They call the room "None the Wiser" after a Dexter cow from 1892.

As you may note, the whole room is a tribute to native cattle breeders.

Kelsie points to picture boards centered in the various panels.

KELSIE

I love the names...Croom A-Boo, Razzle-Dazzle, Charlie's Aunt, King of Kilarney, and Did'na Forget. They read almost like poetry.

ALEC

The Irish have a gift for names, God's truth.

Kelsie opens her menu and begins to scan it.

KELSIE

Impressive menu with surprisingly reasonable prices.

ALEC

Aye.

Kelsie closes the menu and puts it back down.

KELSIE

Why don't you order for me?

ALEC

Oh, you are the brave one. *Davis?*

Almost immediately, the thin attendant re-appears.

ALEC

...I believe we'll try the Bay Monk fish. I'll also add the creamed spinach and some of the fresh-baked Sourdough. For dessert, we'll try the ice-cream and the Pineapple Upside-down Financier.

Davis finishes writing on his pad, gives a nod, and exits. Alec turns to Kelsie.

ALEC

Bay Monk has a bit of a Halibut texture. Hawkmoor's sauces are also superb, and I ordered two desserts to give you a give you a chance to taste a few local favorites, and to sample your local competition.

KELSIE

The staff all seem to know you.

ALEC

They should. I visit Ireland frequently. Sometimes, to film. Sometimes...because.

Kelsie's eyes furrow momentarily, but she eventually looks back down at the wine list.

KELSIE

*Domaine Larroche*... Is it a good wine?

ALEC

It is--A 2019 vintage Chablis Grand Cru from their Reserve. I thought you might know your wines.

KELSIE

I don't drink much. I prefer to know what I say or choose not to say.

ALEC

Smart lady. Of course, not the words a Guinness man wants to hear.

Alec has Davis open and pour the wine.

FADE TO:

The staff have just finished serving the main course. Alec picks up his fork and glances up just as Kelsie finishes mumbling something silently over her plate.

ALEC

You're religious?

KELSIE

I wouldn't say so, but I do find gratitude a way to stay grounded.

ALEC

You are a curious person, Kelsie McDunn...What makes you tick? Where are your passions, your dreams.

KELSIE

Auch, I'm a rather simple soul, Alec. I don't live in extremes. I care about the environment, but I'm not an environmentalist.

I love animals, but I'm not an activist. I love art and culture, but can't stomach elitists. I like staying fit, but I'm not a health nut.

It seems to me that the world is divided enough without me having to wave a banner for some micro-defined cause. What are my dreams...

I noted since I was very young that food seems to be a great leveler between people. It connects us. It highlights our memories of being together, and warms us in those times when we're apart.

My dream is to be able to provide a catalyst for those kinds of connections. Some have said to me, "You could have done anything-- you're a McDunn! Why the heavens would you choose ice cream?"

But those are folks who've never stopped to notice the smile on the sticky face of a child finishing an ice cream cone, or the twinkle in the eye of a gal sharing a Sundae with her new beau.

ALEC

Interesting...

KELSIE

Now it's your turn. How'd you get into acting?

ALEC

There are some parallels... My father was a railroad man. He died when I was in my teens. My mom died eight years later. My brother went off into the merchant marines, and I was left trying to figure out what I wanted to do, what I wanted to be.

I loved adventure, but it was an older kind of adventure, where part of the thrill was the beauty in the journey and the man you're becoming as you face challenges. For me, it wasn't just about adrenaline highs and proving I could face my fears. So, I ended up taking a job at the Edinburgh docks. It's where I met Isla's mother.

KELSIE

What happened with her, Alec? Isla told me she died.

ALEC

Aye. Her name was Charity. She waited tables at a pub I frequented. She had this amazing smile that seemed to go from her head to her toes. We were young, and we were in love. She had a great talent in art and wanted to study in Paris. Then Isla came along...

At first, she was overjoyed--we both were. She spent hours painting up a corner of our one bedroom flat to be a nursery. But I began to see another side of her...sad, her moods changing like the tides of the sea.

When Isla was born, she was determined to be the best mum there ever was. She doted on the girl. Her own childhood had been rocky--an orphan, pushed through the social services system. She would never talk to me of those days, and whenever I brought them up, a darkness seemed to seep into her soul. I could see it in her eyes.

Isla was barely one when I got a call from London asking if I would consider auditioning for a new show about a rugged seafaring crew. It sounded adventurous and fun, and we'd get to travel, so I said yes.

Charity showed support as well, and on good days, her excitement even surpassed mine, but her bad days were becoming more frequent.

I finally got her to see a doctor. He spoke of postpartum depression and gave her some pills. I decided to cancel my trip to London, but Charity wouldn't hear of it. She begged me to go and promised to take her pills and see the doctor regularly while I was gone. She seemed at the height of her good temper as I left.

The audition turned into a week, and then two. I called Charity every night and she seemed fine, back to her old self even. Then word came that they had cast me as the rugged Captain. I couldn't wait to call Charity. I got back to my hotel, and there was a message.

The police had found a baby, seemingly abandoned on a stretch of beach just outside Edinburgh. A tag on the car seat had led them to my house and neighbors had helped them track me down. They had tried to search for Charity, but a storm was raging and they had to call the search off. A day later, her body washed up on shore. They were kind enough to call it a swimming accident...

KELSIE

I'm so sorry, Alec. I didn't mean to pry--

ALEC

You didn't. I needed to tell you. I went back and picked up Isla. I took her home, but I couldn't stand being there in the flat. There was so much of her around me.

The film company found out about the incident and contacted me.

A wonderful, Christian woman in Human Resources stepped in and helped me make arrangements to sell our flat and move to London, then worked with PR to help hide the existence of Isla so that she didn't become fodder for the press. Her mother's story never hit the headlines.

Alec finally looked up, wiping a hand across his face.

ALEC

You pretty much know the rest. How do you like the sauces?

KELSIE

Well, I really like the Porcini Hollendaise, but I think I'm partial to the Peppercorn.

Kelsie takes a final bite of fish.

KELSIE

I found out when I was eight that I was unwanted by Hamish. He only wanted sons--to run the business. He thought a daughter would be a bother. My uncle, Shamus, had it out with him when he heard. That's the true reason for their row. It wasn't a property dispute as the PR people later framed it. It took me a while to come to terms with that, then I made two promises to myself; First, I would never be a part of H&S Energy. Second, I would never let Hamish know that I knew.

Alec listens, but doesn't say anything. The servers slip back into the room, whisk their plates away, and serve desert. Kelsie reaches for the ice cream and tastes it.

KELSIE

Hmmm, I think this coconut is freshly roasted.

ALEC

They take fresh very seriously here. So, now that I know a little more of the *why*, tell me more about the *hows* of your emporium.

KELSIE

What do you want to know?

ALEC

What's with the white coats?

KELSIE

I like to think we're more than just an ice cream shop.

ALEC

How so?

KELSIE

We're inventors, adventurers you might say in the palette of life. We design flavors that heighten the ice cream experience, carefully configured to remind one of lost memories, hidden longings, long suppressed loves, and the like. With lab coats, we try to pass that hunger for discovery, for invention, on to our staff.

ALEC

Very poetic. There were a lot of "we" references in there. How large is your staff?

KELSIE

Small, but growing.

ALEC

Hmmm. I seem to only remember two of you.

KELSIE

You mean the hundreds of times you've been there?

ALEC

Point taken.

Alec lowers his fork a moment, his eyes intensifying.

KELSIE

Besides; we've hired Isla, so that makes three.

She pushes the ice cream dish over to Alec.

KELSIE

Now, you take a bite and concentrate on what you're tasting.

Alec raises an eyebrow, but obeys.

KELSIE

There's an art to eatin' ice cream, ya know. Close your eyes...Now, first, ya feel the cold.

ALEC

Is closing the eyes absolutely necessary?

KELSIE

Yes! Quiet. The cold can be nice on a hot day, but you leave it sitting and it's too much for the taste buds. So, roll it around on your tongue--don't swallow until ya fair can't help it. That's when ya start to think about taste. Take another small bite. Just let it sit a moment on your tongue. Appreciate the coolness, but don't get shocked by the cold. Feel the tingles of taste criss-crossing your gums? Block every immediate thought out. Just concentrate on that tingle, on its promise of taste...

There--it's coming on strong, now. A hint of orange. I can see it in my mind's eye a green orchard, filled with ripening orange fruit, on a hill, overlooking a sandy beach, with bright blue ocean. There's a hint of salt in the sea spray. And here comes the cinnamon. I'm in a sweltering bazaar, on the fringes of a moonlit dune. A man is juggling a fire sword. I can taste the hint of ash on the air.

Next comes coconut--soft, smooth; hints of another dune far away from cities, the coconut fronds swaying overhead in a gentle breeze, with the moon, a giant's orb, rising up to light the black, black sea.

ALEC

Wow.

KELSIE

Aye. And if ya can get that from a single dish of ice cream, imagine the feast you could have if ya learned to always use your senses to their fullest while eating?

ALEC

I feel my senses heightened when I'm around you, Kelsie.

KELSIE

Good. Then you wouldn't mind telling me what flavor you think I am.

ALEC

*Flavor?*

KELSIE

Flavor.

ALEC

Uh... Okay. I'll take a stab. Mmm. Let's start with a base of silky vanilla. Add a dash of sharp lemon, some sprinkles for color, then that longing taste of smooth, rich, mint truffles. It's the kind of taste that once it takes hold, it never leaves you, like the pull of the sea beneath a starlit sky...

KELSIE

I'm impressed.

ALEC

So, fair play...what flavor am I?

KELSIE

You, *Alec Mickle*? You want to know what wonders I see when I start to peel away the surface of that weather-worn Captain's exterior? I'd start with flavor of iced rum--

ALEC

Good place to start.

KELSIE

Then a shake or two of raw ginseng.  
I'd add almond extract and bits of  
ground oats, walnuts, hazel nuts,  
and a few dozen elderberries. I'd  
add ground, raw honeycomb, then a  
pinch of sea salt. To top it off,  
I'd collect tablespoons of morning  
frost, straight from the varnished  
walls of the ships hold, a taste  
meant to remind all that secrets  
kept deep below sour with age...

Alec's grin tightens. He takes his own dish of ice cream,  
scoops a spoonful, and holds it up, studying it.

ALEC

Careful... When you start digging  
into a man's soul, you might find  
more than you bargained for.

KELSIE

Someone needs to. If only to give  
you a chance to come clean. You've  
kept perhaps the biggest secret in  
the entertainment world for fifteen  
years. Don't you think it's time  
that load was lifted?

Again, Alec studies Kelsie.

ALEC

You're...intuitive. The time is  
getting close.

Kelsie gazes deep into his eyes.

KELSIE

What am I getting into, Alec? I  
need to know more about Isla and  
how she's coping with the trauma of  
her mother...

ALEC

You care about Isla, don't you?

KELSIE

Of course. I wouldn't be here if I  
didn't. She's bright and unique.  
She reminds me of...me, when I was  
her age.

Alec gives a slow sigh.

ALEC

Isla has come to cope pretty well. She used to have these...episodes whenever there was a big storm. She wanted me to drive her to the coast--she swore her mom would be there...I've been considering for some time stepping away from the limelight to spend more time with her. But I think she has gotten wind of that and it scares her. Acting is the only profession I've pursued in her lifetime.

Kelsie gives her head a slow shake.

KELSIE

That doesn't sound like Isla. I doesn't see her scaring easily.

ALEC

Isla is like the ocean. What's happening on the surface often masks deep currents and eddies underneath. My career *has been* sort of a security blanket for her--it has given her a sense of purpose. She's immersed herself in it, and become pretty good at analyzing my performances. In fact, I trust her judgment more than most of the directors I've worked with.

KELSIE

When ya say stepping away, ya mean you'll quit acting altogether? What do you plan to do?

Alec considers the question.

ALEC

I won't quit acting altogether, but lower my work load by at least half. I do have other interests. In fact, one involves your father and M&W Energy.

Kelsie's eyes narrow.

KELSIE

*My father?* You know my father?

ALEC

I've always been a fan of Hamish McDunn. He's a straight up guy.

KELSIE

What business do ya have with my father and M&W Energy?

ALEC

We're embarking on quite an adventure together. If we pull it off, it will be the first of it's kind. Your father seems to like adventure.

KELSIE

Aye, he loves to explore: nature, history, technology, science...

ALEC

In this case, Kelsie, it's a bit technology, a bit science, and a bit oceanography. You see, a company I've invested heavily in has designed a self-sustaining, green energy community that can float on the ocean and withstand the rigors of the sea. It can be built and anchored anywhere, and can support a community of up to 500 with food, electricity, transportation, even internet. M&W Energy feels it would be a great way to showcase their commitment to green energy. We've been in merger talks for several months now, hence my trips to London.

KELSIE

H&S want to buy you out?

Alec lifts an eyebrow.

ALEC

Well, yes, but it's more like, they're buying me in. They want the company, but they also want me to be spokesperson for my company's new project.

As a resident on the floating community when it's completed, they feel my celebrity status will help populate the community and encourage other coastal nations to look at adding such communities.

KELSIE

I take it that Isla knows nothing of this?

ALEC

No, and that fact may have set in motion the events that caused Isla to reach out to you. Your father shared with me the social media article about your shop. He hoped you might be interested in opening a second venue on our island. He seems to be very proud of what you've built, and feels you have enough of an adventurous spirit to consider it. I left the article on the counter, and...

Kelsie nods slightly. She takes a deep breath.

KELSIE

Ah. This is more complicated than I imagined. I haven't even thought of a second venue yet. So... Where do we go from here?

FADE TO:

SCENE EIGHTEEN

EXT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

Katie is just turning the "Open" sign off when Kaycee waltzes in with a box under one arm. He looks more clean shaven this time and better dressed. We hear an off-key version of Coldplay's "*Princess of China*" from the back, being barked out in a male voice over the sound of clinking dishes and spraying water. Isla is sitting at the polished counter, putting some new lettering on the chalk board. Katie steps over to Kaycee, obviously confused.

KATIE

Kaycee...What are ya doin' here?  
We're just closin' up.

KAYCEE

Brought these for ya. They're chocolates. Ones ya like.

Kaycee hands Katie the box. She sighs.

KATIE

What d'ya want, Kaycee? It's been a long day.

KAYCEE

I've done it Katie. I've started AA and decided it's time for me to grow up.

KATIE

Hallelujah and hope it lasts till tomorrow!

Kaycee gives a nod and a solemn smile.

KAYCEE

It will. Ya got my word.

KATIE

Aye, and how many times have I had that? But, it's a start. Come back when you've somethin' behind it.

Kaycee nods, turns, and abruptly leaves. Katie watches him go, her eyebrows knit together. Isla, finishes with her lettering and walks up behind her.

ISLA

Wow. How did ya manage *that*?

KATIE

I have no idea... Men are weird.

Aryan comes out from the back, still singing. Pulling an earbud out, he turns to Katie and Isla and salutes.

ARYAN

All done. Good evening, ladies!

Isla looks over.

ISLA

"*Princess of China*?" Really?

ARYAN

Oh, not your type? More of an *Alice in Chains* type?

Isla says nothing. Her withering gaze says everything. As Katie goes to lock the door, Isla finally comments.

ISLA

I thought you said he's a scholar?

Katie gives her head a shake. She had also been staring after Aryan.

KATIE

Oh, aye, but *smart* and *intelligent* don't always mean the same thing. Boys, you'll find, are quite good at movin' their lips, but ya don't want to be puttin' too much stock into the words that fall out.

ISLA

So, boys are weird too.

KATIE

Aye...and they grow...

CUT TO:

SCENE NINETEEN

EXT. HAWKMOOR RESTARAUNT, DUBLIN, IRELAND

Alec leads Kelsie out of the restaurant saying his goodbyes to the staff. They head southeast along the wide and less busy street, ambling toward the Shelbourne Autograph Collection hotel. Alec is softly humming to himself.

KELSIE

What's the tune?

Alec gives her a self-conscious grin.

ALEC

Some call it the unofficial Dublin anthem:

*'In Dublin's fair city  
Where girls are pretty  
I first set my eyes on sweet Molly  
Malone...'*

Her statue's about a block west. A pretty young thing. As the story goes, she was a fishmonger, but died early, in her prime.

Some claim she never left the city;  
that she still roams the streets at  
night, trying to sell her wares...

Kelsie smiles, but pulls slightly closer as they reach a  
corner and cross.

KELSIE

Really? Are ya trying to scare me,  
Alec McDunn?

ALEC

That's the tale--God's truth.

KELSIE

Well...Leave it to the Irish to  
romanticize a haunt.

ALEC

Oh, but Ireland itself is a haunt--  
no doubt about that. I once stayed  
in a place, north of Dublin called  
the Martello Towers. There's a  
small hotel built in an old tower  
looking out over the rocky cliffs  
and sea. One night, I looked out,  
and I'd swear I saw a clipper ship  
in full regalia--shouts from the  
crew wailing about Selkies on the  
shoal...

Alec looks over, giving his signature grin. He makes a slight  
left, keeping to the center of the wide sidewalk. It's  
bordered to the left by a short, gray stone wall, with a  
high, black metal pole fence atop.

ALEC

There's a great pub up that way.  
Their Irish Poke Cake and Butter  
Whirl Biscuits are legend.

KELSIE

Based on dinner, I have no trouble  
taking your suggestions for  
cuisine. In fact, do ya happen to  
have any recipes from tonight?

Alec smiles.

ALEC

I happen to have *all* the recipes  
from tonight. I worked that into my  
deal with the management.

KELSIE  
So, you're a sly one.

ALEC  
I am at that.

The two walk in silence for a long moment.

KELSIE  
I'm sorry, Alec, but I can't stop  
thinking about your... about Isla's  
mother.

Alec takes a deep breath and lets it out slowly. He stares  
down at the pavement.

ALEC  
Aye. Questions with no answers  
haunt us. Ever present, ever  
challenging, ever pushing... Maybe  
that's what ghosts are; questions  
and puzzles, captured in lost  
moments, frozen in place, waiting  
for answers and hoping resolutions  
will make sense when they come.

KELSIE  
How could a mother leave a child  
alone in a storm like that... Was  
she mentally stable?

ALEC  
And how do you measure mental  
stability? Sometimes, she was fine.  
Others, not. She was sane until she  
wasn't, like many of us. I've  
thought it over a million times and  
I still have no idea what happened  
on that day.

Kelsie's eyes tear.

KELSIE  
Is that why your acting is so  
mesmerizing? You know the  
complications of real loss...

Alec walks along in silence, lost to some distant memory.

ALEC  
Perhaps...

KELSIE

Did you keep any of her art?  
Charity, I mean.

Alec looks over, thankful to be pulled back.

ALEC

Aye. I have a number of her works  
in the basement and Isla keeps one  
in her room--an umbrella, painted  
on the underside. It's the one that  
Charity left her under when she  
walked into the sea...

KELSIE

What's painted there?

Alec glances over at her, his mind going to the painting.

ALEC

Maybe Isla will let you see it. The  
scene she painted is meticulously  
balanced: A bright, brilliant  
meadow, with the sun directly in  
the center. Springtime flowers are  
in full bloom... Isla keeps it open  
over the bed. It's one of her most  
prized possessions.

They walk in silence a few more steps. Kelsie turns as they  
approach the lobby of the hotel.

KELSIE

You really think you can keep all  
this from Isla?

ALEC

I hope so, at least until the  
merger is announced. We plan to  
announce the island later in the  
year--when the prototype is ready.  
That's when I'll announce my semi  
retirement as well. With the press  
covering my move to the island and  
my scaling back, they'll already  
have plenty to talk about. That's  
when I'll introduce Isla. It'll  
limit the scrutiny they show her,  
and if I can whisk her right off to  
the island, I think she'll survive  
the ordeal, especially if she's  
opening a new ice cream emporium  
for you.

Think you could train Isla to open a second shop? I'll fund it completely.

Kelsie cocks her head.

KELSIE

Well, she's bright enough, and she's creative...but I'm not sure I want to open a second shop. I need time to think about it. And I would like to speak with Hamish.

ALEC

Great! Invite me over. You talk with Hamish, I'll come clean with Isla. What'ya think?

KELSIE

Aye. I could invite ya to family dinner. If I meet with Hamish and you come clean to Isla, it would clear the deck for me to speak with Katie and start training Isla for management. When should I set it up for?

ALEC

We've plenty of time, Kelsie. Let's give it another few months

KELSIE

I don't believe that, Alec. I don't think ya have plenty of time. Isla is out there and she's restless. I don't believe ya have near as much time as you think you do.

Alec locks eyes with her.

ALEC

You think I'm making a mistake letting her get out more, to work at your shop?

KELSIE

No! I think you're making a mistake thinking you can keep all this under glass for another several months. Somehow, somewhere, someone is gonna see something, or hear something, and start putting the pieces together.

ALEC

I hope not. But maybe you're right.

Kelsie feels Alec's eyes burn into hers.

ALEC

You seem to know Isla already.  
You've built a bond with her in a  
little over a month. I've been her  
father for years, and she's still  
somewhat of a mystery to me...

Kelsie looks away, out over the distant bay.

KELSIE

I guess it's because I know how  
lonely it can be growing up in the  
shadows. My dad did his best to  
keep us from the press too. He was  
also away a lot. I came to believe  
at one point it was because he was  
ashamed of me, or still didn't want  
me. I know better now. Anyway, I  
feel a kinship to Isla, and I think  
she feels one to me, even though  
she doesn't know as much as you do.  
She is very good, though, at  
putting two and two together.

ALEC

Don't I know it.

Conversation lags. Both Alec and Kelsie stare out over the bay. The moon paints tips of silver onto the restless waves. Kelsie's voice breaks the silence, soft and tentative.

KELSIE

Aye, now, look at that, will ya?  
That's a view I could get used to.

Alec turns to look at her.

ALEC

It is... Why is it, do you suppose,  
that people turn to the moon for  
words when there are...other things  
they'd rather say, rather do?

Kelsie allows her eyes to drift back over and lock with his.

KELSIE

It's the light, I think...We like how it shines down on us--a patient mother, softening away all the rough edges...We like its touch...

ALEC

*Like this?*

Alec takes her face in his hands, tilts her head up, and slowly, purposefully, kisses her.

ALEC

So, what would mother moon say now?

Kelsie seems flustered, but only for a moment.

KELSIE

She'd say ya best think of the morning, I suspect. The sun comes up, and things look different in the hard light.

Alec's eyes never leave her.

ALEC

Sun, moon, stars, rain, it won't matter to me.

He takes her more fully into his arms and kisses her again. She pushes back, blushing.

KELSIE

It was a lovely evening, Alec, but I must go. Goodnight...

FADE OUT.

SCENE TWENTY

INT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN EDINBURGH

Katie is busily prepping condiments as we see Kelsie in the background. She is in her small office behind the bathroom.

Kelsie and Katie are conversing loudly, making it obvious that the shop has not yet opened for the day.

KATIE

*...on a full clipper-ship?*

KELSIE

Aye. He said it was a short spoof on travel films. The Irish travel board funded it.

KATIE

They must've spent a fortune.

KELSIE

Aye. They had fun with it. The second day, they filmed Alec arriving at the island. He walked up a cobblestone road with a tour center to one side. The sign above the door read: "*Inspiring Irish Literature Tour, 15-18 minutes. Depressing Irish Literature Tour, How long have you got?*"

Katie cackles.

KELSIE

So, anything new here?

KATIE

Not much. Kaycee is making a play to get back into my life.

KELSIE

*Really!*

KATIE

It's true. Came by with gifts, he did. Told me he'd signed up for AA. I did like him when he was sober. Other than that, not much changed. Isla has taken to the shop like a duck to water. She's bright, that one.

Now, to the real news, the juicy news...Let's hear it, Kelsie McDunn!

Katie turns holding the last bin. She gives Kelsie a telling gaze as she saunters over to Kelsie's office to lean against the door frame.

KELSIE

Okay. Tell me. What are you on about?

KATIE

You were on a 3-day date with one of the most eligible bachelors in the world and ya haven't spoken one word about romance. Either that man's blind, or there's things you're not tellin' me.

KELSIE

Alec Miekle is a nice man who's been through a lot and I had a wonderful time...

KATIE

Uh-huh. Cut to the chase, Kelsie. We're adults here. I want the full version--nothin' omitted.

KELSIE

Katie!

Kelsie throws an only slightly irritated glance over at Katie, then breaks down.

KELSIE

Oh, alright! He did kiss me, twice in point of fact, but *nothing* more.

Katie gives a hoot.

KATIE

There! Now we've come to somethin' worth talkin' about!

KELSIE

And I did have a Leprechaun pinch me on the bum--said he mistook it for a pot of gold.

At that instant, Isla sticks her head into the room.

ISLA

Uh, who mistook your bum for a pot of gold?

Isla struts on in, grabbing a lab coat as she continues to jabber.

ISLA

I doubt it was dad--not his style, but ya were in Ireland, so I'd say ya got out easy.

Katie is the first to recover.

KATIE

Isla! Didn't see ya there.

Isla barely seems to notice, throwing on her coat as she heads back to the front counter, jabbering as she goes.

ISLA

Frankly, Leprechauns know that there's precious little gold in Ireland, so can ya blame 'em for puttin' a premium on a well-portioned bum? It's a sight better than chasin' fairy farts in the gloamin'.

She nods to them, as if having delivered the definitive word on fairies, farts, and gold in Ireland. Katie throws Kelsie a quick glance.

KATIE

Remind me to steer clear of the gloamin'!

FADE TO:

CLOSE UP: KELSIE, ASLEEP. CAMERA PULLS SLOWLY OUT

Kelsie is snoring softly as Isla sticks her head around the corner, startling her awake.

ISLA

Oh, sorry... Shifts over. Mind if I take a few pints home? I'd like to try out the new stuff.

Kelsie sits up straight, wiping the sleep from her eyes.

KELSIE

No, not at all... Sorry about that. A bit of jet lag. Let me know what you think.

Isla starts to leave, then turns back.

ISLA

Oh, yeah, and I'm supposed to ask ya if ya want to go to a big dinner and gala tomorrow night. It's for SAMH--the Scottish Association for Mental Health.

It'll be a good meal, and we'll  
have great seats. Say you'll go,  
then I get to go!

Kelsie narrows her eyes.

ISLA

Dad has set it up so you'll be a  
donor--he already made a donation  
in your name. You'll also be a  
friend of the family, and I'll  
be...uh, your niece or somethin'.

Kelsie gives a soft sigh.

KELSIE

A chaperone? How arcane.

ISLA

Good thing you're talking to me and  
not Aryan. I actually know what the  
word means.

KELSIE

Aryan?

Katie has just stepped into the back

KATIE

Aye, I was just comin' to tell ya.  
Aryan is a new boy I hired. Isla  
and I have been puttin' him through  
the paces. I know his mum. Good  
lad, if a bit typical.

ISLA

Meaning daft.

KATIE

Isla! There's no need for that.  
He'll be here any minute. Plays  
rugby for his school or some such.

At that very moment, the bell jingles from the front door and  
Aryan bursts in.

ARYAN

Helloo! Helloo! Never fear! Your  
Sectionals victor is here!

Aryan blows into the back room like a small hurricane.

KELSIE  
*Sectionals victor?*

Katie follows Aryan, a tight grimace on her face. Kelsie looks to Isla, who shrugs.

ISLA  
 I don't know. The *Victor* part could reference *Frankenstein*...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE TWENTY-ONE

EXT. VOODOO ROOMS BAR AND BANQUET HALL, DOWNTOWN EDINBURGH

DUSK. CAMERA SWOOPS DOWN FROM HIGH ANGLE, PULLING IN SLOWLY ON THE VOODOO ROOMS BAR AND BANQUET HALL.

Cars pull up to a red carpet to drop richly attired guests off. Close in on Alec pulling up to the red carpet in his Gull-wing Mercedes. He steps out, pats the valet attendant on the shoulder, then strolls around to join Kelsie and Isla. Isla's make up is lighter, but still noticeably Gothic. With one on each arm, he leads them to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. VOODOO ROOMS BAR AND BANQUET HALL, DOWNTOWN EDINBURGH

CLOSE UP: THE LIT SIGN FOR THE VOODOO ROOMS. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AND ENTRY DOOR.

Alec, Kelsie, and Isla enter and are led through a barrage of flashing lights from paparazzi. The beautifully ornate interior with paneled walls and elaborate ceilings is packed. They're led to the banquet hall.

As a waiter seats them at a round table, draped with a bit of netting and a lighthouse centerpiece, they take in the walls and ocean themed interior. A jazz band is playing from a nearby stage. A soft sound of waves on a beach blends with the clink of glassware and the low murmur of voices, creating a compelling ambiance.

KELSIE  
 This place is amazing! I can't believe I've never been here.

ALEC

I can. I mean, you can't beat the place for atmosphere, I'll give you that, but it's culinary offerings have never really captured me. It has a enviable liquor collection, but outside of that, little else is exceptional. (*Alec stands*) Ah, here we are... Lord Shounesly and Lady Marie, May I introduce Kelsie McDunn and her niece.

After cordial greetings, the Lord and Lady take their place at the table. The servers immediately begin laying out the meal. Alec takes a call on his cell phone and has to excuse himself from the table. The Lord and Lady take the moment for a quick spin around the dance floor. Kelsie glances at Isla, who is unusually quiet.

KELSIE

You okay?

ISLA

I've been here before, but a long time ago. Just checking to see how well I remembered the details.

KELSIE

And?

ISLA

Well, I accurately recall the entryway, though I did remember four diamonds in the stained glass windows, not three.

KELSIE

And here I though remembering to do the laundry was a win. So, do you remember everything in such detail?

ISLA

You'd be surprised what I remember...

Isla's voice trails off as her eyes abruptly lock onto something. Kelsie follows her gaze. Aryan is heading toward them, a look of surprise on his face. An attractive blonde is draped over him as if she were a long coat.

ARYAN

Well, I'll be buggered! Fancy meetin' you here!

Kelsie notes that Isla has bristled slightly. She can't recall the boys name, but smiles just the same.

KELSIE

We're here as guests of Mr. Meikle.

It's Aryan's turn to show shock.

ARYAN

*Alec Meikle?* The actor?

Kelsie gives a nod. Aryan just stands, as if in shock. The blonde gives his arm a slight tug to snap him out of it.

ARYAN

Oh, yeah. Uh, this is Sherrie.  
She's a friend from school.

He turns to Sherrie.

ARYAN

This is the owner of that ice cream shop I told ya about, Kelsie McDunn, and that girl I work with.

Isla holds her hand out.

ISLA

Hi. I'm Isla.

SHERRIE

Ah! The *Goth Girl!* I was wantin' ta meet ya! Aryan says you're a hoot!

Isla's reaction is immediate. She mimics the smile.

ISLA

Aye. 'Hoot'. The wise old owl, that's me! By the by, the way ya got your claws in Victor's arm might well peg you as a vul--

Kelsie jumps up, talking over Isla and grabbing her hand.

KELSIE

Ah! Our drinks are ready! Would you excuse us?

Isla stands, reluctantly, biting her lip. Aryan seem confused, especially at being called Victor.

ARYAN

Right. Well, we've got to get back to Dad's table anyway. Cheerio!

Aryan turns, pulling Sherrie's arm as she fights to angle her head back for a parting shot. She smirks.

SHERRIE

It's Aryan, not Victor, ya Goth bat! ...*Wise old owl indeed!*

Isla turns to follow the girl, but Kelsie holds her tight. She whispers in a low tone.

KELSIE

*Not the time, not the place!*

Isla stops resisting and looks away, blinking quickly, her breathing labored and erratic. Kelsie quickly leads her out.

CUT TO:

EXT. VOODOO ROOMS BAR AND BANQUET HALL, DOWNTOWN EDINBURGH

Once Kelsie and Isla are outside, the two slow, stepping onto the sidewalk. Kelsie lets Isla set the pace. They walk for several moments in silence.

KELSIE

She's not worth it. The best you can do with those who choose to be cruel is to ignore them. I realize sometimes that's easier said than done... Anything I can do?

Isla drags an arm quickly across her eyes.

ISLA

Well, I was thinkin' a Blackbeard's Booty across the kisser--one with lots of gooey fudge and caramel, might have been nice, but it's not so much her... It's *him*. He was *tellin'* her about me--*calling me 'Goth Girl!'*

KELSIE

I know. It was unkind. But then, you did call him Victor, as in *Frankenstein*, did you not? Though I doubt he'll ever figure out the reference, that wasn't the height of kindness either.

ISLA

*(grins)* I know...Tell me honest, am I that big of a joke to everyone?

Kelsie takes a moment to answer.

KELSIE

If you're asking are ya a joke to some brain-dead jock from secondary school and his snobbish friends, yeah, you probably are. Outside of that, I think anyone that comes to know you would call you *unique*.

ISLA

Because I'm smart? Because I'm not afraid of things? Or because I'm... '*Goth Girl*'?

KELSIE

Well, you do know your fashion tends toward Gothic, right?

Isla's voice explodes with dramatic tone.

ISLA

Aye, I know! *My life IS Gothic!* I'm shunned, hidden away! I haunt an empty castle like some *Wuthering Heights* ghost! I have a dark past and an uncertain future. So, I create a look on the outside to tell people what's goin' on in here (points toward her heart). Is that really so horrible?

Kelsie, taken back by the intensity of Isla's outburst, puts a hand on her shoulder. She tries to both comfort and calm.

KELSIE

No, but it is rather unique. You haven't grown up in this world, Isla. Most people out here choose to hide their true selves and innermost feelings. They tuck them under layers of pomp and pretense. If they wear Goth attire, it's likely just a statement of the type of fiction they enjoy or the type of blokes they like to hang with. As you say, you've lived a rather unique life. You lost your mother at a very young age. You have your dad's fame to deal with. You've been kept away from most real social interaction...

They walk quietly for a moment.

ISLA

What about you? You had a unique life. But you went to Cambridge! You became a Rhodes Scholar and finally a star graduate of *Cordon Le Blue* in London! You started your own business! It's you that's given me hope that there's a way to turn it all around--to be normal. To be a success!

Kelsie looks over at Isla with a subdued grin.

KELSIE

I'm not sure I'd call myself success and I certainly wouldn't call you a failure. You know what happened when I told my dad I wanted to go to *Cordon Le Blue* and open a restaurant? He broke into laughter! Not small, chuckling sort of laughter, but the big, side splitting kind--the kind that has you rolling on the floor.

Dad never understood me. For my sixteenth birthday, he built a stable and stocked it with top breed mares. He was determined I was going to be some sort of equestrian legend. Only, he didn't let the horses in on the joke.

ISLA

Ya don't like ridin'?

KELSIE

I love riding! I'm just not good at it. After leading two of our top competitors to last place finishes, the horses themselves told him: '*We love the girl for trying, BUT...*'

Isla lets go a slight chortle. Getting her tears under control, she sniffs.

ISLA

Yeah...I like ridin', and I'm good at it I'm told. That's if I can believe anything anyone tells me.

KELSIE

Well, I've got something I would tell you. Stop *wearing* your emotions. Break away from the Gothic for awhile. If you want to come back to it because you just like the vibe and have your own group that understands you, that's great, but let's try conquering the social world for awhile first.

ISLA

I'd like that, but dad is determined to keep me a secret until I'm, I don't know, *thirty-two* or some ancient age.

It's Kelsie's turn to chuckle.

KELSIE

Watch it--I'm thirty-four. Don't put me in the grave just yet! As for your father, let me handle that. I think you're ready. I'll speak with him. Now, we better be heading back. Our guests may think we abandoned them.

Isla wipes her eyes one last time.

ISLA

So, if you really do believe I'm ready, what would it take to make me look like you? Your outfits are always stunning. You walk in and eyes turn toward you like spindles on a compass.

KELSIE

Ah! I only wish that were true. I do have good fashion consultants though. I'll make introductions.

ISLA

You would? That would be a dream!

KELSIE

Be aware that they take fashion seriously. I wouldn't be surprised if they make you burn a fair amount of your Goth regalia.

ISLA  
 Alright--but not my dark unicorn!  
 That's where I draw the line...

FADE TO:

INT. VOODOO ROOMS BAR AND BANQUET HALL, DOWNTOWN EDINBURGH

Alec is back at the table, chatting with the Lord and Lady when Isla and Kelsie return. Isla's make up has been touched up to hide evidence of her tears.

KELSIE  
 Sorry to take so long. We were  
 exploring around a bit.

Alec throws her a curious look, but decides to drop it.

ALEC  
 What do you think of the meal?

Kelsie has only taken a dozen or so bites, but seems glad for the conversation.

KELSIE  
 For banquet fare, I'd say it's  
 wonderful! Did you have anything to  
 do with the menu?

Alec throws her a wink.

ALEC  
 I did have a discussion with the  
 planning commission this year. Glad  
 you like it.

Alec smiles as Lord Shounesly and his wife attest to the quality of the meal. The band strikes up a new song. Alec slowly reaches for Kelsie's hand. He lifts her gently while addressing the Lord and Lady, explaining that this is a favorite song of his. He leads her onto the dance floor.

ALEC  
 Okay, so what's the real story? I  
 don't think you went exploring, and  
 why has Isla been crying?

KELSIE  
 How d'ya know?

ALEC

I'm fairly accomplished with make up, if you recall, and hers had obviously been recently touched up.

Kelsie sighs.

KELSIE

Let's just say a boy showed up she knows from the shop--with a fetching blonde draping herself all over him--I mean ALL over him. She seemed quite keen to voice her opinions on Isla's fashion sense.

Alec shakes his head.

ALEC

Teenage girls can be cruel. Is she okay?

KELSIE

Oh, aye. I'm going to introduce her to a fashion consultant friend, and we'll see if we can help her expand her wardrobe.

ALEC

Good! That's wonderful news! I've long tried to get her to consider that. Let me know if you need anything. I'm happy to help.

Alec is quite light on his feet and spins her gracefully around, nodding and waving to other couples.

KELSIE

You *can* help, Alec. You need to move up your plans to introduce her as your daughter--now, while there's still time.

Alec is quiet for a moment, letting the request sink in as they continue to dance.

ALEC

Still time? What do you mean? The paparazzi will eat her alive. It's too soon. She's getting good experience at the ice cream shop. That'll have to be enough for now.

KELSIE

She's almost sixteen, Alec. You can't keep hiding it. The truth will get out. You bring the news out now, you control the narrative. You wait until it leaks, and it will be much worse for you both, mark my words.

Again, Alec is quiet, but not as long this time. He sighs.

ALEC

Alright. I'll take a look at my calendar.

KELSIE

You could take her to the premier of your Irish spoof. It should be a smaller premier, the perfect setting, don't you think?

ALEC

You don't give up, do you? First, I think I'll accept that invitation to your family dinner.

Kelsie nods and the song ends.

KELSIE

Okay. I'm good with that. I'll set it up.

Alec takes Kelsie's arm and leads her back to the table.

ALEC

You always find a way to win, don't you Ms. McDunn? Even before the dance is over.

Kelsie smiles.

KELSIE

Only with old Sea Captains...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

SCENE TWENTY-TWO

EXT. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

A large SUV pulls up to the curb. Isla, Kelsie, and PeeWee climb out. Only the female driver stays in the SUV. Isla leans a head back in after everyone has climbed out.

ISLA

Thanks again, Jenna--greatest day  
of my life! Good luck on your show.

As she steps back and closes the door, PeeWee and Kelsie have just finished pulling a dozen or so clothes bags and a few boxes out of the back. They close the back hatch.

KELSIE

I owe ya one, PeeWee.

Isla takes two of the boxes and a few bags from PeeWee.

PEEWEE

Are you kidding? I had a blast!  
Isla's Goth collection inspired  
both Jenna and I!

ISLA

I love everything--the makeup tips  
and hair styling. I'd hug ya again  
if I had another pair of arms!

PEEWEE

No need. (She leans in, lowering  
her tone) I mean, how often does a  
designer get to work with the  
secret child of a celebrity!

PeeWee waves goodbye and hops back into the SUV, which takes off as Kelsie and Isla make their way into the ice cream shop where Katie is holding the door open for them.

KATIE

So, did ya leave any clothes for  
the rest of us?

KELSIE

We tried. Remember, this *was* Pee  
Wee and Jenna.

ISLA

They showed me makeup strategies,  
and how do ya like my hair. Oh, and  
you've got to see the dress!

Isla grabs one of the garment bags and one of the boxes and heads into Kelsie's office, yelling through the shut door.

ISLA  
Are ya okay with me usin' your  
office Kelsie?

KELSIE  
Uh... Sure.

They wait a moment, hearing bangs and rattles from the office, then Katie looks to Kelsie, her eyes questioning. Aryan comes in with a tub of dirty dishes.

ARYAN  
Hey, what's all the excitement?

At that moment, Isla emerges from the office wearing a full-length shimmering deep blue gown, highlighted by sparkling dangling earrings and matching bracelet. Aryan turns, his eyes growing large. Isla does not notice, her eyes on Katie.

ISLA  
So, is this look acceptable for  
Alec Meikle's daughter?

ARYAN  
Who's Alec Meikle's daughter?

Isla spins, sees Aryan, then, not knowing what to do, pushes back into the office and closes the door.

KATIE  
I heard ya nicknamed her, 'Goth  
Girl,' and if ya say a word, you're  
done--here, there, everywhere!  
Understand me, Aryan? You don't  
breathe a word until Alec Meikle  
reveals it!

Aryan gulps, blood draining from his face as he realizes the implications of the revelation. Katie looks over to Kelsie with a 'What do we do now?' look. Kelsie says nothing, just stares after Isla with a tight-lipped look of frustration.

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY-THREE

EXT. THE PARK, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

LOW SHOT OF FRONT GRILL OF THE MERCEDES 300SL GULLWING  
APPROACHING CURB.

Isla opens the side door and steps out. She looks up with a  
degree of trepidation.

CUT TO:

OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT OF KELSIE WATCHING OUT HER WINDOW  
SEVERAL STORIES UP.

Kelsie watches Isla approach the door and push the buzzer.  
She puts her cat down and turns away from the window, walking  
to the wall intercom near her front door. She pushes the  
button and speaks.

KELSIE  
Okay, come on up.

She hears the door buzz and Isla open it.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY JUST OUTSIDE KELSIE'S APARTMENT

Isla steps out of the elevator just as Kelsie opens the door.  
Behind her is a large, roller cooler and a matching set of  
three suitcases. They are both dressed casual, Isla in jeans  
and a T-Shirt that says "Loch Ness: Protect the Wildlife."  
Kelsie is in tight-fitting, straight-legged jeans and a  
cashmere cardigan. She beckons Isla in. The girl's eyes  
settle onto the suitcases.

ISLA  
Wow. Who's going with us?

Kelsie follows her eyes.

KELSIE  
Ah. I don't pack light--that's a  
fact.

Isla has stepped into Kelsie's home and is taking it in. A  
gray cat comes up and starts rubbing against her ankles. She  
reaches down and picks it up.

ISLA  
Hey, ya never told me ya had a cat.  
What's her name?

KELSIE

*His name is Gray Beard, and you're trying to change the subject.*

Isla looks up, still stroking the cats head. She glances around.

ISLA

You seem to like naturalist art.

KELSIE

I do love nature. That's a print by Kirsten Zerngibl. She also does Steampunk styles, but I don't think you came up here to see how much luggage I had, to meet my cat, or to observe my interior decorating choices. Let's have it. What's going on?

Isla looks down at the cat for a long moment, then back up.

ISLA

I feel like an idiot letting things slip in front of--of all people--Aryan! How bad do you think it is? I should have been more careful.

Kelsie sighs and comes closer, sitting on the arm of a stuffed chair.

KELSIE

It was bound to happen some time. You can't keep that kind of secret out in the real world long. I don't think that Aryan will tell--for all his faults, he seems good lad. But even if he doesn't, someone will. Your dad needs to get ahead of the narrative, and soon.

ISLA

You think he'll be mad?

KELSIE

You haven't told him yet?

Isla shakes her head.

KELSIE

Well, he won't be thrilled. I've stayed after him about taking you to his upcoming premier of his Ireland spoof.

Isla's eyes light up.

ISLA

Really? You think he will? I'd wear my dark blue gown, the one we just bought--and those long, dangling earrings!

KELSIE

Don't go planning your wardrobe yet. He still has to agree to it.

The two are quiet for a long moment, then Isla stands.

ISLA

I've a confession...I brought...I brought the gown. I thought I'd show it off for your folks and dad at the same time.

KELSIE

I think it's a great idea! Tell him while he's still trying to catch his breath.

ISLA

Ya think it'll work?

KELSIE

Perhaps. We best get moving, though. We've been up here a while.

Isla nods, her mind obviously still absorbing the new possibility. She carefully sets the cat back down on the window seat as Kelsie stands. She grabs the large suitcase.

ISLA

I got these...Ugh! This one feels like you stashed a body in it!

KELSIE

Well-packed is the term I think you're looking for. A few things in there are for my folks.

ISLA

What, a stack of gold bars?

KELSIE (LOOKS OVER)  
 You're kidding, right? We have MANY  
 long days ahead, courting the ice  
 cream elite, before we're ready to  
 offer that kind of gift!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PARK, OLD TOWN, EDINBURGH

Alec is still waiting, leaning against the Mercedes as the girls exit Kelsie's apartment complex. Isla jumps in the car while Kelsie goes around to the back with the luggage.

KELSIE  
 Hope it'll all fit.

Alec doesn't respond immediately, but while picking up the first bag he leans in, keeping his voice low.

ALEC  
 I was beginning to wonder if you  
 were coming. Is everything okay?

Kelsie leans in as well, keeping her voice low.

KELSIE  
 Well, I learned Isla has a way with  
 cats. Gray Beard went right to her.

ALEC  
 You named your cat Gray Beard?

KELSIE  
 Uh... I think he came that way. We  
 also touched on art and wee folk.

ALEC  
*Wee folk?*... So, I'm not to really  
 know what you discussed.

Kelsie gives him a broad, teasing smile.

KELSIE  
 And ya got there all on your own!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

SCENE TWENTY-FOUR

EXT. COLVEND, DUMFRIESHIRE, SCOTLAND.

WIDE SHOT OF THE GULL-WING MERCEDES PULLING UP TO A LARGE, COUNTRY MANOR

Alec is watching, interested, as he pulls the car up to a quaint Country Manor nestled in a grove of trees on a hill. A medium height man with a cabbie cap and an angular jaw steps out of the cottage. Kelsie looks over at Alec.

KELSIE

Dad can be intense. Be on guard.

Alec gives a nod, then pulls to a stop just in front of the man with the cap. A slightly taller, equally thin woman with a pleasant smile and shoulder length white hair, comes out to stand beside him. Both are dressed in traditional attire, he in a hunting jacket, she in plaid skirt and white blouse. As soon as Alec steps out of the car, the man steps forward and grips Alec's hand in a firm grip.

HAMISH

Alec Meikle! Welcome. Nice to meet the man I've heard so much about--

Alec cuts him off.

ALEC

Hamish McDunn... You're not as tall as I imagined, but you've got a beautiful place here.

Hamish breaks into a slow grin.

HAMISH

Aye, not so tall, but tougher. Perhaps ya want to put it to the test. To my eyes, though, you don't look at all like a seaman.

ALEC

And you don't look like a billionaire.

Hamish barks a laugh and slaps Alec on the shoulder. He looks over to Kelsie who has climbed out of the car.

HAMISH

How are ya, daughter! And who's this?

Isla piles out of the car and walks toward Hamish.

ISLA  
 Hi...I'm Isla, the invisible,  
 Alec's daughter.

Lydea McDunn steps in front of Hamish, embracing Isla.

LYDEA  
 Oh, you're not invisible, dear!  
 We've been waiting to meet you.  
 Kelsie's told us so much about ya,  
 but she never mentioned how  
 beautiful ya are!

Alec looks over sheepishly, realizing that he should have been the one to introduce Isla. Hamish steps forward.

HAMISH  
 Well, welcome to the ranch, Ms.  
 Isla. Do ya like horses?

ISLA  
 Horses? As a point of fact, I do.

HAMISH  
 Well, I was just headed to the  
 stables. I could use a hand.  
 What'ya say, lass?

Isla looks to Alec who has walked to the back of the Mercedes, popping the trunk. He smiles and nods, giving a slight shrug.

ISLA  
 Should I call you Hamish or do you  
 find it too informal?

HAMISH  
 (After a short laugh) I've  
 certainly been called worse.

He pats Isla's shoulder, but before turning her toward the stables, he glances at the Gull-Wing, letting his hand run softly across its exterior. Isla waits, pushing a strand of hair behind her ear. After a moment, he turns back to her and motions her to fall in step beside him.

ISLA  
 How many horses to ya have? Kelsie  
 says she's no good with horses.

HAMISH

Aye, believe her! If the horses see her comin', they hide in the hay!

FADE TO:

SCENE TWENTY-FIVE

INT. HORSE BARN, COLVEND, DUMFRIESHIRE

Hamish and Isla enter the stable deep in conversation. The stable is neatly kept, with eight stalls and three horses. Hamish heads toward a rack in the back where buckets, feed, bridles, and other horse paraphernalia are kept.

ISLA

I like riding in woods around our place--jumping the stream and such.

Hamish raises an eyebrow. He sets out three buckets, grabs a bag of feed, and begins filling them. Grabbing two of the buckets, he instructs Isla to grab the third. He approaches a calico filly, strokes its nose and speaks to it in Gaelic

ISLA

These are beautiful horses. Are they race horses?

Hamish moves on to the next horse, repeating the exercise.

HAMISH

Not race--they're trained for *Eventing*.

ISLA

*Eventing?*

HAMISH

Aye. It includes Show Jumping, Dressage, and Cross Country--all equestrian sports.

ISLA

Sounds like my woods. I think I could be good at that.

HAMISH

You don't say? Well, let's see how Sparkle likes ya.

Hamish points her to a young, attractive chestnut mare. To his astonishment, Isla speaks in Gaelic, stroking the horse as if she'd known it her whole life. The horse stamps a bit, but settles right down as she hangs the bucket on its peg and lightly brushes the horses mane.

HAMISH

I've never seen the like! I'm the only one who's ever been able to feed Sparkle! He's a bit wild.

Hamish lets the comment hang on the air a moment, then adds:

HAMISH

His sire's name was Coal. He was my horse. As a lad, we'd ride like the wind. We entered events and won, over and over. I loved that filly. I thought we'd never be parted...

ISLA

What happened to him?

HAMISH

(With a shake of his head) He got old. I remember coming home from college. I went out to see him and he was lying down in the straw, worn out and tired looking. I took his head in my hands looked him square in the eyes. Somethin' passed between us. We knew we would never compete again; never ride like the wind. But we also knew that was alright. Worn and tired things have a place too.

Hamish gives Isla a soft grin.

HAMISH

Your dad put on plaids and had a round of golf with a few of us a while back. We were a worn out and tired lot. It was kind of him to let us feel we weren't forgotten, that it was alright if we weren't as stylish as we once were...

Hamish winks and gives Sparkles a final pat. He then turns toward the stable door. Isla stares after him.

ISLA

You played golf with my dad?

Hamish continues on, calling over his shoulder as if he didn't hear her.

HAMISH

Stay as long as ya like. I'll be back at the manor.

Isla eyes still narrow. She turns back to Sparkles and strokes his nose.

FADE TO:

SCENE TWENTY-FIVE

INT. COUNTRY MANOR, COLVEND, DUMFRIESHIRE, SCOTLAND.

Isla comes in the back door into a huge kitchen with beamed ceilings. She takes a moment exploring the interesting fixtures of the room which include a brick oven. Lydea comes around the corner.

LYDEA

Hey-ho, Isla. Kelsie said you'd be more comfortable in a room with its own bathroom, so I put ya in the north end. It's upstairs to the right. I also hung your gorgeous dress in the closet. I hope we get to see ya in it?

ISLA

I hope you will as well. (Her attention has been caught by what looks like a small brick over.) Do ya actually make bread in this?

LYDEA

Aye, at times. You like to cook?

ISLA

I don't know. I'd like to know how to make bread.

LYDEA

Well, we'll have to do that on your next visit, now, won't we? You get settled in. There's gardens, and paths to explore, and places for a rest if you're so inclined. Holler if you need anything.

Isla wanders out of the kitchen as Lydea begins preparations for dinner.

FADE TO BLACK:

FADE UP FROM BLACK:

CLOSE UP: DECORATIVE ANTIQUE CLOCK SITTING ON A HEAVY, CARVED WOOD END TABLE. THE TIME IS FIVE MINUTES TO FOUR. CAMERA PULLS OUT TO REVEAL ISLA, LYING ON A COUCH IN A RATHER LARGE LIBRARY/STUDY.

Isla is curled up, reading a book on a small, ornate sofa. Bookshelves cover three walls in the room. The fourth sports a central fireplace with a fire crackling. Floor to ceiling windows fill the space to either side of the fireplace. The couch is facing this fourth wall. Over the fireplace is a large painting of Hamish and partner.

Alec wanders into the library through one of the doors. He heads for an area in the back bookshelf where an array of alcohol is displayed with a tray of glasses and bucket of ice. Hamish enters soon after him. Neither notices Isla, who has ducked down onto the sofa, pretending to be asleep.

HAMISH

The girl's are upstairs. What's up?  
It's dangerous to have everyone here. I suspect ya have your reasons though. Have ya told 'em?

Alec pours himself a drink, then turns and stares at the painting over the fireplace. At length, he sighs.

ALEC

Not yet. But I don't know that I can do this anymore, Hamish. Keeping this under wraps is getting...*difficult*.

Hamish also pours himself a drink.

HAMISH

What'ya mean? The merger's barely six months away and the paparazzi have no clue. They're too busy deciding if H&S Energy's Kelsie McDunn has indeed fallen for the world's most eligible Sea Captain.

ALEC  
Yeah, but what if...Well, what if  
it's the other way around?

HAMISH  
I don't follow.

ALEC  
What if it's the *Sea Captain* that's  
trying to figure out if he's fallen  
for Kelsie McDunn?

Hamish's head jerks up, a stunned look on his face.

HAMISH  
You're not serious...*My Kelsie?*  
That does complicate things a bit.

Hamish seems stunned. He steps back, leaning against the  
bookshelf to steady himself.

HAMISH  
Well now...that is a new wrinkle.

ALEC  
She's...she's different from anyone  
I've ever met, Hamish--at least,  
anyone since...I feel at home with  
her. I can be myself and not like  
some international icon.

HAMISH  
Have ya told her?

ALEC  
Of course not. *I hired her less  
than a month ago!*

HAMISH  
The clock is moving, my friend.It  
won't stop for romance.

ALEC  
I know. Initially, it was only a  
business deal. We decided to let  
Isla think she was in control--that  
she was simply fulfilling the  
bargain the two of them made.  
Then... Well, it wasn't about the  
deal and Isla anymore. It was about  
how it felt when we were together.

HAMISH

Aye. I've felt that something was different with Kelsie too. I mean, I know she genuinely likes Isla, but I knew that wasn't the whole of it. How do you think Isla will take the news?

ALEC

That's the thing. I'm not sure. There will be a lot of things hitting Isla at once. As soon as she finds out about the merger, she'll figure out that I purposely left the article about Kelsie for her to find. She'll surmise that Kelsie was part of a strategy to keep the press off our scents. She's not going to like that. Frankly, I'm not sure how Kelsie is going to feel about that... Then there's the fact that I'll have to step back from my acting career for a while to take on this new role as Branding VP for the new company. She doesn't even know that I'm the major stake-holder in a green technology incubator. Then there's the fact that we'll need to move to the new island where the job is.

Even if Kelsie agrees to open a new Emporium branch there, Isla's been so bent on getting out there, on joining the larger world, I don't know how she'll react. Will she be willing to tuck herself away on a man-made island, even if it is beautiful, and helps the world take a giant leap forward in ecology and the adoption of green technology...

Now, we're adding to all this an additional possibility. How will she feel about having a new mother?

HAMISH

I think Isla may be tougher than you think. She'll adjust.

ALEC

Aye, but there's bound to be fall-out with so many moving pieces.

Hamish starts to pace in front of the fireplace.

HAMISH

As far as Kelsie's concerned, I'll tell her that I've had an eye on your company for some time. Market indicators changed and I decided to move rather aggressively. I pushed you into working with Isla to keep her out of it until the merger was approved. That' basically true.

ALEC

Okay. Let me get a commitment from her to attend the Irish film premier before you do, though. I want her to know how I feel about her before she finds out about the other.

Hamish paced toward the side wall and back.

HAMISH

I would think Isla would be happy when ya tell her about Kelsie. After all, she seemed pretty keen on matching the two of you up at the start, didn't she?

ALEC

She did. Still, I don't know if she's really thought through what having a real mom means. Isla is always so...*unpredictable*.

Alec considers the words, then pours himself a drink and drains his glass.

HAMISH

I might be able to help with that as well. Isla likes horses. She told me today that she thought she might be good at eventing.

ALEC

So?

HAMISH

So, maybe between that and helping Kelsie open the second Emporium, Isla won't have the time to over-think things.

ALEC  
 You don't know Isla. Over-thinking  
 things is her specialty.

HAMISH  
 Well, I'm afraid that's all I can  
 do as far as Isla's concerned...

Hamish pours another drink and downs it. He narrows his eyes  
 and bites at his lip.

HAMISH  
 ...You becoming a son-in-law and  
 Isla being a granddaughter...It's a  
 lot to take in...

ALEC  
 My point exactly.

The two grow silent. Alec breathes in slowly, rubbing at his  
 temples. Finally, he looks up.

ALEC  
 I need to clear my head... You up  
 for a spin in the Gull-Wing?

Hamish looks up, his eyes sparkle.

HAMISH  
 Thought you'd never ask!

The two exit the library/study.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP ON ISLA, PULLED IN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AGAINST THE  
 COUCH. HER EYES CLOSED TIGHTLY, HER LIP QUIVERING. A TEAR  
 ESCAPING HER EYE.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

SCENE TWENTY-SIX

EXT. COUNTRY MANOR, COLVEND, DUMFRIESHIRE, SCOTLAND.

Kelsie is just coming from behind the house, a worried look  
 on her face. The Gullwing squeals into the drive. She waits  
 for the car to come to a complete stop. Alec is the first out  
 of the car, resting a hand on it to steady himself.

ALEC

Does your dad always drive like a maniac?

KELSIE

Aye--should have warned ya. Hey, have ya seen Isla? She's not in her room or at the stables.

ALEC

I haven't.

KELSIE

Huh... Well, I want a word with ya if ya have a moment.

Hamish finishes pulling himself out of the car and closes the wing doors, throwing the keys to Alec.

HAMISH

I, uh, I'll see how Lydea is doing.

Hamish heads toward the manor. Kelsie waits till he's gone.

KELSIE

When we were lookin' at dresses, Isla made it clear she needed an elegant gown for your premier.

ALEC

I never agreed to let her come to the premier, Kelsie. I'm just not sure it's the right time, and besides, I have other plans for the premier. I...wanted to ask you to accompany me.

KELSIE

Me? Alec, Isla needs this. When is it going to be the right time?

Alec ignores the question.

ALEC

Just trust me, Kelsie. At the premier, things will become more clear. I do have my reasons.

Kelsie narrows her eyes, trying to read him.

KELSIE

I'm afraid it will break Isla's heart. She even brought the gown to show off for you tonight.

Don't take that away from her! If you need to tell her later--once you have a plan to make up for it--then maybe, but don't tell her tonight. Tonight, just look at her--*really see* her! See the beautiful, intelligent young lady she's turned into. You might rethink your decision.

ALEC (SIGHS)

Alright. I'll give her this moment. I'll try to *really see* her. But I'll need to tell her soon.

KELSIE

Understood. Thank you, Alec.

FADE TO:

SCENE TWENTY-SEVEN

INT. COUNTRY MANOR, COLVEND, DUMFRIESHIRE, SCOTLAND.

Lydea carries the final steaming dishes from the kitchen. Alec mills in. Hamish ducks his head back out into the hall.

HAMISH

Dinner's on!

CUT TO:

Kelsie stands in the long hallway outside Isla's door.

KELSIE

Isla, ya need help, hon? Everyone's at the table.

ISLA

I'm fine. Go on without me. I'll be there momentarily.

Kelsie sighs, but turns and heads down the stairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

Everyone is seated, waiting, when Isla enters. Her entry brings all conversation to an abrupt halt.

KELSIE

*Isla?*

Isla is in her blue gown, but it is now ripped in several places and the skin underneath has been blackened and covered with red streaks that look like blood that continues down her arms and legs as if dripping. Her hair is a disheveled mess and she has blackened both eyes and lips so that she looks like some kind of zombie or a discarded voodoo doll. Alec throws a quick glance at Kelsie, who still seems in shock.

ISLA

Sorry to have kept you waiting...  
Uh, shall we pray? I hear that God  
can be forgiving.

Mrs. McDunn tries to diffuse the moment.

MRS MCDUNN

What happened to your pretty dress  
dear?

ISLA

Aye, we can pray for that as well,  
Mrs. McDunn. You mind, Hamish?  
...God is gracious, God is good,  
thank you for this evening food.  
Forgive the ones that make the  
mess, forgive the blood, forgive  
the dress...Amen.

Isla grabs at a serving dish and begins to fill her plate. She piles it several inches high.

ISLA

Come on all! Eat! One never knows  
when they'll be tossed to the wind,  
*or whisked off to a private man-*  
*made island, eh, dad?*

Mrs. McDunn slips out to get more food.

HAMISH (CLEARING HIS THROAT)

Huh. You seem to have some things  
to say, Isla... I mentioned to your  
father that ya may have interest in  
competitive ridin'. We have a Show  
Jumping competition coming up. I  
was thinkin' ya might represent us.

Isla gives Hamish a fake smile.

ISLA

Why Hamish, ya believe I'm stronger than people know, and God bless you for that, but I'm busy right now stayin' out of the way of my dad-- you know, Mr. Star of Stage and Screen. He's makin' moves on your daughter, the ice cream queen, as you know. *Oh, isn't love just a splendid, splendid thing!*

Kelsie opens her mouth to speak, but Alec beats him to it.

ALEC

That's enough, Isla. You've obviously heard, or learned news that disturbs you. Let us talk about it, but *not* here.

Isla starts singing.

ISLA

*"Here, there, everywhere..."*

Kelsie can't hold back any longer.

KELSIE

What's this really about Isla?

Isla's voice softens.

ISLA

It's about, Kelsie, learning to be honest. To start with, Hamish, why don't ya tell us all about the merger happening in a few months?

(Hamish opens his mouth but isn't sure what to say.)

And while we're at it, Dad, you can catch us up on your green tech incubator and plans to sell to Hamish here, then snatch me up from my lonely castle and whisk me away to an even lonelier man-made island where--this is a good one Kelsie--I help open a second branch of the Ice Cream Emporium!

And while we're discussing Kelsie, perhaps she can explain who is working for whom? I thought she was working for me, but surprise!

Seems I was just a pawn in the master plan. You see, Dad wanted me to be interested in her business acumen and her little shop. That would keep me out of the way while said secret merger went through.

Oh, and the added prize was that Kelsie, a story in and of herself, could keep the press at bay, wondering if the hapless Sea Captain would finally trade in his ship for a new ice cream flavor! *Bingo!* But, oh no! Something happens on the way to the merger! Dad discovers he actually *likes* the ice cream queen! Maybe even *loves* her! So, he has to act fast before things start to unravel and share his true feelings! Which, of course, he decides to do at the Ireland premier. It's *hilarious*, isn't it? I bought a beautiful dress, yet the only ones to appreciate was fated to be the dolphins...Did I miss anything?

Kelsie looks to Alec, her eyebrows raised.

ALEC

I can explain.

Isla rises from the table taking her plate. Blood is draining from Alec's cheeks. He glances toward Hamish, who has a *deer-in-the-headlights* look.

HAMISH

Look, I...We...Let's just...lean back, and try to *breathe*...

KELSIE

*Breathe?*

Kelsie, fire in her eyes, stands, takes her plate and exits.

Lydea McDunn reaches across the table, grabs the server spoon out of the mashed potatoes, and clobbers Hamish soundly on the head.

HAMISH

What was that for, crazy woman!

Alec drops his head, mumbling to himself.

ALEC  
Well...*I saw her.*

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

ACT THREE: SCENE TWENTY-EIGHT

INT. OLD TOWN EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND. KELSIE'S ICE CREAM  
EMPORIUM.

CLOSE UP ON WHITEBOARD CALENDAR. TWO DAYS LABELED "KELSIE AND  
ISLA GONE" ARE FOLLOWED BY TWO WEEKS OF NORMAL WORK. ABOUT A  
HALF-DOZEN OF THOSE DAYS ARE MARKED OFF. CAMERA PULLS BACK  
INTO A WIDE SHOT.

KATIE  
So, you're still not speakin' to  
him?

Kelsie looks up from the ice cream vat where she seems to be  
creating something that includes coconut, heavy creme,  
crushed Brazil nuts, dark chocolate, cinnamon, and butter.

KELSIE  
Oh, I'll speak to him...as long as  
he stays across the street. If ya  
don't mind Katie, I don't want to  
go over it a again. I'm busy.

KATIE  
Have ya spoken to Isla?

KELSIE  
I've tried. She wants to be left  
alone.

KATIE  
Aye. That's my point. She didn't  
come in for work today.

Kelsie, for the first time, puts her things down and pushes  
her goggles up.

KELSIE  
No call? Nothing? ...Did ya try  
calling her? Calling the house?

KATIE

Aye. No answer on her cell. The house staff said they haven't a clue where she is. She stormed out about two hours ago--*taking Alex's Gull-Wing!* They've been trying to reach Alec for an hour now.

KELSIE

Why isn't Alec there? Does Isla even know how to drive?

KATIE

Alec's in London, meeting about a new project. As to Isla knowing how to drive... (shrugs) She got out of the driveway. That's a good sign.

Kelsie throws off her lab coat and goggles.

KELSIE

*We've got to find her!*

KATIE

Aye! I agree. What's the plan?

Kelsie considers the question for a moment.

KELSIE

Watch the store. If Alec calls, patch him through to me.

KATIE

I can do that. (Kelsie grabs her purse and heads for the door. Katie calls after her.) You bring her back now!

CUT TO:

SCENE TWENTY-NINE

INT. RANGE ROVER, OUTSIDE KELSIE'S SHOP, OLD TOWN, SCOTLAND

Kelsie jumps in the Range Rover, glancing up at the sky. She slings her purse onto the passenger seat and revs the car. The wind is whipping and dark clouds are rolling in. Her cell phone rings. She glances down. It's Alec.

KELSIE

Alec? Fine... Not now, Alec. We've no time for that...Isla's missing and she may have taken the Gull-Wing...Aye, that's what they've been calling about. *Does she even know how to drive?*...Aye. Any idea where she might have gone? Yes, a storm is brewing...Where is the beach? I know a stretch of I6 about twelve miles out. Got it...Are ya on you're way? ...That fast? *How?*...The coast guard? ...Never mind, just get here--and give Katie a quick call, to let her know where I'm going. Ta.

Kelsie hangs up, her face riddled with concern. She pushes down on the gas and swerves into traffic.

FADE TO:

SCENE THIRTY-TWO:

EXT. BEACH ALONG I6, WEST OF EDINBURGH

A WRANKLED BIT OF GUARD RAIL LEADING TO AN OPEN GAP.

The Rover pulls to the edge of the steep embankment. The back wheels of the Gull Wing angle up from an outcrop of rock about half way down. Kelsie hurriedly makes her way to the car but finds it empty. She notes footsteps leading toward the beach in the sand.

AN UMBRELLA, PLAIN ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT PAINTED UNDERNEATH, IS STUCK IN A ROCKY OUTCROP, WAVES RAGING BEHIND.

The tide is rolling in. Kelsie ducks down, using her cell flashlight to view the underside painting more closely. In masterful strokes, it depicts a sunrise scene. There are words written along the outer fringe of the umbrella. She takes a moment to read them before turning her phone off and rising to her feet. She pushes toward the churning ocean.

KELSIE

Isla! *Isla!*...

A dark figure is visible several meters out, fighting the turbulent waves. It doesn't respond. Kelsie dials her cell.

KELSIE

Alec! I think I found her, *thank God!* The car was wrecked and I, I... Well, she wasn't in the car, so I assume she's okay. I think I see her out in the waves... I know. I'll get to her. What's your ETA?..Good. Aye...Bye now.

Kelsie steps into the frigid water. Hair whips in her face. Lightning flashes. She sees the figure in the waves more clearly. It's definitely Isla, staring blankly at the waves.

KELSIE

Isla! Isla! *Don't be going any further!* There's rip tides and lightening!

The figure does not move. Kelsie slings her jacket toward the sandy embankment and wades further into the water.

KELSIE

Isla!...Do ya hear me?

Above the rage of the surf and storm, Kelsie hears Isla's voice, singing a simple tune, over and over. She can't make out the words. She calls out again to no avail. In a frantic burst of desperation, she screams the words she read along the outer fringes of the painted umbrella on the beach.

KELSIE

*"Candles only die when they fail to ignite another..."*

Isla turns slowly, perplexed, as if coming out of a trance.

ISLA

Kelsie...Don't come closer.

Kelsie stops a moment, then continues inching forward.

KELSIE

Then you come my way.

ISLA

Where did you see those words?

KELSIE

The umbrella. You anchored it in the rocks, just like your mom. I saw the car. *Are you hurt?*

Isla turns away, starting up her simple tune again.

KELSIE

Isla! Your mother painted that umbrella to keep you from doing something like this, on a day li--

Isla rounds on Kelsie, nostrils flaring.

ISLA

*What do ya know of my mother? What do you know of anything? Ya weren't there that night! You didn't watch her kiss you and just walk away, leavin' ya alone in a storm!*

KELSIE

*No! I wasn't! But I know you, Isla. I know this isn't really where you want to be, what you want to do.*

Isla stands rigid, like a statue or a rock for a moment. Then her head droops. She turns away, her words melancholy.

ISLA

*They all think I was too young; that I don't remember any of it. But I do. I remember all of it-- every little detail.*

Kelsie sees now that Isla is crying.

ISLA

*I watched her paint that umbrella. She sang to me while she painted. It's the song I was singing; a sad song, a Welsh song about pain, and failure, and the great cost of tryin' again...*

KELSIE

*How have you failed, Isla? You only fail when you quit.*

Isla spun, her eyes spitting fire.

ISLA

*She quit! You think you know me! You don't! You weren't abandoned on an empty beach...*

KELSIE

*Your mother made a mistake. Now, today, is about you.*

ISLA  
Me? Who is "me"?

Isla spins, the force of her emotion in her eyes.

ISLA  
Things are weighing in on *this* me  
and I don't have the answers and I  
don't have time to listen to some  
diatribe about the *sweet* or the  
*savor! This is life, Kelsie!* Life  
problems aren't resolved by a bowl  
of your latest, greatest ice cream!

Kelsie remembers the words from her dinner with Alec.

KELSIE  
He told you that, did he?

ISLA  
I used to think we shared  
everything. Now, we each have our  
ugly secrets...And, on that note--

Isla takes a cell phone from her upper pocket and throws it.  
Kelsie is barely able to catch it.

ISLA  
Check the highlighted feeds. You'll  
see I'm a monster; a curiosity; a  
*pitiabile waif!*

Kelsie narrows her eyes as she begins to read. Words light up  
on the screen: "*What is Alec hiding?*" Finally, she snaps her  
head up, heaving the phone as far as she can into the waves.

KELSIE  
It's garbage, Isla! You know that!  
Lies and fabrications, smoke and  
mirrors, sensationalist marketing.

ISLA  
*My whole life is lies and  
fabrications, Kelsie, smoke and  
mirrors...Everything--all of it--  
it's my fault!* I'm ruinin' Dad's  
film legacy. I crashed his car. I'm  
wrecking his relationships...I'm in  
the way. I'm just in the way for  
him...

I try so hard, but people keep walking away, leaving me alone on this beach, in that castle, on the future *fake island*--alone to face the storm I'm somehow in the center of, but don't know how to face! So, maybe it isn't so bad to go to the storm, to *call it!* To walk away first!

KELSIE

*You don't believe that, Isla!*  
You're smarter than that. I don't know why your mother did what she did, but I do know one thing: *you were her world! "A Candle only dies when it Fails to Ignite Another..."*  
*You were, YOU are her other, Isla.*  
Even as an infant, she wanted to ignite a fire in you!

Darkness, fear, depression, they're tough customers. They mess with your mind. They make you see things that aren't there, and miss options that are right in front of your face. They lie to you. They cause you to discount the good in your life and focus on the pain, the guilt, the anger, and feed, ever feed that darkness that would eat you alive... It leaves you feeling shattered and alone, believing there's no way out but to walk away, into the storm...

But it's illusion, Isla. Walking into the storm isn't *facing it!*

Isla breaks, her body racked with huge sobs. Kelsie lunges forward to hold her. They stand, water up to their chests, letting waves crash against them. Isla calms.

ISLA

Dad's gonna kill me.

KELSIE

Your father loves you--as stupid as some of his actions, and your actions have been, he really loves you. Cars can be replaced. Social chatter dissipates with social whim. *But an Isla!*

Now that's not a thing we want to lose. It comes around only once in a lifetime...

Isla takes a moment to finish wiping her eyes.

ISLA

How come you're so wise...You're just an ice cream lady.

KELSIE

Oh, we ice cream ladies know a winning flavor when we find it. And we're not above fighting for it either. Best be on our wa--

A huge flash of lightening, punctuated by ear-spitting thunder drowns her out. Kelsie throw a concerned look just as an enormous wave crashes over, knocking them both off their feet. Able to recover, they are spitting and floundering as they surface.

KELSIE

*Isla, this way!*

Isla gives a frightened nod and they turn toward shore. Another large wave hits, pulling Isla back. Kelsie lunges for her, barely missing the girl's ankle. Another wave hits.

ISLA

I (screaming, spitting) don't feel the b-bottom. Gettin' c-colder...

Kelsie searches the roiling sea, trying to get her bearings.

KELSIE

Aye...W-we're being s-s-sucked out. A r-rip...tide...*Shoes, outer garments off!...We gotta s-s-swim!*

Isla complies and starts to swim, but in the next lightening flash, it's obvious they've made little progress.

ISLA

*C-current strong...not...g-g-gettin' anywhere! Waves...too big!*

KELSIE

*Push, h-h-harder!...C-come on, I-Isla! Kick!...*

ISLA

F-freezin'...c-c-cold...too c-c-

Another huge wave hits, pulling them under again. Kelsie surfaces first. Isla gasps and screams as she bobs under.

ISLA

Kel! Arms-s...*tired!*

Another wave hits. Kelsie frantically searches for Isla. Gulping air, she dives, swimming blind, fanning out her arms. Just as she starts to surface, her arm brushes against something. She grabs at it. *It's an arm!* Pulling, she drags a limp body to the surface. Isla is out cold.

Kelsie thinks she hears a sound in the distance. She tries to check Isla's vitals. The sound grows stronger. Suddenly, a light shines down from somewhere above. The largest wave yet hits. She is pulled under, holing tightly to Isla. She manages after what seems a lifetime to surface, gasping.

CUT TO:

POV: KELSIE'S SIGHT IS BLURRY. A DARK FIGURE SPLASHES DOWN BESIDE HER, YELLING SOMETHING. IT TAKES A LONG MOMENT BEFORE SHE'S ABLE TO UNDERSTAND.

COAST GUARD DIVER

I've got her Ms. McDunn! I'VE GOT HER! You can let go! *LET GO!* ...

KELSIE (VOICE SLURRED)

N-n-not...b-b-breathing

COAST GUARD DIVER

LET GO!

She lets go. Her brain registers a sound: chopper blades.

KELSIE

*Wings...*

Kelsie stares as Isla disappears up into a streaming light.

POV: KELSIE SEES ANOTHER WAVE RISING UP, BLOCKING OUT THE LIGHT AND CRASHING DOWN. ROLLING, HER ARMS AND LEGS BARELY MOVE. SHE FINDS THE FAINT LIGHT ABOVE. DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO STRUGGLE, THE LIGHT, THE SOUND, THE COLD, THE CHAOS SEEM TO BE FADING. A TUG PULLS AT HER. IT HAS A HOLD ON HER WAIST. IT PULLS HER UP, BACK TOWARD THE COLD, THE CHAOS...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. OLD TOWN EDINBURGH, KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM

WIDE SHOT: KELSIE IS AGAIN SITTING WITH THE SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIALIST (FROM OPENING SCENE). CAMERA MOVES IN ON KELSIE

KELSIE

That's what it felt like...someone pulling on my waist, pulling me away from the blissful abyss. Next thing I knew, I woke in a hospital room. They said I'd been out for over a day! Isla came out of it about an hour after they got her to the hospital, but they say it was a bit touch and go with me. That's it. At least, what I'm aware of.

ALLY DUNCAN

Ah, the images of Alec, stripping down to his briefs, and diving into that raging sea when he saw ya go under! They're calling it the most spectacular boating accident rescue ever! A whole load of paparazzi filmed it. You've seen it, right?

KELSIE

How could I not. It's everywhere.

She gives Ally a sheepish grin and leans forward, her voice low, as if sharing a confidence with a friend.

ALLY

*He looked pretty good, didn't he?*

Despite herself, Kelsie's face twitches, but she doesn't answer.

ALLY

I hear the studios are scrambling to sign him up for a new film!

KELSIE

I would suppose so. He's earned his place there. And life goes on, despite the dramas and traumas of we folk. The sun still rises. The earth still turns.

Ally's expression turns to a tight smile.

ALLY

And brilliant food connoisseurs  
still await the latest flavors from  
the ice cream queen. Is love on the  
menu I wonder?

KELSIE

(smiles) That's a good question,  
one I don't have an answer for.  
Love doesn't always follow the  
recipe. But I will say this; there  
is certainly good flavor there!

Kelsie looks back toward the shop where Isla and Katie are  
working to fill an order.

ALLY

Ah! There's hope then!

Kelsie excuses herself and hurries back into the shop.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD TOWN EDINBURGH, KELSIE'S ICE CREAM EMPORIUM

Isla is just putting finishing touches on a small bowl of red  
and white striped ice cream.

KELSIE

What's takin' so long?

ISLA

Nothin'! On it's way right now.

Isla rushes off with the small dish, along with a bag of four  
other pints of ice cream. Katie and Kelsie stare after her  
for a long moment. Finally, Katie sighs.

KATIE

Hard to imagine that we had to turn  
to a *socialist* to straighten this  
whole thing out.

Kelsie looks over, giving her a large grin.

KELSIE

Ya feel better now? I know you've  
been dying to say that all day!

Katie throws a hand up

KATIE

I'm just sayin', when that hair  
finally does jump off that head of  
hers, it better not come runnin'  
toward my shop!

Kelsie bards a short laugh as Katie disappears in the back.  
Making her way slowly outside, she angles toward Ally.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD TOWN EDINBURGH, KELSIE'S ICE CREAM Emporium

ALLY

Ah, here she is...(turns to  
Kelsie). So, I was tellin' Isla I  
think this is the best flavor yet!  
Who would've thought the fire of  
pepper sauce could be balanced by  
the cool ice of peppermint! Ah,  
it's nothin' short of divine!

Ally quickly finishes the little bowl, then grabs the white  
bag with her pints in it, as if trying to stay ahead of a  
hurricane.

ALLY

Gotta run! Late, late, late,late,  
late! Isla! Child, keep up the good  
work--I love your flavors!

Isla turns toward Kelsie, indignantly mouthing the word,  
"child." Ally scurries off

ISLA

I'll start wearin' my dark Griffith  
smock if I hear anymore of that!  
No-one would call me *child* in it.

KELSIE

You gonna also wear wolf-bane and a  
wooden cross...

Isla breaks into a slow grin.

KELSIE

So, that's a genuine smile, is it?

ISLA

What'ya mean? I smile!

KATIE

Not enough. Not nearly enough. So,  
how are you doing? *Really*.

Isla looks down.

ISLA

Better. (Looks up, her smile even brighter.) Most days...better.

Kelsie puts a hand on her shoulder as they watch Ally, still scurrying toward her car. The woman's moves are sporadic, like a mouse on the hunt for cheese. As she turns a corner and disappears from view, golden sunlight reflects from the retro storefront of a Scottish tweed shop nearby.

ISLA

Ya think we should tell her that if ya look at the word '*stressed*,' backwards, it reads '*desserts*'?

Kelsie gives a soft grin.

KELSIE

I wouldn't be surprised, Isla, if she doesn't already know...

THE END