

NELSON

WRITTEN BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. LONG ISLAND CITY STREET - NIGHT

A parked white van with "Rainbow Brushstrokes" emblazoned on the side.

NELSON, 30, sporting short, unkempt hair, hops out of the van. A few distinct tattoos peek from her arms, each one a story in itself. She is dressed in paint-splattered white overalls, splotches of paint dot her hair and hands.

She trudges toward a multi-family home facing the New York harbor, but stops in her tracks and turns back.

INT. BUSHWICK CLUB - NIGHT

Music blares. The club is packed with a mix of young and old, black and white, straight and gay.

Nelson is alone on the crowded dance floor, moving awkwardly but effortlessly cool.

INT. BUSHWICK CLUB - NIGHT

A bartender hands Nelson a drink. She makes her way back to the dance floor, completely unaware of her surroundings.

Hannah, 28, stands across the room and watches her. After a moment, she steps forward and approaches Nelson.

HANNAH

Hi.

NELSON

Hey.

Hannah gestures to herself.

HANNAH

Hannah.

Nelson doesn't respond.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

It's Hannah.

NELSON

I'm Nelson.

HANNAH  
You don't recognize me? Well, I-- I  
look a lot different now. Had my  
cheeks and nose--

Nelson looks incredibly confused.

NELSON  
I'm sorry, do we know each other?

HANNAH  
Um, yeah. We went to--

A Joy Division song starts to play.

NELSON  
I love this song.

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH  
(to herself)  
Yeah, I know.

NELSON  
Let's dance.

HANNAH  
Uh, no. I'm a terrible dancer.

NELSON  
Me too.

HANNAH  
No, really, I--

Nelson heads to the dance floor, leaving Hannah behind.  
Hannah watches her for a moment, then smiles briefly before  
turning and walking away.

EXT. QUEENS - MORNING

The iconic Pepsi-Cola sign looms against the morning sky.  
Cherry blossoms cover the Unisphere. An Astoria ferry cuts  
through the East River. A spring morning in full bloom.

INT. NELSON'S LONG ISLAND CITY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM -  
MORNING

The apartment is mostly dark, with the light from the window  
casting a glow over the well-kept space. Everything is  
controlled, clean.

Art books are neatly stacked on shelves, and artwork covers the walls. The centerpiece: a Diane Arbus: Retrospective poster dominates an entire wall.

Nelson lies passed out on the couch, still dressed in her white overalls.

INSERT - NELSON'S DREAM

Nelson and a MAN are in the throes of a raw, physical encounter. Kissing, moving with hurried intensity, their bodies coated with sweat.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Nelson is jolted awake by the insistent buzzing of her cell. Sleepy, she fumbles for it and squints at the screen.

NELSON

Fuck.

She buries her face in the pillow and screams.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

The white van speeds through traffic.

INT. WHITE VAN - DAY

Nelson drives aggressively, gripping the steering wheel. MARCO, 30s, handsome, tattooed, and growing a beard, fidgets in the seat beside her.

MARCO

Jesus. Slow down.

Nelson glances at the clock on the dash.

NELSON

I'm running out of time.

MARCO

Where are we going?

Nelson clears her throat.

NELSON

A wedding.

MARCO

Wait, what? Whose wedding?

Nelson pauses several seconds before replying.

NELSON

Claudia's.

MARCO

Shit. You guys just broke up.

Nelson's voice cracks.

NELSON

Three months ago we-- we were planning our future. Now she's marrying some doctor she met at a fucking barbecue in Long Island.

MARCO

She's not worth it. She's a self-absorbed, selfish bitch.

NELSON

What's your point?

MARCO

She doesn't share her french fries with you. What kind of person does that? A sociopath.

NELSON

She's marrying a man. A fucking man!

Marco exhales, rubs his face.

MARCO

Not this again. What's the plan when we get there?

Nelson pauses, realizing she hasn't thought it through.

NELSON

Uh... I don't know. I'm not sure... I've been watching her. Following her after work. She looked... different. Sad. And then-- she did it again. Cut herself. There was blood everywhere. If I hadn't been there... I-- I don't know what would've happened.

MARCO  
Oh great, now you're a stalker.

NELSON  
I saved her life.

MARCO  
Stop the car.

NELSON  
No.

MARCO  
Stop the fucking car!

Nelson ignores him.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
Pull over, Nelson!

Marco grabs the wheel, causing the van to swerve to the right.

NELSON  
Hey, cut it out!

MARCO  
Stop the car!

Nelson pulls over.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
We're not going to Claudia's wedding, okay?

NELSON  
I have to stop her. She wants me to stop her.

MARCO  
No, she doesn't.

NELSON  
She sent me several texts this morning.

She pulls out her cell and shows him the texts.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
See?

MARCO

You're always looking for something  
or someone to give your life  
meaning.

Nelson looks defeated.

NELSON

I feel like... like my soul left my  
body.

MARCO

You're freaking out because another  
one of your bisexual girlfriends is  
marrying a guy. And in your  
insecure brain, you're doubting  
yourself again. Thinking, "What's  
wrong with me? I'm not good  
enough." You don't need a woman to  
give your life purpose, Nelson.

Nelson drops her head.

NELSON

You'd think I'd know better by now.

MARCO

Maybe take a class. Get a hobby.  
"Don't just exist. Live."

Nelson laughs.

NELSON

Thanks for reminding me how  
pathetic I am.

Nelson's on the verge of tears. Marco pulls her into a  
comforting hug.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. She takes a deep  
breath, trying to calm her racing thoughts, but it doesn't  
help. With a sigh, she gets up.

EXT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Nelson smokes a cigarette, looking at the NYC skyline. Her  
leg fidgets restlessly. She stubs out the cigarette and  
returns inside.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelson meticulously cleans the already spotless white cabinets.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marco and ROB, 30s, sit on the couch. Rob shows him some pictures on his iPad.

ROB  
This house has a front porch.

MARCO  
It's too much money.

ROB  
Okay, what about this share in Fire Island? It's a lot cheaper.

Marco scratches his arm.

MARCO  
The sand makes my eczema worse.

ROB  
What about a house upstate? Maybe on the Hudson or in the Catskills.

MARCO  
I'm allergic to grass.

ROB  
God, you're so sensitive. Can't you take allergy medicine?

MARCO  
Yeah, I guess I can take something.

ROB  
What about getting a dog?

MARCO  
But--

ROB  
Before you say no, remember there are hypoallergenic dogs, and you have a backyard.

MARCO  
I don't want a dog.



ROB  
It's important to me.

MARCO  
Can we just wait and think about  
it?

ROB  
For what?

Marco hesitates.

MARCO  
I... I don't know. I just don't  
think getting a dog is the right  
thing for us right now.

Rob stands up, frustrated.

ROB  
I don't know how to make you feel  
the same way I do.

Marco looks down.

MARCO  
I'm trying my hardest.

ROB  
I love you.

Marco stays silent, inhaling deeply.

MARCO  
I'm so sorry.

After a pause, Rob leaves, slamming the door behind him.

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT - DAY

Ceiling-high windows overlook downtown Manhattan. Nelson and Marco are painting a large wall. Marco looks depressed, hunched over with slumped shoulders.

MARCO  
I'm done dating. Just gonna have  
empty, trashy sex from now on.

NELSON  
You're Catholic. Semen-stained sex?  
It's just gonna make you feel  
yucky.

MARCO

Fuck.

NELSON

So, Rob broke up with you?

MARCO

I don't think we were ever really together.

NELSON

Yeah, that's... kind of the problem.

Marco exhales sharply.

MARCO

I feel bad for leading him on. I'm just...

NELSON

In love with someone else.

MARCO

I'm a mess.

NELSON

How's James?

MARCO

Same as always. Still can't leave the house. And now Pepi's got a tumor. Vet says he won't last much longer.

NELSON

Shit. This could push him over the edge.

MARCO

Stop it.

NELSON

Look at what happened with Alex. We missed all the signs, and he--

MARCO

Not helping right now.

NELSON

Sorry, I just...

She hesitates, rubbing her neck, then clears her throat.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
It's almost been two years.

MARCO  
You're obsessed.

NELSON  
You won't even talk about it.

MARCO  
I fucking hate him, okay?

They exchange a long look, then Marco returns to painting.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson tosses and turns in bed, lost in a dream.

INSERT - NELSON'S DREAM

Nelson and a MAN are entangled in a tense moment of attempted intimacy. Her body language is visibly tense, hesitant, and clumsy. Fumbling through the encounter, her anxiety turns the dream into a suffocating nightmare.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson jolts awake, breathless and sweating. She lies back down, trying to calm herself. After a long moment, she gets up.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAWN

An array of cleaning products sits on the counter. Nelson is on her knees, scrubbing the floor. Her hands are rashy and swollen, a clear sign she's been at this all night.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Nelson slumps across from her therapist, CATHERINE, 50s.

NELSON  
Ugh. Why do I-- I keep dreaming  
about having sex with men?

CATHERINE  
Have you ever been attracted to  
men?

Nelson twists her hands nervously.

NELSON

No, never.

CATHERINE

It's not unusual to dream about things we never plan to act on.

Nelson rambles on, panicked.

NELSON

Bu-- but, uh, what if my subconscious is trying to tell me something? Tell me something about my innermost desires that-- that I may not be consciously aware of, and I've just been denying it all this time? These dreams have been going on for months.

Nelson takes a shaky breath.

NELSON (CONT'D)

What if I'm a closet heterosexual?

Catherine notes the blisters on Nelson's hands.

CATHERINE

Are you cleaning obsessively again?

NELSON

My mind's racing a hundred miles an hour. I can't slow it down.

Catherine looks at her with concern.

CATHERINE

Nelson, did you stop taking your medication again?

Nelson looks down, ashamed.

NELSON

The sweating's... it's disgusting. I can't stand it. And it makes me bloated, constipated-- it's just... embarrassing.

CATHERINE

You have to learn to deal with it.

Nelson bites her nails.

NELSON

I think... I think I'm ready to explore this. Whatever it is.

CATHERINE

I'm worried this can trigger your PTSD.

NELSON

We've been working on my trauma for years. I think I'm ready. I can handle it.

Restless, Nelson gets up and starts pacing.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Where do I even start? How do I do this?

CATHERINE

Are you sure?

NELSON

Yes.

CATHERINE

Having sex with a man doesn't have to mean dating or falling in love. It's just physical attraction. Find someone you're attracted to and see where it goes.

The room falls silent as Nelson processes Catherine's words.

INT. JULIUS' BAR - NIGHT

Nelson and Marco sit at the bar, both visibly drunk.

NELSON

You're in love with someone you haven't seen in three years.

MARCO

It's a long-distance relationship.

NELSON

He lives in New Jersey.

MARCO

He doesn't want me to see him like that.

NELSON

Like what? Fat? What is it with gay men and body dysmorphia?

MARCO

He's insecure. He lost his job, his dad died during COVID, and now his dog's sick.

NELSON

I read something the other day, about gay men, as they get older. How they start to hate their bodies. It's like, when you're younger, looks are everything, right? But then, as you age, it's this... panic. Like, you're losing your relevance. No one looks at you the same anymore. You stop being that hot thing at the bar. And you feel it. You can't escape it. It's like this constant reminder that you're fading. And then there's the working out, the surgeries, the steroids, just to keep up... just to be seen. All this pressure to look like you're still in your twenties when you're not. How do you even live with that? How do you deal with the feeling that you're just... disappearing?

She laughs at herself.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Oh, God. What the fuck did I just say? I'm drunk and stupid again.

Marco looks depressed and downs his drink. He signals the bartender.

Nelson chews her lip.

NELSON (CONT'D)

You know what? I'm ready. I'm going to do it.

MARCO

Do what?

The bartender pours Marco another drink.

NELSON

You know?

Marco shakes his head.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
"Something round, split in the  
middle. Surrounded by hair, and  
water comes out."

MARCO  
I'm too wasted for riddles, Nelson.

NELSON  
Penis!

MARCO  
I'm sorry-- maybe I'm just a little  
too drunk. What are you fucking  
saying?

NELSON  
I'm ready to have penetrative sex  
with a man.

MARCO  
Oh.

There's a long silence.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
Holy Mary, mother of Saint Theresa.  
Not this again. Are you out of your  
fucking mind? If you want  
attention, just say it.

NELSON  
"Don't exist. Live."

MARCO  
I told you to get a hobby, not  
start having sex with men. This is  
crazy, even for you.

NELSON  
This could lead to something  
special.

MARCO  
Yeah, it sounds very romantic.

NELSON  
I'm trying to be more adventurous.

MARCO  
Jump out of a fucking plane.

NELSON  
Life's short.

Marco looks down, clearly sad.

MARCO  
It doesn't matter. We're all dead,  
sleeping with the fishes.

NELSON  
What's eating you?

Marco pauses, rotates his glass.

MARCO  
I asked James if I could come over  
this weekend. He said no.

NELSON  
But you already knew that. Why keep  
doing this?

Marco avoids the question and changes the subject.

MARCO  
This isn't really a dick issue, is  
it?

NELSON  
I often wonder what it will be  
like. How it'll feel.

MARCO  
Okay, that's enough. I can't-- This  
is a bad idea.

NELSON  
I don't know why you're so worried.

MARCO  
Oh, it sounds so safe. Great way to  
get raped and killed.

NELSON  
You know what? I think I'm going to  
set up a *Tinder* profile.

Marco shakes his head.

MARCO  
Do me a favor. Leave me out of it.



NELSON

Oh, come on. I need your help.  
What's the worst that could happen?

MARCO

Well, let's see. Weight gain,  
insomnia, depression... feeling  
like you're not good enough.

NELSON

Can you please take this seriously?

MARCO

I just don't get it. Why now?

NELSON

It's hard to explain. Maybe I'm  
just depressed. I don't feel much  
these days. I'm just looking for  
something different.

She drifts off.

NELSON (CONT'D)

There's no one special in my life,  
Marco.

Marco sadly nods.

MARCO

I never met a Ryan Gosling, or a  
Jared Leto.

NELSON

It's so sad.

MARCO

I know you're not great with  
rejection, but your last breakup  
was actually a good thing. Maybe  
you should try falling in love  
again.

NELSON

Why bother? All that suffering for  
nothing.

MARCO

For every girl that breaks your  
heart, there's a chocolate-covered-  
strawberry-eating-from-your-pussy  
girl out there.

Nelson cackles.

NELSON  
Right, right, I haven't found my  
"chocolate-covered-strawberries-  
eating-from-my-pussy" girl yet.

MARCO  
One day you will.

They laugh.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Nelson paints a wall while Marco, on a ladder, does the trim.

NELSON  
So, do I have to suck--

MARCO  
Ugh, please don't say it.  
Revolting.

NELSON  
Why?

MARCO  
You're like my sister. It's gross,  
okay?

NELSON  
Oh, come on. Please.

Marco rolls his eyes.

MARCO  
Some of the guys I've dated, they  
weren't exactly hungry for it.

NELSON  
Do you like it?

MARCO  
I want it in my mouth all the time.

NELSON  
Any tips?

MARCO  
Just don't bite it off.

NELSON  
Please, be serious.

Marco jumps down from the ladder.

MARCO

Do you like going down on a girl?

NELSON

Uh, not always. Only when I'm in love.

She dips the roller.

NELSON (CONT'D)

So, um, what about hand jobs?

Marco covers his face.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Come on, please. I should learn how to give a proper hand job, right?

Marco shakes his head.

MARCO

"Mahorrla Intoxicating Pleasure Method." Just google it.

Nelson quickly reaches for her cell to Google it. Marco places a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Just remember, don't do anything you're not comfortable with. The decision is yours.

Nelson hugs him.

NELSON

Thank you.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marco stands in the living room, looking at framed photos on a shelf.

INSERT FRAMED PHOTOS

-- Nelson, Marco, and ALEX, 30s, on the edge of a canyon, radiating happiness.

-- Nelson and Alex holding a birthday cake with blazing candles, standing in front of Marco.

-- Alex proudly seated on his surfboard in the ocean.

-- Nelson dressed as Ziggy Stardust, Marco as Halloween Jack, and Alex as Thin White Duke for Halloween.

Marco sinks onto the couch, his spirits crushed by the sight of the photos. Nelson enters with two glasses and a bottle of wine, and sits down beside him.

NELSON

Ready.

Marco forces a smile.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Chinese takeout boxes are scattered across the coffee table, alongside an empty wine bottle. Nelson sits on the couch, eagerly swiping through *Tinder* on her cell. Marco, clearly exhausted, rubs his head.

NELSON

What about him?

MARCO

I can smell the fish from here.  
Like a can of tuna left out in the  
sun for days.

Nelson swipes.

NELSON

Okay, this one?

MARCO

Looks like the type of guy who  
sells coke at a community college.

Nelson swipes.

NELSON

Him?

MARCO

Perfect example of what happens  
when cousins marry.

Frustrated, Nelson swipes once more.

NELSON

Last one, I swear.

MARCO

Really? Definitely looks like  
someone who sniffs glue and eats  
lead paint chips.

NELSON

Okay, enough. You're not taking  
this seriously.

MARCO

Listen, I think they're slipping  
something wild into your  
antidepressants.

Nelson looks down.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck. You've stopped taking  
them again.

NELSON

I hate them.

MARCO

But--

NELSON

I know. I'm really intense.

MARCO

I think you're absolutely terrific.

Nelson laughs.

NELSON

Yeah, right. I drive you crazy.

MARCO

That's an exaggeration.

NELSON

It's true.

Marco takes the cell from her hand.

MARCO

Okay, let me concentrate.

He swipes, swipes, swipes until he finally stops.

MARCO (CONT'D)

This one.

Nelson looks puzzled.

NELSON

Really?

MARCO

He looks like he's packing small.  
You don't want to be cracked open  
like a can opener.

Nelson grimaces. That sounds painful.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Potentially, a bottom.

They laugh.

EXT. CONNECTICUT MANSION - DAY

Nelson and Marco jump out of the van, quickly unloading the back.

NELSON

So... I've got my first date  
tonight.

MARCO

I really wish you'd stop trying to  
make "losing-my-virginity-to-a-man"  
happen.

NELSON

Don't worry.

MARCO

Nelson, you are historically messy.  
Nothing's ever easy with you.

NELSON

I need you to be supportive.

MARCO

It's weird shit, okay?

NELSON

Please try.

MARCO

All right, all right. Show me the  
lucky guy.

Nelson shows him a picture on her cell.

MARCO (CONT'D)

You've got to be kidding me.

NELSON  
What wrong now?

MARCO  
He's the white dude who sings made-up love songs to his dog while his mommy makes him organic mac and cheese.

NELSON  
Jesus.

MARCO  
Leave Jesus out of this. He's been traumatized enough.

NELSON  
Can you please be serious?

MARCO  
Okay, okay. Show me again.

Nelson shows him the picture again.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
Good.

NELSON  
Good?

MARCO  
Looks like he has a little...

Marco makes the sign for a tiny penis with his fingers. Nelson shakes her head, indicating that she has reached her limit.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nelson makes out with TINDER GUY, 20s. He unzips his pants. She looks ill at the sight of his erect penis. He motions for her to suck it. But instead, ends up vomiting all over it.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Catherine sits across from Nelson.

CATHERINE  
What happened?

NELSON  
I puked.

CATHERINE

On him?

Nelson covers her face, whimpering.

NELSON

All over it.

CATHERINE

It's okay.

NELSON

What's wrong with me? Why did I react like that?

CATHERINE

You're afraid of men in power. The phallus symbolizes authority, and you prefer to be in control.

Nelson lets that sink in.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Or maybe you just find the penis... disgusting. It's not your thing, Nelson.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is lively and down-to-earth, filled with Brooklyn locals. Nelson and GREG, 30s, his hair in a bun, wearing a Megan Rapinoe T-shirt, sit at a table. The waitress, Hannah, approaches. Upon seeing Nelson, she briefly pauses, caught off guard.

HANNAH

Hi.

NELSON

Hi.

Hannah intently focuses on Nelson, like she's the only person in the entire place.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'll have a--

NELSON (CONT'D)

Corona.

HANNAH

Corona.

Nelson looks up at Hannah.



NELSON (CONT'D)  
How'd you know?

Hannah doesn't say anything.

GREG  
Maybe she's telepathic.

NELSON  
Hmm.

GREG  
(to Hannah)  
Uh, I'll have nachos with guac and  
a margarita. No salt.

Hannah finally acknowledges Greg. Unimpressed, she slips away.

Greg pulls out his wallet and begins counting out a small amount of cash.

NELSON  
It's okay, this one's on me.

GREG  
Cool. Okay.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hannah looks in the mirror and takes a pin out of her hair, allowing it to fall around her shoulders. She applies lipstick.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson looks bored, already regretting this.

GREG  
Like my T-shirt?

NELSON  
Megan Rapinoe's cool.

Greg winks at her.

GREG  
I wore it to make you feel  
comfortable.

NELSON  
Uh-huh.

An awkward silence hangs between them.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
So, where do you live, Greg?

Greg hesitates before responding.

GREG  
My mom's basement. Lost my job  
during the pandemic.

NELSON  
But the pandemic's over.

GREG  
Uh, no rush to get back to work.  
I've become less ambitious.

NELSON  
Uh-huh.

GREG  
We can't do it at my mom's place.  
She'd totally flip out. So, it'll  
have to be at yours.

NELSON  
Sure.

Hannah returns with drinks and nachos on a tray. She serves them while staring at Nelson.

HANNAH  
(to Nelson)  
Anything else?

Nelson looks up at her, mildly bewildered.

NELSON  
No.

Hannah lingers for a moment, then slips away. Greg stuffs nacho chips into his mouth.

GREG  
So, you want to fuck men now?

Dripping food onto the plate.

GREG (CONT'D)  
It's okay. You don't have to be  
embarrassed. I think what you're  
doing is really brave. Sometimes, I  
want a guy to suck my dick.  
(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

So, uh, I'll go to a gay bar and just stand outside. Can't bring myself to go in... Do you want to suck my dick? I'll go down on you if you want.

Nelson looks mortified.

NELSON

Uh, look, I... I'm sorry. I...

GREG

No pressure. You don't have to suck it.

Nelson rubs her neck.

NELSON

I-- I can't do this.

GREG

You sure?

Nelson nods.

NELSON

I'm so sorry.

GREG

It's all right. Well, if you change your mind, just text me, okay?

Greg heads for the exit, and seconds later, Hannah arrives to clear the table. Nelson looks sad and confused.

HANNAH

Can I get you another drink?

NELSON

Just the check. Thanks.

Hannah places the check on the table, turns, thinks to herself, and then turns right back.

HANNAH

Hey. Are you okay?

NELSON

No. Not really.

Nelson stares into Hannah's eyes, the intensity palpable.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
You know, you remind me of  
someone...

HANNAH  
We went to college together.

NELSON  
Sarah Lawrence?

HANNAH  
Yeah.

NELSON  
I...

Hannah touches a tattoo on the inside of Nelson's arm, right  
below her elbow.

HANNAH  
Your mom's signature... You got it  
right after she passed away. I went  
with you.

Nelson looks down, a shocked realization dawning on her.

NELSON  
You held my hand the whole time.

Nelson looks up at Hannah.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Hannah.

They stare into each others' eyes for a moment.

HANNAH  
I've always thought you should wear  
glasses.

NELSON  
I never see what's in front of me.

HANNAH  
No. You don't.

Nelson can't stop staring at Hannah.

NELSON  
You look so different.

HANNAH  
I was in the early stages of  
transitioning when you graduated.

NELSON  
You're beautiful.

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH  
Thank you.

There's a pause.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Um, were you on a date?

Nelson chews her lip, feeling embarrassed.

NELSON  
Uh-huh.

HANNAH  
You're not gay anymore? Not that it matters.

NELSON  
No, I'm still gay. I'm just in the middle of an existential crisis.

HANNAH  
Aren't we all?

They share a smile.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Well, um, I'm getting off soon.  
Would you like to--

NELSON  
Yes.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT

The Brooklyn Bridge stands nearly empty, with few people in sight. Nelson and Hannah stroll along, engaged in conversation.

NELSON  
Are you seeing anyone?

Hannah shakes her head.

HANNAH  
Dating's hard. But when you're trans, it's even harder. Most people are smart, but lazy.  
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

They don't ask questions. If you don't understand something, just ask.

NELSON

I ask a lot of questions.

HANNAH

You always did.

NELSON

What's the hardest part?

HANNAH

I always fall the hardest.

NELSON

They do say one person always loves more.

A silence falls between them.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Are you teaching?

HANNAH

Yeah. I only wait tables on the weekends for extra cash.

NELSON

Do you still like it?

HANNAH

I love it. I love kids. They're smarter than most adults. They see through all the bullshit. They're persistent too. They won't accept "no" for an answer. They'll keep trying until they get what they want.

NELSON

I'm glad you're doing what you love.

HANNAH

What about you?

Nelson looks down.

NELSON

Um, nothing. I'm just doing nothing.

HANNAH  
You're not curating?

Nelson shakes her head.

NELSON  
I... I joined my friend's painting company.

HANNAH  
You don't miss it?

NELSON  
Sometimes.

Hannah looks at Nelson curiously and confused.

HANNAH  
Why did you stop?

NELSON  
The museum was... overwhelming. Too many people. With painting homes, I don't have to deal with anyone, or talk to anyone. Marco, my best friend, handles all the talking and business stuff.

HANNAH  
I remember in college, you had a lot of panic attacks.

NELSON  
Still do. It gets worse as you get older.

HANNAH  
Life gets harder. Not easier.

NELSON  
I know this might sound terrible, but... I kind of miss the lockdowns. It cured my anxiety. I felt safe in the isolation.

HANNAH  
Honestly, Nelson, I think it made it worse. The lockdown was like a shield, but now that it's gone, facing the world feels harder than ever.

Nelson takes in Hannah's words. The sun rises over the city, casting an orange glow on everything. They step up to the railing, pausing to absorb the stunning view.

NELSON  
Isn't that amazing?

HANNAH  
Yeah.

A jogger breezes past them. Hannah looks at her watch.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
We've been walking and talking all night.

NELSON  
I like talking to you.

HANNAH  
Me too.

INT. SEX SHOP - DAY

Nelson is browsing when she notices a STRAIGHT COUPLE making out against a wall. The woman slides her hand down the man's pants. Nelson can't help but watch. The couple notices Nelson staring and stops, glaring at her. Nelson quickly looks away, embarrassed, and shuffles off.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson lies in bed, masturbating while glancing at heterosexual porn on her laptop. She closes her eyes, but nothing's happening. She laughs, shuts the laptop, and kills the bedside lamp.

INT. MOMA - DAY

The museum is nearly empty. Nelson and Hannah spin around with their eyes closed.

NELSON  
Now.

They open their eyes to "The Lovers" by René Magritte. They take in the painting, completely absorbed.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Together... yet apart.



Hannah looks at Nelson, processing her words.

INT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Nelson and Hannah stroll through the park, eating ice cream.

HANNAH  
Can I ask you something?

NELSON  
Sure.

HANNAH  
Why were you really on a date with that guy? I'm not judging, but you were such a militant lesbian in college.

NELSON  
Remember my mullet?

HANNAH  
Oh, I blocked that from my memory.

They laugh.

NELSON  
I just turned thirty and I've never been with a man.

HANNAH  
Never?

Nelson shakes her head.

NELSON  
Never even seen a penis until the other night.

HANNAH  
Oh, wow. What happened?

NELSON  
I threw up on it. Yeah. You should've seen his face-- like I'd just ruined the Mona Lisa.

Hannah laughs.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Do you think it's weird?

HANNAH

Nope. Never had coffee.

NELSON

Really? Why not?

HANNAH

The smell makes me sick.

NELSON

I need a cup every morning. Can't open my eyes without it.

HANNAH

Never tried pot. People always give me weird looks when they find out.

NELSON

Never had a pickle. Ever.

HANNAH

Never had Japanese food.

NELSON

What? How is that even possible? You live in New York City.

HANNAH

I know, I know. I'll try it one day. And I've never seen "Desert Hearts."

NELSON

Best film ever.

A brief pause.

HANNAH

So why now?

Nelson pauses before replying.

NELSON

Um, every one of my ex-girlfriends is now married to a man. They date me, leave me, then get married and have kids. I guess I want to know what it feels like. What they feel.

HANNAH

So you think they left you because you don't have a penis?

NELSON  
I... I think so.

HANNAH  
Fascinating.

Hannah chuckles in disbelief.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
You're kidding, right? Do you  
really believe that?

NELSON  
I... I don't know. I know it sounds  
stupid. So, uh, what do you think?

HANNAH  
Maybe they end up with men because  
of all the biphobia. A lot of the  
gay community refuses to date  
bisexuals.

NELSON  
Or maybe I just have bad luck with  
women.

HANNAH  
Can I be honest with you, Nelson?

NELSON  
Yeah.

HANNAH  
I think your ego's bruised. You  
feel inadequate, so you've  
convinced yourself it's "the penis"  
causing all the issues. It's easier  
than facing the truth, right? They  
leave because you don't let anyone  
in. You push people away. No one  
can get close. Intimacy scares the  
shit out of you, Nelson.

Nelson takes a moment to process.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
You can't be scared of life.

NELSON  
I guess it wouldn't be meaningful  
if I didn't put myself through  
unnecessary suffering.

HANNAH  
No, it wouldn't.

NELSON  
I've missed having you in my life.  
You always tell me the truth.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hannah approaches a table of DRUNK MEN.

HANNAH  
What can I get for you?

DRUNK MAN #1 leers at Hannah and snickers with his friends.

MAN #1  
What do you recommend?

HANNAH  
Well, our specials tonight are--

DRUNK MAN #2 interrupts, pointing at Hannah's big hands.

MAN #2  
Wait a minute, are you a dude?

Hannah's smile fades.

HANNAH  
I'm sorry, what?

MAN #1  
You're a man in a dress?

Hannah takes a deep breath and tries to maintain her composure.

DRUNK MAN #3  
We don't want no tranny serving us.

HANNAH  
Asshole.

The table erupts in laughter, the sound hollow and cruel. Drunk Man #1 suddenly grabs her arm, his fingers digging into her skin. His grip is tight, too tight.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Get your hands off me!

SheHannah doesn't think. The bowl of salsa - hot, red, and burning - flies from her hand, splattering across his face.

The men shout. Drunk Man #1 screams in pain, his hands clawing at his eyes, desperately trying to wipe the burning sauce away.

MAN #1  
I can't see! You fucking bitch!

The MANAGER rushes over.

MANAGER  
What's going on?

HANNAH  
He grabbed my--

Hannah tries to explain, but the drunk men drown her out, shouting over her, pointing fingers.

MAN #2  
This freak attacked us!

MAN #3  
We're gonna fucking sue you!

MANAGER  
(to Hannah)  
Get out! Out!

Hannah rips off her apron and walks out.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Hannah sits on her bed, crying. Nelson sits beside her.

HANNAH  
Who cares, right?

NELSON  
I care.

Nelson tenses up, her anger rising.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I wish I was there I would've--

HANNAH  
It's okay.

NELSON  
I can't believe this shit still happens.

Nelson hands Hannah a tissue.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
You're still teaching, right?

Hannah nods and wipes her face.

HANNAH  
Yeah, but the landlord raised the rent again.

NELSON  
Bastard.

HANNAH  
I can't afford to live in Brooklyn anymore.

NELSON  
It's sucks teachers don't get paid enough.

HANNAH  
You didn't have to come right over.

NELSON  
I didn't want you to be alone.

Hannah looks at Nelson, touched.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Let's go for a walk, get some fresh air. It'll help.

HANNAH  
I should be looking for job.

NELSON  
Come on, it's a nice day.

HANNAH  
Okay.

EXT. BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN - DAY

Hannah and Nelson walk past the cherry blossoms.

HANNAH  
How's the dating going?

NELSON  
Honestly, I'm done with it. I don't think I can date another guy. I don't even know what I was thinking.

HANNAH  
I don't blame you. They have such  
big hands.

Hannah looks at her hands, laughing to herself.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
All the hormones in the world  
couldn't shrink them.

Nelson seems distracted, deep in thought. Hannah notices.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
What's up?

Nelson shrugs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Come on.

NELSON  
I... uh, it's hard to explain.

HANNAH  
I'm a good listener, remember?

Nelson hesitates for a moment, then opens up.

NELSON  
It's just... I can't figure out  
what I really want. One day, I feel  
one way, and the next, something  
else. The truth is, when I'm in a  
relationship, I want to run. But I  
hate being alone. It's scary.  
Sounds crazy, right?

HANNAH  
Not at all.

NELSON  
God, I'm always talking about  
myself. I know I can be self-  
absorbed.

HANNAH  
No, you're not. Your feelings are  
important to me. Go on.

NELSON  
I admire people who know what they  
want. People who go after it, no  
matter what it takes.

HANNAH

Most people don't know what they want, Nelson. They don't like what they're doing, and they don't even like themselves. I look around, and all I see is sad people.

NELSON

Don't be ungrateful, right? What do I have to worry about? I'm healthy. Well, my body is... my brain is all messed up. I have a job, a roof over my head...

HANNAH

Jesus, you're so hard on yourself.

NELSON

It's just... I haven't figured anything out.

HANNAH

When you're young, you don't have the answers. When you're old, you still don't have the answers. That's life.

Nelson looks down.

NELSON

I... I feel like I'm floundering. I have no direction.

HANNAH

What about the museum?

NELSON

They'll never take me back.

HANNAH

Why? What happened?

Nelson bites her nails.

NELSON

I-- I was doing a tour on O'Keeffe. I was standing in front of her infamous Black Iris, and all of a sudden, I started hyperventilating. Sweating. Shaking uncontrollably. They thought I was going to knock over one of the paintings. 911 was called, and I was taken away on a stretcher.



HANNAH

You had a meltdown in front of the most famous painting of female genitalia?

NELSON

Uh-huh.

They both laugh.

HANNAH

What about working in a gallery? I mean, they don't get the same foot traffic as museums, and it's not like people are buying art right now.

NELSON

I don't know if I could handle it.

HANNAH

Just be yourself, Nelson.

NELSON

I don't know what that is anymore.

Hannah's stomach growls.

HANNAH

I forgot to eat today.

Nelson approaches a hot dog stand.

NELSON

(to vendor)

Two with mustard. Thanks.

The vendor hands over two hot dogs. Nelson pays and turns to Hannah, handing her one.

HANNAH

You know what I like about you?  
You're honest. You say what's on  
your mind. You feel human.

Nelson watches as Hannah takes a bite of her hot dog.

NELSON

Why is it that couples in movies  
are always walking around eating  
hot dogs on dates?

HANNAH

They sure are.

Nelson takes a bite of her hot dog, and mustard drips down the corner of her mouth. Hannah reaches over to wipe it off, and they both pause.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Are we on a date?

Nelson and Hannah's eyes meet. A moment.

INT. RUSS & DAUGHTERS - DAY

Nelson and Hannah sit at a small table, surrounded by the bustling atmosphere of the iconic deli. Hannah holds out a pickle to Nelson.

HANNAH  
Ready...?

Nelson hesitates for a moment before closing her eyes and taking a bite. Hannah watches on with anticipation as Nelson chews thoughtfully. Finally, Nelson opens her eyes and looks at Hannah with a grin.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
And?

NELSON  
Not bad. Actually, really good.

They laugh.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hannah and Nelson sit cross-legged on the floor. Nelson takes a hit from a joint and is about to pass it to Hannah but hesitates.

NELSON  
You sure?

HANNAH  
Yep.

NELSON  
I'm a bad influence.

HANNAH  
You sure are.

Nelson passes her the joint. Hannah inhales and coughs.

NELSON  
How you feeling?

HANNAH  
Dizzy.

NELSON  
Let's lie down.

They lie down on the floor and stare at the ceiling for a long time. High.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
You okay?

HANNAH  
I want to read "One Hundred Years of Solitude." In Spanish.

NELSON  
Do you want to watch a movie or play some word games?

Hannah laughs.

HANNAH  
Word games? Really?

Hannah points to a record player.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Music.

Nelson thumbs through records and selects "Ghasteen" by Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds. She puts it on the spindle and lies back down. The music is dreamy and haunting. Hannah laughs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
I can't believe you picked that record out of all of them. You really are depressed.

They listen to the music, completely absorbed. Hannah glances at Nelson, whose eyes are closed.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
What is it?

Nelson opens her eyes and looks at Hannah.

NELSON  
Why did we drift apart?

HANNAH  
Everything comes to an end.

NELSON  
But we were so close.

HANNAH  
We were young... You graduated a year before I did. After graduation, I moved back home. Transitioning was hard in New York.

NELSON  
I should've been there for you.

HANNAH  
Uh, I moved back in 2013. I looked you up, but you were gone.

NELSON  
The museum sent me to Paris for a year.

HANNAH  
Did you visit the Musée Rodin?

NELSON  
Breathtaking.

HANNAH  
I always wanted to go to Paris.

NELSON  
You'd fit perfectly.

Nelson lets out a long, deep sigh.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I wish we kept in touch.

HANNAH  
Me too.

They share a long, complicated moment, their expressions conveying the weight of their shared history and the complexity of their current feelings. There's a palpable sense of tension and longing in the air.

NELSON  
Time flies, huh?

HANNAH  
Yeah.

They both look in different directions, deep in thought.

EXT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Light rain falls. Nelson stands on the fire escape, smoking a cigarette. A lightning bolt cuts through the sky. The rain grows heavier. She puts out her cigarette and goes back inside.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The cabinets are all open, and on the counter, there are piles of dishes, glassware, flatware, and pots. Nelson is in the middle of drying them. Her cell buzzes, and she looks at the screen.

HANNAH (TEXT)  
*You awake? Can't sleep.*

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hannah lies in bed, watching the end of "Desert Hearts" on her television while holding her cell to her ear.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson lies in bed, talking on her cell. She reaches for the remote and clicks the television off.

INTERCUT: HANNAH AND NELSON

Hannah sniffles.

NELSON  
Hannah...

HANNAH  
Yeah?

NELSON  
Are you crying?

HANNAH  
It's just the rain.

There's a silence, both deep in thought.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Thanks for staying up with me  
during the storm.

NELSON  
I'm glad you called.

HANNAH  
Well, I appreciate it. Good night,  
Nelson.

NELSON  
Good night, Hannah.

Nelson and Hannah hang up.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marco lies in bed, staring at the TV as the credits roll.  
He's on his cell.

MARCO  
(into phone)  
Good night.

He hangs up, full of regret. He buries his head in the  
pillow.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Suddenly, filled with a newfound determination, Marco seizes  
his cell and dials a number. It rings.

MARCO  
(into phone)  
I... I want to watch a movie,  
sitting next to you, on the couch,  
not on the phone...

He listens, nervous and uncertain.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
Okay.

He hangs up and a huge smile spreads across his face.

INT. BROOKLYN CAFE - DAY

Hannah and Nelson sit across from each other at a table with  
one cup of coffee.

NELSON  
Are you ready?

Hannah takes a deep breath.

HANNAH  
Yes.

Hannah brings the cup to her mouth but the smell makes her gag. She coughs and sputters. Reacting quickly, Nelson snatches the cup from Hannah's hand and hurls it to the floor. It shatters with a loud crash.

An ANGRY WAITER rushes over to their table.

ANGRY WAITER  
What the hell is wrong with you people?

HANNAH  
Run for your life!

Hannah and Nelson bolt out of the door.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

Nelson and Hannah catch their breath on a bench. Nelson bursts into hysterical laughter, feeling a newfound sense of freedom and ease, even if it's only for a moment.

HANNAH  
What's so funny?

NELSON  
I feel like I can do anything.

HANNAH  
Anything?

NELSON  
Anything!

Hannah pulls a folded paper from her bag and hands it to Nelson.

HANNAH  
Um, a small gallery in Brooklyn is looking for a new curator.

Nelson starts to sweat. Hannah pulls out a tissue from her bag and gently dabs Nelson's forehead.

NELSON  
I can't do it.

HANNAH  
Yes, you can.

NELSON  
I-- I fuck everything up.

HANNAH  
Why, Nelson?

NELSON  
I don't know... I think maybe I  
don't deserve it. It's just easier  
not to want anything. That way, it  
doesn't hurt.

Hannah takes Nelson's hand.

HANNAH  
There's pain in everything. There's  
joy in everything. That's life,  
Nelson. You can't run away from it.

Nelson takes it in.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Marco shoots the ball, but it bounces off the rim. He passes  
it to Nelson, who's staring into space.

MARCO  
Hey! Wake up.

Nelson snaps out of it and takes the ball.

NELSON  
Sorry, I'm just...

MARCO  
What's going on?

She can barely dribble the ball.

NELSON  
I... I feel like I'll never have  
the courage to go after what I  
really want.

MARCO  
Just because you keep telling  
yourself that doesn't make it true.



Nelson aims and shoots but misses. Marco chases after the ball. She chews her lip.

NELSON

I-- I want to ask Hannah out on a real date.

MARCO

So, just do it.

Nelson shakes her head.

NELSON

It won't work.

MARCO

Why not?

NELSON

I'm a mess.

MARCO

That's true.

NELSON

You should really stop me.

Marco shakes his head no-way.

MARCO

Tell me what's really scaring you, Nelson.

Nelson answers as if it goes without saying.

NELSON

I'm scared that I'll just disappoint her. You know?

MARCO

Do you like her?

NELSON

So much.

She looks overwhelmed.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I-- I have panic attacks all the time. My anxiety's taking over again. I can't function without taking a fucking pill every day.

MARCO

You're using your mental health problems as an excuse to avoid life.

NELSON

Yeah, I know.

MARCO

Doesn't she know all this about you already?

Nelson nods.

NELSON

When we were in college, I had this really bad panic attack. She stayed with me the whole night, in the dark, humming Ian Curtis songs.

MARCO

She sounds amazing.

NELSON

She is.

MARCO

You're lucky she's back in your life. Don't fuck this up.

NELSON

The world feels so much easier with her in it. I just wish I had it all figured out, you know?

MARCO

I don't think anyone has it all figured out. And honestly, anyone who thinks they do is just stupid. But people like you, Nelson, people who are trying to be better... are the coolest people alive.

Nelson takes this in, her expression softening. Marco shoots and misses again.

MARCO (CONT'D)

I'm seeing James.

Nelson looks surprised.

NELSON

Wait, really?

MARCO  
I said I wanted to see him. He  
finally said yes.

NELSON  
That's great.

She aims but stops before shooting.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
What are we doing?

MARCO  
What do you mean?

NELSON  
Look at us. This is humiliating.

She motions to a pair of laughing kids nearby.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
They're laughing at us.

MARCO  
No, they're not.

NELSON  
Who are we fooling? We're not good  
at sports.

MARCO  
Gay people are great at sports.

NELSON  
Yeah, but we suck.

MARCO  
We only hang out in bars.

NELSON  
I know.

Marco sighs.

MARCO  
Let's go grab a beer.

NELSON  
Okay.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Nelson lies awake, staring at the ceiling. She looks exhausted, with dark circles under her eyes. She can't sleep.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Nelson stares out of the window, her eyes slowly closing.

INT. SUBWAY - SECONDS LATER

A PASSENGER attempts to squeeze into the seat beside Nelson, but her bag takes up some space.

PASSENGER

Hey, can you move your bag?

No response.

PASSENGER (CONT'D)

Hey. Can you move your--

Nelson jolts awake, startled and disoriented. She looks around, confused and panicked, swinging punches in the air.

NELSON

Stay away from me! Don't touch me!

The passenger takes a step back, clearly alarmed by Nelson's reaction. The other passengers turn to look, but quickly return to their own business.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

The doors open, Nelson runs out, feeling embarrassed by her outburst.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Nelson paces anxiously.

NELSON

I-- I don't know what's happening anymore. What's wrong with me? I can't even handle a simple train ride. It feels like-- like I'm losing my mind again.

CATHERINE

You have PTSD, Nelson. You're constantly on edge, afraid someone might hurt you at any moment. Your past traumas still haunt you. You don't trust anyone.

Nelson looks down.

NELSON

(almost to herself)  
I know.

CATHERINE

What's triggering all this?

Nelson sits and takes a breath.

NELSON

I'm not sleeping again.

CATHERINE

Why's that?

NELSON

I have a date with Hannah.

CATHERINE

And how does that make you feel?

NELSON

I'm scared. I keep having these negative thoughts that-- that I'm not good enough. Ugh, I'm so pathetic.

CATHERINE

You're not pathetic, Nelson. Do you still want to go on the date?

NELSON

Of course.

Catherine leans forward.

CATHERINE

Let's try a CBT exercise, okay?  
We'll challenge negative thoughts with positive ones.

Nelson groans.

NELSON

Will it really help?

CATHERINE  
It can. Trust me.

NELSON  
Okay, how does it work?

CATHERINE  
Says something negative about  
yourself. Anything.

Self-deprecation comes easy for Nelson, and she responds quickly.

NELSON  
I hate myself.

CATHERINE  
Now counter it with a positive  
affirmation.

Nelson rolls her eyes.

NELSON  
I love myself.

CATHERINE  
Keep going.

Nelson bites her nails.

NELSON  
I'm crazy... Um, I'm eccentric.

Nelson covers her face with her hands, feeling vulnerable.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I'm so stupid. Hannah is going to  
think I'm an idiot. She's so smart,  
for Christ's sake.

CATHERINE  
Keep challenging those thoughts.

NELSON  
I'm smart. I have a college degree  
in art history.

CATHERINE  
One more.

NELSON  
I'm a coward.

Nelson's eyes well up with tears.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I'm brave.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nelson cleans and organizes her closet. She pulls out a bunch of clothes, revealing an old surfboard leaning against the back wall. As she runs her fingers across it, a painful feeling stirs inside her, causing her to feel short of breath.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Nelson smiles as Alex teaches her how to surf. They both appear radiant and full of life.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nelson snaps out of the flashback and looks at the surfboard with a longing and pain.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Nelson lies on her surfboard, gently rising and falling with the waves, gazing at the stars.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Nelson walks along the beach with her board, deep in thought, watching her feet sink into the sand.

INT. MARCO'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Nelson shaves Marco's beard. He looks at himself in the mirror.

MARCO  
What was I thinking? James would've hated it.

Nelson doesn't say anything. He looks at her.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
What's up?

Nelson pauses for a moment.

NELSON  
We should go see him.

MARCO  
What for?

NELSON  
I don't know... but I think we  
still need to figure things out.  
Will you come with me? Please?

Marco pauses for several seconds before replying.

MARCO  
Okay.

NELSON  
Thank you.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Nelson and Marco stand in silence beside a grave surrounded by fresh flowers. The headstone reads: "Alex Young." Nelson's eyes are red from crying, while Marco's eyes show no emotion.

NELSON  
I miss him so much.

MARCO  
Of course you do. You both shared  
everything: despair, loneliness,  
depression, anxiety...

NELSON  
Self-hatred too.

Marco lets out a pained chuckle.

MARCO  
Yeah, you both were a real blast  
together. So much fun.

Nelson looks down, lost in a thought.

NELSON  
I don't want to end up like him.

Marco screams and kicks the flowers. Nelson watches him.

MARCO  
(to the headstone)  
Asshole! You fucking selfish piece-  
of-shit!



He paces frantically.

MARCO (CONT'D)

I'm so fucking mad! Can you believe  
he did this? Fuck him!

There's a long silence before she suddenly falls to the  
ground, laughing uncontrollably.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Wh-- what's wrong with you?

NELSON

He left you alone with me. Now  
you're stuck with me.

Marco drops to the ground, joining her in laughter.

MARCO

Fucking bastard.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRANCEWAY - DAY

Nelson retrieves her mail from the mailbox while MAUREEN,  
70s, struggles inside with shopping bags.

NELSON

Hey, Maureen, let me help you with  
those.

Nelson takes the bags from Maureen's hands.

MAUREEN

Oh, thank you, dear.

Maureen coughs repeatedly.

NELSON

Are you okay?

MAUREEN

Yeah. I just can't seem to quit  
smoking.

NELSON

I don't have it in me to quit  
either.

They head down the hallway.

MAUREEN

I hope my date on Saturday doesn't mind. I tried vaping, but it's just not the same.

NELSON

No, it's not.

Maureen pauses, then looks at Nelson.

MAUREEN

Do you think I'm too old to fall in love again?

NELSON

No.

MAUREEN

The heart doesn't stop beating, right?

NELSON

No, it doesn't.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maureen fumbles for her keys at the door, laughing to herself.

MAUREEN

You know, I've pulled myself out of more romantic messes than you can imagine.

NELSON

I bet.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maureen flips on the light. It's a mess: garbage, clothes, empty soda bottles, unopened mail, loaded ashtrays. Nelson looks around, anxious.

MAUREEN

Sorry about the mess.

NELSON

Oh, it's okay.

MAUREEN

My arthritis makes it hard to clean sometimes.

Nelson heads into the kitchen.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Dirty dishes, overflowing trash can, and more empty soda bottles. Nelson places the groceries on the counter and starts scratching her arm.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nelson enters. Maureen flops down on the recliner.

NELSON  
Do you need anything?

MAUREEN  
No, I'm fine. Do you want to come over later? There's a Barbra Streisand marathon tonight.

NELSON  
I'm sorry, I can't. I have a date with Hannah tonight.

MAUREEN  
You're a lesbian?

NELSON  
Yeah.

MAUREEN  
Well, you look great.

Nelson laughs a little.

NELSON  
Thanks.

MAUREEN  
Do you know what Hannah means?

Nelson shakes her head.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)  
God's gift.

Nelson smiles.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)  
Don't go. Wait there.

Maureen disappears into the bedroom.

Nelson looks around the apartment, her anxiety growing.

Maureen reappears holding a gold shell pendant and hands it to Nelson.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

It's the symbol for the goddess of love. It'll bring you luck on your date with Hannah tonight.

Nelson looks deeply moved.

NELSON

Thank you.

MAUREEN

Don't ever take God's gift for granted, Nelson.

NELSON

I won't. I promise.

Nelson heads for the door, then stops and turns back.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Uh, my date is not until tonight. I can help clean the apartment, if you want.

MAUREEN

Oh, no, dear. I can't ask you to do that.

NELSON

I don't mind. Really. I like to clean. It, uh, helps me with my anxiety.

MAUREEN

Are you nervous about your date tonight?

NELSON

Yeah.

MAUREEN

Well, if it helps you feel better, then go ahead.

NELSON

Oh, it will. I swear.

Maureen looks at Nelson with kind eyes, genuinely appreciative.

MAUREEN  
Thank you, dear.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Everything is neat and orderly. The floors spotless. Maureen is peacefully asleep in the recliner.

EXT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - BACKWARD - DAY

Nelson waters Maureen's wilted flowers. As she finishes, she notices the filthy hose and lays it out on the brownish grass. She grabs a sponge and starts scrubbing it.

Nelson cell rings, and Marco appears on FaceTime with the Rag & Bone logo on the wall behind him.

NELSON  
Whoa, Rag & Bone. Expensive.

Nelson holds up a bright pattern print shirt.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Patterns make you look wide.

Marco holds up a black shirt.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Love it. That's the one.

As he puts the shirt aside, he notices her on her knees scrubbing the hose.

MARCO  
What are you doing now?

NELSON  
The hose is dirty.

MARCO  
Whose hose?

NELSON  
My neighbor's.

MARCO  
What's wrong?

NELSON  
Nothing.

MARCO

Nelson, you clean like crazy when  
your anxiety's at its worst.

NELSON

My date is tonight.

MARCO

Just be yourself.

Nelson chuckles at the suggestion.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelson stands frozen in the kitchen, her hand shaking as she  
pours herself a glass of water. After a moment, she takes a  
pill, swallows it, and briefly closes her eyes.

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson paces back and forth, adjusting her hair and shell  
pendant repeatedly. She's anxious and it shows. Hannah  
approaches in a flowing spring dress, nervous but radiant.  
Nelson tries to appear calm.

NELSON

Hi.

HANNAH

Hi.

NELSON

You look beautiful.

Hannah touches her dress, self-conscious about her  
appearance.

HANNAH

I was worried it might be too much.

NELSON

You look absolutely amazing.

HANNAH

Sorry, I'm just... I don't know,  
nervous. Been on so many bad dates.  
There's just too many creeps out  
there.

NELSON

It's okay.

Nelson opens the door for her. Hannah smiles.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A trendy spot with an attractive, unique-looking crowd. Nelson and Hannah sit on the floor at a low table. Nelson gulps down sake while Hannah looks around.

HANNAH

You ever notice how everyone in New York is so attractive and unique?

NELSON

As beautiful as the photos of Diane Arbus.

HANNAH

I saw her retrospective at the Met a couple of years ago.

NELSON

I curated it.

Hannah looks impressed.

NELSON (CONT'D)

"You see someone on the street, and essentially what you notice about them is the flaw."

HANNAH

Why do we always do that?

NELSON

Sometimes, I think seeing others who are worse off than us makes us feel better about ourselves.

HANNAH

Yeah.

They lock eyes. Nelson starts to sweat. She quickly wipes her forehead with a napkin, trying not to hyperventilate.

NELSON

I'm gonna-- gonna go use the bathroom now.

HANNAH

Okay.

Nelson darts across the restaurant to the bathroom.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nelson hyperventilates, sweat dripping from her brow. She stares at herself in the mirror, overwhelmed.

NELSON

I can't-- I can't do this.

She composes herself, takes deep breaths.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I can do this. I can do this!

Nelson splashes water on her face, attempting to regain control.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson exits the bathroom, muttering to herself.

NELSON

I'm scared. I'm confident. I'm boring. I'm interesting. I'm--

She slams into a low table.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Shit.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson limps toward the table. Hannah looks concerned.

HANNAH

You're limping.

NELSON

It's-- it's just a cramp.

The waiter sets down plates of food. Nelson reaches for the chopsticks while Hannah looks embarrassed.

NELSON (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

HANNAH

I don't know how to use chopsticks.

NELSON

It's all right. Actually, many Japanese people eat sushi with their hands.



Nelson drops the chopsticks and picks up a crab roll. Hannah follows suit.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Good?

HANNAH

It's different...

Hannah takes another bite.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Mmm, it's actually quite delicious.

There's a brief silence.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Can you imagine what I'm thinking?

Nelson shakes her head.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

What are the odds of us meeting again? In a city of eight million people.

NELSON

That's the beauty of New York.  
Anything is possible.

Hannah looks at her. Nelson looks down, she stuffs her face with roll after roll.

HANNAH

You're quiet.

Nelson swallows.

NELSON

Um, I...

Their eyes meet.

HANNAH

What?

NELSON

Can I ask you something?

HANNAH

Sure. What is it?

NELSON

Um, do trans-- No, never mind.  
Forget it.

HANNAH

You can ask me anything, you know  
that, right?

Nelson tenses and bites her lip.

NELSON

Do trans women usually keep  
their... um...

Nelson looks down to the crotch area.

HANNAH

Penis?

Nelson feels embarrassed and already regrets asking. She  
talks nervously.

NELSON

I'm so sorry. I-- I didn't mean it  
like that. What a stupid thing to  
say. I have poor social skills. I--  
I really can't help myself  
sometimes.

HANNAH

It's okay. Uh, it depends. We're  
not all the same. Each trans woman  
has her own reasons why.

Hannah pauses.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You want to know if I kept mine,  
right?

Nelson nods slowly.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Yes.

NELSON

Why?

HANNAH

I want a family. I want to fall in  
love, get married, have kids.

NELSON

I think you'd make a good wife and mother.

HANNAH

I want the whole package. The happily ever after. Do you think it's silly to want all that?

NELSON

No.

They share a smile.

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson and Hannah exit the restaurant.

HANNAH

I had a nice time tonight. I--

Hannah sees blood seeping through Nelson's pants.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You're bleeding.

NELSON

Oh, it's nothing. I'm okay, really.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hannah cleans Nelson's cut.

HANNAH

What happened?

Nelson looks down, embarrassed.

NELSON

I, um... I'm really clumsy when I'm nervous. I walked into one of those low tables at the restaurant.

HANNAH

Why were you nervous?

Nelson pauses.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Did I make you nervous?

Nelson nods. Hannah leans closer.

NELSON  
You smell nice.

Nelson gently touches Hannah's mouth. Hannah closes her eyes.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Your mouth is so warm...

Nelson kisses Hannah.

EXT. HOLLAND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Marco's van exits the tunnel headed toward New Jersey.

INT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

Marco, in his new Rag & Bone shirt, sings along to a love song on the radio as his cell rings. He quickly lowers the volume and answers. It's James.

MARCO  
(into phone)  
Hi, I'm on my way. I, um, picked up  
some smoked fish, caviar, pickles,  
tuna salad... Oh, and I got your  
favorite chocolate chip pudding--

Suddenly, he grows emotional but holds it together.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
I can come with you. You don't have  
to do this alone-- But I--

Marco takes a moment and decides that an argument would be pointless. He does not want to upset James more than he already is.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
Oh, okay, sure. I understand.

A whimpering dog in the background.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
It's fine, really, I'm still in the  
city. Haven't jumped on the tunnel  
yet. I'll call you tomorrow.

Marco ends the call, on the verge of tears, gripping the steering wheel tightly.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Fuck.

EXT. MARCO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Marco pulls into his driveway.

INT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

Marco, red-eyed and hunched at the wheel, grabs the take-out shopping bags.

EXT. MARCO'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Marco dumps the take-out bags in the trash.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nelson sits on the couch, her cell pressed to her ear. It rings but goes straight to voicemail.

NELSON

(into phone)

Hey, just checking in. My date with Hannah went really well. How was yours? Oh, and I'm heading to the Slipper Room with her tonight. Let me know if you want to come. I really want you to meet her...

INT. THE SLIPPER ROOM - NIGHT

Packed with tourists and couples, both queer and straight. Hannah and Nelson sit at a table. The stage lights dim as the performance comes to an end. Everyone claps, and Hannah whistles along.

HANNAH

Thank you for coming with me. My friend's been begging me to see her new show.

NELSON

I'm having a really nice time.

HANNAH

I got a new waitressing job at a Brazilian restaurant in the East Village.

NELSON  
That's great. You'll learn some  
Portuguese.

Hannah leans in close to Nelson.

HANNAH  
(in Portuguese)  
"Take me to bed."

Nelson looks impressed.

NELSON  
You speak Portuguese?

HANNAH  
Uh-huh.

NELSON  
What does that mean?

HANNAH  
Um, I'll tell you later.

The stage lights come on, revealing CLAUDIA, mid 20s, naked  
and covered in gold glitter, strutting onto the stage. Nelson  
turns pale.

NELSON  
Shit.

HANNAH  
What's wrong?

NELSON  
My ex.

Claudia and Nelson's lock eyes. A tense moment.

HANNAH  
Are you okay?

NELSON  
I... I...

Hannah laughs.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
What's so funny?

HANNAH  
You don't find this funny?

NELSON

Not really. I-- I think I'm gonna have a stroke.

HANNAH

Come on, it's ridiculous. I mean, what are the chances, right?

INT. THE SLIPPER ROOM - LATER

Claudia approaches the table and hugs Nelson, leaving gold glitter everywhere.

NELSON

What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be in Long Island?

CLAUDIA

Ugh, I hate Long Island. I don't know what I was thinking. You know me, I'm crazy.

NELSON

Um, this is Hannah.

CLAUDIA

Hi.

HANNAH

Hi.

Claudia leans over Nelson and whispers into her ear.

CLAUDIA

I'm getting off soon. Wanna take me home?

NELSON

No.

Claudia looks stunned.

CLAUDIA

No?

NELSON

I'm not gonna follow you anymore.

CLAUDIA

Okay.

Claudia looks over at Hannah.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
It was nice meeting you.

HANNAH  
Nice meeting you, too.

CLAUDIA  
I like your dress. It's very pretty.

HANNAH  
Thank you.

Claudia walks off, disappointed.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
You didn't have to do that. Go if you want. I'll just wait for my friend and...

NELSON  
I want to stay here with you.

Hannah smiles.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The diner is semi-empty. Nelson and Hannah sit at a table, eating. Nelson reaches over to grab one of Hannah's french fries but hesitates.

HANNAH  
It's okay. You can have one.

Nelson smiles and takes the fry.

NELSON  
I should have seduced you in college.

HANNAH  
I should have made you worship me.

They both laugh.

NELSON  
So, what did you say in Portuguese tonight?

Hannah pauses, looking unsure.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Come on. Tell me.



Hannah takes a deep breath, summoning her courage.

HANNAH  
Take me to bed.

A moment.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hannah and Nelson are kissing and undressing each other when Hannah suddenly pulls back.

HANNAH  
Nelson...

Nelson kisses her neck, but Hannah pulls away again.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
I want this, I really do. But...

Nelson smooths Hannah's hair back tenderly.

NELSON  
Did I do something wrong?

HANNAH  
No. It's just... What are we doing?  
I really need to know.

NELSON  
What do you mean?

HANNAH  
What is this?

Nelson doesn't know what to say.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
What do you want, Nelson?

NELSON  
I... I...

HANNAH  
I want to know what you're feeling.

Nelson pauses before replying.

NELSON  
I-- I don't know. I mean, I like  
you a lot, but... I think I need to  
get my life together first.

HANNAH

Bullshit.

Nelson rubs her neck.

NELSON

Uh, I-- You're great and--

HANNAH

I don't need you to tell me that.

Nelson stands.

NELSON

Right, right. I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

HANNAH

Just tell me how you feel?

Nelson searches for the right words, feeling the weight of the moment. She knows how terrible she is at this.

NELSON

Oh, Hannah. I feel... I feel...

HANNAH

I'm falling in love.

Nelson's body tenses up, her shoulders hunch, and her eyes dart around the room, clearly nervous and uncomfortable. She speaks fast, twisting her hands. She can feel the walls going up again, and she knows she's about to self-sabotage yet again.

NELSON

There's, uh, a lot going on in my life and, um, I'm just... I don't know. I-- I don't want to lead you on or make any promises I can't keep, you know? I... I'm not ready for, uh, big commitments-- like, marriage or... starting a family--

HANNAH

Oh my God. How arrogant. How stupid. Presumptuous.

Hannah picks up a book and throws it at her.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You're so conceited, Nelson. What gave you that impression? Have I proposed to you?

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Have I asked you to have my baby?  
What's wrong with you? That's a  
pretty stupid thing to say.

Nelson rubs her head.

NELSON

I'm sorry, I-- I misunderstood. I  
just need some time--

HANNAH

For what? You don't have a fucking  
clue.

Nelson looks at Hannah.

NELSON

I didn't mean to hurt you. Please,  
give me a second chance.

HANNAH

I'm in a place in my life where I  
know better.

Hannah's face crumples, tears welling up in her eyes. She  
covers her face with her hands, as if trying to hide the  
pain.

NELSON

Please, don't cry.

HANNAH

Just go. I want you to go.

NELSON

Hannah...

HANNAH

Please go.

Nelson looks at Hannah, overcome with emotion. She feels  
horrible.

NELSON

I just want to say... these last  
few weeks have been the best weeks  
of my whole life.

Nelson leaves. Hannah wipes away her tears.

INT. JULIUS' BAR - NIGHT

Nelson walks in, looking bleak. She spots Marco slouched over the bar, nursing his drink, clearly drunk.

NELSON

I had the worst night. I'm a horrible person. Hannah hates me.

Marco scoffs and shakes his head.

MARCO

You're fucking incredible. Someone should commission a statue of you, made entirely out of shit.

NELSON

Why are you freaking out?

Marco downs his drink.

NELSON (CONT'D)

You didn't see him, right?

He signals the bartender who pours him another drink.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Give me a fucking break. He hates himself because he doesn't look like he did when he was twenty.

Marco's veins are about to burst. He snaps back angrily.

MARCO

How dare you judge him. Have you looked at yourself lately?

NELSON

I'm sorry, I--

MARCO

Do you think I'm better than him? I'm not. I'm insecure too. I used to have a six-pack. Look at me now.

He lifts his shirt to show her his flabby pouch.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Do you ever ask me how I feel? No! It's always about you and your crazy epiphanies.

Nelson looks down, ashamed.

NELSON  
I hate my epiphanies.

MARCO  
It doesn't matter. I don't care  
anymore.

There's a tense silence. Marco chugs his drink. Nelson goes  
back to sulking. She can't help it.

NELSON  
I really need your help. I fucked  
things up with Hannah. We were  
about to have sex, but--

MARCO  
Stop forcing me to know things  
about your sex life. Everything I  
know, I know against my will.

NELSON  
I have no one to talk to. You're my  
only friend.

MARCO  
Because you drive everyone crazy.

NELSON  
Everyone's against me.

Marco shakes his head and laughs.

MARCO  
You've got to be kidding me.

NELSON  
Maybe I should move. I don't care  
where. I'll just start over. Make  
new friends--

MARCO  
That's going to be the greatest "I  
told you so" in the history of your  
pathetic life. Stop whining.

NELSON  
I'm feeling sorry for myself again,  
I know.

Marco shakes his head with annoyance.

MARCO  
As usual. You poor, pathetic  
lesbian. Snap out of it.

NELSON

Asshole.

MARCO

I'm no longer interested in the rehabilitation of Nelson.

Nelson looks hurt.

NELSON

Stop mocking me.

MARCO

It helps me keep my sanity when dealing with you.

NELSON

I'm not the one who didn't show up.

MARCO

I'm sick of you. You are exhausting.

A barfly buzzes around them. He tries to swat it.

NELSON

Flies are attracted to shit. You know that, right?

MARCO

You're average. Nothing special. Just a bundle of anxiety.

Nelson stares at him incredulously.

NELSON

How can you say that? I'm your best friend.

MARCO

You do the absolute bare minimum. What do you know about my life, huh? You never give me the time of day.

NELSON

That's not fair.

MARCO

You're self-absorbed. You live in your own world.

NELSON

Stop it. Please!

MARCO

No one can't count on you!

Nelson stares at him, disgusted.

NELSON

How much does one have to drink to reach this level?

MARCO

Don't throw rocks if you're not willing to get some thrown back at you, baby.

NELSON

Fuck you.

MARCO

Get the fuck outta my life.

NELSON

Don't worry, I'm done. I'm leaving. Never talking to you again.

Nelson scrambles to get ready to leave. Marco slams his fist on the bar.

MARCO

Hurry up. Get out.

NELSON

You son of a bitch.

Everyone turns to look. Nelson is on the verge of tears.

MARCO

Don't fall for it. It's all for attention.

Nelson runs out. Tearing up, Marco immediately regrets what just happened.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Nelson tosses and turns in bed, her eyes dark and puffy. She checks her cell, which reads 5:13am. Frustrated, she gets out of bed and walks out of the room.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAWN

An array of cleaning products is scattered on the floor. Nelson vigorously scrubs the bathroom tiles with a toothbrush.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Nelson collapses on the couch, utterly exhausted. She surveys the apartment, mentally making a list of things to clean next. Her cell rings. She looks at the screen and closes her eyes.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Nelson and Claudia sit outside at a cafe, eating and talking.

CLAUDIA  
Seeing you again, it's... nice.

NELSON  
Yeah, same here.

Claudia bites her lip, wrestling with her next words.

CLAUDIA  
I'm getting a divorce.

NELSON  
You okay?

Claudia responds with an unexpected laugh.

CLAUDIA  
I feel nothing. I'm a cold-hearted bitch, remember?

NELSON  
Yeah, you are.

They chuckle, a shared laughter only they understand.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Is that why you called me?

Claudia takes a deep breath.

CLAUDIA  
I miss you, Nelson... I'm sorry.

Nelson takes a moment to digest this.



NELSON  
You hurt me.

CLAUDIA  
I know.

A heavy silence hangs in the air.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)  
So, um, are you seeing anyone?

NELSON  
Yes.

Claudia clears her throat, fighting off the twinge of discomfort.

CLAUDIA  
Who?

NELSON  
Hannah... You met her the other night, remember? Well, um, we just...

CLAUDIA  
Wait, Hannah, she's trans, right?

NELSON  
Yeah, this is... this is a bit new for me.

CLAUDIA  
I'm proud of you, Nelson.

NELSON  
Why?

CLAUDIA  
It's very... mm... brave of you. You're challenging yourself.

NELSON  
Was I really that scared all the time?

CLAUDIA  
Yeah.

NELSON  
Is that why you left?

Claudia pauses before replying.

CLAUDIA  
You put all these walls up.

Nelson sighs heavily.

NELSON  
I know.

CLAUDIA  
You wanted a perfect relationship.  
You put me on a pedestal. There was  
no way I could live up to it.

NELSON  
I'm sorry.

CLAUDIA  
I forgive you.

They both smile at each other.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beer cans and takeout boxes are scattered around the room.  
Marco slumps on the couch in front of the TV, disheveled and  
emotional, comfort-eating from a takeout container.

On the TV screen: "Call Me By Your Name," showing the scene  
where Elio and Oliver share their first kiss.

MARCO  
More fucking unrealistic bullshit.

Marco turns off the TV, cracks open a beer, and takes a long  
swig. He stares blankly ahead, lost in his thoughts.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nelson and Maureen sit on the couch, tears streaming down  
their faces as they watch the end of "The Way We Were."

Maureen reaches into her pocket, pulls out a cigarette,  
lights it, takes a drag, and passes it to Nelson.

INT. BROOKLYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HANNAH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Hannah appears dazed while MATTHEW, a 10-year-old student,  
squirms in his seat, desperately holding his bladder.

MATTHEW  
Miss Hannah! Miss Hannah!

Hannah snaps out of her daze.

HANNAH  
I'm sorry, Matthew. What is it?

MATTHEW  
I need to go to the bathroom.

Hannah hands him the hallway pass, and he darts out.

INT. NYC APARTMENT - DAY

Marco paints a wall, looking forlorn as he looks over at the empty space where Nelson usually is.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Nelson stands in a long line, her basket filled with cleaning products. She rubs her bloodshot eyes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Nelson shuffles down a street with her shopping bags. Suddenly, she stops in her tracks, drops the bags, and clenches her fist, tears welling up in her eyes. In a burst of frustration, she punches a mailbox.

NELSON  
Fuck.

A group of TEENAGERS across the street start laughing and pointing at her.

TEEN #1  
Look at that fool!

INT. HOSPITAL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Nelson, now with a cast on her hand, stands next to a wheelchair-bound WOMAN, 30s, singing softly to her NEWBORN BABY.

Nelson watches, moved by the beauty of new life. A moment of longing crosses her face, jealousy perhaps, or yearning for a fresh start, free from the weight of fear, regret, and hopelessness.

INT. BROOKLYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Nelson stands outside the elementary school, watching Hannah as she joyfully engages with the students during recess.

Hannah, engrossed with the children, remains unaware of Nelson's presence.

Nelson walks away from the school, consumed by her depression and the void left by their separation.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Nelson sits down on a bench, her knee bouncing up and down restlessly. Next to her is a drunk HOMELESS MAN. The sound of her bouncing knee irritates him.

HOMELESS MAN

Anxiety doesn't exist. It's made up  
by cowards.

(mocking)

"I can't do it. I'm so scared.  
They'll laugh at me." How stupid.  
Fuck off.

Nelson looks down. The homeless man takes a sip from a small vodka bottle.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

Go. I'm tired of you stupid idiots  
sitting on my bench, wallowing in  
fucking self-pity.

Nelson jumps up and walks off.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

Poor baby. Try being homeless with  
no friends.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Nelson sits slumped in front of Catherine, looking broken. Catherine looks at Nelson's cast.

CATHERINE

How's your hand?

Nelson looks at her hand and shrugs. She couldn't care less about the state of her hand, underscoring the depth of her depression.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)  
Do you know how long a feeling  
last?

Nelson shakes her head.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)  
A tenth of a second.

NELSON  
That's impossible. My feelings  
never go away.

CATHERINE  
A feeling only last because you  
hold on to it.

Nelson rubs her forehead.

NELSON  
But...

CATHERINE  
Nurture the happy feelings, Nelson.  
Stop holding on to the negative  
ones. Let them go.

Nelson looks at Catherine.

NELSON  
Thank you.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Nelson stands in the shower for a long moment, under the  
water, deep in thought. Her cast is covered in plastic.

EXT. BROOKLYN ART GALLERY - DUSK

Nelson nervously holds a manila envelope. An ARTSY WOMAN  
leans out the door.

ARTSY WOMAN  
Can I help you with something?

NELSON  
Um... I...

ARTSY WOMAN  
You've been standing out there all  
day. Are you all right?

Nelson hands her the manila envelope and runs off.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - DUSK

Nelson runs through the streets with a sense of exhilaration, as if she has just conquered Mount Everest.

INT. MARCO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dazed, Marco sits on the couch, a disheveled mess, holding a beer. Suddenly, a knock at the door startles him. He opens it to find Nelson standing there.

NELSON

You're the most important person to me. I'm so sorry.

Nelson hugs him tightly. Marco squeezes back.

MARCO

I've missed you so much.

Nelson looks around. The apartment is a wreck: clothes everywhere, empty beer cans, unopened mail, and empty take-out boxes.

NELSON

You okay?

MARCO

No.

NELSON

What can I do?

MARCO

Nothing.

He notices the cast on her hand.

MARCO (CONT'D)

What did you do?

NELSON

I punched a mailbox.

MARCO

Why?

NELSON

I don't know.

MARCO  
You don't know why you attacked a  
defenseless mailbox?

NELSON  
Defenseless? I'm the one with the  
broken hand.

They sink down on the couch, both feeling broken. Marco takes  
a sip from his beer.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I saw her the other day.

MARCO  
She agreed to see you?

NELSON  
No. I stood outside her school.  
Watching her during recess.

MARCO  
You're stalking again?

Nelson nods sadly.

NELSON  
I'm so lonely without her. I miss  
her so much.

She lets out an anguished gasp.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
How did it come to this?

She rubs her forehead.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
I was so awful to her. I'm so  
ashamed. I hate myself.

MARCO  
Unbelievable.

NELSON  
What?

MARCO  
Goddamn it, Nelson. What are you  
doing? Can't you see?

Nelson looks confused.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
You're in love with Hannah.

He motions to her cast.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
This is what people do when they're  
in love. They punch things...

He stares at the scattered take-out containers and the empty  
beer cans on the floor.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
They stuff their faces. Drink till  
they puke. Hurt themselves.

NELSON  
I love Hannah.

MARCO  
That's all that matters.

NELSON  
Why do I always run away?

MARCO  
Because it's fucking scary.

He comes to his own realization.

MARCO (CONT'D)  
But you can't let fear control you  
anymore.

Nelson kisses him on the head.

NELSON  
Thank you.

MARCO  
What are you waiting for? Go get  
your girl!

Nelson dashes toward the door, while Marco takes a deep  
breath and dials a number on his cell.

EXT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Nelson stands outside of Hannah's terrace, calling her name  
repeatedly.

NELSON  
Hannah! Hannah! Hannah!



Nothing.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Hannah! Hannah!

A light turns on, and Hannah appears in her robe.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Hannah! Oh, Hannah.

HANNAH  
What are you doing here, Nelson?

NELSON  
Come down.

HANNAH  
Are you drunk?

NELSON  
No, I'm not drunk. Please, come down.

HANNAH  
Go home, Nelson.

As Hannah starts to turn back inside, Nelson calls out to her again.

NELSON  
Hannah! Hannah!

HANNAH  
You're going to wake up all of Brooklyn.

NELSON  
I don't care.

HANNAH  
They'll come out with bats and beat the shit outta you.

NELSON  
Let them. I deserve it. I'm an asshole. A blind piece of shit.

An angry WOMAN, 60s, throws a head of lettuce at Nelson, missing her, and clenches her fist angrily.

WOMAN  
Shut up, or I'll punch you in the mouth!

HANNAH  
Please, just go home.

NELSON  
No, I'm not leaving. Come down, or  
I'll scream your name till the sun  
comes up.

HANNAH  
Okay, okay. Just shut up.

EXT. HANNAH'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Hannah exits the building and notices Nelson's cast.

HANNAH  
What happened to your hand?

NELSON  
I'm in love.

Hannah turns away, visibly upset.

NELSON (CONT'D)  
Wait. Don't go. You don't  
understand. I'm in love with you,  
Hannah.

HANNAH  
Please, don't.

NELSON  
I fucked up. It's what I do. I get  
scared. I run away. I never meant  
to hurt you.

HANNAH  
But you did.

NELSON  
I'm so sorry, Hannah.

HANNAH  
I'm afraid you'll just do it again.

Nelson is assured and confident for the first time in a long  
time.

NELSON  
I love you.

HANNAH  
Don't say that unless you mean it.

NELSON

Oh, Hannah, I mean it. I do. I'll show you.

Nelson jumps onto the hood of a car.

NELSON (CONT'D)

See?

HANNAH

What are you doing?

NELSON

This is what people in love do.

Nelson jumps down.

NELSON (CONT'D)

They make fools of themselves.

Nelson attempts a cartwheel but crashes into a row of metal trash cans.

HANNAH

Oh, my God.

Hannah rushes over to Nelson.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

Nelson gently touches Hannah's face.

NELSON

I love you, Hannah. I'm so sorry it took me forever to get here.

Hannah gazes into Nelson's eyes.

HANNAH

Love isn't always on time.

NELSON

It's not.

Nelson kisses her.

EXT. HOLLAND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Marco's van exits the tunnel, headed toward New Jersey.

INT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

Marco sits in the van, takes a deep breath, and jumps out.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson and Hannah make love.

EXT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - TERRACE - DAWN

Nelson smokes a cigarette in her underwear, her body silhouetted against the morning light.

Hannah appears behind her and wraps her arms around her.

For the first time in a long time, Nelson looks at peace.

FADE OUT.