

Ned

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Draft
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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Two employees wait for the elevator to arrive. These two are JOE and OLIVER. Thick as thieves.

JOE
Does it work?

OLIVER
It's broken.

JOE
Man, again?

Oliver nods.

JOE (cont'd)
Hate going to the third floor.

Beat.

JOE (cont'd)
Did you run into Tyson?

OLIVER
No, thank god.

JOE
Lucky. I had to hear another bad joke today.

OLIVER
What was it?

JOE
What do you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener.

Beat.

OLIVER
There was one he told me yesterday. It wasn't have bad. If you're American when you go into the bathroom and American when you come out, what are you in the bathroom? European.

They both try not to laugh but they can't help it.

OLIVER (cont'd)
Who else is coming?

JOE
Nigel and Stan. A couple others from
the top floor as well.

OLIVER
I've never been.

JOE
It's a good spot. I like the food
also. I haven't tried everything.
I'll try something new tonight.

Beat.

JOE (cont'd)
You think we should invite-?

Joe gestures to someone. Oliver shakes head.

OLIVER
He looks busy.

A row of empty cubicles except for one. Push in for a beat.
Turn a corner to reveal the back of NED THOMAS (30s).
Clearly the introverted type.

He remains dead focused on his screen when he stops. He
brings his gaze to Joe and Oliver going on the elevator.

Ned brings his gaze back to his screen. He finishes, turns
off the screen, and lets out a sigh.

Ned heads over to the elevator.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Ned walking under the city lights. Traffic hums in the
background.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ned heating up some leftovers. He fills up a bowl of water
and places it down by his dog.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned eating while watching a scene from "Casablanca". The scene where Rick asks Sam to play "As Time Goes By".

RICK (ONSCREEN)
You know what I wanna hear.

SAM (ONSCREEN)
No I don't.

RICK (ONSCREEN)
You played it for her play it for me.
If she can stand I can, play it.

We hear the song. Slowly push out from Ned. As we do, darkness starts to surround the room until the only source of light is the television.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The environment in its normality. Cubicles filled, typing, etc. Ned in the middle of working when he gets. Sitting across from are JOE and OLIVER.

Joe turns to Marvin.

JOE
Did you get the stain out?

Marvin shakes his head.

OLIVER
One of my favorite jackets too. It'll be missed.

Beat.

OLIVER (cont'd)
Gonna get a coffee. You want one?

JOE
I'll take one. Two sugars.

OLIVER
Gotcha.

Marvin gets up and leaves. Joe turns to Ned whose still locked in on his screen.

JOE
Ned.

NED

Yeah?

JOE

Question for you.

Ned stops working and turns to Joe.

JOE (cont'd)

I got a ticket outside of a store. It said for parking in a no standing zone. You think I should take it to court to contest it?

NED

You'd get rejected.

JOE

How? The sign said no standing zone, not no parking.

NED

Well, with no parking if you stay with the vehicle and you're waiting for someone, that's fine. But with no standing, you can't even do that.

JOE

How come they don't tell us that?

NED

It's on the driver's test.

JOE

Who remembers that? I thought everybody just passed on common sense. Do this, don't do this. Simple.

Beat.

JOE (cont'd)

A couple of the others were gonna go to Brimstone. You should come.

NED

I think I'll just stay in.

JOE

Again? It's not we're going out a business or something.

NED

I just... like the work.

JOE
Do you do anything outside of work?

NED
I go grocery shopping.

Beat.

JOE
My god. You're serious about that. My
condolences.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Ned walking his dog for a beat. Not much traffic.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned watching another vintage film.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ned trying to get his mail. He tries to head back when-

MURIEL
Morning Ned.

Ned turns his gaze to MURIEL, front desk attendant. Ned
heads over.

NED
Morning, Muriel.

MURIEL
I see you tried to make you're little
escape again.

Ned hangs his head down.

Beat.

MURIEL (cont'd)
Did you get a chance to meet your new
neighbor?

NED
New neighbor?

MURIEL
Ned. Seriously.

NED

What?

MURIEL

The one who moved into Mister
Cooper's apartment.

NED

I haven't.

MURIEL

You should introduce yourself.

NED

I shouldn't.

MURIEL

And why is that?

NED

Because I have work.

MURIEL

Are you working right now?

NED

No. But I like a head start when I
leave.

MURIEL

Ned.

NED

Muriel.

MURIEL

You gotta talk to someone.

NED

But-

MURIEL

I don't count.

NED

I prefer solitude.

MURIEL

Too much of that can be a bad thing.

NED

I beg to differ.

Ned leaves.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned working in his normal environment.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Ned checking out a book. He hands it to the RITA, librarian.

RITA

One of my favorites. It's a good read.

NED

Looking forward to it.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ned reading his book in bed before he goes to sleep.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ned tries to get his mail and leave but yet again-

MURIEL

Ned.

Ned turns to see Muriel with a woman whose with her baby in a stroller. Ned heads over.

NED

Morning Muriel.

MURIEL

This is your neighbor Sandra.

Ned turns to SANDRA.

NED

Nice to meet you.

SANDRA

You as well. Muriel said you dressed like Steve Urkell.

Ned turns to Muriel.

MURIEL

I didn't know how else to describe you.

Beat.

SANDRA
I need to head out. Thanks Muriel.

Sandra turns to Ned.

SANDRA (cont'd)
It was nice meeting you.

NED
You too.

Sandra leaves.

MURIEL
So?

Ned turns to Muriel.

NED
Sooo... what?

MURIEL
She's cute huh?

NED
Have a nice day, Muriel.

Ned leaves.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Sandra shopping with her baby.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sandra on the phone while she feeds her baby.

SANDRA
I moved in a couple days ago. So far
so good. I'm still doing it. I'm
taking courses online though.

Beat.

SANDRA (cont'd)
You still talk to him? We ended
things for a reason. Look, it doesn't
matter. I don't wanna see him

Sandra hangs up the phone.

EXT. DAYCARE - DAY

Sandra drops her baby off.

INT. DINER - DAY

Sandra in the middle of working a shift.

INT. DINER - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Sandra opens her locker and takes her belongings. LILLIAN leaves.

LILLIAN
You work tomorrow?

SANDRA
Yeah. I think I'm opening with Ruth.

LILLIAN
See you tomorrow.

SANDRA
See you.

Lillian leaves.

EXT. DAYCARE - DAY

Sandra picking up her baby.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sandra putting her baby to sleep.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A couple books on the table. Sandra writing a paper.

INT. DINER - DAY

Sandra in the middle of working a shift. She heads to the locker room.

INT. DINER - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Sandra comes into find Lillian putting her name tag on.

SANDRA
You close?

LILLIAN
They have me on the registers today?

Beat.

SANDRA
You think you can pick up my shift on
Thursday? I need the time to write
this paper for course I'm taking.

LILLIAN
Yeah I got you.

SANDRA
Ugh, thank you.

LILLIAN
One condition.

Sandra.

LILLIAN (cont'd)
The next trainee that comes in.
They're all yours.

SANDRA
You're joking.

LILLIAN
That's the deal.

Beat.

SANDRA
Fine deal.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Sandra comes in and sees the elevator about to close.

SANDRA
Hold the elevator!

The elevator opens back up. Sandra comes in to find Ned.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Hey. Thank you.

Ned nods and gives a half smile.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ned keeps eyes glued to the ground.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ned and Sandra get off the elevator. Sandra turns to Ned.

SANDRA
Good night.

NED
Night.

They head into their apartments.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra comes into find a babysitter.

SANDRA
How was she?

SITTER
Nothing to report. Just the usual.

Sandra pays the sitter.

SANDRA
Thank you.

SITTER
No problem. Good night.

The sitter leaves.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Sandra gets off the elevator with her baby in a stroller and heads to her mailbox.

She notices Muriel.

SANDRA
Good morning Muriel.

MURIEL
Good morning. Any plans for the day?

SANDRA

Not much. Just groceries and go for a walk around the complex.

MURIEL

Might I suggest a park close by.

SANDRA

Sure. What park is it?

EXT. PARK - DAY

Angle on Sandra walking the trail. Various people in the background playing.

Sandra sees Ned on the bench with his dog. She heads over.

SANDRA

Look who it is.

NED

Hey. Never seen you around here.

SANDRA

This is my first time. Muriel suggested it.

NED

Muriel?

Sandra nods. Ned looks ahead for a beat.

SANDRA

And who's this little guy?

Ned extends his hand.

NED

This is-. I actually don't know.

SANDRA

You don't know the name of your own dog?

Sandra holds back a laugh.

NED

I found him in alleyway a couple nights ago. The name just never crossed my mind .

SANDRA

What made you take him in?

NED
I don't know. I guess maybe I wanted something else to take care of other than myself for a change.

SANDRA
Maybe you kidnapped him.

NED
I didn't. Scout's honor.

Beat.

SANDRA
Scout. Maybe that could be his name.

NED
I like it.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
While we're on names, who's this?

Ned gestures to Sandra's baby.

SANDRA
This is Edith.

NED
How old is she?

SANDRA
Six months.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Ned and Sandra walking the trail.

NED
Not the most lucrative. But it pays.

SANDRA
I'm in the same boat. I'm a waitress at the Silverfork diner. You ever been?

NED
I haven't. I've gone by a couple times.

SANDRA
You should. Food's good.

Ned nods. Beat.

NED
You have any siblings.

SANDRA
I do. One sister. Younger. You?

NED
One brother. Older. Ironically. You
close with her?

SANDRA
We are. Talk a lot. Things tend to
come up in our lives, but we try to
make the time.

NED
I haven't talked to mine in a while.

SANDRA
Why?

NED
I don't really do small talk. I don't
think can.

SANDRA
You make it sound like it's so
complicated.

NED
It just... seems redundant at times.

SANDRA
I can see that. But if there's
something more, then shouldn't you
tell that person?

NED
I guess. It's just not me per se.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
How's it been for you since moving
in?

SANDRA
It was difficult. The change of
scene. But I'm adjusting to it.

NED
Well If you need anything, I'm here.

SANDRA
I appreciate that.

Angle on the two of them continuing there walk on the trail.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ned and Sandra enter. Ned heads over to the front desk.

NED
Muriel.

MURIEL
Yes?

NED
Can you please drop this?

MURIEL
Drop what?

NED
Whatever it is that you're doing?

MURIEL
What am I doing?

NED
Seriously.

MURIEL
I got paperwork to do... so.

Muriel tends to her paperwork. Ned heads over to the elevator with Sandra.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sandra gets off the elevator with Edith. Ned follows shortly after.

NED
I'll see you around.

SANDRA
See you.

Ned heads to his apartment. Sandra heads to hers a couple doors down. They both go in.

INT. DINER - DAY

Sandra continuing with the training process.

SANDRA
You have any questions so far?

PHYLLIS
Nothin' yet.

Beat.

PHYLLIS (cont'd)
Was that your boyfriend?

SANDRA
No.

PHYLLIS
Do you want him to be?

Beat.

SANDRA
We are so not discussing this.
Training, back to it.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Ned going for a walk with Scout.

EXT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Ned comes across Sandra coming up.

NED
Hey.

SANDRA
Hey.

NED
You okay?

SANDRA
I'm fine. Just a rough shift.

NED
Do you have time? I wanna show you
something?

SANDRA

What? It's not gonna take long is it?

NED

No, not at all.

They both into the apartment.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Ned, Sandra, and scout on the roof of the apartment.

SANDRA

Nice view.

NED

True, but there's a little trick I do. I grab my headphones, I close my eyes and I take a couple deep breaths and then I open.

SANDRA

You listen to music or something?

NED

No, I mean you can but I don't. When I'm up here I just use them to block out the noise. I have my days where my mind goes a mile a minute. And for you, today was one of those days.

SANDRA

Oh it was.

Beat.

SANDRA (cont'd)

I needed this. Thanks.

They smile at each other.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Joe waits on the elevator with another employee.

JOE

Did you run into Tyson?

OLIVER

I tried avoiding him today best I could but he hit me with another bad joke.

JOE
He did the same for me. What was yours?

OLIVER
What do you call a cow with no legs?
Ground Beef.

Joe shakes his head.

OLIVER (cont'd)
Did he tell you the same thing?

JOE
Mine was "what did the pirate get on his report card? Seven C's".

Oliver tries to hold back a chuckle.

Angle on Ned lost in work. He stops lets out a sigh.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Ned with his headphones on as he takes in the city view. He gets tapped on the shoulder. Ned takes off his headphones and turns to see Sandra.

SANDRA
Figured you'd be up here.

Beat. They both look out at the city. Sandra.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Did something happen?

NED
No, I just needed to clear my head.

SANDRA
Did I interrupt?

NED
Not at all.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
I can't help but think I'm doing something wrong. Either It's wrong or I'm just missing.

SANDRA

I know what you mean. I have my moments where I feel like things aren't as fast as they should be. But everybody's timeline is different.

Beat.

SANDRA (cont'd)

But whenever that happens you just have to remember... You're a nerd-

They both laugh.

SANDRA (cont'd)

And you'll figure it out.

Angle on the two of them.

INT. DINER - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Sandra grabs her stuff from her locker. Lillian comes up to her.

LILLIAN

Guess what?

SANDRA

What?

LILLIAN

Looks like I'm closing in on our deal sooner than later. We hired someone.

SANDRA

They applied willingly?

LILLIAN

Oh yeah. They're all yours.

Lillian taps Sandra on the shoulder.

LILLIAN (cont'd)

Good luck.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Sandra taking off her name tag as she leaves.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Sandra picking up a few things with Edith.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Sandra unloading her groceries for a beat. She stops for a second.

SANDRA
Wait, did I get-

Sandra continues rummaging through the groceries but nothing.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Ughhhhh.

Sandra turns to Edith.

SANDRA (cont'd)
This is why lists were invented.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Sandra knocks on Ned's door. Ned opens it.

NED
Hey, what's up?

SANDRA
Could you do me a small favor?

NED
Sure, what is it?

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ned sits on the couch and watches Edith. Sandra grabs her keys.

SANDRA
I'll be quick.

NED
Sure thing.

Sandra leaves. Locks the door behind her. Ned turns back to Edith. He gives her an awkward wave.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Sandra gets back with her desired item. She looks for Ned and Edith but they're not here.

SANDRA

Ned?

She locks the door and drops the keys.

SANDRA (cont'd)

Ned?

Sandra heads further down.

NED

We're over here.

Ned comes with Edith sleeping in his arms.

NED (cont'd)

Sorry. She started crying. Didn't know what else to do.

Sandra smiles.

SANDRA

It's okay.

Ned hands Edith back over to Sandra.

NED

I'll head out.

Ned heads for the door.

SANDRA

Wait, why don't you stay for dinner?
That's fine.

NED

SANDRA

I insist. I don't think you're doing anything. Are you?

Beat.

NED

Ugh, no.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ned and Sandra having dinner.

SANDRA

It just happened so fast, to be honest. We were just headed in different directions. So we went our separate ways.

Beat.

SANDRA (cont'd)

But I wanna know about you.

NED

There's not much to know about me.

SANDRA

I don't believe that.

NED

It's the truth.

SANDRA

No. Everyone's gotta story.

NED

What do you wanna know?

SANDRA

I think the obvious one is why don't you have a girlfriend.

Beat.

NED

I get in my own head a lot. Worried I would say something idiotic. So I end up not saying anything. It's not too bad, I have Scout.

SANDRA

You talk to no one else?

NED

No.

SANDRA

What about Muriel?

NED

That's different. I've lived here for years and she forces me.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
All in all I guess it's best to avoid
people.

SANDRA
But why?

NED
I just figured you can't make fun of
someone if you don't they exist.

SANDRA
You don't feel that now do you?

Beat.

NED
No, not at all.

Beat.

SANDRA
You're not as invisible as you may
think.

Angle on Ned. Then back to Sandra.

SANDRA (cont'd)
I see you.

Angle on the two of them.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

Ned in the middle of putting his clothes in the washer when-

SANDRA
Great minds think alike.

Ned looks up to see Sandra coming in with her laundry.

NED
The best time is at night. I came in
the afternoon. Every thing was being
used. So I had to wait for hours. And
at that point the only that was left
open for me was a broken one.

SANDRA
What was wrong with it?

NED
 Something with the spin cycle. Wasn't
 doing the job properly?

SANDRA
 You got off easy.

NED
 Easy? How do you figure?

SANDRA
 How do I figure? I'll do you one
 better. My usual spot was perfect. I
 bring my own quarters just because.
 The machine they had I've used it
 before. No issues. Halfway when
 driving there, cause it's about
 thirty minutes give or take, I for
 got to get quarters. Fast forward to
 me getting there. The quarter machine
 is broken.

Ned laughs.

NED
 Sorry.

SANDRA
 It's fine.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - LATER

Ned and Sandra sit down while their clothes are in the
 dryer. Ned tries to use the tv remote.

SANDRA
 This happen often?

NED
 Off and on.

Ned gives it one last try.

NED (cont'd)
 Yeah. It's not working. No matter.
 When that happens.

Ned pulls out his phone. He then pulls out a pair of
 earbuds. As he hands one to Sandra-

NED (cont'd)
 Are your ears clean?

Sandra smiles.

SANDRA
Are YOUR ears clean?

NED
I asked you first.

SANDRA
I asked you second.

Sandra takes it.

They watch a film on Ned's phone.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - LATER

Ned and Sandra folding their clothes. Sandra notices how Ned is doing it.

SANDRA
Let me show you little a trick I learned.

Sandra folds one of Ned's shirts.

NED
Where'd you learn that?

SANDRA
Something my mom taught me. I think she just wanted more space to steal hotel soap.

Ned smiles.

SANDRA (cont'd)
I don't know what it is. Hotel's just have the best soap.

NED
They really do.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
How are classes?

SANDRA
There was a test I submitted.

NED
How'd you do?

SANDRA
I got a C. I used to dread C's now
they're all I live for.

NED
One of the few things I do not miss.

SANDRA
What did you study?

NED
Communications. I wanted to do
something in News and Broadcasting.

SANDRA
You wanted to be on camera.

NED
Oh god no. Behind the scenes. Working
behind the scenes.

INT. DINER - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Sandra clocks in. Lillian walks up to her.

LILLIAN
You're trainee's here.

Lillian smiles.

SANDRA
You're enjoying this too much.

LILLIAN
Maybe. All yours.

Lillian leaves. As she does the trainee comes in. Her name
is PHYLLIS.

PHYLLIS
Are you Sandra?

SANDRA
Yes. You'll be with me? What's your
name?

PHYLLIS
Phyllis.

SANDRA
Nice to meet you. You nervous?

PHYLLIS
Little bit.

SANDRA
I was too, but there's nothing to it
honestly.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned stops working for a beat and turns to Joe.

NED
Joe?

Joe stops working and turns to Ned.

JOE
Sup.

NED
I'm going on a break.

Beat.

JOE
You're what?

NED
I'm going on break.

Beat.

JOE
Are you on something?

NED
No. If anyone asks just tell them.

JOE
Okay.

Ned leaves. Joe turns to Marvin.

JOE (cont'd)
He's definitely on something.

EXT. DINER - DAY

Ned going into the diner.

INT. DINER - DAY

Ned looking over the menu when Sandra comes up to him.
Sandra's eyes squints.

SANDRA
And what are youuu doing here
exactly?

NED
I'm a paying customer.

SANDRA
Are you now?

NED
Yes. You're the one that said you
should come.

Beat.

SANDRA
Touche. So Mister paying customer.
What can I get for you?

INT. DINER - LATER

Ned and Sandra in the middle of conversation.

SANDRA
That's why I'm taking classes online
now. Balances it out.

NED
What are you studying?

SANDRA
Education. Wanna be a teacher.

NED
What subject?

SANDRA
Math. It was my favorite in school.

NED
Mine too.

SANDRA
Really?

NED
Yeah, why?

SANDRA
I would've guessed science.

NED
And why is that?

Beat. They both laugh.

NED (cont'd)
How'd you get into teaching?

SANDRA
Well. How do I explain it?

Beat.

SANDRA (cont'd)
You ever had that feeling when you're
being taught something and everyone
in the class gets it except for you?

NED
I know it all too well.

SANDRA
Right? I hate that feeling. So I want
to create an environment where
everyone helps each other. There not
ashamed or scared to say they don't
understand. It should be like that
now, but it... isn't.

Angle on the two of them.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned gets back. He walks up to his cubicle. He turns to Joe.

NED
What?

JOE
You're using aren't you?

Ned drops his shoulders and gets back to work.

JOE (cont'd)
Admitting is always the hardest step.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned watching a film with Scout.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned working when he takes out his phone.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sandra cleaning when the phone rings. She answers it.

SANDRA

Hello?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

NED

Hey. So I called you.

SANDRA

Yeah. I'm aware.

Sandra smiles.

SANDRA (cont'd)

What'd you call me for?

NED

I was calling...to ugh officially see if I could take you to dinner?

SANDRA

Oh officially. How could I say no to that.

Beat.

SANDRA (cont'd)

I'd love to.

NED

Are you free tonight?

SANDRA

Just have to get a sitter. Text me the place. I'll meet you there.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned putting on a suit. He turns to Scout.

NED

How do I look?

Angle on Scout.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Ned gets off the elevator. He notices Muriel.

NED
Muriel? What are you doing here?

MURIEL
I'm covering for Alice. She was
feeling kinda sick.

Muriel notices the getup.

MURIEL (cont'd)
And where might you be going?

Beat.

NED
You have a nice night Muriel.

As Ned leaves.

MURIEL
You're welcome.

NED
Yeah, yeah.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ned waiting at a table when he gets a text from Sandra. It reads: I'm omw.

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra in the middle of talking to her babysitter.

SANDRA
Snacks in the fridge. Help yourself.
If anything happens just call me.

SITTER
Of course. Have fun.

SANDRA
Thank you.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Sandra comes across Muriel.

SANDRA

Oh Hi Muriel. Strange seeing you at night.

MURIEL

Ned basically said the same thing. I work nights from time to time. But I'm just covering for someone.

Beat.

MURIEL (cont'd)

You look nice.

SANDRA

Thanks.

MURIEL

Where are you meeting Ned?

SANDRA

At this spo-. Wait, He told you?

MURIEL

He didn't have to. It was all over his face.

Sandra smiles and shakes her head.

SANDRA

He was so nervous when he asked me today?

MURIEL

How did it go? Tell me everything.

SANDRA

I feel I've said too much.

MURIEL

You haven't trust me.

SANDRA

I'll let him do it.

MURIEL

You're gonna leave me in the dark too, fantastic.

Sandra smiles.

SANDRA

I'll see you later.

MURIEL

Have fun.

Sandra leaves.

EXT. CAR - MOVING

Sandra driving.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Ned still sitting alone. With his head down, Ned gets up and leaves.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

Ned heads up to the front desk. Muriel's on the phone but Ned doesn't notice. He still has his head down.

NED

Well Muriel, you were wrong on this one. But I shouldn't be surprised I should be more mad at myself for letting-

Muriel slowly lowers the phone with distraught look on her face.

NED (cont'd)

What is it?

CUT TO: BLACK

INT. SOCIAL WORKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ned sitting across from JACQUELINE STEPHENS. Jacqueline reads over some files.

JACQUELINE

What is your relationship to the child?

NED

I was close with her mother.

JACQUELINE

Have there been any legal proceedings regarding the child's custody as of yet?

NED

No.

Beat.

JACQUELINE

Okay, Mr. Thomas. So how this works is we will do a background check, proof of income, residency. We also-

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jacqueline's words slowly fade into the background as we see Ned enter with Edith in a stroller. He locks the door behind.

Ned takes a seat by the couch. He takes a look at Edith.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ned in the middle of talking to Muriel.

NED

Her sister came down a couple weeks ago. I brought it up to her as well. Apparently Sandra talked about me a lot with her.

MURIEL

You sure you wanna do this?

NED

I am.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)

Besides, it's my fault.

MURIEL

No it isn't. Don't do that to yourself.

Angle on the two of them.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned sleeping when he's woken up by Edith. Ned rubs his eyes.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ned feeding Edith.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ned shopping in the baby section. Ned tries to decide between what diapers to use. Ned smells something.

INT. GROCERY STORE - BATHROOM - DAY

Ned rushes into the bathroom. He pulls out the changing table. He opens Edith's diapers.

NED
Oh my goodness.

Ned covers his nose.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ned pushing the shopping cart with Edith.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned putting Edith to bed.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Ned reading instructions on how to swaddle a child.

NED
Take the child.

Ned looks at Edith.

NED (cont'd)
That's you. Lay them flat on the blanket.

Ned attempts to swaddle Edith.

NED (cont'd)
Is this right?

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned sleeping when he wakes up due to Edith's crying.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned comes into work. Joe notices.

JOE
You look like crap.

NED
I know.

Ned takes a seat.

JOE
Maybe you should get some sleep?

Ned slowly turns to Joe.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ned shopping for diapers. He examines two different brands.
He sees a woman.

NED
Excuse me, Miss.

The woman turns to Ned.

NED (cont'd)
Would you happen to know which of
these is the better option?

WOMAN
Huggies definitely.

NED
Thanks.

Ned puts huggies in the shopping cart.

WOMAN
How old?

NED
Almost a year.

WOMAN
Should be an expert by now.

NED
Her mother did all this stuff. She's
the expert. She was.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ned holding baby Edith. Slowly pull out of Ned's bedroom and into the hallway. We hold for a beat with a smooth transition to-

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Ned sleeping when a child comes into his room. Edith (4 or 5) jumps on the bed.

EDITH
Wake up! Wake up!

Edith continues jumping. Scout comes along as well.

NED
I'm up. I'm up.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Ned and Edith brushing their teeth.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM

Ned and Edith having breakfast.

EDITH
When can we have ice cream for breakfast?

NED
Ugh, never.

EDITH
Why?

NED
Because it's not a breakfast food.

EDITH
It can be.

NED
No it can't.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Edith hugging Scout.

EDITH
Bye Scout.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ned and Edith getting off the elevator. Edith rushes over to Muriel.

EDITH
Morning Muriel.

MURIEL
Good Morning, Edith. Morning Ned.

NED
Morning Muriel.

EDITH
I made something for you.

MURIEL
What did you make?

Edith pulls out a drawing and hands it Muriel.

EDITH
I did it in class yesterday.

MURIEL
I love it. Thank you.

Muriel hugs Edith.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Ned and Edith walking along the curb.

EDITH
You won't be late like last time will you?

NED
I won't.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
What'd you learn in school yesterday?

EDITH
Times tables.

NED
You an expert.

EDITH
Yup.

NED
Okay. Okay. What's three times four?

EDITH
Twelve.

NED
What's six times five?

EDITH
Thirty.

NED
Nice. What's eight times eight?

EDITH
Ummm. Sixty?

NED
Close, but no. Sixty-four.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Ned and Edith stand outside. Ned kneels down to Edith.

NED
Ready?

Edith nods. Ned hugs her.

NED (cont'd)
Have a good day.

Edith goes inside.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned working when Joe comes in and sits at his cubicle. Ned notices.

NED
Joe you missed the meeting.

JOE
My car got towed.

NED

Why?

Beat.

JOE

Parking in a no standing zone.

Ned fixes himself to say something but turns back to his computer instead.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Ned , Joe, and Oliver on break. They meet someone at a table. The infamous TYSON.

JOE

Ned, this is Tyson.

Tyson and Ned shake hands.

NED

Tyson. The bad jokes?

TYSON

Bad jokes?

Tyson turns to Joe and Oliver.

TYSON (cont'd)

You guys think my jokes are bad?

JOE

I mean-

OLIVER

Well, ugh-

OLIVER (cont'd)

You have your moments. Let's leave it at that.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

The guys are done eating. Joe notices some women at another table.

JOE

Guys.

Everyone else notices.

JOE (cont'd)

So gonna make the introduction.

TYSON
I can. I'll hit 'em wi-

JOE
Tyson, with all due respect you'll
just get us arrested.

Tyson gives Joe the middle finger.

JOE (cont'd)
You know I'm right.

OLIVER
How about you Ned?

NED
I don't have the time.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Edith looks for a book for a beat. She finally picks one out.

Edith and Ned head over to the librarian to check it out. Rita SAMPSON, 30s, sits at the counter.

EDITH
Hi Mrs. Sampson.

RITA
Hey Edith. Let's see what you got here.

Rita examines the book for a beat.

RITA (cont'd)
Good choice.

Rita turns to Ned.

RITA (cont'd)
You're not out of the woods sir.

NED
I know. I know.

Ned takes out a book.

NED (cont'd)
I misplaced it during cleaning.
Finally found it yesterday.

RITA
Was about to call it "Ned's personal
copy".

NED
Apologies.

Ned and Edith leave.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Ned grabbing items and placing them in the cart while Edith
reads off the list.

EDITH
What are taxes?

NED
It's basically a charge the
government puts on people and
businesses for public services.

Beat.

EDITH
So the government takes your money.

NED
Well it's to help the public.

EDITH
So they take your money.

NED
Yeah, they take your money.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)
We got everything on the list?

EDITH
Water?

NED
Check.

EDITH
Cereal?

NED
Check.

EDITH
Gummy bears?

NED
That's not on there.

EDITH
For emergencies.

Ned shakes his head as he smiles.

EDITH (cont'd)
Oh, we need toilet paper. You used
the last of it.

A nearby customer hears.

NED
Thanks for putting that out there.
Let me take a look at this.

Ned gets the list from Edith. Ned reads it over. Edith notices something. Through her POV we see a mother and her child. Looks around the same age as Edith.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Ned and Edith washing Scout. Scout making it difficult for the two of them.

EDITH
He has bubbles on his nose.

Ned and Edith continue washing him.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - EDITH'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ned tucking Edith in bed. He lays next to her and reads her a bedtime story.

He finishes and gently rubs Edith's head.

NED
Sweet dreams.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Ned and Edith sitting at a table. Ned helps Edith with her homework.

Ned looks over her work.

NED
You're a natural.

They give each other a high five.

EDITH
I like math.

Angle on Ned as he smiles.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ned and Edith having dinner at a fast food joint.

EDITH
I think we need more paper.

NED
More what?

Edith points.

EDITH
Paper.

Ned picks it up.

NED
These are napkins.

They look at each other a beat then burst out laughing. They continue eating for another beat. Edith stops.

EDITH
How did my mom die?

Ned looks at Edith for a beat. He lets out a sigh.

NED
I had asked your mother out on a date and I waited at the restaurant for a little while. She never showed, so I figured she stood me up. I get back to the apartment and Muriel tells me your mother was in a car accident.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Ned in the hospital searching for Sophia.

INT. DINER - BACK TO PRESENT

Ned and Edith still talking.

NED
I spoke with the doctor and he told
me she had passed away.

Edith eyes lower.

NED (cont'd)
Edith I want you to know something. I
think about it all the time. But I
made promise to her that I would take
care of you. And that's what I intend
to do.

Angle on the two of them.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned and Edith get back.

NED
Time for bed.

Edith yawns.

EDITH
But I'm not tired.

NED
Yes you are.

EDITH
I'm not. See?

Edith waves her arms very slowly.

NED
So convincing. Let's go.

Ned picks her up. And heads to her room.

EDITH
You suck.

NED
So does every other parent.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Angle on Edith playing in the grass with the dog. Ned sits on the bench. Edith comes over and grabs some water. Edith takes a seat.

NED

Edith.

Edith turns to Ned.

NED (cont'd)

This is the same spot where I ran into your mother.

EDITH

Really?

Ned nods.

NED

I was taking Scout for a walk and I decided to take a seat enjoy the scenery. Your mother came from over there and she saw me. Come on.

Ned and Edith get up and continue down the trail.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Ned, Edith and Scout walking alone the trail.

EDITH

Dad?

Ned turns to Edith.

NED

Yeah?

EDITH

Why do bad things happen to good people?

Ned taken back.

NED

Ugh. Where is this coming from?

EDITH

We're reading a book in school and-

Beat.

NED
I understand.

They stop walking. Ned kneels down to Edith.

NED (cont'd)
The truth is. Bad things happen to
all people. It's just a part of life.
There isn't always a reason for why
it happens. You just have to choose
what you take away from it.

Ned and Edith continue walking.

INT. MALL - DAY

Ned and Edith at the food court. They're ordering a pizza.
Ned picks Edith up so she can talk to the cashier.

EDITH
I wanna large with extra cheese. And
make it snappy!

Ned puts Edith down.

INT. MALL - LATER

Ned and Edith with a couple bags in hand head for the exit.
Edith notices a man dropped something. She rushes ahead.

EDITH
Hey, Mister. You dropped this.

MAN
Why thank you.

EDITH
Why do you need shampoo?

MAN
For my head.

EDITH
But your bald.

MAN
I noticed.

NED
I am so sorry.

Ned takes Edith to the side.

NED (cont'd)
Edith. You can't say stuff like that.

EDITH
I'm not wrong.

NED
Doesn't matter.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Ned and Edith headed to the car when Edith sees someone familiar.

EDITH
Hi Mrs.Sampson.

Rita with a child in hand walks over.

NED
You getting some shopping done too.

RITA
Yup. Great minds think alike.

NED
And whose this?

RITA
This is my niece Kelly.

KELLY
Hi. Aunt Deb can they hang out with us?

RITA
They probably have plans.

EDITH
No, we're not doing anything.

Ned turns to Edith.

NED
Wow. You are just so honest today.

EXT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kelly and Edith play out back while Ned and Rita talk.

NED

I'm in the wrong profession. This is a nice house.

RITA

Thank you, but trust me. It's not what you think. I Grew up here. Parents left it to me.

NED

Are they-?

RITA

No, no. They just had to move.

Beat.

RITA (cont'd)

You're so good with her. How did you adjust?

NED

To be honest, I didn't. I'm still figuring it out. Speaking of that. When do I tell her that Santa Claus doesn't exist?

EDITH

What doesn't exist?

Edith and Kelly come in and sit on the couch as well.

NED

Oh nothing. Just grown up stuff.

KELLY

Aunt Deb. Can Edith come to birthday party?

RITA

I don't see why not.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Kelly's birthday. Various shots of kids playing and decorations everywhere.

Ned watches on with a few other parents. Rita comes up next to him.

RITA

These things never come with a manual.

NED

Tell me about it. I struggled during Edith's but it was smaller than this.

RITA

Where'd you guys have it?

NED

It was neighbor on our floor. He had a lot of room.

RITA

What'd you do?

NED

I made the mistake of renting a bounce house?

Rita laughs

RITA

Oh my, nooo.

NED

I'm never doing that again. Complete nightmare.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - EDITH'S ROOM - DAY

Ned and Edith on the edge of the bed.

NED

Did you have fun?

EDITH

Yeah.

NED

Can you do me a favor?

EDITH

What?

NED

Can you stay five forever?

EDITH

But... I can't.

Ned gives Edith a hug.

NED

I know.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)

You're gonna be so annoying when you're a teenager. I'm not looking forward to that.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned working when his phone rings. He answers.

NED

Hello?

JACQUELINE

Ned it's Jacqueline. There's something important that's been brought to my attention. I'd like to see you sometime this week.

NED

Sure, not a problem. I can leave early on Wednesday. What's this about?

Beat.

JACQUELINE

It's best we talk about this in person.

NED

Okay.

Ned hangs up the phone.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ned and Edith cleaning the apartment. Dan Croll " Home" starts playing. Various shots of them cleaning different areas of the house together.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned and Edith watching a movie while eating popcorn.

INT. SOCIAL WORKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ned sits across from Jacqueline, distraught.

NED
Why now? All of sudden.

JACQUELINE
He didn't know about her. Sandra never told him.

Beat.

JACQUELINE (cont'd)
He is her father.

NED
What happens now?

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Ned driving while Edith's in the back. "New World Coming" by Augustine plays in the background.

Various shots of the car and different buildings as the song plays.

Angle on Edith taking it all in.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ned pulls up to the house. Pretty nice setup. Ned and Edith get out the car head up to the door.

Ned knocks. The door opens.

We Dennis, 30s, along with Jaqueline.

NED
You must be Dennis.

DENNIS
And you're Ned. Nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

Dennis brings his gaze down to Edith. He kneels down.

DENNIS (cont'd)
You're Edith, right? I'm so happy to finally see you.

Edith stands behind Ned still.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ned, Dennis, and Jaqueline in the middle of talking while Edith watches TV.

DENNIS

Me and Sophia. I wasn't the best partner. I understand why she'd never wanted to see me again.

Beat.

DENNIS (cont'd)

A mutual friend told me what had happened. I'm sorry.

Angle on Ned.

DENNIS (cont'd)

I got myself together and I want to be a part of Edith's life. In any capacity.

NED

Okay. She deserves to know her father.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)

What do you do for work?

DENNIS

I'm a general manager of small retail store. Pays decent. Good hours. So I can be flexible in my scheduling.

Dennis turns to Edith.

DENNIS (cont'd)

She looks so much like her.

Ned turns to Edith as well. Dennis turns back to Ned and Jaqueline.

DENNIS (cont'd)

What are next steps?

JAQUELINE

We'll start off with weekly scheduled visits. I'll be supervising.

DENNIS

Understood.

Angle on Edith watching TV.

Dennis walks up and takes a seat next to her.

DENNIS (cont'd)

What you watching?

EDITH

Spongebob.

DENNIS

That was my favorite cartoon as a kid.

EDITH

Really?

DENNIS

Yeah. Squiward is my favorite character.

EDITH

Squidward. Why?

DENNIS

He's relatable. It used to be Spongebob, but then I grew up.

INT. CAR - MOVING

Ned driving while sleeps in the backseat. Ned glances at her.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Ned and Rita walking as they discuss the aftermath of meeting Ricardo.

NED

He seems like he's putting his life together. A nice house.

RITA

Doesn't mean it's a home.

Ned nods halfheartedly.

NED

Now it'll be scheduled visits once a week.

RITA

How you holding up?

NED

When I saw them together. I just felt as if I'm the one that doesn't belong ya know.

RITA

You need to put that out of your head. You've been great for her. You still are. You can't think like that.

NED

Thanks.

RITA

Of course.

NED

Come one.

Ned and Rita continue walking.

EXT. OUTDOOR EATERY - NIGHT

Ned and Rita in the middle of talking. They sit at a table among other people.

Rita laughs.

RITA

You're kidding.

NED

I'm not. Before I met Edith's mother. I had a strict routine. Then she came along and she screwed everything up.

Rita smiles.

NED (cont'd)

I'm glad I did. As chaotic and short lived as it was. I wouldn't trade it.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)

How are things with your niece?

RITA

Great. Her mom's gonna be coming down to ger her.

NED

When?

RITA

Two weeks. So Edith's partner in crime is sadly gonna be leaving soon.

NED

That's a bummer.

RITA

I know. But it's not a goodbye. It's a see you soon. I hate goodbyes.

Beat.

NED

We should plan something. The four of us.

RITA

What'd you have in mind?

INT. SCIENCE MUSEUM - DAY

A wide shot of the bustling museum entrance. Families and friends are milling about, eager to explore. Ned, Edith, Rita, and her niece walk up to the entrance.

Ned extends his hand to Edith. As she takes it, the opening lines of "Pure Imagination" by Gene Wilder begin to play: "Come with me, and you'll be, in a world of pure imagination..."

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

ENTERING THE MUSEUM:

Hand in hand, Ned and Edith walk through the museum doors, followed closely by Rita and her niece. The music swells, filling the air with a sense of wonder.

EXHIBIT EXPLORATION:

The group moves through different exhibits, their faces lighting up with curiosity and joy.

Edith and Rita's niece run ahead, pointing at fascinating displays, while Ned and Rita share amused glances.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES:

They engage in interactive exhibits, such as building structures with blocks, experimenting with light and shadow, and watching science demonstrations. The song underscores the sense of discovery and delight.

PLANETARIUM:

In the planetarium, they lean back in their seats, eyes wide as stars and planets come to life above them. The children gaze in awe, holding hands.

FOSSIL EXHIBIT:

Edith and Rita's niece stand in front of a dinosaur skeleton, mimicking the poses and giggling. Ned captures the moment on his phone, while Rita playfully pretends to be a paleontologist.

CLOSING MOMENTS:

The group exits the museum. The song fades out with Ned driving while the girls sleep in the back.

FADE OUT

INT. LAUNDROMAT - LATER

Ned and Edith in the process of folding clothes. Ned teaches a few things.

NED

Grab it by the middle. Bring it up.

Edith does the same.

NED (cont'd)

Then you'll fold it up to here. Then fold it again. Like so.

Edith does the same.

NED (cont'd)

Easy.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)

Tomorrow you'll be visiting Dennis.
How do you feel about it?

EDITH

Fine. I guess.

NED

It'll all be fine. Just a little
different. That's all.

MONTAGE

INT. DENNIS'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

FIRST DROP-OFF:

Ned: Ringing the doorbell, looking a bit anxious.

Dennis: Opens the door in a casual t-shirt and jeans,
looking surprised but welcoming.

Edith: Tentatively steps inside, giving a shy smile to
Dennis.

SECOND DROP-OFF:

Ned: More relaxed, chatting briefly with Dennis at the door.

Dennis: Wearing a different casual outfit, perhaps a hoodie
and joggers, with a friendly smile.

Edith: More confident, giving Dennis a small wave as she
enters.

Third Drop-Off:

Ned: Casually chatting with Dennis, even sharing a laugh.

Dennis: In a flannel shirt and jeans, clearly more
comfortable with the routine.

Edith: Happily rushes inside, excited to see Dennis.

FOURTH DROP-OFF:

Ned: Smiling and exchanging a friendly handshake with Dennis.

Dennis: Wearing a fun, bright-colored shirt, showing a playful side.

Edith: Runs to hug Dennis, showing a strong bond has developed.

FIFTH DROP-OFF:

Ned: Confidently waving goodbye to both Dennis and Edith.

Dennis: In a more formal outfit, maybe ready for a special day out with Edith.

Edith: Excitedly holding Dennis's hand, ready for their adventure.

SIXTH DROP-OFF:

Ned: Drops Edith off without lingering, trusting the routine.

Dennis: In a relaxed outfit, comfortable with the arrangement.

Edith: Happily greets Dennis, feeling completely at ease.

INT. ARCADE - DAY

Dennis and Edith enjoying different arcade games.

INT. ARCADE - LATER

Dennis and Edith in the middle of eating.

DENNIS

How'd you get so good at that?

EDITH

Practice. Lots of practice.

DENNIS

Can you teach me?

EDITH
Got a busy schedule. But I can fit
you in.

DENNIS
I appreciate that.

Dennis laughs. Beat.

DENNIS (cont'd)
You know I took your mother on a date
to an arcade once.

Edith pays attention to Dennis.

DENNIS (cont'd)
I think I had like only thirty
dollars on me. I really wanted to
impress her. After trying almost all
the games in there I saved the one
for last. It was the claw machine.
The last quarter I had left.

Angle on Edith smiling.

DENNIS (cont'd)
I was constantly sweating as I
grabbed onto this bear. I got it by
the arm. I'm slowly bringing it up.
Slowly. Slowly. And guess what?

EDITH
You won?!

Dennis smiles.

DENNIS
Absolutely.... not.

EDITH
Huh?

DENNIS
Right before I get it slipped right
out. We're bummed out. But it was the
most fun we ever had.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Edith sleeps in the back as Ned drives.

INT. COSTUME STORE - DAY

Ned and Edith trying to find a costume.

NED
How about this one?

EDITH
No, not that one.

Ned heads down an aisle. Still keeping a close eye on Edith. Edith browses some costume further down. She comes back with costumes in her hand.

EDITH (cont'd)
What about these?

Angle on Ned.

NED
Ugh. You sure?

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ned and Edith knock on the door. Rita opens it.

RITA
Hey.

Rita brings her gaze to Edith dressed as Michael Myers.

RITA (cont'd)
Hi Edith.

EDITH
Hi Mrs. Watson.

RITA
That's quite the costume.

The girls greet each other and head down the street. Ned and Rita walk shortly behind.

As they do-

RITA (cont'd)
Micheal Myers. That's what she wanted.

Rita smiles.

NED

She actually wanted Jason. I didn't even know they made those for kids. I figured a knife is less dangerous machete.

Rita laughs.

RITA

It's plastic.

NED

That's what I try to tell myself.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Angle on Edith and Rita's niece walking together.

NED

It was a while ago. Around Edith's age. Maybe a little older. But the mask I had on was so hard to breathe. I would've have to take it off from time to time.

RITA

The last time I did it was high school. But it wasn't trick or treating though, it was a party.

NED

What was your costume? I'm guessing it wasn't a serial killer.

Ned gestures to Edith. Rita smiles.

RITA

No. I dressed up as an Anime character.

NED

Which Anime?

RITA

You watch Anime?

NED

I dabble. Not as much as I'd like to.

RITA

Well I came as Makima?

NED
Did you wear the wig?

RITA
Of course.

NED
Of course. Why did I ask?

RITA
Yeah, why did you?

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

The girls head up to a house where the candy is placed at the door step. There's a sign that says take one. Both of the girls take a handful.

NED
Girls?

They look at the Ned.

NED (cont'd)
What did the sign say?

EDITH
What if we can't read?

Beat.

NED
Cute. Put it back.

The girls head back up to the doorstep.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rita and Ned on the couch. The girls sleep with some candy around them on a blanket. Television plays on in the background.

RITA
What's one horror film you wish you could unsee?

NED
Easy, Slither.

RITA
Never seen that.

NED
Consider yourself lucky.

RITA
Too scary for you?

NED
No it was too gross. I genuinely
almost threw up.

Rita laughs.

NED (cont'd)
What about you?

RITA
Children of the corn.

NED
Why?

RITA
I just couldn't get into it.
Especially how it was filmed.

NED
What's your favorite then?

RITA
That's tough. I'm gonna have to go
with The Shining.

NED
That's cop out.

RITA
How is that a cop out?

NED
It just is.

RITA
Okay what's yours then?

NED
Silence of the Lambs.

RITA
That's not even a horror film.

NED
Yes it is.

RITA
No it isn't. That's like mystery,
suspense.

NED
You're just jealous cause mine is
better than yours.

RITA
How old are you?

They both laugh.

Beat.

RITA (cont'd)
When do you take her to see her
father?

NED
In two days.

RITA
How do you feel?

NED
Worried. But its nothing new. There's
so many things I wish I could shield
her from. But I understand there's
just some things need to go through
in order to learn from it.

EXT. DENNIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Ned pulls up.

INT. DENNIS'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ned walks in on Dennis and Edith in the middle of a game.
Edith ends up winning.

DENNIS
You got me.

NED
Time to go.

DENNIS
Hey, Ned can I speak with you?

NED
Okay.

Ned and Dennis head into the-

INT. DENNIS'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Dennis stands on one end of the counter. Ned on the other.

DENNIS

You know these past few weeks. I've really gotten to know Edith and they've been amazing.

Angle on Ned.

DENNIS (cont'd)

It makes me think I how much I've missed out on her life. I don't want to miss out on anything else.

NED

Ugh. I'm sorry what exactly are you trying to say.

DENNIS

I want Edith to live with me from now on. I want custody.

NED

Dennis that's not a good idea.

DENNIS

Why?

NED

Because you just came into her life.

DENNIS

I just found out about her. Her mother never told me.

NED

I'm sure she had her reasons.

DENNIS

I'm not perfect. Far from it like everyone else. But frankly Ned what say do you have in the matter.

NED

I'm the one who raised her. That's what I have.

DENNIS

If we have take the legal route, we can. I only wanted to tell you in hopes that you would support this.

NED

Why would I support this? You've been with her for weeks. I've been with for years and you think that the gives you the right to just take her abruptly.

Beat.

DENNIS

Is there for her or you?

NED

What are you talking about?

DENNIS

You see how well she is with me. How great we are together. Like it or not she's MY daughter. I think deep down you wanna keep her so you can escape the fact that no one is ever gonna have kid with you.

A long beats hangs over them.

NED

Edith, lets go.

INT. CAR - MOVING

Ned silent as Edith sits in the back.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Ned sits on the side of his bed. Alone in thought. His door is slightly opened.

Angle on Edith as she peaks through to see Ned. She enters. The dog is with her as well.

EDITH

Could you read me a bedtime story.

Ned turns to Edith.

NED

Of course. I'll be right there.

Edith leaves.

ACT 3

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Ned sits across from a family lawyer.

FAMILY LAWYER

We'll file the necessary paperwork.
Then, the court will schedule a
hearing where both sides present
their case.

NED

Am I-? Are my chances low?

FAMILY LAWYER

Not necessarily. The primary concern
is Edith's best interests.

NED

Will Edith have to testify?

FAMILY LAWYER

In most cases, the court avoids
putting children in that position.

Beat.

FAMILY LAWYER (cont'd)

You've got a strong case. Stay
focused on Edith's well-being, and
let me handle the legal side.

INT. FAMILY COURTROOM - DAY

Ned and Dennis sit at opposing tables with their lawyers.
The bailiff comes in.

BAILIFF

All Rise.

Everyone rises.

BAILIFF (cont'd)

Honorable Judge Cassidy presiding.

JUDGE CASSIDY enters and takes a seat at the bench. Everyone else takes a seat as well.

INT. FAMILY COURTROOM - LATER

Dennis sits on the witness stand. His lawyer proceeds with his questioning.

STEPHEN

How long did you know Sandra?

DENNIS

Ten years.

STEPHEN

Why did you breakup?

DENNIS

It was just life pulling us apart. I wanted to stay, but she wanted to go.

STEPHEN

Why do you want custody?

DENNIS

She's my daughter. Her mother is no longer here but she lives in on her and want to spend the rest of my life making it up to her.

INT. FAMILY COURTROOM - DAY

Ned is on the witness stand.

STEPHEN

How long did you know Mrs. Forbes?

NED

A couple months.

STEPHEN

Were you in a relationship with her?

NED

No. She was my neighbor.

STEPHEN

You only knew for a couple of months and yet you made such a heinous decision to take care of her newborn?

NED

Yes. I was developing feelings for her.

Beat.

STEPHEN

Can you tell me about the night she died?

NED

I had asked her out to dinner. She told me she needed to find a babysitter and to text her the address and that she'll meet me there. I waited at the restaurant for about an hour and I figured she stood me up so I left.

STEPHEN

How did you find out about her passing?

NED

Muriel, the front desk attendant she told me.

STEPHEN

So if it weren't for that night she'd still be alive.

Ned's lawyer Byron stands up.

BYRON

Objection, badgering.

JUDGE CASSIDY

Sustained! Counsel on.

STEPHEN

Yes, your honor.

Beat.

STEPHEN (cont'd)

Ned, during the times you took Edith to visit Dennis did you see anything that showed he's a bad father?

NED

No.

STEPHEN

But yet you're trying to take her
away from from her father.

NED

No, not all.

Beat.

NED (cont'd)

I just want to protect Edith.

STEPHEN

No further questions.

INT. FAMILY COURTROOM - LATER

Ned and Dennis wait in anticipation. Judge Cassidy addresses
the court.

JUDGE CASSIDY

After careful consideration of the
evidence presented, this court awards
custody of Edith to-

CUT TO: BLACK

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Ned and Edith making breakfast for a beat.

NED

That should be good. Let's start
setting the table.

Edith heads off. Before she goes-

EDITH

I wont forget the NAPKINS!

Ned shakes his head.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - DINING ROOM

Ned and Edith having breakfast.

EDITH

It could be.

NED

No it will never be a breakfast.

EDITH

Says you.

NED

Says the whole world.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Angle on Ned coming from Edith's room. He's carrying something. He lays it down by the couch.

Angle to reveal Edith's luggage.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Ned and Edith both sitting down waiting. There's a knock at the door.

Ned picks up Edith's luggage in one hand and grabs Edith's hand in his other. They walk up to the door.

They stand in front of the door. Ned places the luggage on the floor. Ned kneels down to Edith. He holds both her hands.

NED

Ready?

Edith's eyes fill up with tears. She hugs Ned instantly. Tears fill up in Ned's eyes as well but he holds them back.

Ned gets up and opens the door. Dennis and Jacqueline are there. Dennis picks up Edith's luggage. Edith leaves.

Ned closes the door behind them.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ned working in his cubicle.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Ned taking Scout for a walk.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Ned grabbing his mail. Muriel's in the middle of taking someone. Ned notices Edith's drawing. Ned's eyes lower.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Ned taking scout for a walk. He sits on the bench.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Ned eating alone as he looks out the window.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ned cleaning the living room when he comes across a picture of himself and Rita at the Science Museum.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Rita saying goodbye to a few colleagues as she leaves. Rita stops for a beat.

Angle on Ned standing in front of her. Angle on the two of them.

FADE OUT