

SECOND STANCES

Feature Length Film

Written By

Laura Harbin

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115 Delaware Ave.
Toronto, ON M6H 2S9
(416) 569-9987

EXT. STREET - EARLY EVENING

We track down a quiet, well-kept street, stop briefly at one house, a momentary shudder, then continue to the next house which looks identical. We continue up the outside of the house, and into the bedroom window.

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

JULIA (42), equal parts mess-maker and cleanup crew, is in bed with IAN (44), a book you can judge by its cover, post sex, looking eye to eye.

IAN

Happy anniversary, Julia.

Julia snort laughs.

JULIA

Strangest anniversary ever. Are you okay with this?

IAN

Am I okay with...

He motions to them in bed together.

IAN (CONT'D)

Door number one?

He motions to a manilla envelope on the night table.

IAN (CONT'D)

Or door number two?

Julia breaks eye contact with Ian.

JULIA

If we are just separating I don't understand why you had to draft a divorce agreement.

IAN

You know me and my ducks. And where I like them. I'm not pushing, I'm just being open to what you want.

JULIA

I wanted a year to see figure out who I am and if I even like myself.

Ian shrugs.

IAN
I still like you.

JULIA
Oh, Babe.

IAN
It's a sample from my firm. No
pressure. Read it anytime.

Julia pauses, then tries on optimistic.

JULIA
We had twenty mostly good years and
two pretty great kids.

IAN
Two mildly dysfunctional young
human beings.

JULIA
We were kids ourselves, what did we
know?

IAN
Absolutely nothing.

JULIA
They're going to be here in fifteen
minutes. I'd invite you to stay,
but it might confuse them.

IAN
I have salsa class tonight anyway.

JULIA
Salsa? Since when?

IAN
This is my fourth class, I think.

Julia suppresses that Ian surprised her.

JULIA
Look at you trying new things.

The front door opens with a BANG downstairs startling both of
them.

MADISON (O.S.)
Mom! We're here! We brought Indian!

Julia jumps out of bed and fumbles as she gets dressed.

JULIA
 (whispering)
 They're early.

Ian throws on his shirt, then hops as he puts on a sock, looking at the floor.

IAN
 (whispering)
 I can't find my other sock.

Julia watches him for a moment. He finds the sock and puts it on and picks up his shoes.

JULIA
 (whispering)
 Hurry!

MADISON (O.S.)
 Mom!! Are you upstairs??

JULIA
 (yelling)
 Coming!

In the rush, Ian slips on his pants without his boxers which are stuck to his belt.

Julia tiptoes out of the room and motions for Ian to follow.

INT. FRONT HALL - EARLY EVENING

Julia hurries down the stairs with Ian shadowing her. MADISON (18), born like a Cornish hen, all tightly wound, and SPENCER (20), foot neither on the gas nor the brake, are in the front hall arguing.

SPENCER
 I love how you try to take credit
 by carrying it all in, when I paid
 for it.

MADISON
 (through gritted teeth)
 I'm in school.

As Julia rounds the bottom of the stairs she pastes on a smile.

JULIA
 Hey kids!!

Julia grabs the take-out bags from Madison and then envelops the kids into an awkward group hug, turning their backs to the stairs where Ian awaits.

JULIA (CONT'D)
 (over-enthusiastically)
 It's soooo nice of you guys to come
 and spend tonight with me. I cannot
 tell you how much I appreciate it.

Spencer and Madison make eye contact. Strange.

Julia ushers the kids away from the sight-line of the front door and into the dining room.

Ian tip-toes out the front door, his boxers slipping off the back of his pants onto the floor just before he exits.

Julia's eyes widen as she sees his boxers lying on the hallway floor and follows the kids into the dining room.

INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Julia, Spencer and Madison sit down at the dining room table as Julia opens the take-out bags. There's a bottle of wine and three glasses on the table.

Spencer gets up, and Julia startles to her feet.

JULIA
 What do you need?

SPENCER
 Water?

JULIA
 I'll get it!

She starts toward the kitchen when the doorbell rings.

JULIA (CONT'D)
 I'll get it!

SPENCER
 (whispering)
 Mom's losing it.

MADISON
 (whispering)
 You know we should have thought
 about Dad today too.

SPENCER

(whispering)

He's okay, he's taking salsa lessons with some lady-friend.

MADISON

(whispering)

Lady-friend??

Spencer shrugs.

INT. FRONT HALL - EARLY EVENING

Julia runs to the front door, scooping the boxers in her hand.

Julia opens the door a crack and throws out the boxers.

JULIA

(whispering)

Here you go!

She does a double take and sees it's not Ian, but JULES, (22), undecided voter on every survey ever, now with Ian's boxers sitting on her shoulder.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(still whispering)

I'm sorry, thought you were someone else.

She stretches out her hand, and Jules leans her shoulder closer to Julia so she can grab them.

JULES

I've rented the house next door and I don't have my key. I called Tricia and she said you should have one?

JULIA

Come on in.

Jules steps inside while Julia hides the boxers in the drawer of the hall cabinet and roots around in a bowl of keys that sits on top.

JULIA (CONT'D)

We used to take care of their cat when they were away. Aha!

Julia pulls out a key and hands it to Jules.

JULES

I'm Jules. Sorry, I should have introduced myself.

JULIA

Julia. Are you in school?

JULES

No, I graduated this year. Starting my first real job next week.

JULIA

Congratulations. An exciting time.

JULES

Yeah, my roommate Georgia and I are looking forward to having our own space.

JULIA

That's so funny, my first roommate was Georgia too. What kind of job are you starting?

JULES

I'm an intern at an ad agency.

Julia cocks her head.

JULIA

That was my first job, too. What a coincidence!

MADISON (O.S.)

Mom! You coming?!

JULIA

Better go. Good luck.

JULES

Thanks. I'll return this as soon as I find mine.

JULIA

No rush.

Jules exits.

INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Julia walks back into the room smiling. Spencer pours wine into the glasses.

SPENCER
Who was that?

JULIA
A new neighbor.

MADISON
Why do you look so weird?

She shrugs.

JULIA
She was nice.

SPENCER
Should we have a toast to Mom's
'year of Mom'?

Julia is one part self-conscious of this recognition and one part surprised that Spencer can acknowledge it.

Madison rolls her eyes. Julia clocks it.

JULIA
I heard that.

MADISON
Whatever.

They clink glasses with varying enthusiasm.

JULIA
To new beginnings.

Julia takes a large gulp.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Julia rocks on a cozy porch swing full of cushions set next to a loveseat, a porch clearly designed for four, and now there is only one. Sipping her wine, she looks about the seats, and sighs taking in her new reality.

Julia flips through some photos on her phone, landing on a one year old video:

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Julia and Ian clink wine glasses and smile at the camera.

The camera flips around to Spencer who is filming:

SPENCER

Next year's the big 2-0!

The camera flips back to Julia and Ian. Ian beams, a moment of uncertainty flashes across Julia's face. Then she holds up her glass.

JULIA

To nineteen years!

Ian kisses her cheek.

BACK TO:

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Julia tears up looking at the video. She cheers to no one and puts the phone down. She wipes her tears and stares off into space. Her sad reverie is interrupted.

BETH (O.S.)

Julia!!

There is a 'mad at the world' woman, BETH, 40's, on the sidewalk obscured by the hedge.

JULIA

Yes??

BETH (O.S.)

Where are you, Birdie? Are you coming? I can't see anything.

JULIA

(confused)

Mom?

BETH (O.S.)

Who else would it be??

Puzzled, Julia heads to the sidewalk, wine glass in hand.

She peers around the hedge, and sees Beth, her back to Julia.

JULIA

Mom?

Beth turns, and Julia sees that this is not her mother, and in fact Beth is her age.

BETH

What?

(yelling)

(MORE)

BETH (CONT'D)

Julia! Come down here. There's a lady down here who is confused.

Jules appears on the sidewalk from her house walkway.

JULES

Mom, this is my neighbor, Julia.
And Julia this is Beth.

BETH

Another Julia.

JULIA

Sorry Beth, I thought you were calling *me*, Julia, not *Jules*, Julia. My mom calls me Birdie, too. She used to anyway.

BETH

What? That's impossible.

JULES

Mom.

BETH

Can we go inside, Julia? I'd like to see this new place of yours.

Jules mouths "Sorry" to Julia as she heads to her house.

BETH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That woman is crazy! She thought I was her mother.

JULES (O.S.)

She thought you *sounded* like her mother...

BETH (O.S.)

She was drinking on the sidewalk. It's beyond me why you would want to move out of our house, and into this place.

JULES (O.S.)

It's a great neighborhood.

BETH (O.S.)

Well, I still need your help taking care of your father.

JULES (O.S.)

I know.

Still standing on the sidewalk, Julia downs her wine.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Julia lays limp in a hammock with her arm over her eyes and a partially read book resting across her. A large glass of water and her cell phone balance next to her on the ground.

The phone rings and Julia looks at it before she answers.

JULIA

Hey Charlotte.

(pause)

My night was... strange. I polished off a bottle of wine after the kids left.

Julia looks at the time.

JULIA (CONT'D)

How long do hangovers take to go away? I haven't had one in such a long time.

(pause)

Not the answer I was hoping for.

(pause)

I'm an idiot. I better go. This is my last hope. Sanjay my last contact in the industry, I don't want to blow it!

Julia hangs up, stares up at the sky a moment, then gets herself up.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Carrying a briefcase, Julia approaches the reception desk where WENONAH (20's), no filter between brain and mouth, sits.

A sign reading "Launch Pad Agency" hangs on the wall behind the desk.

Beads of sweat line Julia's forehead.

JULIA

I have an interview with Sanjay Bhatia. I'm Julia Fairfax.

WENONAH

I'll let him know you're here.

Wenonah picks up the phone and calls someone, keeping her eyes on Julia.

WENONAH (CONT'D)

Uhh, Sanjay's two o'clock appointment is here. After we work out tonight, remind me to call my mom.

Julia, mildly insulted that she reminds Wenonah of her mom, mops her soggy brow and tries to connect with her.

JULIA

(conspiratorially)

I'm a little hung-over, you know. Any chance you have an Ibuprofen?

Wenonah opens a drawer and pulls out a small vial.

WENONAH

Ibuprofen causes stomach bleeding. Rub this Tiger Balm on the back of your neck and temples.

JULIA

Thank you so much. That is very kind of you.

Julia takes the vial and starts dabbing.

WENONAH

My therapist says getting drunk is just a way of numbing yourself because you haven't dealt with your childhood trauma.

Julia's uncomfortable with the oversharing.

JULIA

Or just a really strange evening...

Just then an ASSISTANT comes into reception.

ASSISTANT

Julia?

JULIA

That's me.

ASSISTANT

This way.

Julia hands the vial back to Wenonah.

JULIA

Thanks for the session.

Wenonah raises an eyebrow, unsure how to read Julia's comment.

INT. UPSCALE OFFICE - DAY

The Assistant escorts Julia into a large, upscale office with a beautiful view of the city.

The chair is turned away from the door and swings around to reveal, SANJAY, (35), three-showers-a-day-clean.

SANJAY

Julia! So great to see you.

JULIA

Thank you so much for meeting with me.

SANJAY

How could I not? You were the one who gave me my break at Wonderwall.

JULIA

Right. Hired you right out of University.

SANJAY

High school. Summer job.

Julia's forehead crinkles, doing age math.

JULIA

And look at you now, with your own agency.

SANJAY

And you? What have you been up to the last... decade. Oh my god, I sound like my mother.

JULIA

Since I left Wonderwall ten years ago, I have been raising responsible citizens! My kids are out of the house now. Husband too, actually.

This catches Sanjay by surprise.

SANJAY

Oh, I didn't realize that.

JULIA

It's all good.

Julia wants to move on from this achilles heel.

JULIA (CONT'D)
So, has anything changed in the
industry since I left?

Julia smiles and Sanjay eyes her uncertainly, until he decides, it is indeed a joke.

SANJAY
Everything is exactly the same.
And completely different.

JULIA
As I expected. I brought some
examples of my work from 'back in
the day'.

There is a knock at the door and, MATTHEW, (mid 20's), no socks in his shoes ever, walks in carrying a tablet.

MATTHEW
Is now a good time?

Sanjay waves Matthew in.

SANJAY
Julia, Matthew is the Art Director,
in search of a Copy Writer.

JULIA
Hello.

SANJAY
Julia was just about to show us her
portfolio.

Matthew launches his tablet.

MATTHEW
What's the URL?

Julia face reads, 'that would have been a good idea!' as she reaches into her briefcase, pulling out a folder.

JULIA
I have a few pages here.

Matthew makes eye contact with Sanjay. What fresh hell is this?

JULIA (CONT'D)

In 2010, when Sandra Bulloch was seen in some Birkenstocks, we found a model with 'Sandra-like legs' and had a campaign ready to go right after she won her Oscar.

MATTHEW

Celebrity ads are standard now.

JULIA

Right. It was unusual in its time. It's just a matter of applying that kind of thinking today.

MATTHEW

Sure.

SANJAY

Honestly Julia, I'm not considering you on the basis of your portfolio.

MATTHEW

(like air escaping a tire)
Lucky for you.

Julia side-eyes Matthew.

SANJAY

You left a world of 30-second TV ads and print ads, and now it's 6-second pre-roll ads on YouTube.

JULIA

I understand. You know how well I work with clients. No matter what kind of campaign we are running.

SANJAY

It takes a lot of energy.

JULIA

I'm starting a new chapter and I'm ready to put all my energy into my career in a way I have never been able to. No distractions. One hundred per cent committed.

SANJAY

Thank you Julia. It was really great to see you again. I'll be in touch.

JULIA
Thank you.

MATTHEW
Take care of that hang-over.

Julia looks at Matthew quizzically. Matthew touches his nose.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Tiger Balm.

JULIA
Right.

Julia exits.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Julia reclines in the hammock, still in her interview clothes.

Ian comes through the back gate with a grocery bag.

IAN
How was the interview?

JULIA
I'm a dinosaur.

IAN
You are *not* a dinosaur.

JULIA
The Art Director thinks I am. What did you need?

IAN
I left my tennis racquet in the basement closet. Time to dust that thing off.

JULIA
I was planning to start playing again too.

IAN
We can play doubles.

JULIA
With who?

IAN
I don't know. Whoever we both find to play with.

He holds up the grocery bag.

IAN (CONT'D)

Anyway, I brought you some kombucha. Supposed to help with the hang-over. Haven't tested it myself...

JULIA

How did you know I was hung-over?

IAN

(beat)

Lucky guess. Or unlucky I suppose.

JULIA

How was salsa?

IAN

Challenging for those of us not blessed with latin hips. Okay if I run in and grab the racquet?

JULIA

Help yourself. And your boxers are in the hall cabinet drawer.

As Ian runs in the house, Julia hears voices from the backyard next door.

EVAN (O.S.)

You could put some herbs in planters here. Lots of sun.

JULES (O.S.)

That's a great idea.

Julia jumps up and waves at Jules and a button-down, khaki young man, EVAN (20's).

JULIA

Julia! Jules! Hey hi!

JULES

Hi Julia. This is Evan.

JULIA

Hi Evan, nice to meet you! Do you guys want to come over for a coffee or kombucha!

She holds up the bag.

JULES

Evan has to get to class, but thanks.

Jules waves and they head into the house.

EVAN

(whispering to Jules)

Is that the crazy neighbor your mom was bugging you about?

It takes Julia a second to realize Evan is talking about her. She turns to say something but they have disappeared.

Ian comes out the back door.

IAN

Are we celebrating Madison's birthday together?

JULIA

We should. Can I tell you something about last night?

Ian nods and smiles, expectant.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I was on the porch and I thought I heard my mom calling me from the sidewalk, but the woman was *my* age.

IAN

I'm confused, this is a dream you had?

JULIA

No. She's real, and the mother of our... my... new neighbor Julia whose roommate is Georgia and is starting a job at an ad agency. Isn't that freaky?

IAN

Something is definitely freaky.

Julia exhales. Puts her hand to her head.

JULIA

I don't know what I'm saying. Maybe I should have some of that sambuca.

Ian smiles at Julia's joke.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Oh, right. Not 'hair of the dog...'
Thanks for bringing it, very nice
of you.

Ian looks directly at Julia.

IAN

Are you okay?

JULIA

Yes. No. I don't know. I don't
think we should have had sex last
night.

IAN

I thought it was a nice surprise.

JULIA

But how are we going to figure out
how we are outside of each other if
we keep... being inside each other?

IAN

I'm not the one trying to figure
that out.

Ian turns and leaves, hurt.

Julia sits back down on the hammock, disappointed she's hurt
Ian again, when this was what she was trying to avoid.

Julia hears the screen door slam as Jules comes out her back
door.

JULES

Julia! Sorry, I didn't mean to be
abrupt just then. We were in a bit
of a rush. Evan likes to be on
time.

JULIA

No worries. What's Evan studying?

JULES

He's in law school.

Wait, what?

JULIA

Do you want to come over for a
dinner tonight?

JULES

Sorry, I'm meeting Georgia and her friend Charlie and I'm running late. Next time.

JULIA

Funny, I almost named my son Charlie after my best friend.

JULES

Actually her name is Charlotte, but everyone calls her Charlie.

Wait, wait, what?

JULES (CONT'D)

See you!

Julia waves feebly as Jules disappears around the side of her house.

Julia sits back down on her hammock, her head in her hands. Does it hurt from the inside or the outside?

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Julia stands on a paint-chipped trunk that has seen better days, in her living room. She takes a vase off of a shelf, steps down onto the floor and examines the vase, before placing it in a box on the floor.

Beeping outside draws her attention to the window. She sees her mom, LIZ, 70's, opening the trunk of her car. If there's a cloud in the sky, Liz will stand under it.

Liz closes the trunk of her car after pulling some old tomato cages out and struggles with her key fob until the beeping finally stops.

INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

Julia opens the door for Liz as she climbs the porch stairs. Liz holds up the tomato cages, tendrils of dead tomato leaves hanging off of them.

LIZ

Can you use these? I have more than I need.

JULIA

Hi Mom. They'll come in handy for next year. You didn't tell me you were coming.

Liz walks in and Julia grabs the cages from her, and as she turns, they knock magazines off the hall cabinet and when she picks the magazines up, the cages get caught in her shirt.

JULIA (CONT'D)
 (under her breath)
 Crikey.

As Julia de-tangles herself, she sees Liz rifling through the box of discards from the shelf. Liz holds up the vase.

LIZ
 Did I give this to you?

Julia looks at it and takes it from Liz.

JULIA
 I don't know how that got in there.

Liz looks around.

LIZ
 It looks different in here.

JULIA
 Well, Ian took half of everything in here. So I guess you could say I've been de-cluttered.

Liz points at the paint-chipped trunk.

LIZ
 What is this monstrosity?

JULIA
 Isn't it amazing? It's been in the basement for years. I'm going to refinish it and use it as a coffee table.

Liz raises her eyebrows, turns and walks towards the kitchen.

LIZ
 I need some water.

JULIA
 Mom, do you want something to eat? I could heat up some soup I made yesterday.

LIZ
 If that's all you have, sure.

Classic Liz. Julia watches her go.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Liz pulls a glass from the cupboard and inspects it before she fills it with water.

Julia tries to shield the fact that she is pulling a saucepan out of the fridge, but the lid pops off and spins on the ground like a never-ending top.

LIZ

I'll bring you storage containers
next time I come over.

JULIA

I was just in a bit of a rush.

As Julia turns on the stove, Liz pulls spoons and bowls out and inspects them as she sets two spots at the island bar.

LIZ

The Walters' silver maple split in
two. On a beautiful sunny day,
hardly any wind, and the tree just
split and half of it fell on our
property.

JULIA

Whose tree?

LIZ

(impatient)

The new neighbors! Where the
Brown's used to live.

JULIA

I have a new neighbor too. Her
mother reminded me of you.

LIZ

The amazing thing is, it fell right
between all the buildings, didn't
harm a thing. The arborist said it
rotted internally, and no one
noticed the failings on the
outside.

As Julia serves the soup, she studies Liz's expression - is Liz speaking metaphorically about her relationship?

JULIA

It's just a trial separation, Mom.

LIZ

You know I warned you that Ian wouldn't keep your interest. Too vanilla.

Julia's now offended on Ian's behalf.

JULIA

Ian was... is a great Dad. And he was a good husband too. Maybe just not for me.

Julia shrugs.

LIZ

What ever happened to that musician you were dating at the same time? I thought he was cute. He always said we looked like sisters.

Liz smiles to herself.

JULIA

I don't know.

LIZ

Did you know the twenty year anniversary of your father's passing is coming up?

JULIA

Yes, I did.

LIZ

The Liver Foundation wants to honor him at their annual dinner, because of the bursary the hospital did in his name. Will you come with me?

JULIA

Of course.

They continue to eat their soup in silence.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Julia wakes when she hears the sound of the door opening downstairs.

MADISON (O.S.)

Mom!

Julia jumps up and throws a sweater on, and sits back down as Madison appears in her doorway.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Were you *sleeping*??

JULIA

No. I was just... sitting on the edge of the bed.

MADISON

What? Mom, it's eight-thirty! I was texting you and you weren't answering so...

JULIA

You were worried about me? That's so sweet.

This expectation was just a disappointment in disguise.

MADISON

I left my uniform here by accident when we came for dinner. Someone called in sick so I got an extra shift. It would have really helped if you had been able to drop off my uniform.

JULIA

Sorry, Sweetie.

Madison turns and starts down the stairs. Julia follows.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Is everything okay, Madison? You seem a little stressed.

INT. FRONT HALL - MORNING

Madison corners into the front hall from the stairs.

MADISON

I've got papers due and I keep getting shifts, which I can't turn down, because if I do they might not call me again. I don't get to sleep in and stare out the window all day like you!

JULIA

Madison! That's not true.

MADISON

Isn't it?

The doorbell rings, surprising both of them. Julia looks down at her pajamas. Madison, seeing Julia's discomfort, opens the door wide, revealing Jules standing there.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

JULES

Is Julia here?

MADISON

Right here. In her pajamas still.
C'mon in.

JULIA

Madison, this is Jules, she just moved into Tricia's house.

MADISON

Nice to meet you Jules. Enjoy the neighborhood. Somebody should.

With that Madison turns and leaves.

Julia looks down and sees Madison has forgotten to grab the bag she came for. She picks it up and holds it out. Madison storms back in, grabs the bag and leaves. Julia sighs.

JULIA

She's late for work.

JULES

I get flustered when I'm late too.

JULIA

What can I help you with?

Jules reaches into her pocket and returns the borrowed key.

JULES

Thanks for this. And I was wondering if I could borrow an extension cord? Trying to put up some shelves and the drill won't reach.

JULIA

Sure. I was about to put on some coffee. Do you want some?

JULES

I would, actually. The coffee maker didn't survive the move.

JULIA
Sure thing.

Julia motions for Jules to follow her.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Julia tries to fix her hair as she goes to the coffee maker.

JULES
Have you lived on this street for a while?

JULIA
Yes, we have. I have. Getting used to saying that.

Jules squirms a little.

JULES
Are you divorced?

JULIA
Separated.

JULES
Oh sorry to hear that. Does Madison live with her father.

JULIA
No, no she's in residence. First year university.

JULES
At University of Toronto?

JULIA
My Alma Mater.

JULES
Mine too. Does she like it?

JULIA
I'm not sure yet, but I think she'll get the hang of it.
(beat)
How do you take your coffee?

JULES
Black. Just black.

JULIA

Have you ever noticed people always say 'just' before how they take their coffee? 'Just' sugar. 'Just' milk. 'Just' double cream and three sugars. That would be a good name for a coffee brand. 'Just' coffee. All you need.

Julia hands Jules her coffee. Jules shrugs.

JULES

It's catchy but I like a product that makes a difference. You know, ones that put their profits back into the community.

JULIA

Right. Me too.

(pause)

Does your mom still think I'm the neighborhood drunk?

JULES

She doesn't make, or take, a very good first impression.

JULIA

What about your dad? Your mom said something about helping with him?

JULES

My dad has liver disease. He stopped drinking a couple of years ago, but it was too far gone.

JULIA

Liver. That's the kind of cancer my dad had. He's been gone almost twenty years now.

JULES

Sorry to hear that.

They sit in silence for a moment at the island bar.

JULIA

At the risk of sounding like a crazy person, do you find it strange that we have... so many parallels?

JULES

Parallels?

JULIA

Well, we have the same name, my Ian is a lawyer and your Evan is in law school. Our dads had the same organ issues...

JULES

But not the same illness.

JULIA

True. But my roommate at your age was Georgia and Charlotte is my best friend.

JULES

I just met Charlie. She's Georgia's friend.

JULIA

Soon Georgia will be George and you'll lose her to Xbox Live... And it will just be you and Charlotte becoming besties. And if you aren't careful, you'll get pregnant on your next birthday. Twenty-two is coming up, isn't it?

Jules stands up hastily, abandoning her coffee.

JULES

Umm. I just remembered I have a thing I have to get to. Thanks for the coffee. The extension cord?

JULIA

Right.

Julia reaches in a cupboard, grabs the cord and hands it to Jules.

JULES

Thanks.

Julia watches Jules go, and takes her foot out of her mouth so she can have a sip of coffee.

INT. RUG STORE - AFTERNOON

CHARLOTTE (early 40's) like a coconut, the soft inside can be hard to get to, finalizes a sale with a CUSTOMER as Julia enters.

Julia browses a pile of rugs. The sign reads "Locally Made with Organic Materials".

Charlotte opens the door to let the Customer out, then approaches Julia.

JULIA

You should really advertise your local sourcing more. People would love to know they are supporting their own community.

CHARLOTTE

It's slim margins on the local stuff. People don't actually want to *pay* more.

JULIA

We should convince them to.

CHARLOTTE

What are you on about?

JULIA

Maybe Launch Pad Agency could help you with your advertising needs.

CHARLOTTE

Did you get the job??

JULIA

Not yet. Fingers crossed. Can I ask you something?

CHARLOTTE

No.

JULIA

Do you believe in parallel lives?

CHARLOTTE

No.

JULIA

You know where you can be living in different parts of your life at the same time?

CHARLOTTE

No.

JULIA

I think my younger self may have moved in next door.

You can almost hear the piano plinks as Charlotte blinks.

JULIA (CONT'D)

That sounded worse outside my head.

CHARLOTTE

That makes me worry about what's rattling around in that cage of yours.

JULIA

Well, that's nothing new is it?

CHARLOTTE

Seriously though. What?

JULIA

She's twenty-one, her name is Julia, she's about to start a job at an ad agency and her mom calls her Birdie! My mom calls me Birdie!

CHARLOTTE

I have never once, heard your mom call you that.

JULIA

And her roommate is Georgia! Remember Georgia?

CHARLOTTE

I choose not to.

Charlotte stares at Julia, unsure what to say.

JULIA

It's like a message from the past. Or the future. I can't tell which. It's too many coincidences. Or synchronicities to ignore. You know?

CHARLOTTE

I admit it's a bit odd, but parallel lives? That's a little 'comic book', don't you think?

JULIA

I know, but I can't help feeling like I need to steer her away from making the same bad choices I made at that age. I always wondered what my life would have been like if...

CHARLOTTE

If what?

JULIA

If I made different choices. Look at me. Starting everything over. Ugh.

CHARLOTTE

Two wrongs don't make a right.

JULIA

(like Groucho Marx)
No but two Wrights make an airplane!

CHARLOTTE

Walked into that one.

JULIA

Sure did.

CHARLOTTE

Can't you just have a regular mid-life crisis and get a sports car or something? Do you have to invent a reason to adopt your new neighbor?

JULIA

Mid-life crisis. That sounds like such a cliché.

CHARLOTTE

Give yourself some alone time. It's what you wanted. Time to do all the things you put on hold.

The bells on the door chime announcing a customer. Charlotte puts her hand on Julia's arm.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm fairly sure you're not crazy. But it's a slippery slope and you, my friend, are on it.

Julia watches Charlotte go.

JULIA

Jules is not friends with *her* Charlotte yet. Watch yourself!

Charlotte makes a sad face over her shoulder.

EXT. UPSCALE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Julia and Charlotte stand together on a porch and ring the doorbell.

CHARLOTTE

Did you finish the book this time?

Julia shrugs as if to say, 'you know me'.

JULIA

Ian and I had sex on our anniversary.

CHARLOTTE

What?? Julia!!

CYNTHIA, 40's, who would be on the podium for any competition requiring color coordination, opens the door with a huge smile.

CYNTHIA

Julia! So great to see you. It's been too long.

She envelops Julia in a huge hug that catches Julia with her arms pinned to her side.

Julia looks at Charlotte who shrugs a bit before she gets her own, slightly less enthusiastic, hug.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Charlotte.

Julia clocks the curt hello to Charlotte.

JULIA

(whispering)

Everything okay between you two?

Charlotte shrugs as if to say, I think so?

INT. UPSCALE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Julia and Charlotte follow Cynthia into the house.

CYNTHIA

Hey everyone! We're all here now.
We can get into the appetizers!

Cynthia walks quickly to the living room, motioning the other BOOK CLUB MEMBERS to help themselves and pouring wine into glasses.

Julia looks at Charlotte.

JULIA

Are we *that* late?

Charlotte shrugs.

CHARLOTTE

I'm sure the evening is scheduled
in fifteen minute blocks. First
block: appetizers!

JULIA

My favorite block!

CHARLOTTE

With your least favorite block
being the one where we discuss the
book you haven't read.

JULIA

I will for sure finish *all* the
books before our meetings from this
point forward.

CHARLOTTE

I'm glad you think 'new and
improved Julia' is going to be so on
top of things.

JULIA

Look out world.

Julia picks up two glasses of wine, clinks them together and
hands one to Charlotte.

Charlotte shakes her head, laughing at Julia.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Julia picks up her phone and dials.

JULIA

Sanjay Bhatia's office, please.

Julia bites her lip.

INT. SUBWAY - AFTERNOON

Julia runs down the stairs to the subway, just missing a
train.

JULIA

Crikey.

As she leans back against the wall, a man who could have
walked out of a Ralph Lauren advertisement, SIMON, 40's,
approaches Julia and leans against the wall until she glances
at him.

JULIA (CONT'D)
(startled)
Simon! Hi. How are you?

Simon beams his megawatt smile at Julia.

SIMON
Better now that I've seen you.

They hug each other warmly.

JULIA
I was just talking about you. What
are you doing in town?

SIMON
I moved back six months ago.

Julia suppresses her excitement.

JULIA
You did?

SIMON
Do you have time for a coffee?

JULIA
I'm just on my way to a job
interview... of sorts.

SIMON
Amazing!

JULIA
Can I take a rain check?

SIMON
One hundred per cent. I'm playing a
concert at Maple Hall next
Thursday. I can set aside a pair of
tickets for you and... Ian?

JULIA
It's just me now.

SIMON
Even better. I'll leave you a
ticket and we can meet after. Okay?

JULIA
Sure.

SIMON
So good to see you! My lucky day.

Simon puts his hands over his heart, then blows her a kiss and continues down the platform and up the stairs.

A smile erupts from Julia's face.

INT. UPSCALE OFFICE - DAY

The Assistant ushers Julia to the door.

ASSISTANT

Julia's here.

SANJAY

Come on in.

JULIA

Thanks for fitting me in.

SANJAY

Not a problem.

JULIA

I wanted to tell you how much I really would love the opportunity to work here. With you. And Matthew.

SANJAY

Are you prepared for budgets that are a fraction of what they used to be?

JULIA

I'm very good with budgets and I wanted to say if you hire me, I can bring in a new client to the agency.

SANJAY

Go on.

JULIA

A local rug retailer, an immigrant family operation that's been transformed into a fair trade business. She's got a good story.

Sanjay sighs.

SANJAY

The truth is, it would be such a relief to have you. I know there will be blowback but, I could use some senior energy here.

JULIA
Senior?

SANJAY
Experienced.

JULIA
(surprised)
Really?

SANJAY
You better work on your poker face
though, can't have you being
surprised when you pitch a client
and they say yes.

Julia adjusts her expression, and points to her face.

JULIA
How's this?

SANJAY
Workable. I'll get HR to send you
an offer this afternoon.

JULIA
(all business)
Excellent. We'll get right back to
you.

Julia thrusts out her hand, and breaks back into her excited
self.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Actually, *I* will get back to you.
You won't regret this!

SANJAY
Regret is a waste of energy.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Julia walks through the lobby.

WENONAH
Hungover today?

JULIA
Not today, but maybe tomorrow. I
got the job!

Julia lifts up her hand to high-five but Wenonah leaves her
hanging.

WENONAH
Not a high-fiver.

Just then Julia sees Jules enter the lobby.

JULIA
Jules!

JULES
Julia! What are you doing here?

JULIA
I've talked them into hiring me. Is this where you're working??

JULES
Yes, I'm picking up my contract.

Julia can't contain her smile. Holds up her hand for a fist-bump.

JULIA
With any luck we'll be working together!!

Jules feebly fist-bumps and watches Julia go, her smile fading.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Julia finishes a jog in front of her house. She's focused on her watch, recording the run when she nearly bumps into Evan who has just turned onto the sidewalk from Jules's house.

JULIA
Oops. Sorry about that. Good morning.

EVAN
How was your run?

JULIA
Slow. But that's me. I'm training for my first 10k in 6 weeks.

EVAN
I'm trying to get Jules to run with me, but she's not convinced yet.

JULIA
Yeah, I took some coaxing too, but now it keeps me sane-ish.

EVAN
Have a good day.

Evan passes by Julia when she turns to him.

JULIA
Can I ask you something?

EVAN
Sure.

JULIA
Are you and Jules serious?

EVAN
Why?

JULIA
I was just...
(stumbling)
She's barely getting started in her
career and it would be nice for her
to get her footing. You know?

Evan stares at Julia blankly.

EVAN
Okay. You think I would have an
issue with that?

JULIA
No! No. Just umm. Use a condom!

After dropping that one, Julia hurries up to her front door.

Evan turns to go, wondering what the hell that was.

INT. OFFICE KITCHEN - DAY

Julia stands in the office kitchen with a group of five
twenty-somethings including Jules.

The OFFICE MANAGER addresses the group.

OFFICE MANAGER
And finally, this is the kitchen.
Any food on the counter and drinks
in the fridge are fair game.
Please, clean up after yourselves.
Your mother does not work here.

Everyone's eyes drift to Julia.

TODD, with a 'never had to worry about money' vibe, elbows Jules.

TODD
Thought that's who she was. The
office mother.

Todd snickers while Jules stink-eyes him.

JULES
She's the new Copy Writer.

TODD
Actually?

OFFICE MANAGER
Okay, everyone, if you have any
questions you can message me. Enjoy
the rest of your first day.

Everyone turns to go back to their work stations.

JULIA
Jules!

JULES
Yes?

JULIA
I need an intern to help me with a
campaign. You free?

Jules looks at Todd who shoots daggers at her.

JULES
Sure.

TODD
I'm free too, if you need anyone
else.

JULIA
Why don't you both meet me in the
boardroom at 1:00.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Julia sits across from Jules and Todd, who continually rocks back in his chair and looks at his phone.

JULES
Is the wool organic, or recycled?

TODD
Nobody cares about walking on
organic wool.

Jules looks to Julia to respond.

JULIA
It's our job to make them care.

He holds up his phone.

TODD
They have no social presence.

JULIA
We'll be taking care of that. Can
you please do some research on who
else is using organic or
sustainable fibers in their
carpets?

Todd just stares at Julia.

TODD
You mean me?

JULES
I don't mind doing research...

JULIA
I want you to start working on the
brand narrative. Todd, you are on
research.

TODD
(sucks it up)
Sure thing.

Todd leaves the room.

JULIA
Don't defer to the loudest voice in
the room.

JULES
Easy for you to say, you're the
boss.

JULIA
I say it because I used to do the
same thing.

JULES
Fine.

JULIA

No need to be quite so effusive.
You don't want to look like you are
sucking up.

Jules smiles as she leaves the room.

JULES

Okay.

Julia calls after her.

JULIA

Actually you might want to, a
little!

INT. CONCERT HALL - EVENING

Julia watches a concert from the front row.

Simon plays guitar and sings harmony with a singer-songwriter
PERFORMER.

He makes eye contact with Julia that makes her feel like the
only person in the room.

When Simon closes his eyes to sing, Julia glances at the
people beside her, who are looking at her. It's obvious to
all of them, that Simon is playing to her.

PERFORMER

Thank you very much. I'd like to
thank Simon Player for joining me
on this tour. It's been a pleasure.

The crowd rises to a standing ovation.

As Simon bows he makes eye contact with Julia and motions his
head to the side of the stage.

INT. COZY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A SERVER approaches the dimly lit table with a tray and two
drinks.

SERVER

Rosé?

They place the glass of wine in front of Julia.

SERVER (CONT'D)

And a ginger-ale.

They place a glass in front of Simon.

SERVER (CONT'D)
Your nachos should be up any
minute.

JULIA
Thanks.

Simon raises his glass as does Julia.

SIMON
Congrats on landing the new job.

JULIA
Thank you.

Simon looks directly into Julia's eyes.

SIMON
Do you think it was fate that
brought us together?

JULIA
Does fate play a long game?

SIMON
One hundred per cent. The stars
that had to align for us to bump
into each other on that subway
platform. It's amazing.

JULIA
Why did fate wait for you to be
here six months?

SIMON
Well, we both had to be ready,
didn't we?

Julia smiles at Simon.

JULIA
You are more 'sentimental' than I
remember.

SIMON
Tell me. Do you regret breaking up
with me? I have never stopped
thinking about you. We could have
traveled the world together.

Julia smiles.

JULIA

I would love to travel. I always wished I could have backpacked through Europe after University but I was busy changing diapers and putting Ian through school.

SIMON

Still could?

JULIA

That ship has sailed. Slightly less appeal at this age to that scene.

SIMON

It was a scene, that's for sure. Obviously you must regret marrying Ian, given where you are now.

JULIA

We have two amazing children.

SIMON

We could have had two beautiful children.

JULIA

Did you have kids?

SIMON

No, I didn't find the right person to have them with.

JULIA

Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

SIMON

I mean it's not too late for me...

Julia looks a little startled, and Simon veers the sentence hard.

SIMON (CONT'D)

... to meet your kids, is it?

JULIA

Of course not. They'll love you. My son is really into music.

SIMON

That's amazing.

JULIA
He would love to talk to a real
live musician!

Simon smiles. His eyes are a little teary.

SIMON
Honestly Julia, you were the love
of my life. I can't believe I found
you again. It's fate. That's what
it is.

He reaches for her hand and squeezes it. Julia smiles.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Julia rolls her recycling bin out to the curb and sees Jules
standing on the sidewalk, in an embrace.

JULIA
Hey Jules! Hey Evan!

Jules turns slowly, with dread.

The guy with her, DYLAN, (20's), coolest guy in the room
vibe, carrying a guitar case, turns as well.

JULES
Hi.

Whoops. Julia thrusts out her hand to Dylan.

JULIA
I'm Julia, I live next door.

DYLAN
Dylan.

JULIA
We also work together but I'm sure
Jules told you that.

Dylan shakes his head.

JULES
Actually we didn't talk about work.

JULIA
Or your new neighborhood?

Awkward lull.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Anyway, are you guys on your way in
or on your way out?

JULES

We were at Jenga and Java on the
corner.

JULIA

Oh, I haven't been there since it
changed hands. Is it good?

JULES

It's great. Dylan had a gig.

Dylan holds up a guitar.

JULIA

Was it a success?

DYLAN

One hundred per cent. They asked me
to come back.

Julia swallows hard as she hears Simon's expression 'one
hundred per cent' coming from Dylan.

JULES

Are you okay?

JULIA

Sure yeah.

(recovering)

Well don't stay up too late, we
have a big day tomorrow!

DYLAN

No guarantees!

Jules giggles and punches Dylan in the arm and runs up her
walkway.

Julia leans into Dylan.

JULIA

(quietly)

Use a condom.

Dylan looks at Julia, confused, then follows quickly after
Jules.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Jules joins an ongoing meeting in the board room between Julia and Matthew. She goes to say hello but Matthew is very animated and she ends up sitting without saying anything.

MATTHEW

There are too many beats to execute
in 6 seconds.

JULIA

I can streamline it.

MATTHEW

We don't have time to make them
think. We just need to make them
feel!

JULIA

Okay, I'll come up with some other
options and we can look at them.

Matthew gets up shaking his head and exits the boardroom.

JULES

Why is he acting like your boss
when he's supposed to be your
partner?

JULIA

I don't know. Sanjay forced me on
him.

JULES

Forced an experienced Copy Writer
on him. Poor boy.

JULIA

I'm still getting up to speed on
the way things are now.

JULES

Just don't defer to the loudest
voice in the room.

Jules looks at Julia pointedly.

JULIA

Good one, grasshopper.

JULES

What?

JULIA
Never mind.

Jules sits down. She gets a notice on her phone. Looks distressed and puts it down.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Everything okay?

JULES
Yeah, it's just my Mom. She wants me to come see my Dad. He's having a bad day. Again.

JULIA
You should go see him.

JULES
I'll go on the weekend.

JULIA
Go now. I'll cover for you. You don't have much time left with him.

Jules shrugs.

JULES
All the days are bad days now.

JULIA
What I am saying to you now, I wish someone would have said to me. Just go and tell him what he means to you while you have the chance, okay?

Jules breaks and chokes on her words.

JULES
Sometimes I find myself wishing he would die so this cloud wasn't over my head and the pit wasn't in my stomach...

JULIA
He's suffering. It's no life for him, or for you.

JULES
So you don't think I'm a monster?

JULIA
How could I? I felt the same way.
(pause)
(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

What would you do if you could move
on with your life?

Jules wipes her tears.

JULES

My secret fantasy is to move to
Italy and learn to paint.

Julia packs up her stuff to leave and stands.

JULIA

Call me after your visit, I have an
idea.

And she's gone.

Jules picks up her phone and looks at the message. She puts
down the phone and sighs deeply.

INT. ART STUDIO - EVENING

Jules and Julia sit with two other STUDENTS in a semi-circle
around a bowl of fruit on a table. The instructor stands next
to the bowl.

INSTRUCTOR

I want to thank you all for coming
this evening. We are open for
another thirty minutes so feel free
to stay longer.

The two other Students get up and leave Julia and Jules
looking at their own paintings, and working on finishing
touches.

JULIA

So tell me about Evan and Dylan.
What interests you about the two of
them?

JULES

Different things, I guess.

JULIA

Okay Evan first.

JULES

He's just so comfortable with
himself. Not tricky. You can count
on him, and we like doing the same
things.

JULIA
Mmm-hmmm. And Dylan?

JULES
He's different from me. So he pulls me out of my comfort zone. I like that too.

JULIA
Mmm-hmmm. When I was your age I was dating Ian and Simon at the same time.

Julia looks at Jules, expecting a bit of props for her daring behavior. Nothing.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Ian didn't know. Felt like Simon and I were always sneaking around.

Jules reacts.

JULES
That sounds awful.

JULIA
So Dylan and Evan know about each other?

JULES
Of course.

Julia realizes she's out of her depth here.

JULIA
You want my advice?

JULES
Use a condom?

Julia laughs.

JULIA
I guess Evan told you.

JULES
So did Dylan!

JULIA
Oh. Well, it still stands as good advice!

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

If you have to choose between disappointing another person and disappointing yourself, choose the other person, every time.

Jules nods and then looks back to her painting.

JULES

I think I'm done.

Jules turns her painting for Julia to see. Julia gasps.

JULES (CONT'D)

That bad?

Julia turns hers for Jules to see. The two paintings are nearly identical.

JULES (CONT'D)

What the...? I guess we followed the instructions identically. Weird.

Julia shrugs and smiles as if it just makes sense.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Julia hangs up the phone as Jules comes into her office.

JULES

Hey. You wanted me to drop by?

JULIA

Real quick. The client mixer tonight - make sure you talk to the clients and higher ups, don't just stand with all the interns, okay?

JULES

Okay. I understand this is a work thing.

JULIA

Make yourself stand out. More exposure pays off. I wish someone...

JULES

I know, I know. You wish someone had told you this. But I can figure things out for myself.

JULIA

I'm trying to save you time. Learn
from my mistakes.

Just then Wenonah comes in with a bouquet of flowers in a
vase.

WENONAH

These came for you.

JULIA

Oh wow, thanks.

Julia looks for a card and can't see one.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Was there not a card?

WENONAH

No.

JULES

A secret admirer!

WENONAH

Or some fool who is forcing you to
call and see if it was them. And
what if it's not them? Then what?

Wenonah leaves. Julia looks at Jules.

JULIA

She's very direct.

JULES

(playful)

Is she? I hadn't noticed.

JULIA

I think she sees right through me.
It scares me.

JULES

Yeah. Me too.

EXT. OFFICE PATIO - DAY

A number of people mingle with drinks while tables hold
finger foods and snacks.

Julia stands with Sanjay.

JULIA

How often do you have these client events?

SANJAY

Once a month. We used to just do them in the summer but our main client makes such a big deal about how much he loves them, we have them every month now.

He motions with his head to a small group where a 50-something SILVER FOX stands next to Jules with his hand on her back.

JULIA

That's the President of Urban Explorer?

Sanjay nods.

Julia notices he is sliding his hand slowly down Jules's back, while she is looking increasingly uncomfortable.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Julia makes a bee-line for the Silver Fox and thrusts out her hand.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hello. I'm Julia, the new Copy Writer here. How are you?

The Silver Fox has to pull his hand out from Jules's back to shake hands with Julia.

SILVER FOX

I'm excellent, thank you.

Julia turns her body to wedge herself between the Silver Fox and Jules.

The Silver Fox drops his napkin and when he bends down, Julia motions with her head for Jules to get out of there.

Jules walks over to talk to Todd who looks at Julia.

TODD

Wow, Julia moved in fast there. She must be really thirsty.

JULES

Shut-up Todd.

Jules looks back at Julia who continues to occupy the Silver Fox. Matthew walks by.

JULES (CONT'D)

Hey Matthew. Can I grab you for a minute?

Matthew stops up.

MATTHEW

Sure.

JULES

I wanted to talk to you about some of the Cannes Lions award winning campaigns. They are so inspiring.

Matthew looks surprised.

MATTHEW

Sure!

JULES

Do you want to grab a drink first?

Todd watches them walk away.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Julia spoons a bowl of noodles onto a plate Spencer holds.

JULIA

That enough?

SPENCER

Perfect.

The doorbell rings.

INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

Julia opens the door to see Jules standing there with a bakery box with string around it.

JULIA

Hi.

JULES

I brought you some tarts.

JULIA

You did?

JULES

I appreciate what you did for me at the mixer today.

Julia smiles.

JULIA

Have you had dinner? We're about to eat. My son is here.

Jules shrugs.

JULES

It was Georgia's turn to cook but that didn't happen...

Julia opens the door and Jules walks in.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Julia, Jules and Spencer sit at the dining room table, with finished meal plates in front of them. The bakery box sits unopened on the table.

JULIA

So Jules, you want to crack open that box of tarts.

Jules grabs it and pulls on the string.

JULES

I got two raisin and two pecan.

SPENCER

Hit me with the raisin one.

Jules hands Spencer a raisin tart.

JULIA

He's the only one in the family who likes raisins.

JULES

Lucky for me then, because they are my favorite too.

She pulls a raisin one out and puts it on her plate. Julia is puzzled by this preference.

JULIA

Really? I would have predicted 'pecan or die', like me.

SPENCER
Pecan or die, Mom?

JULES
I have to say your Mom did predict
Georgia's obsession with her Xbox
and not showering.

SPENCER
That was me in high school.

JULES
What do you do now? Are you in
University?

SPENCER
Gap year. I'm DJ'ing.

JULES
What kind of music?

SPENCER
Retro. House mostly.

JULES
Cool.

SPENCER
I'm at The Speakeasy tonight if you
want to check it out.

Julia watches them talk like she's watching a ping-pong game.
What's going on here?

JULES
That sounds great. I'd love to.

Spencer smiles.

SPENCER
I'll put you on the guest list.

JULIA
Maybe we could both go.

Spencer reacts.

SPENCER
Mom, no. I mean it's late, I don't
go on until the middle of the
night, like 10pm.

Julia stands up to clear the table.

JULIA
I've been out at night before,
Spencer.

As Julia leaves the dining room, Jules and Spencer share a look.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Spencer dances as he DJ's from the stage.

The dance floor pulsates with dancers.

Julia wanders into the night club, looking around.

Jules breaks out of the crowd heading towards the bar. She does a double-take when she sees Julia.

JULES
Julia! You actually came?

JULIA
I was up, so I thought I'd pop by.

JULES
Does Spencer know?

JULIA
Not yet. I'll go say hi.

JULES
He's really busy up there.

JULIA
Well, I can always wait until he's done. Or wave. Are you here with Dylan or Evan?

Jules scoffs.

JULES
Girl's night.

Jules points to the bartender.

JULES (CONT'D)
Did you want something?

JULIA
Whatever you're having is good.

JULES
(to bartender)
Four Mango White Claws please.

Julia makes a face.

JULES (CONT'D)
What? Did you not want one?

JULIA
No. I mean, yes. It's perfect.

She pulls out her credit card.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Here, let me pay.

She taps and looks at the amount, yikes.

Jules hands one to Julia and carries the other three, walking ahead of Julia towards 'take no prisoners' GEORGIA, and CHARLIE, who is constantly apologizing for Georgia.

GEORGIA
(to Charlie and Jules)
Oh look it's 'use a condom!'

CHARLIE
Georgia!!

JULIA
Hi Georgia, and you must be Charlotte.

CHARLIE
You can call me Charlie.

Charlie points to Spencer.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Your son is really sweet.

JULIA
You met him?

CHARLIE
He put us all on the guest list. It was so cool.

JULIA
That's nice of him.

Julia waves to Charlie and he spots her, stunned. Makes a WTF face.

GEORGIA
I guess he forgot to put 'Mom' on the guest list!

CHARLIE

Georgia!

Julia's face falls. What is she doing?

JULIA

Excuse me for just a minute.

She heads off the dance floor.

INT. JENGA AND JAVA - NIGHT

Julia sits at a table with a cup of coffee when Charlotte walks in.

Charlotte sits down and takes a look around.

JULIA

Thanks for meeting me. I'm losing it.

Charlotte squeezes Julia's hand.

CHARLOTTE

Oh Sweetie, you lost it a while ago.

Julia pulls back her hand and laughs.

JULIA

You know, I didn't tell you, but I had a date with Simon.

CHARLOTTE

Simon who?

JULIA

Simon Player.

CHARLOTTE

The Player! What? How did that happen.

JULIA

We bumped into each other on the subway.

CHARLOTTE

Well, that's a surprise.

JULIA

Isn't it? I always wondered what might have happened if I picked Simon instead of Ian. Maybe I'm getting the chance to find out!

CHARLOTTE

This a parallel lives thing again?

JULIA

Feels more like a 'choose your own adventure' thing.

JULIA (CONT'D)

You think I'm crazy?

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

JULIA (CONT'D)

You want to think about that? No.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Charlotte looks down.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I should tell you something.

Julia looks puzzled, then a bit alarmed.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Ian is dating Cynthia.

JULIA

Cynthia! How do you know that?

CHARLOTTE

We've all been taking salsa together.

JULIA

You're what?

(beat)

When were you planning on mentioning this?

CHARLOTTE

Ian needed a dance partner and I said I would go with him. And Cynthia had signed up too.

JULIA

(hurt)

Why didn't you tell me?

CHARLOTTE

I guess I thought you'd find it weird.

JULIA

And how long has Ian been dating
Cynthia?

Charlotte exhales.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. A month?

JULIA

A month?? We've barely been
separated that long.

CHARLOTTE

Did you expect him to do nothing
while you were separated?

JULIA

I didn't imagine it would happen so
fast.

(pause)

Does the whole bookclub know? I
thought everyone was acting weird
because I didn't read the book
again.

Charlotte shrugs as if to say I don't know.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I thought you had my back.

CHARLOTTE

Ian's my friend too. Plus you
didn't tell me about sleeping with
Ian or your date with Simon.

JULIA

I told you about both!

CHARLOTTE

Not right away.

JULIA

Because it doesn't affect you!

CHARLOTTE

You and Ian separating *affects* me.

(pause)

Plus now if Simon's back in the
picture, it's like you've dialed
back time. Ian or Simon.

Right then the WAITER comes up.

WAITER

Can I get you anything to drink?
And have you decided on a game you
would like to play?

JULIA

Do you have a game called "Stab in
the Back?"

WAITER

I think we have one called
"Backstab". Do you want that one?

Julia doesn't take her eyes off of Charlotte.

JULIA

Sure, that will work.

CHARLOTTE

Don't bother. I'm not staying.

Charlotte grabs her coat and leaves.

JULIA

I'll have a bourbon.

WAITER

Sure thing.

The waiter pulls a deck of cards out of his back pocket and
leaves them gently on the table.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Julia wakes up slowly, passing some gas before realizing that
she is not alone. She looks over at Simon who smiles at her.

JULIA

Sorry.

Simon shrugs.

SIMON

Same old Julia.

JULIA

Really. Ugh. I was hoping for new
and improved Julia.

SIMON

You can't improve on perfection.

Julia puts her hand on his forehead.

JULIA

I think you're running a fever.

SIMON

Oh yeah. I got the fever for the girl!

Julia laughs as Simon pulls her close.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I did not expect a booty call, that's for sure.

JULIA

Well...

SIMON

I am *not* complaining. Who needs to take it slow?

JULIA

Well, we're picking up where we left off. Are we?

SIMON

Happy to. I don't feel any older inside. Do you?

JULIA

When my grandmother was ninety, she starting talking about going back to school, so I asked her how old she thought she was, and she said thirty.

SIMON

Maybe you hit a certain age, and then just start rolling back time.

JULIA

Then you could start all over with all the knowledge you gained!

SIMON

Too much existential talk for this early. Want to grab breakfast?

JULIA

I have a presentation at work this morning. Next time?

Simon smiles.

SIMON
One hundred per cent.

Julia's phone rings. She looks at it to see that Ian is calling. She declines the call.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Julia and Charlotte sit awkwardly apart while Jules gives a presentation.

Todd sits watching.

JULES
So as you can see, Launch Pad Agency has a track record of working with retail companies based out of Toronto.

Jules hits a key on the remote and the slide advances to a list of retail companies with monthly sales figures and a related chart on the bottom of the screen.

JULES (CONT'D)
As you can see, a spike in sales for Mattress-in-a-Box and for Knit Stitch for the months following our Social Media Engagement roll-out.

Jules hits a key on the remote and the powerpoint moves backwards instead of forwards.

JULES (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Crikey!

Charlotte looks quizzically at Jules, recognizing this expression as one Julia uses. She then looks pointedly at Julia.

Julia is torn between her told-you-so look and avoiding eye contact with Charlotte.

Todd registers this awkward interaction.

JULES (CONT'D)
Okay, so onto the team here at Launch Pad Agency that will take care of your account.

A slide shows Julia and Matthew as the leads with Jules and Todd as the juniors.

JULES (CONT'D)

So, as you can see, Julia Fairfax will be our lead creative along with Matthew Singer who was unable to attend today but was a key member in coming up with our strategy. And both myself and Todd will be available to you anytime you need someone here at the agency. Any questions?

Charlotte looks pointedly at Jules.

CHARLOTTE

Yes. Has Julia told you her parallel lives theory yet?

Julia stands up abruptly.

JULIA

Charlotte, thanks for coming in. Please let us know if you are interested in our services.

Julia hands a business card to Charlotte.

JULIA (CONT'D)

My office number is on here.

Charlotte gets up and leaves the boardroom, Julia follows and peels off the other way outside the doors.

Jules and Todd look at each other, stunned. Todd breaks the silence with air quotes.

TODD

So, as you can see, the client has left the building. As you can see, Julia was openly hostile to the client prior to her departure. As you can see...

JULES

Shut-up Todd.

TODD

Do they know each other?

JULES

I think they are best friends?

TODD

Awkward.

INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

Julia answers the door to Liz dressed for an evening.

LIZ
You're not dressed!

Julia looks down at what she's wearing.

JULIA
What's wrong with this?

LIZ
I would have thought you'd dress up
a bit more since you'll be
speaking.

JULIA
What? Speaking? What?

LIZ
I told you. They wanted a little
speech about your Dad. You're the
writer.

JULIA
You didn't tell me. Why can't you
do it?

LIZ
Well I guess I could, if you gave
me some ideas.

JULIA
We'll figure it out on the drive
there.

LIZ
We can't be late!

JULIA
For once we can be, they won't
start without us.

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

Julia walks through a banquet hall with her phone in hand. She gets a text and looks to see who it is from. Ian has texted "Please call me. Need to talk." Julia rolls her eyes and puts her phone in her purse.

She returns to her table to see Liz talking to the EVENT ORGANIZER who stands next to her chair.

EVENT ORGANIZER

I wanted to thank you for your speech. It was lovely. You have a way with words.

LIZ

No problem at all. Anytime.

Julia anticipates some acknowledgment for her help but they skate on by.

EVENT ORGANIZER

He sounds like quite the man.

LIZ

I got pregnant on our wedding night, silly me.

EVENT ORGANIZER

That's bad luck.

They share a laugh, oblivious to the fact that the product of that union is standing next to them.

LIZ

I often wonder what my life would have been like if I hadn't had kids. I could have done anything, really.

Julia clears her throat.

JULIA

That stings a bit.

LIZ

What?

JULIA

Wondering if your life would have been better without me.

The Event Organizer takes this as her cue to leave.

EVENT ORGANIZER

Excuse me.

LIZ

That's not what I said.

JULIA

Isn't it?

LIZ

You know I had a boyfriend before your Dad who was very interested in marrying me.

JULIA

What?

LIZ

He ended up living in Bermuda. That would have been nice.

Julia sighs. It's exhausting talking to a brick wall.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Julia sees Evan sitting in the lobby, reading a magazine.

JULIA

Hey Evan. Does Jules know you're here?

EVAN

No, I was hoping to catch her on her way home. She's been working so much, I thought this might be a good window.

JULIA

She's actually at a meeting offsite and won't be coming back today. Do you want me to tell her I saw you?

EVAN

That's okay. I'll call her later. Thanks for not letting me sit here and waste my time.

JULIA

No problem. I think she said she has a date later but I'm not sure.

EVAN

Oh.

JULIA

I'll walk out with you.

Just after Evan and Julia leave, Jules walks into the lobby.

JULES

Good night Wenonah.

WENONAH

I thought you were out at a client meeting.

JULES

Me, out at a meeting? I wish. Haven't been allowed to yet.

WENONAH

So do you actually have a date tonight?

JULES

How do you know about that?

WENONAH

At least some of what she said was true!

The phone rings.

WENONAH (CONT'D)

Launch Pad Agency.

Jules turns to leave, puzzled by this interaction.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Julia and Simon step onto the sidewalk from Julia's walkway.

JULIA

So where do you want to go?

SIMON

I was thinking Trattoria Nervosa. Sound good?

JULIA

My fave.

Julia sees Jules approaching on the sidewalk.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Hey Jules! What are you up to?

JULES

I'm meeting Dylan for dinner.

JULIA

Hey, we're about to go for dinner. You guys want to join? Is that okay with you Simon?

SIMON
Whatever you want, Babe.

JULES
I'd have to check with Dylan...

JULIA
It would be great for Dylan to meet
Simon.

JULES
Why?

JULIA
He could hear what the life of a
musician is all about from Simon's
perspective.

SIMON
Come.

JULIA
We're just going to Trattoria
Nervosa. Meet us. Just stay for
drinks if you don't want to eat.

SIMON
She's hard to say 'no' to.

Simon gestures to himself as if he's succumbed.

JULES
Sure.

Jules holds onto the word as if she's trying not to let it
escape.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Simon is mid-story, with Dylan enraptured by tales of the
road. Julia and Jules look on.

SIMON
This one tour I was on in Germany,
we tried to play all the clubs that
the Beatles played in Hamburg. It
was incredible.

DYLAN
I'm dying to go to Europe.

JULIA

That was Simon at your age. I seriously considered going with him.

JULES

Why didn't you?

SIMON

She dumped me.

DYLAN

Dude! How could you?

JULIA

Things got complicated.

SIMON

There was another guy.

JULIA

You were the other guy!

SIMON

Oh that's right. Of course I was. Not anymore!

Julia shrugs and smiles at him.

Jules looks at Simon.

JULES

Did you always want to travel?

SIMON

I always knew I wanted to be on stage. Traveling was a bonus.

JULES

But did you get to experience other cultures?

SIMON

I 'experienced' a lot of other cultures, for sure.

Simon locks eyes with Dylan and winks. Jules reacts physically.

JULES

Yeah, that's not what I meant.

SIMON

Of course I did. I hung out with so many interesting people.

Dylan is definitely more enamored with Simon than Jules.

DYLAN

Sounds amazing.

SIMON

Speaking of travel, a friend of mine has offered me his place in Paris for a month. I was going to convince Julia to come and you could come by and see if you could get some gigs there?

JULIA

When?

SIMON

Next month.

JULIA

I just started a job.

Simon shrugs.

SIMON

Aren't all office jobs, work-from-home jobs?

Julia shakes her head, incredulous.

JULIA

No. Especially not ones you just started.

JULES

We should get going.

Julia clocks Jules's desire to flee.

JULIA

Sure.

SIMON

So are the girls paying tonight for their musician boyfriends?

Jules and Julia freeze in the exact same way. But to the word 'boyfriend' not 'paying'.

SIMON (CONT'D)
We can split it, no problem.

JULIA
Don't be silly. My treat.

EXT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Julia waves goodbye to Jules and Dylan who turn as they walk away.

Simon exits the door and Julia and Simon walk the other way. They turn right into Ian and Charlotte and stop like they've hit a brick wall.

CHARLOTTE
Funny running into you here.

JULIA
Is it? Late dinner for you two?

CHARLOTTE
Just had salsa, so...

JULIA
What? No Cynthia?

Ian looks at Julia.

IAN
She's away this week.

Ian, ever the gentleman, extends his hand to Simon.

IAN (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm Ian.

Simon looks at Ian.

SIMON
Seriously man, you don't recognize me?

Ian squints his eyes and takes a closer look.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I'm Simon, we were at University together.

Charlotte looks at Julia with eyebrows that say 'see I kept your news secret'.

IAN
Oh sorry, sorry.

SIMON
You don't remember me? We were
competing for the same girl.

IAN
What girl? I really only dated...

He gestures to Julia. Julia stands with 'deer in headlight'
eyes.

The realization pours over Ian's face.

IAN (CONT'D)
Really? Well.

SIMON
You won. That time.

Ian looks at Julia.

IAN
I guess that explains why you've
been too busy to call me.

Julia grabs Simon's arm.

JULIA
We have to go.

Simon yells over his shoulder.

SIMON
The funghi pizza is incredible!

JULIA
He knows.

Julia pulls him tighter, hoping that will stop him from
talking.

INT. FRONT HALL - DAY

The doorbell rings and Julia opens the door to see Liz on
crutches with an Aircast boot as a taxi pulls away.

JULIA
Mom! What happened?

LIZ

A fracture in my metatarsal. I was in the cab on the way home wondering how I was going to manage when I thought maybe I could stay here a couple of days until I can walk on it.

JULIA

You should have called when you were at the hospital.

LIZ

Well, I didn't want to bother you.

JULIA

It's no problem, Mom.

LIZ

I thought it might be nice for you too, since you're all alone.

JULIA

(mumbling)

This might be one reason you are glad you had kids.

Just then Simon appears behind Julia.

LIZ

Hello there.

JULIA

Mom, you remember Simon. The musician.

SIMON

Hello Liz. You haven't changed a bit.

Liz can't contain her smile.

LIZ

Well, you are a sight for sore eyes. What a pleasant surprise. This one doesn't tell me anything!

JULIA

Let's get you to the couch.

LIZ

Are you sure it's okay if I stay? I don't want to intrude.

SIMON

What mother is an imposition on her daughter?

Liz beams at Simon while Julia smiles wanly.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Matthew and Jules sit across from each other in the boardroom.

JULES

So for Urban Explorer, we hide free stuff in YouTube ads. Like a free phone case, or free water bottles.

MATTHEW

Go on.

JULES

So people watch the ads hoping for the pop-up of the free offer. And they actually watch more ads than they would otherwise.

MATTHEW

Let's set a meeting tomorrow afternoon to brainstorm.

Julia walks by and clocks the meeting in progress. She pokes her head in.

JULIA

Hey, am I missing a meeting?

MATTHEW

Jules has a brilliant idea for Urban Explorer. With a few tweaks, I think we'll have a whole new campaign for them.

With that he gets up and leaves.

Julia looks at Jules pointedly.

JULIA

Fill me in?

JULES

I had some ideas I thought I would float by Matthew.

JULIA

But why wouldn't you float them by me first? Or at least both of us.

JULES

I didn't want to bother you.

JULIA

Bother me??

JULES

You told me to stand out. *I'm* trying to stand out.

JULIA

And you thought pitching Matthew would be better than pitching me?

JULES

He's more... in tune.

JULIA

Wow.

JULES

I just... feel like you're trying to hold me back or something.

JULIA

Hold you back? I've done nothing but try to prop you up.

JULES

I don't need propping up. You treat me like a kid. I'm not. And I'm certainly not your kid.

JULIA

Jules! I'm not treating you like a kid... I'm...

JULES

I know you are trying to treat me like you wish you were treated, but I'm not you. I'm independent. I'm not needy.

Julia gasps. Her eyes well up.

JULIA

I am just trying to help you avoid making mistakes you regret later. I'm sorry if I care too much.

JULES
This isn't about you. You make
everything about you.

JULIA
I do not.

JULES
Look, I'm sorry if I hurt your
feelings.

Julia steels.

JULIA
I'm not hurt. I'm just
disappointed.

JULES
Well, you told me if I had to
choose between disappointing myself
and disappointing someone else...

With that Jules gets up and leaves the boardroom and Julia
calls after her.

JULIA
I didn't mean me!!

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Julia rushes into a restaurant to find Simon waiting. Simon
gets up and gives her a kiss.

SIMON
Everything okay?

JULIA
Yes, sure. Just some work stuff.

SIMON
That's good. I was getting worried.

JULIA
That?

SIMON
You were changing your mind about
us.

JULIA
What? No, no.

SIMON

Because I don't think I could take that again. Double crushed.

JULIA

I could really use a glass of wine.

SIMON

I've actually already ordered dinner and your wine should be...

He looks around and sees a WAITRESS with drinks on a tray.

SIMON (CONT'D)

There it is.

The Waitress puts the drinks on the table. Julia looks at the wine.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Is that okay? I assumed you would want rosé.

JULIA

Yeah, sure, that's great.

He picks up his glass to toast. So Julia does the same.

SIMON

To my hard working babe. Killing it!

JULIA

Yeah, just killing it. Am I needy?

SIMON

What? No. Why?

JULIA

I don't know. I was accused of being needy. It hurt.

SIMON

I am happy for you to need me!

Simon smiles, big.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I bought us two tickets to see a play tomorrow night. A friend of mine is producing it.

JULIA

Tomorrow night?

SIMON
Yeah. Is that okay?

JULIA
It's actually Madison's birthday
tomorrow and we're having dinner.

SIMON
Oh, you didn't tell me.

JULIA
Sorry.

SIMON
Do I finally get to meet your kids?

Julia swallows hard.

JULIA
Madison's a little stressed right
now. I'm sorry, not quite yet.

SIMON
But soon, okay? I want to meet this
musical son of yours.

Julia smiles and takes a bit too large of a drink of her
wine.

INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

The front door opens and Madison comes in.

MADISON
Hi Mom.

JULIA
There's my birthday girl.

Julia envelops Madison in a one-sided hug.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Where's Spencer?

MADISON
He'll be here in a minute. He's
bringing someone.

Madison spies Liz over Julia's shoulder.

MADISON (CONT'D)
Hi Grandma!

Julia looks out the front door and sees Spencer coming up the walkway with Jules. Her eyes widen.

She opens the door.

JULIA
What's going on here?

SPENCER
I invited Jules. I didn't think you would mind.

They pass by Julia, and Jules and Julia make eye contact.

Julia steps out onto the porch to grab some air.

EXT. PORCH - EVENING

Julia paces while taking some breaths as Ian comes up the walkway.

IAN
Hey. I wish you would have called me.

JULIA
Didn't I?

IAN
I wanted to coordinate presents for Madison.

Julia erupts.

JULIA
Did you even wait until we were separated to start dating Cynthia?

Ian looks away.

IAN
Of course I did.

JULIA
Well. Not very long. And I went to book club and probably everyone knows except me!

IAN
I am sorry I didn't tell you. I tried, but I failed.

JULIA

Well, let's go and celebrate then.
Just so you know, my Mom is staying
here because she broke her foot.
And Spencer is dating my younger
self. Who is turning out to be a
real pain.

IAN

That's a lot to unpack.

JULIA

Best night ever.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

There is a lull in conversation as everyone finishes their
meal.

SPENCER

So Jules, what's it like working
with my Mom? Anyone think she's a
hard-ass? Call her big bad boss-
lady?

JULES

No, but my friend's have starting
calling her 'use a condom'.

Julia does a spit-take.

SPENCER

Why do they call her that?

JULES

She seems to say that a lot.

Julia swallows uncomfortably.

JULIA

It was just some sound advice. That
I wish someone had said to me.

Jules bristles at the worn out lament.

SPENCER

You wish someone had said that to
you at Jules's age?

JULIA

Yes.

As this escapes from her mouth, Julia registers the
implications. Spencer tenses.

SPENCER

Because, you didn't use one and got pregnant with me.

Julia looks at him and at Madison whose ire is brewing and then Ian who is completely taken aback.

MADISON

So now you wish we were never born??

IAN

Julia?

She's taken them all down with this one statement.

Liz looks at the sullen table.

LIZ

Who's ready for cake?? Julia, get the cake!

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Madison, Spencer, Ian, Liz, and Jules sit quietly as Julia brings in the cake while everyone sings like it's hymn-time at a funeral.

ALL

Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear Madison. Happy birthday to you!

Julia places the cake in front of Madison.

JULIA

Make a wish!

MADISON

I wish...

JULIA

Not out loud!

MADISON

I wish... to go back in time to when things were simpler.

Crickets. Julia feels the weight of this.

Madison blows. The candles go out but then come back on.

MADISON (CONT'D)

What? I can't even blow out
candles?

She tries again. Same thing.

JULIA

Sorry, sorry, sorry. I got the kind
that re-light. I thought it would
be fun!

MADISON

Fun?! To make me feel like I can't
even blow out candles.

Julia starts putting the candles out with her fingers.

JULIA

Ouch, ouch.

She picks up the cake server.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I can serve if you like.

Madison bursts into tears.

MADISON

I don't care.

Madison gets up and leaves the room. Liz stands up and
hobbles after Madison.

LIZ

I've got this.

Julia stands poised over the cake with dwindling customers.
She looks at Spencer.

SPENCER

You know Mom, it's okay for you to
have a mid-life crisis or whatever,
but do we all have to suffer??

Gut punch. Spencer gets up and heads out.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

C'mon Jules. Let see, should we
take my Mom's advice?

Jules looks shell-shocked but gets up and leaves the scene of
the crime.

Everyone is gone except for Julia and Ian.

IAN
I'll have a piece. To go.

Julia cuts a large piece.

EXT. PORCH - EVENING

Julia and Ian step out of the house onto the front porch. Ian holds the container with his piece of cake.

IAN
Well, we won't forget that birthday party.

JULIA
I've never seen my mother be so 'motherly'.

IAN
Madison told me she asked Liz if she could live with her while she's in school.

JULIA
Really? She never mentioned that to me. Neither of them did. Why wouldn't she just move back here?

IAN
She's under the impression you don't want her here.

JULIA
What?

IAN
I told her it's not true but she's pretty dedicated to that idea.

Julia's phone rings, she looks at it. It's Simon. She puts it back in her pocket.

IAN (CONT'D)
Do you have to get that?

JULIA
No. That's okay.

The phone keeps ringing.

IAN
If you decline it, it puts the other person out of their misery faster.

Julia doesn't want to take out her phone again, in case Ian sees it's Simon.

IAN (CONT'D)

It's Simon, isn't it.

Julia shrugs.

JULIA

I don't need to answer it.

IAN

He seems like a bit of an asshole.

JULIA

He can be.

IAN

I wanted to talk to you about Charlotte.

JULIA

What about Charlotte?

IAN

There's no reason for you to be mad at her.

JULIA

She's supposed to be *my* friend.

IAN

I think you're taking your anger for me out on her.

Julia sighs.

JULIA

You haven't done anything wrong. I guess I just didn't expect you to be dating so soon.

IAN

You're dating, too.

Julia shrugs.

JULIA

Sometimes when you try to make things better, you make them worse first.

IAN

I won't disagree with that.

JULIA

Jules accused me of standing in her way when I was just trying to help her.

IAN

How did that feel?

JULIA

Not great. I feel like I might have accused you of the same thing.

Ian raises his eyebrows in agreement.

IAN

I was never, ever trying to hold you back. And it makes me sad to think you regret getting pregnant. It makes me think you regret our whole life together.

JULIA

Oh Ian. That's so not true. I'm so sorry.

Ian gives Julia a hug.

Julia watches Ian leave. Ugh.

A car that was parked on the street leaves and catches Julia's attention as it goes.

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY

Charlotte and Julia sit in the boardroom.

JULIA

And I think I burned my fingers on those stupid candles.

Charlotte's trying to repress a laugh which turns into an uncontrollable giggle.

CHARLOTTE

I mean, that seems like the least of your pain.

Julia snort laughs.

JULIA

I've missed you and I'm sorry.

CHARLOTTE

Did Ian make you apologize?

Julia struggles.

JULIA
He was always better at the 'higher
road' than I was.

CHARLOTTE
How's the view from up there.

JULIA
Foggy!

Jules opens the door to the boardroom.

JULES
I have to leave.

JULIA
Is everything okay?

JULES
No, no, it's not. My Dad just died.

Julia stands to hug Jules.

JULIA
Oh Sweetie, I'm so sorry.

Jules hugs her back.

JULES
Thanks for making me go see him
when you did. I got the chance to
say the things I needed to say and
I wouldn't have gone if you hadn't
urged me to.

Jules turns and leaves.

Julia crumples back in her seat and stares at Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE
Are you okay?

JULIA
Do you know what day it is today?

Charlotte looks at her watch. Realization floods over her.

CHARLOTTE
It's the day your Dad died.

Julia nods.

JULIA

Twenty years ago, today.

Charlotte reacts surprised. Julia shrugs, I told you so.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Julia is out for a run when she sees Ian walking towards her on the sidewalk. She lifts her arm to wave when Cynthia comes into view, holding his arm.

Julia pulls her arm down and awkwardly hides it behind her back.

Julia looks for some alcove to duck into, but the door of the store opens as someone leaves, and hits her in the forehead. Momentarily stunned by the hit, Julia holds her hand to her forehead.

IAN

Julia?

JULIA

Oh hey. How's it going?

IAN

Are you okay?

JULIA

Yeah, fine.

IAN

You're bleeding.

Julia shakes her head, no.

JULIA

Hi Cynthia.

Cynthia gives Julia another one-way hug.

IAN

Hang on a sec.

Ian runs into the store, leaving Julia and Cynthia standing awkwardly outside.

JULIA

I had no idea you were interested in my husband.

CYNTHIA

I wasn't when you were together. He's so funny and spontaneous.

JULIA

Ian?

CYNTHIA

I think he's a better version of himself right now than he's ever been.

These words slap Julia like an open palm.

Just then Ian comes out with a paper towel and a bottle of water.

IAN

They said they could call an ambulance for you if you need it.

JULIA

It's just a flesh wound!

Ian pours water on the paper towel, and dabs it on Julia's forehead.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Ouch!

IAN

Sorry.

JULIA

I have to finish my run.

Ian hands Julia the water bottle. She runs off holding the paper towel to her head and the water bottle in her hand.

Julia continues to run down the sidewalk, speeding up as she goes, until she finds a street she can turn down.

EXT. SIDE STREET - EVENING

Julia stops running and doubles over, gasping for air. When she comes up, she sobs, ugly loud sobs. The paper towel is still stuck to her forehead, covering the gash.

Just then the same car that left from the front of Julia's house pulls up beside her and stops. Simon gets out.

SIMON

Julia! Are you okay? Did something happen?

Julia looks around, puzzled.

JULIA

What are you doing here?

SIMON

I was just driving by. Come. I'll take you home. You can have a bath, and I'll make you dinner. Let me take care of you.

Julia looks up and sees Simon's car. And remembers seeing it leaving the front of her house. She stops in her tracks.

JULIA

Were you following me?

SIMON

I was worried about you. Come. I know what you need.

Julia pauses.

JULIA

Better than I do?

SIMON

Sometimes we can see better when we aren't in the weeds.

JULIA

And sometimes we just want the other person to do what we want them to do.

Simon starts to get impatient.

SIMON

Let's go. You're a mess.

JULIA

No, that's okay. I'll get home myself.

SIMON

Do you want me to meet you there?

JULIA

No, Simon I don't. I don't want to meet you there or anywhere. Sorry.

SIMON

I told you not to break my heart again.

JULIA
Honestly Simon. After all these
years, you haven't changed at all.

SIMON
Thank you.

JULIA
It's not a compliment.

Simon storms back to his car and speeds off.

Julia watches him go, shaking her head.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Julia enters in her running clothes, the gash visible on her forehead still carrying the water that Ian bought her.

Liz sits in the living room with her foot up on a chair and the tv on a blank screen.

LIZ
Can you help me with this TV? It
was working fine and then I tried
to change the channel and...

Liz looks at Julia.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Birdie, what happened?

JULIA
I ran into Ian.

LIZ
What was he wearing?

JULIA
What? Why?

Liz points to Julia's forehead. Julia's forgotten all about her gash.

JULIA (CONT'D)
It's nothing. Just clumsy me.

Julia takes the remote, hits a button and the TV comes back on.

JULIA (CONT'D)
You hit the input button again.

LIZ
I didn't hit anything.

JULIA
Well, somebody did.

LIZ
Those buttons are so small.

Julia doesn't say anything, and plops down on the couch beside Liz.

JULIA
I think I've pissed off everyone who used to love me.

LIZ
They all still love you. Even if they're hurt.

Julia shrugs.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Despite what I thought about you marrying Ian, I always envied your marriage.

JULIA
You did? Why?

LIZ
You were such a solid unit. Never fighting, at least not in front of anyone else.

JULIA
Never fighting turned into never fighting for our relationship.

LIZ
Listen, people get cancer and it causes them to reevaluate their lives. Then they look at it as a gift.

JULIA
So?

LIZ
(singing)
"You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone. Paved paradise and put up a parking lot."

JULIA

Thanks Mom.

LIZ

And please go and talk to that daughter of yours. She's asked to move in with me when she'd really rather move back home with you.

Liz presses the remote and turns off the tv.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Crikey!

Julia holds out her hand for the remote.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I need to get back home to my own remote.

INT. CAMPUS CAFE - DAY

Julia sits at a table scanning everyone who comes into the café.

Madison grabs a coffee-to-go, sees Julia and does a double take.

MADISON

Mom? What are you doing here?

JULIA

Do you have a sec?

MADISON

I have class.

Madison sits down anyway.

JULIA

I am so sorry about your birthday dinner and cake and everything.

Madison doesn't say anything in response.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Do you want to move back home?

Tears begin to form in Madison's eyes.

MADISON

I thought you wanted me to live in residence so you could be free.

JULIA

I wanted you to live in residence because I wanted you to experience what I couldn't.

MADISON

It wasn't what I wanted.

JULIA

I'm sorry. I pushed you and I was wrong. Come home.

MADISON

Why are you being so nice?

Julia wells up.

JULIA

Oh Sweetie. I am so sorry for everything. Spencer was right. I'm going through something right now but it doesn't mean that I should have put any of that on you.

MADISON

Is it a mid-life crisis?

JULIA

I felt like so much of my life got decided for me. And I just wanted to see what it was like to flip it and make my own decisions. And I lost sight of you and what you need. I'm so sorry.

MADISON

Are you and Dad going to get back together?

JULIA

I don't know if he'd take me back.

MADISON

Yeah, that's true. Spencer says he's got a lady-friend.

JULIA

It's Cynthia.

MADISON

Rainbow Cynthia?

JULIA

Rainbow?

MADISON

Every time we saw her she seemed to be wearing a matching outfit in a different color. She's got nothing on you!

Julia smiles.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Sanjay walks into Julia's office and sits at her desk.

SANJAY

So how are you getting along with Matthew?

Julia's eyes widen.

JULIA

Did he say something?

SANJAY

Nope.

JULIA

Oh. That's surprising. I think he feels I'm taking too long to get up to speed.

SANJAY

Matthew needs to stop behaving like he's the only one who knows how to do his job and everyone else's. I'm not interested in losing another Copy Writer.

JULIA

Oh so *he's* the problem, what a relief!

Sanjay laughs.

SANJAY

He's talented for sure. But he's immature. I know that. You guys can balance each other out.

Julia's unsure how to take that.

JULIA

Thank you?

SANJAY

On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate this crop of interns.

JULIA

They really range. Of the ones I've worked most closely I would give Todd a 7 and Jules a 9, 9.5?

SANJAY

That's too bad.

JULIA

Why?

SANJAY

Jules quit this morning.

JULIA

She did? She didn't say anything to me.

SANJAY

I think she didn't want to tell you.

JULIA

(ironically)

I'm guess I am a hard-ass.

SANJAY

Glad to hear it.

Sanjay winks and gets up to leave.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Jules carries a couple of bags out of her house when Julia sees her.

JULIA

Why didn't you tell me you were quitting?

JULES

I'm going to Italy!

Julia reacts as if to say, that's no answer.

JULES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I didn't like who I was becoming. I went behind your back and I felt sick about it.

JULIA

Why did you?

JULES

I don't know. You kept telling me to put myself first. And I did. But I didn't... it didn't make me feel good.

JULIA

I was trying to help make your life better. Make it what you wanted it to be.

Jules shrugs.

JULES

It made me want to run away.

JULIA

What about Spencer?

JULES

Nothing happened with Spencer. I'm sorry about that too. I really ruined Madison's birthday.

JULIA

It wasn't you. It was me.

JULES

I think we can share the credit.

JULIA

How is your Mom taking this?

JULES

She'll be fine. Somewhere inside she knows I need a change of scenery. It's been a rough few years for both of us.

JULIA

How long are you going for?

Jules shrugs.

JULES

I have a one way ticket. But Evan's going to join me when he has a break. And maybe we'll travel a bit. We'll see.

JULIA

I'm sorry if I was sometimes too...
prescriptive in my advice to you. I
saw a lot of me in you and I wanted
to help you avoid some of the
mistakes I made.

JULES

I knew you meant your best.

Julia gives Jules a big hug, holding on longer than Jules.

JULIA

Just promise me this. Tell Evan not
to come visit until *after* your
birthday, k?

JULES

Because?

JULIA

Just trust me on this one.

Jules rolls her eyes and salutes Julia as if she'll listen to
the orders this one last time.

EXT. HOUSE - EVENING

Julia exits her house in running gear and starts her run on
the sidewalk. As we track the start to her run, she passes
Jules's house which now appears different than Julia's in
contrast to the original tracking shot where they seemed
identical.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Julia stops running while pointedly looking at a house. She
paces back and forth. The door starts to open and she starts
running again but pretends to just notice the door opening
and Ian coming out of it.

JULIA

Hey, Ian, hi.

Ian looks at Julia, puzzled.

IAN

Do you have a new running route?

JULIA

Yeah, yeah. It's a bit longer but
it's good.

IAN
Good for you.

JULIA
Can we talk?

IAN
Sure.

JULIA
I'm sorry I was questioning our
life together. I wasn't happy and I
thought maybe if I had made
different choices, I would be in a
better place.

IAN
I didn't think it was that bad.

JULIA
I know. I thought I was stuck, and
that I couldn't grow in our
marriage. But I was just holding
myself back. And I was blaming you.

IAN
You mean you wish you went back to
work sooner?

JULIA
I could have. I could have
travelled, I could have painted. I
could have done all things I
thought I had to be free to do. But
I used you as an excuse.

IAN
I could have encouraged you more. I
didn't want to push you.

JULIA
I could use some pushing every now
and again.

She grabs his hand and her face contorts in pain.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Do you think you are a better
person without me?

Ian looks at Julia, puzzled.

IAN
A better person?

JULIA
A better version of yourself?

IAN
I just try to be the best I can be
in any given moment. I'm not really
comparing it to the past, or
judging it against the future.

JULIA
Can you forgive me for not being as
grounded as you are?

Ian smiles.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Would you consider getting back
together if you and Cynthia stop
seeing each other?

IAN
We already have and I would love
that.

Julia leans in for a kiss.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Julia pulls back from the kiss and we see that Julia and Ian
are now in bed.

The envelope is still on the night table, sealed. Ian picks
it up and examines it.

IAN
You didn't even open this.

JULIA
Shred it.

IAN
I think you should open it.

JULIA
Why?

He hands it to her.

JULIA (CONT'D)
I don't want to go backwards.

IAN
Just open it.

When she opens the envelope, the papers are all blank.

JULIA

What?

IAN

As long as I knew you hadn't opened
the envelope, I knew there was a
chance.

Julia holds him tight.

JULIA

Don't let me go again,
please.

IAN (CONT'D)

Don't let me go again,
please.

They pull back from each other laughing and looking in each
other's eyes.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Deal.

IAN (CONT'D)

Deal.

They smile and hear the door slam. Then from downstairs.

MADISON (O.S.)

Mom! Are you upstairs?

IAN

(whispering)

Do I have to go this time?

Julia shakes her head.

JULIA

I'm coming down!

MADISON (O.S.)

I'll come up!

JULIA

This is going to get worse, before
it gets better.

IAN

We're all going to like this
better.

JULIA

Indeed.

Julia and Ian look at the doorway, bracing themselves.

THE END