

NOW AND AGAIN

"Pilot"

by

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AMANDA CLARK, two months before her 17th birthday, is in her family's study, walking on a combination treadmill / computer workstation. Her laptop has seventeen browser tabs open to different research subjects, and there is an old leather journal off to one side. She's reading from the journal and cross-referencing names, dates and unfamiliar words with the laptop. SARAH, Amanda's personal tutor, comes in the room with a cup of tea.

SARAH

I thought we were going to take a real break this time.

AMANDA

Alas. Time's running out and I have lots to finish.

Amanda swings an arm around the room, which is filled with books. Many are in boxes labeled with names and date ranges (all the names include "Clark"), but many are stacked up on the floor. Some are older than others, but none are dusty. These are all personal journals of members of the Clark family, mostly handwritten, dating back to the 17th century.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Plus: Johanna was a minx for her day. It's riveting.

SARAH

No kidding. Have you tried anything she wrote about, yourself? Maybe with a young man, or-

Amanda looks at Sarah with a "yeah, right" expression, but it doesn't linger, and she switches immediately back to the journal.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(sighing)

Mark my words, I'll get you out of this house one of these days.

AMANDA

Words marked.

Amanda closes the journal gently and switches her computer screen from her personal research to the screen about school work. She powers down the treadmill.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Anatomy?

SARAH

Sure, why not. Have you got Mrs. Frog?

There's a polite knock on the door and GERALD the butler enters holding a phone, trembling but trying to keep it together.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Oh, hey. What... what's the matter?

AMANDA

(beat)

Gerald?

GERALD

Sorry... to interrupt. The police are on the phone.

(deep breath)

Mr. and Mrs. Clark...

He can't continue and mutely holds the phone out. Sarah puts a hand to her mouth, and Amanda shuffles forward to take the phone.

2 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

2

A forty-something man in a wrinkled sport coat, BRENDAN CLARK, is retrieving the cheapest drink on the overpriced menu from a barista.

BARISTA

Tall drip, no room.

BRENDAN

(handing over two grubby dollars)

Here, you can put the rest in the tip jar.

BARISTA

Thanks, Brendan.

Balancing his coffee, wallet and some file folders, Brendan walks over to his client, DENISE MCAFEE, a well-groomed lady in her late 40s, who is trying to pass for a few years younger, and who is nervously waiting at a table.

BRENDAN

Sure I can't getcha somethin'?

DENISE

No, thank you, I'm too nervous, already.

BRENDAN

I understand. S'pose I'll get right to it, then.

DENISE

Um, shouldn't we go to your office?

BRENDAN

Oh, this kind of is my office. Don't worry, none of these people are listening.

(to the room)

You guys aren't listening, right?

The employees and regulars in the coffee shop all put their hands over their ears, out of habit. Denise isn't impressed but wants to get it over with.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

So. You were right, he is seeing someone else.

DENISE

Damn. You have proof?

BRENDAN

'Fraid so. But I have everything you need here to get the judge on your side. Here's your copy, if you have, uhh, the check for me.

DENISE

(rummaging in her purse)

Oh, yes. Five-fifty, was it?

BRENDAN

(wincing)

I think we agreed on eight hundred.

DENISE

Is that right? Oh, um. I'm afraid I don't have that much at the moment. My daughter's had some car trouble that we weren't expecting..

Brendan tries to hold his ground and appear stony.

DENISE (CONT'D)

And her school books, you wouldn't believe how much they cost these days. Could I pay you the rest next month?

After a moment concluding that he'll never see the rest of the money but giving in anyway, he hands over the file and accepts Denise's check.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Thank you so much. This hasn't been easy, but at least... I know the truth. I'll be in touch.

Denise exits, and Brendan takes a sip of his coffee, burning his tongue.

BRENDAN

Ow! Christ.

BARISTA

Brendan? Phone.

Brendan gathers up his things and heads to the back office of the coffee shop.

3

INT. COFFEE SHOP BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

3

A different barista is counting money in a drawer, and silently hands Brendan the phone when he enters.

BRENDAN

Hello.

(beat)

This is Brendan Clark.

(beat)

Hi, James. Yeah, sure, I remember your firm. Need my signature on something else?

(beat)

Actually, I'd have to sit down on the floor. What's-

The barista with the drawer of cash looks up, concerned. The manager also comes into the back office and is annoyed to see Brendan there. The manager talks while the blood drains from Brendan's face and his eyes well with tears.

MANAGER

Brendan, you know you're not supposed to be back here. What if the regional manager stops by? She'll think you're stealing.

(beat)

Brendan?

(beat)

Uh oh.

BRENDAN
(to the phone)
God. Um. Boston's a couple hours
away. I'll be there when I can.

Brendan mutely hands the phone over to the barista at the
desk, who gingerly puts it down.

MANAGER
Bad?

BRENDAN
My... brother... and his wife were in a
car accident.

MANAGER
Oh, I'm so sorry. You're going to
Boston, then? Is there anything I
can do?

BRENDAN
(distracted)
Make Boston the opposite of Boston.

MANAGER
What?

BRENDAN
Hm? Oh, never mind. Thanks for
everything. I have to go.

MANAGER
Wait, are you... need me to feed your
fish or something?

BRENDAN
You know that phrase "parent or
legal guardian"?

MANAGER
Sure.

BRENDAN
I think I have to go be one of
those.

Brendan leaves the office.

MANAGER
Yikes.

BARISTA
Yeah.
(beat)
(MORE)

BARISTA (CONT'D)
I think the fish died just last
week, too.

4 EXT. CLARK FAMILY HOME - DAY

4

Amanda sits on the swinging bench on the front porch of her house, not swinging. She's clutching a leather-bound journal in one hand and her phone in the other. A ponderous moment passes before an impractical sports car loudly and quickly parks out front. The vanity plate reads "FORTUNE". FORTUNE RICE, Amanda's peer and only real friend of the same age, runs up the driveway to meet Amanda, her backpack slung over one shoulder.

FORTUNE
Amanda! I just heard! I'm so
sorry.

Amanda doesn't react.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
(carefully)
Amanda? Punkin?

No response. Fortune sits down next to her friend in understanding silence. A couple seconds later, Gerald comes out the front door onto the porch.

GERALD
Hello, Miss Fortune.

FORTUNE
You can say that again.

Amanda guffaw-cries a bit and rests her head on Fortune's shoulder.

AMANDA
Smart-ass.

GERALD
Can I bring you anything?

FORTUNE
Whisky neat, please.

GERALD
It's eleven a.m.

FORTUNE
Rocks, then?

GERALD
And you're seventeen.

FORTUNE

Amanda's parents let her drink
sometime—oh, frak me!

At the mention of her parents, Amanda lets out a tiny scream
and bites her friend on the shoulder.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)

Sorry! Ow!
(wincing and patting
Amanda's head)
Okay. That's better. How about
two licorice fluffernutters and
some of those phosphate things.

Amanda makes a noise of approval and nods. Gerald nods and
goes back inside.

5 INT. CLARK HOME FOYER - CONTINUOUS

5

Closing the screen door, Gerald is met by JAMES, the family
attorney who is trying to multi-task on his tablet and his
phone.

JAMES

(whispering)
How is she?

GERALD

I'm afraid I'm not the best judge
of the young lady's mental state.

JAMES

Better than anybody else, though,
right? I mean, you live here. You
see her when she's normal.

GERALD

I can't say that's ever happened,
sir, no.

JAMES

No? Oh, I see. Because of the
tradition.

GERALD

I will say that she seems
especially unfocused at the moment.
Please excuse me.

James nods his assent and gazes out the window where Fortune
and Amanda remain holding each other for comfort.

6 EXT. CLARK FAMILY HOME - CONTINUOUS

6

Fortune reaches over to hold Amanda's hand.

FORTUNE
Is that your dad's journal?

AMANDA
Yes. The last one.

FORTUNE
So what happens now? You gonna start early, or wait 'til you're eighteen?

AMANDA
Neither.

FORTUNE
What? Oh, honey, you don't mean that. You love the journals.
(beat)
We don't have to talk about it now.
We can just sit here for a while.

Fortune tries to sit quietly but quickly becomes fidgety. Slow somber music swells in the background but is abruptly cut off.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
Um. Except. It's done.

Amanda gasps a bit and her eyebrows raise. She reaches to wipe away some tears.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
I stayed up last night finishing it. Honestly, I was probably going to skip school today anyway to bring it over. We're doing the frog thing.

Fortune unzips her backpack and pulls out an eyeglass case, handing it over to Amanda, who opens it and removes some unassuming glasses.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
I know we planned to call it the HUDGear, but I made the executive decision to rename it after your parents, David and Carol, so now it's the DAROL: dee ay arr oh ell.

AMANDA
Which stands for...?

FORTUNE
I dunno yet.

Amanda gives her friend an incredulous look.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
Gimme a break, it's been, like, ten
minutes.

Amanda and Fortune release a tense breath and hug.

AMANDA
Thank you.

FORTUNE
My pleasure. Well, having my name
on the patent doesn't hurt. Go
ahead, try 'em on!

The camera changes to POV Amanda, a pair of glasses being slid onto our faces. The screen is black for a second before the glasses boot up and once again we're seeing Fortune from Amanda's point of view. A grid analyzes Fortune's face and identifies her as "Fortune Rice: Winner".

AMANDA
Winner?

FORTUNE
Ha! Yeah, there's a ton of Easter
Eggs in there. Everything else is
just like you wanted, but I'm sure
we'll find some bugs along the way.

AMANDA
(deep breath)
We've a year to test and debug.

FORTUNE
You're gonna go ahead with it,
then?

AMANDA
Maybe. Right now it seems
pointless, but I've felt that way
before, and it passed. Likely my
descendants would hate blackouts as
much as I do.

An older unreliable car pulls into the driveway. Brendan exits the car and waves awkwardly to Amanda.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
Speak of the devil.

Back in Amanda's POV DAROL, the system identifies "Brendan Clark: Uncle, blackout." Brendan climbs up to the porch and takes off his sunglasses.

BRENDAN
Hi. Are either of you Amanda?

Amanda and Fortune blink and stare at him. Fortune's mother is from Iran and couldn't look less like Amanda's parents.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Sorry. Bad joke. I'm your uncle
Brendan. Your father's brother-

AMANDA
(making some odd motions
with her hands, as in
Minority Report)
Brendan Alan Clark, born June 12,
1965, eleven days past his due
date, to parents Harvey and Ruth
Clark, who had high hopes for him,
until he banished himself on his
eighteenth birthday. Journal
status: blackout. Never married,
no children, one living family
member, Amanda Clark, whose parents
died today.

FORTUNE
Ohhkay. And my name's Fortune. I...
should probably get to school.
(to Amanda)
Ping me if you need anything.

Amanda nods but doesn't stop glaring at Brendan. Gerald comes outside with the sandwiches and drinks, surprised to see Fortune making her way back to her car.

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
(over her shoulder)
Sorry, Wooster, you can let the new
guy have mine.

BRENDAN
(to Gerald)
Wooster? Not Jeeves?

GERALD

The swirling cloud of irony and meta isn't worth keeping up with, sir. Phosphate?

James joins everybody on the porch.

JAMES

Brendan! You made good time. I'm so sorry for your loss.

BRENDAN

Thank you. I think Amanda and I should talk before we get all official, though.

AMANDA

You're here for more than the Will?

BRENDAN

It's not... I never wanted to abandon everybody, Amanda. Actually, now that I'm here I hope we can-
(searching for the right word, he gives up and turns to Gerald)

Did you say phosphate?

Gerald nods.

JAMES

Maybe we should all go inside and sit down.

AMANDA

Wait. Is there a loophole? Are you a usurper, "Uncle Blackout"?

JAMES

Let's take-

AMANDA

Rip the bandage off.

BRENDAN

Okay. You're a child, and I'm your new guardian.

Amanda digests this and looks from Brendan to James, who shrugs.

AMANDA

Crap.

Amanda heads inside, slamming the door, and we hear her stomp up the stairs.

AMANDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm older than all of you!

GERALD
(offering the tray)
Welcome home, sir.

7 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - AN HOUR LATER 7

Brendan is numbly browsing shops. He looks in the window of LIFE IS MAGIC and is surprised to see his high school sweetheart LEAH HUNTER, twenty years older, helping a customer practice an illusion. She recognizes him, too, then gives him an acquaintance smile and waves him inside. To keep walking now would be rude, so he enters the shop.

8 INT. MAGIC SHOP - CONTINUOUS 8

The door chime makes a "Ta-daaaaa!" noise.

BRENDAN
Hi.

LEAH
I'll be with you in a moment, sir,
but please browse the wondrous
magic around you.
(to the customer)
Okay, does that make sense, with
where the latch is placed..

Leah's voice fades to the background as Brendan admires how she's matured. He notices that the store is having a "50% Off Everything" sale. He browses one or two items that could come in handy doing PI work. Finally, Leah joins him.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Hi.

BRENDAN
A magic shop!

LEAH
Presto change-o.

BRENDAN
And here I thought you were
kidding.

LEAH

(punching him in the arm)
No you didn't. We were going to
run it together.

BRENDAN

Sure, when I wasn't too busy being
a Duke of Hazzard. But you
actually did it. I'm impressed.

LEAH

Well, you may not be, much longer.
We've got about two weeks left,
unless some real magic happens.

BRENDAN

I guess illusions are kind of a
luxury in this economy?

Leah starts cleaning some disorganized shelves.

LEAH

Actually we've been in the black
for a couple years, but it's not
enough to keep the lease.

BRENDAN

That doesn't-

LEAH

(sighing)

The short version is that my ex's
family owns the building, and
they're just rubbing salt in the
wound.

BRENDAN

(dropping some trick
playing cards)

Oh, damn. Can I help somehow?

LEAH

Not according to my overpriced
lawyer.

BRENDAN

I'm very sorry. I was actually
just out looking for a suit.

LEAH

Are you zooming in and out again or
are you staying an entire night
this time?

BRENDAN

Hunh. Um, it's a bit up in the air, but I might be around at least until my niece turns eighteen.

(choking up)

She needs a guardian.

LEAH

Really? Oh. Oh! Jesus, Brendan, my condolences! Let's... I'll close up early. Why didn't you say so earlier?

BRENDAN

I don't know what to say.

9 EXT. PROTESTANT CHURCH - DAY 9

Latecomers file into the church.

10 INT. PROTESTANT CHURCH - CONTINUOUS 10

In the middle of the funeral for DAVID and CAROL CLARK, Brendan steps up to speak. The pews are over capacity. Amanda, Gerald, Fortune, James and Leah are also in attendance. Amanda is wearing her DAROL glasses.

BRENDAN

I can't stand here in front of you and pretend I was a good brother for David, but I thought it'd be worse to not even... We had problems, all siblings do I think, but of course I never wanted him to... leave. I hope that I was a good influence on him, even if just accidentally. I know he made me a better person, though it took, you know, longer. Even if I wasn't a good brother, it's obvious here that people liked him a lot.

Unless you're all here for Carol.

(a few awkward laughs)

I only met Carol a couple times.

(beat)

I know she made him very happy.

Brendan can't really continue, so he gives up and steps down to make room for Amanda. While Amanda speaks, we see the story that she relates play out in her imagination as a sort of ghostly apparition in the church. Amanda focuses on the "ghosts" of her parents instead of the attendees.

AMANDA

Mom and Dad were married here. As she approached those steps, she tripped and almost fell down. Dad mimicked her so she wouldn't feel embarrassed, and before you know it, they were doing the electric slide. My whole life, it seemed like they found reasons to dance. Now the dance is over.

(beat)

Don't want to lose it, but you can't choose it. But you know it's there. Here. There. Everywhere. Boogie woogie woogie.

In the pew, Fortune is the first of the attendees to giggle nervously, but many soon join her.

11

EXT. PROTESTANT CHURCH - 15 MINUTES LATER

11

Brendan and Amanda are leaving the church and separately walking back toward home. Brendan hurries a bit to catch up. Off to the side we see Amanda's imagined apparition of David and Carol being showered with soap bubbles.

BRENDAN

Mind if I walk with you?

AMANDA

No.

(beat)

Your speech was nice.

BRENDAN

Thanks. Wish I planned it better.

AMANDA

Eh.

(beat)

Why'd you leave?

As we follow them down the street, other silent apparitions appear and disappear, illustrating significant moments in the lives of Amanda's ancestors. There's a fist fight, a first kiss, etc.

BRENDAN

I'm sorry, I can't tell you.

AMANDA

Even now that Dad's gone?

BRENDAN

Oh, it had nothing to do with him.
Is that what he thought?

AMANDA

Sometimes.

BRENDAN

Damn. I tried to tell him it
wasn't a family thing. It's just...
not safe for me here.

AMANDA

Still?

BRENDAN

'Fraid so. I mean, I can't prove
it but I figure better safe than...

He trails off and we see him looking into the distance at a plume of smoke a few blocks away. He and Amanda share a look, and they start running.

12

EXT. CLARK FAMILY HOME - A COUPLE MINUTES LATER

12

Amanda arrives at the front of the house to see it more than half burned. Fire trucks are working to put out the flames but it's a lost cause. Brendan shows up a few seconds later, out of breath.

BRENDAN

Oh. God.

He starts to put his arm around Amanda, who instinctively hides her face in her hands, then she snaps back to attention and puts on the DAROL glasses, shrugging him off.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

What are those for?

Amanda is about to speak but is interrupted by a firefighter.

FIREFIGHTER

Do you live here?

AMANDA

Yes.

FIREFIGHTER

Was there anybody in the house?

AMANDA

Shouldn't be.

BRENDAN

What happened?

FIREFIGHTER

Too early to say, but of course
we'll work with the police to help
find out. They're on their way.

(beat)

Weird, though, how quickly it went.

AMANDA

We had tons of books.

FIREFIGHTER

Oh, sure. My wife and I are big
readers, too.

BRENDAN

Actually, we wrote them all.

FIREFIGHTER

No fooling? Novels?

AMANDA

History.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

13 INT. DINER - 90 MINUTES LATER

13

Amanda, Brendan, Fortune, Gerald and James are huddled in a diner booth. Nobody is especially energetic about eating. Amanda is wearing the DAROL and making sure she faces whoever is talking.

BRENDAN

I'm only saying, what are the odds that two people die in an accident, and then their house burns during the funeral?

JAMES

Let's not jump to conclusions.

BRENDAN

No, I haven't concluded anything. I'm just asking. I don't need to be a statis... statish... statistics guy to think it's suspicious. And yes, okay, maybe I'm angry too. Now, on top of everything else, Amanda and Gerald and I have nowhere to live.

GERALD

Thank you for including me, sir.

BRENDAN

Of course. How long has your family been with ours?

As Gerald speaks, Amanda does the funny UI hand gestures again.

GERALD

Many generations, indeed.

AMANDA

Eighty-two years, three months, twelve days.

BRENDAN

(to Amanda, who shushes him when James talks)
What is that you're-

JAMES

Either way, where are you going to go?

BRENDAN

Oh, some motel, I guess.

FORTUNE

I can Yelp you something respectable.

BRENDAN

Thanks. I think my credit card can handle the strain until the Will gets sorted out.

James winces at Brendan.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Really? They're freezing the accounts? You have to admit these are extenuating circumstances.

JAMES

I'm sorry, Brendan. Amanda isn't of age yet and you... left town. Not to mention ignoring the journal thing for twenty years. The Will is very specific, and our hands are tied.

Brendan sighs.

FORTUNE

Does this mean you don't need a hotel?

BRENDAN

Oh, I'll stay at least a couple days. I can't help but feel responsible for Amanda's safety.

JAMES

You are responsible for her safety.

AMANDA

I'm fine.

BRENDAN

Right. So yeah, a motel.

GERALD

I have a friend I can stay with, but once things do settle down, I'd very much like the opportunity to come back to work.

BRENDAN

(shaking Gerald's hand)
Oh, count on it. You've been such a rock. If I'm going to stay, though, I'll need to build up my client list from nothing. Know anybody who needs some P.I. work done?

GERALD

Not at present.

JAMES

I'll ask around the office.

FORTUNE

(still Yelping)
Well, don't stay up too late, gents, it's still a school night.

14 INT. DULL MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

14

Amanda and Brendan are reclining on a bed, sipping from cans of beer. Amanda makes a face and puts hers down.

AMANDA

Still awful.

BRENDAN

Ha! "Awful"? Don't you mean "bad"?

AMANDA

Some things deserve extra syllables.

BRENDAN

David told me about how efficient you'd become. All so you could spend extra time reading the journals?

Amanda nods.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

I wonder if there's a Guinness record for saving time.

AMANDA

(doing the hand gestures)
No.

BRENDAN

What is that you're doing?

AMANDA

Googling.

BRENDAN

Cool! Can I try?

AMANDA

(tapping the frames)
Retinal scan.

BRENDAN

Oh.

(sipping beer)

I have to say, though, the terse language does make you sound sorta robotic. Do you think you'll go back to speaking normally now that the journals are gone?

AMANDA

They're not gone.

BRENDAN

(small burp)

But the house. Nothing was left.

AMANDA

Digital copying started in the eighties.

Brendan thinks for a second.

BRENDAN

You backed them up somewhere?

Amanda smiles for the first time and waggles her DAROL glasses up and down.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

No! The whole library is in there?

AMANDA

Images and text, indexed and searchable.

BRENDAN

And a web browser, I guess?

AMANDA

Sure, why not?

(beat)

They record video, too. Fortune helped make them.

BRENDAN

You're doing *video* journals for your descendants instead of written ones? Who would ever have the time to watch so much-

AMANDA

Did two hundred years of our ancestors think it reasonable for us to read all that?

BRENDAN

(sipping)
Cheers to that.

AMANDA

Anyway, I'm not sure I want kids. They're trouble.

15

INT. CLARK FAMILY STUDY - NIGHT - 20 YEARS AGO

15

17-year-old Brendan sits in his father's club chair reading from a journal. His father HARVEY enters the room.

HARVEY

You're still up?

BRENDAN

This is getting pretty good.

HARVEY

Looks like one of mine.

BRENDAN

Your first, actually. If I pretend it's someone else, it's like Skinemax.

(reading more)

No way, her, too?!

HARVEY

Oh, I'm sure you've seen worse.

BRENDAN

We're a dirty family.

HARVEY

Not really.

(sitting down)

That's part of the point, I think. People are people, and we don't seem to get much better or worse.

BRENDAN

Oh, come on. Civil rights?
Suffragettes?

HARVEY

Yes, there's that. But from all
that I've read here, greed still
runs the world.

BRENDAN

Are you sure it's not the hot,
steamy-

HARVEY

Why do you read them out of order?

BRENDAN

I dunno. I guess I like being
surprised.

HARVEY

So have you decided?

BRENDAN

I told you at breakfast, I can't
wait to get started on my own
journal.

HARVEY

And the treasure bath has nothing
to do with it?

BRENDAN

Well, how else could I afford to
hang around reading and writing all
day?

HARVEY

You'll have to get out there and do
things, too. Otherwise there'd be
nothing to write about.

BRENDAN

(holding up the book)
And what better teacher for how to
do things?

HARVEY

A lesser man would tell you to grow
up.

(beat)

So I'll just tell you to get out of
my chair.

Brendan gets up cheerfully and starts to walk out of the room.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
Ah ah. The book stays here.

DISSOLVE TO:

16

INT. DOWNTOWN CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

16

The next day, Brendan is trying to decide if he needs a shaving razor with batteries when he's startled by old school friends DAVE and CHRIS, coming around the corner of the aisle.

DAVE
Brendan!

CHRIS
No way. Brendan Clark?

DAVE
Wow, man, I almost didn't recognize you.

BRENDAN
Hi, guys. You're looking pretty good.

DAVE
You came all this way for a razor?

CHRIS
(grabbing the package from Brendan)
Oh, no, you don't wanna do that. Come to the barber shop, we got a guy will do you up right, old-school.

BRENDAN
(holding out his hand to get it back)
Oh, thanks, that's nice, but this'll be okay for now.

DAVE
What has it been, man, twenty years?

BRENDAN
Yeah, just about.

DAVE

Are you moving back, just visiting, what?

BRENDAN

(taking back the package)
Um. Still trying to figure that out, actually. My niece needs a guardian, and the court wants it to be me.

DAVE

No kidding. Oh, that's right, the car accident. Sh- that was your brother?

CHRIS

Man, I'm sorry.

DAVE

Yeah, me too.

Brendan focuses on the shelves, trying to pick a shaving cream.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Should we get a beer, toast to their memories?

BRENDAN

I don't-

CHRIS

Good idea. You know, Eddie's around, it'd be like a reunion.

BRENDAN

Am I the only one who moved? I mean, I figured you guys for New York or LA.

DAVE

Yeah, that was tempting, but I couldn't pass up working with my Dad.

CHRIS

(analyzing Brendan's choices)
We're pretty normal-size fish, but I guess this pond is smaller, you know? Sensitive skin, huh?

DAVE

So how 'bout that beer?

BRENDAN

Um, maybe later. My niece and I have a lot of details and paperwork to deal with. It's surprisingly draining.

CHRIS

Yeah, you always did hate to take notes. Write stuff down.

DAVE

Little details *can* be annoying.

CHRIS

Facts and whatnot.

BRENDAN

(sighing)

Alright, guys, listen. I've kept my mouth shut this long. You don't have to worry about me.

Chris and Dave glance at each other.

CHRIS

Right, well, here's my card. Let's go get that beer sometime.

DAVE

(convincingly)

Good to see you, man!

17 INT. MAGIC SHOP - 30 MINUTES LATER

17

Brendan is being closed inside of a prop iron maiden, as Leah describes how to do the trick to a CUSTOMER.

LEAH

Fasten the latches on the side, starting at the bottom. For some reason, this creates more tension in the audience. Then you ask your subject to try to open it.

BRENDAN

I've been trying.

LEAH

Sometimes your subject will be a bit snarky.

(beat)

(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

Sir, please try to punch or kick
your way out!

BRENDAN

Can't move.

LEAH

Excellent. Now confuse your
subject by asking your customer to
go finish packing up those boxes in
the back.

BRENDAN

Wait, what?

The customer, who is actually Leah's employee ZANNAH, laughs
a bit and waves to Brendan, heading toward the back.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

She works here? I thought she was
a customer.

LEAH

(with a flourish)

That's what we call misdirection!

BRENDAN

In my business, we just call it a
lie.

LEAH

(laughing)

I have some questions for you, and
I might not get another chance.

BRENDAN

I could just refuse to talk, or
make stuff up.

LEAH

You could. Maybe your time away
has made you a heartless creep, but
I'm betting not.

BRENDAN

I literally get paid for creeping.

LEAH

Sure, but not with people you care
about.

Brendan silently absorbs this.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Why did you leave?

Brendan sighs.

BRENDAN

It ... is it enough if I say that I want to tell you?

LEAH

No.

BRENDAN

And if I ever find out I can talk about it, you'll be the first?

LEAH

No.

BRENDAN

I can't tell you.

(beat)

But hey, at least I'm not making something up!

LEAH

We're both adults, right?

BRENDAN

Officially.

LEAH

We've both had our share of ups, downs, heartache, joy...

BRENDAN

One of us even got married-

LEAH

Nothing ever hurt me more than losing you for no reason.

BRENDAN

Nothing hurt me more than doing it.

LEAH

Wanna try this with the spikes?

BRENDAN

Please, just... it's not safe.

LEAH

No kidding, they're spikes.

BRENDAN

No, I mean, me being here in Boston. I need to keep a low profile and not make any waves.

LEAH

I'm not saying put an ad in the paper. Don't you trust me to keep a secret?

BRENDAN

I trust you. I do. I just know too much about surveillance, I think.

LEAH

Ugh. You're impossible.

BRENDAN

Sorry.

LEAH

(unlatching the contraption)

Don't think this means I'm giving up. Whatever it is has to be better than the horrible things I've thought up for myself over the years.

BRENDAN

Maybe.

Leah opens the prop and Brendan steps out.

LEAH

By the way, Chris mentioned he bumped into you buying some shaving stuff. Does that mean you're staying for a while?

BRENDAN

You're still in touch with Chris?

LEAH

Well, you don't start ignoring someone just because you get divorced.

Brendan is shocked.

18 EXT. MOTEL COURTYARD - EVENING

18

Amanda is sitting tensely on a lounge chair near the motel pool, when Brendan walks over to join her. Fortune is swimming in the pool.

BRENDAN

(to Fortune)

Do you know what's in that water?

FORTUNE

Like I told whatsherface, it's good for the immune system. Besides, the over-chlorination reminds me of the old country.

AMANDA

You never even visited Iran.

FORTUNE

(splashing Amanda)

Hey. I can have race memories, too, if I wanna.

Amanda covers her glasses, not wanting to get the electronics wet.

AMANDA

Stop!

(to Brendan)

What did you learn?

BRENDAN

(sitting down)

Where?

AMANDA

We planned to spend the day finding clues?

BRENDAN

Right. Um. I don't think we should dig around on our own. Let's let the police do their job, and we'll just have to be patient.

AMANDA

I can't. My parents were murdered-

BRENDAN

You don't know that.

AMANDA

Unlike you, I found a clue.

FORTUNE

Ahem.

AMANDA

We.

BRENDAN

Okay, but keep your voice down.

AMANDA

Two days before the crash, Dad bought cigarettes early.

BRENDAN

Early?

AMANDA

He normally bought a pack every three days, but then he bought another the day after.

FORTUNE

(climbing into an inflatable lounge chair)
Pattern recognition algorithm.
You're welcome.

BRENDAN

This is a clue?

AMANDA

He was nervous about something. Had trouble sleeping, too.

BRENDAN

So he never bought extra cigarettes or had trouble sleeping before?

FORTUNE

(floating away)
It happened dozens of times be-

AMANDA

This time it happened right before he died.

BRENDAN

Amanda, this is hard for all of us. Especially you, I know.

AMANDA

You don't-

BRENDAN

But it won't help you to obsess over his journal entries. I mean, it'd be one thing if he wrote in there, like, "I'm in terrible danger," but...

AMANDA

Maybe he couldn't.

BRENDAN

Rule 2. No topic is off limits.

FORTUNE

(from the far side of the pool)

Maybe he was scared!

BRENDAN

Shh!

(beat)

(to Amanda)

You think someone bugged his computer?

Amanda raises one eyebrow.

19

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - NIGHT

19

Gerald steps into an office doorway. We can barely make out his features from the ambient light spilling in from the hallway behind him. The office he's facing is in darkness, as is the person he's talking to.

GERALD

Knock knock.

EDDIE

Hi, Gerald. How are you?

GERALD

Homeless.

EDDIE

Yeah. Sorry about that. I wish there was another way.

GERALD

Mind if I turn the lights on?

EDDIE

Oh, there's something wrong with them, I've got a call into maintenance. What's new with Brendan?

GERALD

He's sufficiently scared. I don't think he wants to stay, but he feels obligated by the court.

EDDIE

Good.

GERALD

Good?

EDDIE

We can find a friendly judge to fix that.

GERALD

Oh, okay. What will happen with Aman-

The lights flicker back on and we see Eddie's face for the first time.

EDDIE

Et voilà! Well, Gerald, I guess that concludes our business for now. Don't be surprised if you find a big tip in the usual place.

GERALD

Much appreciated. I was just curious about-

EDDIE

How was it you planned to retire again? Houseboat?

GERALD

(getting the hint)
RV, I think. See the country.

EDDIE

Sounds great. Keep the phone charged, just in case, okay?

GERALD

Okay.

EDDIE

By the way, don't butlers always say "sir" at the end of a sentence?

GERALD

For the bosses, sure.

EDDIE

You've been working for me.

GERALD

Not as a butler.

EDDIE

Touché. Well, I'm still gonna go with "that will be all".

GERALD

Right on. See ya.

EDDIE

Ha! Jerk.

Eddie chuckles good-naturedly as Gerald heads out. Eddie returns focus to his phone.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What? Come on, there aren't any more pigs. I got 'em all. Grr.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

20

INT. PREP SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT - 20 YEARS AGO

20

TEEN BRENDAN, TEEN DAVE, TEEN CHRIS and TEEN EDDIE are entering the Prep School through an obscure door near the auditorium. Dave and Chris are carrying a goat.

TEEN EDDIE

I told you it was the right key.

TEEN BRENDAN

Yeah, bra-vo.

TEEN DAVE

This is so bad-ass!

TEEN CHRIS

(to Dave)

Can't believe you forgot the camera.

TEEN EDDIE

We'll have plenty of time in the morning.

As they walk through the hallway, a door opens behind them and a NIGHT JANITOR pokes his head out. "Gonna Make You Sweat" by C+C Music Factory is playing faintly in his office.

NIGHT JANITOR

Hey! What are you doing?

TEEN EDDIE

Crap. Run!

NIGHT JANITOR

Stop!

The song from the janitor's office comes to the foreground as the four teens run in the darkness, flashlights waving, and the janitor chases them. A few seconds later, they emerge on the auditorium stage, which is set for a production of The King and I.

TEEN DAVE

Oh, dude, he's peeing on me!

TEEN EDDIE

Shut up!

The janitor continues chasing them, trying to avoid the sharp edges of the stage furniture, then slips on something and falls into the orchestra pit.

There's a terrible crashing sound. The pop music cuts off. Slowly the boys return with their flashlights to find the janitor among a pile of chairs and music stands, badly twisted and not moving.

TEEN EDDIE (CONT'D)

Let's go.

TEEN BRENDAN

Someone should stay *here*, just in case. Chris, use the phone in the hall, 9-1-1 should work from there.

TEEN EDDIE

No, let's go. Leave. Now.

TEEN BRENDAN

Eddie, wait. It was an accident. And you're only seventeen, right?

TEEN EDDIE

I can't take that chance.

TEEN CHRIS

Even if we don't get put away, I can't have a record.

TEEN DAVE

My folks'd never forgive me. Goodbye, Harvard.

TEEN EDDIE

Brendan, we are leaving. Now. Forget the goat, just come on!

Teen Eddie starts to leave without regard for the others. Teen Dave starts to follow, beckoning them.

TEEN DAVE

Guys?

TEEN CHRIS

(backing away slowly, to Brendan)
Judges are weird, man. Sometimes they'll try a minor as an adult.

TEEN BRENDAN

Oh. Oh, f-.

Brendan lights up his watch, which reads 12:06 a.m.

TEEN CHRIS

What?

TEEN BRENDAN
It's my birthday.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

21

Amanda and Brendan are supposedly window-shopping, but they keep glancing toward and following Chris, several yards in front of them, who is conducting business on his phone. Every so often Chris will stop to make a forceful point into his phone.

BRENDAN
What are we supposed to learn from this?

AMANDA
You said he made threats.

BRENDAN
Yeah. Ish. I shouldn't have even said that.

AMANDA
Someone's out to get us.

BRENDAN
Okay, so why him and not Dave?

AMANDA
According to Dad, Dave wasn't smart.

BRENDAN
... Yeah, that's fair.

AMANDA
And the cops are acting like this case is open and shut.

BRENDAN
Maybe it is.

AMANDA
Maybe not. I need to do this, and you know how to tail people.

BRENDAN
I know how to tail *strangers*. This is dangerous.

AMANDA
So you do fear him.

BRENDAN

Ugh. Not... never mind.

Amanda stops walking.

AMANDA

I need you on my team.

Approaching them is a peer of Amanda's, KAYLA.

BRENDAN

Okay. Okay, I'm on your team. But let's do this smarter.

AMANDA

Great! What's first?

Amanda notices Kayla. Her cheeks flush and her posture becomes shy and defensive.

BRENDAN

First we have to get my equipment from home.

KAYLA

Hi, Amanda.

AMANDA

Hi.

KAYLA

I didn't mean to interrupt your... is... is this a relative of yours?

BRENDAN

Hi, I'm Amanda's uncle Brendan. Her father's brother.

KAYLA

(to Amanda)

Hey, I didn't get a chance earlier, but I'm really sorry about your parents. Both of you. And your house. It's not fair.

AMANDA

It never is.

KAYLA

Um. Anyway, I hope you still plan to come to the dance. Might be just what you need.

AMANDA

Maybe.

KAYLA

Okay. Well. Keep us updated.
Bye.

Kayla continues on her way.

BRENDAN

Friend of yours?

AMANDA

(in the same tone)
Rhetorical question?

BRENDAN

Which dance did she mean? Aren't
you tutored at home?

AMANDA

Mom and Dad got favors. Tried to
make things normal.

Brendan's alarm on his phone beeps. He pulls it out to check
the screen.

BRENDAN

(handing Amanda his car
keys)

I have a sort of date to keep. You
know how to drive, right?

AMANDA

I practically invented it.

BRENDAN

(humoring her)

Sure you did. Okay, see you at...
home.

22

INT. PUB - 10 MINUTES LATER

22

Brendan and Leah are slowly drinking cocktails in a booth.

LEAH

So you never got married?

BRENDAN

Nah. I got close a couple times.
Never felt like I was in a solid
enough place to be responsible for
someone else.

LEAH

That's not how it works.

BRENDAN

No?

LEAH

No. You don't save up a million dollars before you get pregnant. You have the baby and then figure out the rest.

BRENDAN

I guess. I dunno, I'm on the road so much...

LEAH

Do you like it?

BRENDAN

Being a P.I.? God, no. Sometimes I can live for months off one photo, but I wish I was this good at something else.

LEAH

(sipping)

Oh yeah? What is it you're bad at?

BRENDAN

Let's see. Data entry, paralegal, copy editing...

(he sees Leah is unimpressed or bored)

... keeping in touch with the people I care about...

LEAH

No kidding.

Brendan fidgets with his glass.

LEAH (CONT'D)

How's Amanda?

A server starts to approach them to see if they want anything else.

BRENDAN

Um... I think she's in the anger stage. Totally distracted by the idea that David and Carol were murdered.

The server quickly decides to come back later.

LEAH

Wow. Were they?

BRENDAN

No idea. I hope not. I mean, of course I hope not, why would I, I'm an idiot-

LEAH

You're not planning on keeping another dark secret for decades, are you?

BRENDAN

I can't keep apologizing for that.

LEAH

(gesturing with a cocktail cherry)

I'm just going to say this. If you had stayed in town, you'd be Jay-Z rich, we'd probably be raising some awesome kids, vacationing at beautiful resorts, tinkering with homemade coffee roasts and partying with movie stars.

BRENDAN

(amused)

Is that what you think they were doing?

LEAH

(eating the cherry)

No. But they weren't like you.

BRENDAN

I do enjoy a nice coffee.

They both sip quietly.

LEAH

You don't have to put on a brave face for me, you know.

BRENDAN

Hm?

LEAH

I just mean, I'd be a wreck if my brother...

BRENDAN

Oh. Yeah. I'm just not very... are you mad at me because you're not rich now?

LEAH

(throwing the cherry stem
in his face)

I'm mad for you that you're not rich. You had it made and you threw it away. I've had a roller coaster life so far but I still like myself. You just seem angry at everything.

BRENDAN

(almost sipping)

Maybe if I'm a good guardian, Amanda will give me an allowance.

LEAH

You're in the gallows humor stage, huh? Wait, do you really think you're staying?

BRENDAN

I think so.

(beat)

Thank you for not giving up on me.

LEAH

Oh, I've given up on you plenty. I just keep changing my mind.

DISSOLVE TO:

23

INT. TEEN BRENDAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - HIS 18th BIRTHDAY

23

Brendan is sitting at his desk, frustrated and staring at a blank page on his computer's word processor software. There's a knock on the door, and his mother RUTH CLARK pokes her head in.

RUTH

Hi, cutie. It's true you're an adult now, but you still have school tomorrow.

TEEN BRENDAN

I know, I just...

RUTH

(coming into the room)

Having trouble with the journal?

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

You nervous? It doesn't have to be profound. Heaven knows there's plenty of sentence fragments in that library.

TEEN BRENDAN

It's not that. I guess I didn't realize... you really think our ancestors included everything?

RUTH

Sure seems that way. Remember when great-great-whomever tried to run for office but all the lurid secrets ruined his campaign?

TEEN BRENDAN

Yeah.

RUTH

Y'embarrassed about a girl?

TEEN BRENDAN

No. I mean, yeah, I guess it's embarrassing.

RUTH

(patting his shoulder)

Well, I won't read it, and the firm doesn't really care. You know they're just checking for length and consistency. We trust you, but you have to play by the rules if you want the reward. "A great fortune is a great slavery," right?

TEEN BRENDAN

Yeah.

RUTH

Your Dad said it helped him at first to write in the third person.

TEEN BRENDAN

Okay, I'll try that. Thanks, Mom.

RUTH

Night, night.

She leaves and closes the door, leaving Brendan to stare at the screen. He sighs and finally starts typing, "Dear Mom, Dad and David, By the time you read this..."

DISSOLVE TO:

24

EXT. PUB - NIGHT

24

Brendan and Leah are saying good night outside the pub. They're more relaxed but still mostly sober.

BRENDAN

Thanks for this. I had a good time.

LEAH

Me too.

Brendan leans in to kiss her cheek when his phone beeps. He pulls it out to see a message from Amanda reading "Got him cornered. Meet me," followed by a GPS coordinates link that opens a map app.

BRENDAN

Oh, damn.

LEAH

What?

BRENDAN

I think Amanda's in trouble. You okay to drive?

LEAH

Sure. I'm just around the corner.

They jog away.

25

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

25

Amanda is crouched peering over the ledge of a rooftop, focused on a small city park below. She speaks to Fortune through the DAROL's built-in communicator.

AMANDA

Why didn't we put night vision in here?

FORTUNE (O.S.)

What? You're lucky the battery lasted *this* long.

AMANDA

It's not luck. Version 2: night vision. And telescope microphone.

FORTUNE (O.S.)

Wow, are you a spy or a journalist?

AMANDA
Journaler. I'm just being
thorough.

Amanda gets a buzz on her phone and sees a message from
Brendan: "I'm where you are. Don't see you." She pushes some
buttons to call him.

BRENDAN (O.S.)
Are you crazy?

AMANDA
Don't go in the park. Copy?

BRENDAN (O.S.)
(sighing)
I copy. What else, Colonel?

AMANDA
Chris and Dave are meeting there.
I can't hear them but they look
annoyed.

BRENDAN (O.S.)
With each other?

AMANDA
I don't think so. Wait. They both
just got a text. They're getting
up. See you out front.

26 EXT. BUILDING NEAR PARK - CONTINUOUS

26

Brendan hangs up and looks toward Leah, exasperated.

BRENDAN
My niece has gone all cloak and
dagger. She's going to want us to
go with her, but I'll need your
help to get her home, okay?

LEAH
Sure, of course.

Amanda emerges quickly from the door near Brendan and runs up
to Leah.

AMANDA
Want to save your magic shop?

Leah looks surprised at Amanda, then looks at Brendan as if
to say "can we, please?"

27 INT. FORTUNE'S BASEMENT - A FEW MINUTES LATER 27

Fortune is slouched in her command center chair, eating snacks and drinking tea. She has four monitors and two sets of keyboards and mice, an Xbox-style controller and two different model tablets charging in their stations. She easily switches focus to various tasks while she talks.

FORTUNE

Codename 1 to Codename 2, where are you now?

AMANDA (O.S.)

Those are awful codenames.

FORTUNE

Codenames are awful. Anybody worth their salt could identify us by our voices.

AMANDA (O.S.)

Version 2 will also need voice disguising and GPS tracking.

FORTUNE

Appending to the whiteboard.

28 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS 28

Amanda, Brendan and Leah are amateur-stealthily following Chris and Dave down the street.

AMANDA

(to the DAROL)

We're heading north on Concord, just past Newland.

BRENDAN

I have GPS on my phone.

AMANDA

(to Brendan)

This is faster.

29 INT. FORTUNE'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS 29

Fortune is whiz-banging her way around a custom map on one of her monitors.

FORTUNE

Okay, Chris and Dave don't live or work in that direction;

(MORE)

FORTUNE (CONT'D)
there are more than a few bars and
coffee shops still open. Let me
know if they turn.

AMANDA (O.S.)
Crap!

FORTUNE
What's up?

30 EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

30

Amanda, Brendan and Leah are now openly chasing Chris and
Dave. Brendan looks like he can't take much more running.

AMANDA
They're running away.

FORTUNE (O.S.)
Keep talking.

AMANDA
They turned right onto Tremont.
(still chasing)
Then the next left.

BRENDAN
(falling behind a bit)
Amanda, we're made! Let's regroup!

FORTUNE (O.S.)
Okay, that doesn't make sense. I
think they're just trying to lose
you.

AMANDA
Gimme a nearby landmark. The
older, the better.

FORTUNE (O.S.)
Um, okay, Boston South End library?

Amanda stops running, takes off the DAROL and closes her eyes
for a second. When she opens them, we see a crowd of Clark
ancestor apparitions in the street around her, some of them
older versions of themselves, doing a multitude of mundane
and interesting tasks. We hear a cacophony of voices, male
and female, muttering about a hundred different things.
Gradually, the word "library" asserts itself among the voices
telling their daily stories and eventually only one voice
remains, that of ancestor JOHANNA CLARK.

JOHANNA CLARK (V.O.)

I was led on a tour of the new South End library, truly a remarkable accomplishment which shall be a boon to our city. I think the gentleman was trying to impress me because he showed me all manner of back rooms and tunnels, one of which leads right out to Warren Avenue. I pointed out the danger but he replied, "Who would steal books?"

As we hear the journal entry, Amanda leads the group to the right street and searches for irregularities, finding the secret entrance and opening it.

BRENDAN

How'd you know this was here?

AMANDA

Johanna Clark. Died 1923.

LEAH

Sorry. Are we chasing or hiding?

AMANDA

Let's find out.

She descends into the tunnel.

LEAH

(whispering to Brendan)
How does this save my magic shop?

BRENDAN

(whispering back)
I dunno, I wanted to go home.

They follow Amanda and close the entrance behind them.

31 INT. LIBRARY TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

31

Illuminated by Leah and Brendan's mobile phones, the three make their way through the tunnel.

BRENDAN

What's the plan, kiddo?

AMANDA

We needed to vanish. With luck, we'll catch our unsuspecting targets on the other side.

BRENDAN
That's not much-

FORTUNE (O.S.)
Amanda! Amanda, help!

AMANDA
What's wrong?!

BRENDAN
What-

FORTUNE (O.S.)
(her voice fading away)
Abducted!

There's a blip of static and we don't hear any more from Fortune.

LEAH
What happened?

AMANDA
They took Fortune.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

32 EXT. CITY PLAYGROUND - DAY - 12 YEARS AGO

32

A younger Carol Clark is in the playground with a five-year-old Amanda, who has her nose in a family journal.

YOUNGER CAROL
Looks like they're having lots of fun over there.

YOUNG AMANDA
What is n-e-c-k-i-n-g?

YOUNGER CAROL
Necking? Oh, well, that's one of those things we talked about that won't make sense until you're older. Let's go down the slide, huh?

YOUNG AMANDA
This is more fun.

Carol sighs as a very young Fortune walks up, all disheveled and scraped knees.

YOUNG FORTUNE
Hi.

YOUNGER CAROL
(pushing down Amanda's book)
Hello, there.

YOUNG AMANDA
Salutations.

YOUNG FORTUNE
(delighted)
What?

YOUNG AMANDA
People used to say that before we said "hi".

YOUNG FORTUNE
Wow. People were fancy.

YOUNG AMANDA
Sometimes.

YOUNG FORTUNE
What's your book?

YOUNG AMANDA

My great aunt's diary. It's got a bunch of fancy words.

YOUNG FORTUNE

Cool. Does it say in there what a rag-head is?

YOUNGER CAROL

(shocked)

Where did you hear that?

YOUNG FORTUNE

Those kids. I don't think it's nice, they were being mean. I called them all snotfaces.

YOUNGER CAROL

Stay here, I'll be right back. I swear, it's the year 2000 for Pete's sake...

Carol trails off as she goes to talk to some of the other parents. Fortune takes her spot on the bench.

YOUNG FORTUNE

I'm Fortune. Don't make fun.

YOUNG AMANDA

Your name is Fortune?

YOUNG FORTUNE

Don't-

YOUNG AMANDA

That's neat. There are way weirder names in here. Look, here's "al-oo-ish-us".

The two girls laugh uproariously.

DISSOLVE TO:

33

INT. POLICE STATION WAITING AREA - NIGHT

33

Amanda, Brendan and Leah are impatiently waiting to talk to a detective.

AMANDA

You believe me now?

BRENDAN

I'm afraid so.

LEAH

I'm still confused. Fortune doesn't live right near the library, does she?

AMANDA

No, miles away. There's at least one more bad guy.

BRENDAN

I shouldn't have stayed in town.

AMANDA

You were under orders.

LEAH

(to Brendan)

No point playing what-if games, right?

AMANDA

Fortune was almost certainly kidnapped to scare us, which means the house fire was likely meant to scare us, so I conclude they don't want you here. What do you know about Chris and Dave?

BRENDAN

Where to start? We were best friends for years, me and Chris and Dave and Eddie.

AMANDA

Eddie?

BRENDAN

Eddie Morgan.

AMANDA

Are they all old money Boston families?

BRENDAN

Yeah, but they were more spoiled than me.

LEAH

Oh, I don't know about that.

Brendan looks quizzically at Leah.

AMANDA

Do you know any secrets? Something we can use for leverage?

BRENDAN

Um..

LEAH

Chris is bad in bed.

Amanda makes a "yuck" face.

BRENDAN

That doesn't help.
(beat)
Maybe a little.

AMANDA

Who has the most money at risk?

BRENDAN

I dunno, can't your cyberglasses tell you?

AMANDA

It's offline. I think they smashed Fortune's system.

BRENDAN

Damn.

LEAH

We dined at all their houses. Those three are thick as thieves. Eddie has way more house than he needs, servants, private schools, assistants, oh, and I've heard rumors of hidden bank accounts and suspicious investments. His wife told me they're thinking about running for Senate.

AMANDA

(eyes closed)
Morgan... Morgan... Morgan Chase?

LEAH

No, that's a different one.

AMANDA

Cyril Morgan.

BRENDAN

That sounds vaguely-

LEAH

Eddie's father. *Big* painting of him in the lounge.

BRENDAN

Right.

AMANDA

He was a Socialist.

LEAH

What? That can't be right.

AMANDA

(standing up)

Maybe not a member, but his name was on the roster of attendees at least once. Sometimes I'd include those in a journal, like a scrapbook. You said Eddie's running for office?

LEAH

Thinking about it.

BRENDAN

(standing up)

People do get scared by the S word these days.

(sitting down)

Oh, but you said Fortune's system was smashed. We can't get a copy.

AMANDA

(slowly sinking)

Oh, right...

(springing back up)

... except for the multiple redundant off-site backups! The interface is gone, not the archive, what am I, stupid? Come on, I just need a Web browser and a printer.

LEAH

(standing up and heading out)

Let's go to my shop.

(whispering to Brendan)

Are we doing something illegal?

BRENDAN

(bringing up the rear)

That was a lot of extra syllables.

34 INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

34

In a dark office tower, Fortune sits tied to a chair with a ball gag in her mouth. Chris and Dave sit with her, wearing party masks, not speaking. Fortune is understandably scared, but tries to act bored. She muffles a few words, but the guys don't react. She tries again, more loudly, and tilts her head toward her lap. One guy shows her he's holding a gun and then removes her gag.

FORTUNE

Have you been planning this long?

DAVE

(trying to modify his
voice)

What?

FORTUNE

I'm just wondering if you *bought* a ball gag for this or if you already owned one.

DAVE

(putting the ball gag back
in)

Brat.

Fortune sighs and rolls her eyes. Outside, we hear a car horn honk the familiar shave-and-a-haircut pattern. Fortune follows up with a muffled "two bits!"

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hm?

A few seconds later, it happens again. Fortune completes it again, muffled.

DAVE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

FORTUNE

Mfoo fitfs.

Dave removes her ball gag, and as the car horn honks again, she sings proudly...

FORTUNE (CONT'D)

Twoooo biiiiiiiits! God, you guys.
Roger Rabbit. Get some culture.

Chris goes to look out the window and sees Leah's car below, Brendan standing outside it, holding a sign that says "Send Out Eddie".

CHRIS

(sighing)

Gag her.

(punching buttons on his
phone)

Hey, man.

(beat)

Yeah, Brendan and the kid are right
outside. And I think that's Leah's
car, why would she-

(beat)

I don't know how, but they are, and
they asked for you.

(beat)

Okay.

(hanging up the phone)

We sit tight here.

FORTUNE

Fduhh.

35

EXT. DAVE'S OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

35

Amanda pokes her head out the rear window of Leah's car.

AMANDA

Think they saw it?

BRENDAN

I saw a dude in a mask. This is
the place.

An expensive car slowly rolls around the corner and parks
behind Leah's car. Brendan puts down the sign and retrieves
a folder from Leah.

LEAH

Good luck. Don't shoot Chris too
much.

BRENDAN

If this goes wrong-

LEAH

Just drive away. I got it.

AMANDA

Give 'em hell, Harry.

Brendan smiles ruefully, then stands and braces for a
confrontation. He forces one foot in front of the other
until he reaches Eddie's car, then opens the passenger door
and steps in.

36

INT. EDDIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

36

EDDIE

You have to leave town.

BRENDAN

Eddie, I have never told anyone, and I never will. Why does me being here make a difference, anyway?

EDDIE

I'd feel safer with you gone.

BRENDAN

Well, I got this niece, see, and-

EDDIE

Guardianship, I know. I'm already working on a judge to fix it.

BRENDAN

I'm not sure it needs fixing, dude. Can't we be grown-ups about this?

EDDIE

Hah. You're the one with the naive dreams. Leave right away, and we'll let the girl go.

BRENDAN

Sure we can't work this out?

EDDIE

My career is sort of based on not being charged with any crimes, you know? I can't take the chance that will change.

Brendan opens the file folder and passes it over to Eddie.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What's this?

BRENDAN

This is what people in my business call blackmail. I hear you're going to run for Senate. I doubt the naive public would look kindly on a guy whose father attended meetings of the American Socialist Party.

EDDIE

What!? This could so easily be a forgery.

BRENDAN

Let's ask a handwriting expert. I'm sure there are plenty of examples of your father's signature down at City Hall.

EDDIE

Even if it is him, he was probably just investigating. You know, "know your enemy."

BRENDAN

Could be. Hey, I'm like the guys on cable news. Not making claims, just asking questions.

Eddie looks severely at Brendan for a long moment, then gets on his phone.

EDDIE

(to the phone)

Let her go.

(beat)

Not exactly, I'll explain later.

(beat)

Sure. Okay.

(he hangs up the phone and talks to Brendan)

The little Arab will be out in a moment.

BRENDAN

She has a name. And her mother was Persian, not Arab.

Eddie waves him away. Brendan opens the car door and is about to step out.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Oh, there's one more thing.

Eddie makes a "don't press your luck" face, but Brendan's going to press it.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

I'm guessing you've got Chris and Dave in there doing your dirty work. This is Dave's office, right? He was always kind of a pushover.

(MORE)

BRENDAN (CONT'D)
Chris's family is trying to muscle
out a small magic shop downtown.
I'd like you to stop that.

EDDIE
The magic shop? The one run by...
ohhh. Well, if she keeps making a
profit, maybe I could help with the
lease.

BRENDAN
Thanks.

EDDIE
Go.

Brendan exits the car and walks confidently to Leah's car,
where Fortune and Amanda are hugging hello. They invite him
to hug, also.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 EXT. BOSTON CITYSCAPE - MORNING 37

The sun rises.

DISSOLVE TO:

38 INT. DINER - MORNING 38

Brendan, Amanda, Leah and Fortune are enjoying lots of
comfort food.

FORTUNE
I don't know if I mentioned this,
but that sucked.

BRENDAN
Many times. And I apologize just
as many times.

AMANDA
Me, too.

BRENDAN
We should be in the clear. I think
the bad guys, as Amanda calls them,
understand our position. That was
some great P.I. work, Amanda.

AMANDA
Thanks.

FORTUNE

Hey!

LEAH

Hey also!

BRENDAN

Sorry. You're right. Team effort.

LEAH

(to Amanda)

That archive of yours is pretty amazing. Maybe it'll help your uncle find some clients?

BRENDAN

Oh, I dunno. That seems a little skeezy. But it could help me help them.

While Brendan is talking, Kayla enters and takes a seat at the counter.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

Hey, there's the girl we-

AMANDA

Shh!

FORTUNE

Excuse my intense friend, Uncle Blackout. She's got it bad.

BRENDAN

Oh.

(beat)

Oh!

(beat)

Amanda, you've got hundreds of years of seduction training, and you're scared to ask a girl out?

AMANDA

(covering his mouth)

It's different.

BRENDAN

(uncovering his mouth)

It's different, sure, but at least it's not 1912, right? Maybe go ask her to go to that dance.

Amanda doesn't budge.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

If you don't, you're walking back
to the motel.

Amanda huffs but gets up and walks to Kayla. We stay focused on the booth but can see Amanda and Kayla talking in the background.

BRENDAN (CONT'D)

She's a little young to decide that
she likes girls, isn't she?

FORTUNE

When did you decide you liked
girls?

BRENDAN

Um. Fair enough. You know, you're
a great friend to her. I'm glad to
know you.

FORTUNE

Likewise. Thanks for the rescue.
And just between us, except for the
fear of rape-torture-death, it felt
good making the city a slightly
better place. I hate cheaters.

Amanda comes back to the table and sits down, defeated.

AMANDA

She already has a date.

BRENDAN

That's a shame.
(looking around pointedly
for a moment)
Hey. I can't help but notice the
world didn't end.

AMANDA

Smart-ass.

BRENDAN

What else did she say?

AMANDA

She said to ask again next time.
But that's a brush-off, right?

LEAH

Hmm...

FORTUNE
(bring out a tablet
computer)
Let's search the archive.

BRENDAN
(smiling)
Nerds.

FORTUNE
Bloobity blah blah inherit the
Earth.

39 INT. EDDIE'S OFFICE RECEPTION - DAY

39

Gerald stands outside Eddie's office speaking to his personal assistant.

GERALD
Hi. I'm Gerald Sullivan. Mr.
Morgan called me to stop by.

ASSISTANT
Sullivan... hm, I don't see you in
the appointment book.

GERALD
Maybe I could leave him a-

Eddie's door flies open and Eddie stands beaming in his office doorway.

EDDIE
Gerald! So good to see you. Come
in, please, I've got an amazing
opportunity I think you'll just
love.

Gerald heads into Eddie's office and the door closes. We linger on Eddie's assistant, who doesn't appreciate the impropriety.

ASSISTANT
(sing-song)
My boss is a creep.
(clicking on the computer)
Aww! What a sweet dog!

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW