

AWKWAFINA

Written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. GREEN ROOM - NIGHT

AWKWAFINA (25, fabulous, diva) sits in a makeup chair as hair and makeup people swarm around her.

AWKWAFINA

(into phone)

...And ya know what, Trish? You can tell Quincy Jones to shove it up his pert asshole 'cause I've had enough!

Awkwafina aggressively hangs up and snaps at an ASSISTANT.

AWKWAFINA (CONT'D)

Lucretia, what's the wi-fi in here?

ASSISTANT

Okay, hold on one sec--

AWKWAFINA

(rude)

Did you just tell me to "hold on"?

ASSISTANT

Um...

AWKWAFINA

GIVE ME THE FUCKIN' WI-FI.

ASSISTANT

Yes, of course, so it's um--
(struggling to find it)
Netgear 873-5G. Password is
HIVAIDS94--

AWKWAFINA

Wait, the password is HIV AIDS 94?

ASSISTANT

Yes.

AWKWAFINA

Well that's a very depressing password.

A DIRECTOR pokes his head in the room.

DIRECTOR

Awkwafina, we're on in five!

Awkwafina bitchily shoos away all the people fuddling with her hair and makeup.

AWKWAFINA
EVERYONE CLEAR THE ROOM I NEED MY
MOMENT.

Awkwafina looks at her reflection in the mirror, steely-eyed.

AWKWAFINA (CONT'D)
(very intense)
Listen here you beautiful, limber,
bitch. You is KIND, you is SMART,
you is IMPORTANT.

CUT TO:

INT. CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

We're in a stadium packed with screaming fans. Think Beyoncé Formation tour. Back-up dancers nail a choreographed routine. Awkwafina stands at the center of it all, barefoot, rapping like a K-pop star.

AWKWAFINA
NEW YORK CITY BITCH, THAT'S WHERE I
COME FROM / NOT WHERE I MOVED TO ON
MOM AND DAD'S TRUST FUND / NEW YORK
CITY BITCH, THAT'S HOW I'M ROLLING
/ YOU OUT-OF-STATE FAKES GET YOUR
IPAD STOLEN

The back-up dancers bow down to Awkwafina as she closes the set like a star: the crowd cheering, strobe lights popping, confetti raining down. She killed it. Scanning the audience, she spots HENRY WINKLER in the crowd.

AWKWAFINA (CONT'D)
He came. Henry Winkler.
(making eye contact,
licking lips)
Imma hit that later.

As the crowd cheers, Awkwafina looks up into the lights, taking it in. Something wet drips on her face from above.

AWKWAFINA (CONT'D)
What the hell?
(calling backstage)
Lucretia, why is this confetti
wet?! It better not be--

*

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - LIN FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

A typical two-family house in suburban Queens. Nora's bedroom is decorated with underground hip-hop posters (think 90's golden era, MF DOOM, MAD VILLAIN, KOOL KEITH, etc.) all over the walls and a keyboard/mic setup on a desk along with a small at-home turntable and mixer. NORA LIN (25, anything but a diva) wakes up to find herself getting peed on by an adorable bichon frise.

NORA
--Floofy!

Nora grabs the dog and rushes into the hall.

NORA (CONT'D)
Dad! Your goddamn dog gave me a golden shower AGAIN this morning and I am FED UP!

Nora opens her Dad's bedroom door only to find a swingers party in full effect. Nora's DAD (40s, Asian guido) is on all-fours on the bed, wearing a harness and fishnet shorts.

NORA (CONT'D)
Dad?!

DAD
Hey Nora. Sorry, were we too loud?

NORA
WHAT THE FUCK!

Nora throws Floofy into the room and slams the door. Traumatized, she heads down the hallway.

NORA (CONT'D)
EDMUND! Edmund, I just saw something that cannot be unseen! Edmund? Are you--

Nora opens another bedroom door only to find EDMUND (27, douchey) sensually caressing the face of a one-armed male mannequin with a wig and a bikini on. Another mannequin, fully dressed, "watches" from the corner. *

NORA (CONT'D)
ARE YOU MAKING OUT WITH A FILENE'S BASEMENT MANNEQUIN?!

EDMUND
(shocked, angry at the interruption)
What the-- GET OUT! GET OUT!
(MORE)

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Don't you ever knock, get the fuck
out, LOSER!

Edmund slams the door in Nora's face. Nora sinks into the wall, bewildered and disgusted.

NORA
This family is gross as shit.

GRANDMA (60s, ratchet) enters and looks Nora up and down judging. *

GRANDMA
Nora, are you going out like that? *

Grandma adjusts Nora's boobs, lifting one up to be symmetrical, then tapping them like she's shopping for watermelons at the grocery store. *

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
That is better. You have such a springy rack, it is your best asset. *

Dad peeks out from the doorway.

DAD
Hey Nora, emergency here, can you get me like, six rolls of paper towels? We've sprung a bit of a leak.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. APARTMENT STAIRS/HALLWAY - DAY

Nora and her best friend CHENISE (23, hip, African-American, Kiersey Clemons-type) carry moving boxes up the stairs, including Nora's keyboard. The apartment is jankey and definitely NOT dope.

CHENISE
(fake but polite)
Wow... this place is... it's... well it's a place.

NORA
Fun fact: back in the late 1970s it was owned by this mob guy Clemmy Two-Bitch Franetti.
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

Apparently, three men who didn't deliver his meats on time were strangled and stuffed into the plumbing system of this very building. Their bodies were never recovered.

CHENISE

That would explain the odor.

NORA

Oh come on, this place is historical! I'm a part of history!

CHENISE

Sure. At least you're moving out on your own.

NORA

Yea, this is big for me. Asian people don't move out of the house until they're like 47.

(re: keyboard)

Least now I can finally make beats and blast Gravediggas without Edmund or Dad complaining.

The girls reach the landing of the top floor. They come upon an apartment door. Nora suddenly looks nervous.

NORA (CONT'D)

Chenise. I'm scared. What if these people think I'm weird? What if I develop thunder thighs from over-ordering Seamless?

Chenise slaps Nora across the face, violently.

CHENISE

This is the beginning of the rest of your life girl. You got this.

Chenise knocks on the door. A super hot guy opens the door wearing a feather boa with suspenders and no shirt underneath, with both nipples pierced. This is DESIRE (mid-20s, multi-ethnic, extremely gay).

NORA

(immediately entranced)

Oh. My. God.

DESIRE

Hey, hey, hey! Oh girl, you must be the new roomie! Yaasss!!

Nora is entranced with Desire's body. She's nervous and tongue-tied. She's in love.

CHENISE

Yup, that's her. Nora.

Nora gives an open-mouthed head nod.

DESIRE

Cute. I'm Desire and that's Susan. *
This is her pad, she's the boss. *

Desire points to SUSAN (50s, hoarder, native New Yorker). In *
Susan's room, stacks of newspapers and shoeboxes reach the *
ceiling, along with water jugs filled with mysterious *
liquids. Susan eats her yogurt like a dog, without a spoon. *

DESIRE (CONT'D) *

She's a little crazy but that's why *
the rent's so cheap. *
(off Nora's stare) *
You okay? *
(no response; Nora stares) *
Alright then. *

Weirded out, he goes back inside. Chenise turns to Nora. *

CHENISE

What's wrong with you?

NORA

Did you see him too, Chenise? Did *
you see that beautiful pulsating *
ANGEL of a man? That jaw *
structure? THEM LIPZ? *

CHENISE

He is a flaming homosexual.

NORA

I seen the way he looked to me.

BEGIN MUSICAL INTERLUDE: "ODE TO DESIRE" *

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Desire sits naked on a chair. As the camera PANS AROUND his *
body, Nora's face pops out from in between his spread legs. *

NORA
KNEES SHAKING, BUT WHY YOU HATING?
/ I JUST WANT OUR NAKED BODIES
ADJACENT / IN THE BACKSEAT OF A
SUBARU / WINING AND DINING AT THE
DALLAS BARBECUE

INT. STAGE - DAY

Desire, dressed in a super deep V-neck and tight pants,
performs a scene from Les Mis. Nora watches from the
audience, captivated.

NORA
WE COULD ACT OUT SCENES FROM LES
MISERABLES / I'LL BE THE EPONINE
AND YOU WOULD BE JEAN VAL JEAN /
CUZ I DREAMED A DREAM OF A TIME
GONE BY / WHERE YOU AND I WAS
BANGIN ON A CLOUD IN THE SKY

EXT. PARK SLOPE STREET - DAY

Desire and Nora hold hands and stroll through Park Slope like
the happy, bougy couple they are. Desire makes eyes at a hot
guy nearby, but Nora is oblivious.

NORA
WE CAN ELOPE IF OUR FOLKS DON'T
APPROVE / THEN BUY A NICE HOUSE IN
A NICE NEIGHBORHOOD / MAYBE GET A
DOG THEN MAYBE HAVE A KID / I'M
OVULATING NOW IF YOU DOWN TO COMMIT

END MUSICAL INTERLUDE.

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Nora stares at Desire from the doorway of her new bedroom.
The bedroom is bare except for Nora's boxes and hip-hop
posters she's put on the wall.

NORA
(re: Desire, licking lips)
Imma hit that later.

Chenise sets down one of Nora's boxes.

CHENISE
Alright, you good? A bitch gotta
saunter off.

NORA

Who you cammin' for tonight?

CHENISE

Some German guys. They're paying
me two grand to read "Flowers for
Algernon" in a baby voice.

*
*
*

NORA

The weird sci-fi book with the
mouse?

*
*

CHENISE

I don't fucking know, but I'mma sci-
fiiii myself to some money.

*
*
*

Nora gives her a look.

*

INT. NORA'S CAR - NIGHT

*

Nora BARRELS through a red light in a 2004 Honda Civic "rice
rocket", complete with whistlers, four different kinds of
hubcaps and a large decal of dragons busting into flames on
the side doors. The seats have t-shirts. On her windshield
there is a decal for a service called "Rydz". She double-
parks next to an apartment building.

NORA

(into bluetooth, muffled
and hard to understand)

Hi, I'm Nora, your Rydz driver, I'm
outside your place.

We see the silhouette of a hipster guy with a beanie look out
his apartment window at Nora in her sketchy car.

NORA (CONT'D)

(into bluetooth, now at
full volume)

What do you mean, you changed your
mind? I'm here. I see you in your
window! OK listen here. You have
somewhere to be and I'm going to
take you there goddammit!

*

(beat)

Bitch I drove all the way out to
Ditmas Park!

(beat, filled with rage)

FINE, may your future rides and all
the future rides of your CHILDREN
be CURSED! May Satan feast upon
your ROTTED FLESH in HELL!

(beat)

(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

Okay wow, sorry I didn't mean that last part, that was a bit much. Ya know, if you could throw a bitch a 5-star ra--

*

The guy hangs up. Nora peels away, pissed. CHAMILLIONAIRE'S "RIDIN' DIRTY" plays.

*

- Nora, driving a passenger, gets a text from Chenise: "Hey girl." Nora responds: "At My job. Dont want to lose my license again for txtng & driving." Then: "Lol JK Wut ru up to."

*

- A passenger opens the door to Nora's car. A cloud of smoke escapes from the car. Nora waves giddily while fanning the smoke, completely high.

*

INT. NORA'S CAR - NIGHT

Nora, with tilted sunglasses and her seat almost fully reclined, picks up a polite, pretty WHITE GIRL. Nora sees in the rearview mirror that she has a ukulele case.

NORA

What you got there, a horn?

WHITE GIRL

(avoiding conversation)

Um, it's a ukelele.

NORA

Ah yes, the uke-le-le. Ibrahim Lincoln's favorite instrument. You a musician?

The White Girl gives a barely perceptible nod.

NORA (CONT'D)

That's lit. I make beats on my computer and rap to 'em sometimes. Just bedroom music stuff. Ya know since I was a young'in I always saw myself doing music. Learned Fur Elise on a Fisher Price xylophone at age 2. But I like my job now. I choose my own hours, I'm my own boss. Get to show off my ride. I rigged it up pretty sweet. Wanna see what it does when I back up?

WHITE GIRL

No, it's fi-

Nora stops, and reverses. A robot with a strong, humorous Boston accent says "THIS CAH IS BACKIN' UP". Nora chuckles.

NORA

Ah, she gets me every time.

WHITE GIRL

Sorry, can we get going please?
It's just, I'm late for this gig.

NORA

Oh cool! A real gig, huh? So how
do you get hooked up with the music
stuff--

WHITE GIRL

Look out!

ANGLE ON a possum in the road. Nora SLAMS on her brakes and SWERVES to avoid it as the White Girl gets whiplashed into the seat in front of her. The possum scurries away, unhurt.

NORA

Geez that was the most ratchet
looking cat I've seen in my whole
life.

WHITE GIRL

(face bloodied, in pain)
IT WAS A FUCKING POSSUM.

NORA

A what?

WHITE GIRL

TAKE ME TO A HOSPITAL, MY NOSE IS
BROKEN. YOU BROKE MY NOSE.

NORA

Oh yikes... Yea, the only thing
about that is you have to go back
in the app and change the address
manually to the new location--

WHITE GIRL

FORGET IT.

The White Girl exits, blood everywhere.

NORA

Whoa that's a lotta blood! I hope
you're good...

*
*

INT. COFFEESHOP - LATER

Nora sits with Chenise.

NORA

Can you believe Rydz suspended me?
It wasn't even my fault, it's these
damn possums! They are an invasive
species colonizing this city.

CHENISE

Yea, those things are everywhere
nowadays.

NORA

They're horrible! We need to get
them out. Build some sort of wall.
And you know who'll pay for that
wall? THE POSSUMS. I mean, look
at 'em now. The possums be dating
our women and stealing our jobs!
(Chenise shakes her head)
But seriously... Rydz was legit a
great job. What am I gonna do now?

CHENISE

Well, if you want, you could always
webcam with me. Lil China dolls
like you make paper on the cam.

NORA

Oh. Um... I don't know...

CHENISE

Look, I know. It's really not for
everyone. Ya know, I'm not gonna
lie. I've done things, girl. I've
done things.

Two male customers nearby perk up, eavesdropping.

CHENISE (CONT'D)

(leans in, but loud enough
for guys to hear)
I put a Nerf gun in my butthole,
and shot the dart out of my vagina.

*

NORA

How is that even possible?

CHENISE

You ever tried to Elmers glue your
labia together?

NORA

No...

The two customers, grossed out, exit. *

CHENISE *

I can solve a Rubix Cube... *

NORA *

What, with your vagina? *

CHENISE *

No, I can just solve a Rubix cube. *

NORA *

Okay. But you got this whole like sexy swag confidence thing. I look like Mowgli and have the sex appeal of a dying fern.

CHENISE

True. Well then maybe you gotta do your own thing. Hey, you could use your time off to work on your music. Make your songs. You've been doing that since we were kids.

NORA

(hadn't thought of that)
Yea maybe...

CHENISE

Aight girl, I gotta go, I'm getting my gooch darkened.

NORA

Yeah, hit ya later.
(as Chenise exits, to self)
Who would darken a gooch?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Desire paints his nails on the couch. He wears a furry pink fedora. Nora emerges behind him eerily, trying to sniff his head. When he catches her, she tries to act casual.

NORA

So, Desire. Nice hat you got there. Where ya from--
(sniffing air around him)
Cuba?

DESIRE

Just outside of Boston.

NORA

Well some might say I'm just
outside of you right now. Want me
to come inside the city limits?

The doorbell rings. Desire jumps up to answer it.

DESIRE

I got it!

Desire opens the door to find a MOVING MAN (40s, Italian).

MOVING MAN

Hi there, we got furniture here for
a Nemo Lan?

NORA

Nora Lin. But yeah, that's me.
Where's my stuff at? You need a
rope or something?

MOVING MAN

Your stuff's downstairs because you
live in a five story walk-up.

NORA

Well can you walk 'em up?

MOVING MAN

Not for what you paid. But if you
threw in an extra few hundred my
guys can maybe do something for ya.

NORA

Right, right, so I just got in a
bit of a situation and I don't have
any money right now... Long story I
don't have a job cuz these possums
be running all over the damn city--

MOVING MAN

Oh a possum. *That's* why you don't
have a job. A possum.

The Moving Man leaves. Nora follows him down the stairs.

NORA

Wait! But I need my furniture!
Can I at least work for it?

MOVING MAN

What skills do you have?

NORA

Um. You ever seen this?

Nora does the thing where you makes you thumb "disappear".

MOVING MAN

(unimpressed)

Goodbye.

Nora follows the Moving Man out to:

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - CONTINUOUS

Nora's bed and dresser are on the sidewalk.

NORA

Wait! I'm also decent at Excel,
mildly familiar with Adobe
Photoshop -- although the cracked
version I'm running gets a little
wonky. Oh! I'm real good at
Snood. Like the 75th highest
ranking in the United States. You
Snood? I got you bro.

MOVING MAN

Sorry Nemo, it doesn't seem like
you have any skills. Until you
have the cash, we ain't movin' a
thing. The thumb thing was cool,
though.

As the Moving Man gets into his van:

NORA

WAIT-- But you can't just leave
this here! Hey!

The moving van drives off, leaving Nora and her furniture out
on the curb. She frantically tries to do the thumb thing as
a last resort. *

NORA (CONT'D) *

Look! Where'd that thumb go? You
see that? *

(gets herself) *

Whoa... *

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

CLOSE ON Nora, content, sleeping. She turns to finds herself face-to-face with a HOMELESS GUY. WIDEN TO REVEAL she is...

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - MORNING

...sleeping outside in her bed on the curb. Nora pulls at her blanket, but the Homeless Guy next to her tugs harder, keeping the blanket for himself.

HOMELESS GUY
(snuggling Nora)
Mmmm this is nice. Mmm mmm mmmmm.

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - LATER

Nora's bed and dresser are still on the curb. Nora, wearing a tool belt, pushes at the dresser but it doesn't budge. Desire comes out the front door. *

DESIRE
Aw girl your shit's still out here? *

NORA
(grunting but still trying to flirt)
Wanna help me out? I'll give you two spins on the old mattress.

DESIRE
Sorry, boo, I gotta run.

NORA
(strained)
What, you got a date or something? I bet I can do everything they can do. And more.
(leans in, whispering)
You can crack me open like a fortune cookie.

DESIRE
Actually, I'm going to work... at the gay bar. That I work at. Because I'm gay.

Desire exits. Nora keeps on pushing at the dresser, to no avail. Frustrated, she starts kicking at it. *

NORA
Move, dammit! *

HOMELESS GUY (O.S.)
Hey Miss Saigon, mind keeping it
down?

*
*
*

WIDEN TO REVEAL the Homeless Guy is still in Nora's bed.

*

HOMELESS GUY (CONT'D)
(huffy)
Some people are trying to sleep.

*
*
*

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nora's barren bedroom. All she's unpacked is her laptop, keyboard, turntable and mic atop some moving boxes. She starts making a SAD BEAT on her keyboard.

NORA
(into mic, autotuned, a
folk emo riff)
*No money, no job. Life is a barren
wasteland of misery. No hope, I
want to die. Oh, who wants to die?
I want to die. Good - bye.*

Nora looks out the window to see two TEENAGERS circling her bed on the curb.

NORA (CONT'D)
(calling out window)
Hey! Hey, get away from that!
That's my stuff!

TEENAGER #1
Then why's it out on the curb?!

NORA
WHY? I'LL TELL YA WHY -- 'CAUSE I
BROKE A WHITE GIRL'S NOSE AND GOT
SUSPENDED FROM RYDZ AND APPARENTLY
MOVERS DON'T ACTUALLY MOVE ANYTHING
WITHOUT MONEY AND POSSUMS ARE
COPULATING ALL OVER THE CITY!

TEENAGER #1
Okay okay okay!
(to friend, walking away)
This bitch out here telling us her
life story.

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - DAY

Nora sits wearily on her bed with a baseball bat and a bottle of Seagrams, guarding her stuff. We hear the same sad beat: *

NORA
No money. No job. Coulda done
somethin' else. Coulda been
someone else...

We stay on Nora on the bed as TIME LAPSES around her. BEGIN MUSICAL INTERLUDE: "COULDA BEEN"

INT. VAPE STORE - DAY

Nora, dressed like a goth chick, sits behind the counter at a vape store. She takes a long hit on a vape pen, bored.

NORA
WORK HARD THAT GRIND WHAT I'M PAID
FOR / COULDA BEEN A ALT CHICK
MANAGING A VAPE STORE / RIDING ON
THE PASSENGER SIDE OF MY BEST
FRIEND'S RIDE SHOPLIFTING WITH THE
HOMIES AT THE BAPE STORE

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

Nora, now at a club, parties hard at a rave. She gets carried out of the club by security.

NORA
COULDA BEEN A PARTY GIRL NAKED AT
CIRCLE / TRAMP STAMP SHINING
THROUGH A RHINESTONE GIRDLE / THREE
TIMES NEARLY DIED AT CAMP BISCO /
POPPING HELLA MOLLY AND I'M TRYNA
FUCK DIPLO

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - DAY

Back to Nora sitting on the bed as people pass around her.

NORA (O.S.)
LITTLE GIRLS DREAMER / WHEN I GROW
UP MAKE ME A BELIEVER / LITTLE GIRL
ON SHIT / WHEN I GROW UP KNOW A
BITCH GON RUN SHIT

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Nora, now as a hipster college student, plays frisbee on the lawn. She accidentally nails a passerby in the neck.

NORA
AND I COULDA BEEN A HIPSTER
GRADUATING RISD / TOM WAITS
SINGALONG BEAST WITH A FRISBEE /
FIRST IN LINE WHEN JAKARTA'S AT
WHITNEY / CHANGED MY NAME TO
MOONSHINE USED TO BE BRITNEY

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Nora, now as a nerd, goes through the stacks. She loses her balance and falls off a ladder into a pile of books.

NORA
COULDA BEEN A SCHOLAR POST DOC
CLASSES / HELLA UNKEMPT WITH SOME
NO FRAME GLASSES / QUASIMODO
HUNCHBACK FROM THE BOOK STACKING /
BUT ASIAN DAD PROUD THAT THE GRADES
AIN'T SLACKING

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - DAY

Back to Nora on her bed, slowly losing steam.

NORA (O.S.)
AND THE LITTLE GIRL WORK / COULDA
BEEN DOPE OR IT COULDA BEEN DIRT /
AND ALL THE LITTLE GIRLS PONDER /
WHEN I GROW UP WILL I BE A BALLER

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Nora, now as an office worker, sits in front of a monitor full of spreadsheets.

NORA
COULDA BEEN A OFFICE BITCH /
DRIVING AN ELANTRA / ALL CRATE AND
BARREL / EATIN' GOURMET PASTA /
WEEKEND SMORGASBORD INSTAGRAMMING
FOOD / LOVE RED WINE GOSSIP GIRL
AND SAM SMITH TOO

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - DAY

Nora is still on her bed. All the other Noras walk in front of her. She doesn't know which one to choose.

NORA

COULDA BEEN A RAPPER / PRO AT THE
TRUMPET / QUEENS BRED NYC WHERE I
RUN SHIT / LATE NIGHT BEATS IN A
MORRISSEY SHIRT / TO DA RAP GAME
PRIME TIME GRIND TIL IT HURTS / I
GRIND TIL IT HURTS / AND GIRLS GET
THAT WORK / IT COULDA BEEN DOPE OR
IT COULDA BEEN DIRT / I MOVE FOR
THAT WORK / I GRIND TIL HURTS IT
COULDA BEEN DOPE OR IT COULDA BEEN
DIRT...

END MUSICAL INTERLUDE.

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT - CURB - DAY

We come back on Nora sitting on her bed in a wedding dress, hair matted, dirt on her face, looking rough. She has an assortment of leaves in her hair.

NORA

(mumbling)

Coulda been dirt...

Grandma walks by and spots Nora.

GRANDMA

Nora?

NORA

(trying to play it cool)

Oh. Hi, grandmother.

GRANDMA

Why's your bed outside? Why you wear a wedding dress?

NORA

(looking down, confused)

I actually don't even know.

GRANDMA

Have you eaten?

NORA

I stole a pretzel out the mouth of a bird.

GRANDMA

Is that it?

NORA

(weakening)

OK, Grandma, truth is my movers left and these out-of-control teenage heathens are trying to violate my belongings. I'm lost, grandma. I'm a loser.

GRANDMA

Grandma will fix this. Let's go, you come home for dinner.

Grandma pulls out a pen and paper and writes "BED BUG VERY SCARY". She leaves the sign on the bed and takes Nora away.

INT. KITCHEN - LIN FAMILY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nora, Dad, Grandma, and Edmund eat KFC at the dinner table.

DAD

So, how are things going? How's the new place?

NORA

Oh, it's dope, dope. I have a really hot roommate, probably gonna start dating him soon, maybe name our future son Barack. And yeah, I got suspended by Rydz, but aside from that I'm totally good.

A leaf falls out of Nora's hair. She swats it away like NBD.

EDMUND

Driving for Rydz wasn't a real job anyway.

NORA

Okay Edmund, you think you're hot shit 'cause you went to Binghamton with C's and didn't get laid? Update, you look like an Asian Martin Shkreli.

EDMUND

At least I have a job!

NORA

You're a teller at Key Bank. Who the fuck even banks at Key Bank?

(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

(then, to Dad and Grandma)
But, I don't know, this is actually
a good thing... I finally have the
time to work on my music.

EDMUND

Like your shitty Soundcloud raps?

DAD

Just remember, Nora, music is a
hobby, not a job.

GRANDMA

Our people, we don't rap. We play
the flute in the subway.

EDMUND

What, you gonna start going to open
mics or something? *

(very bad rapping)

Yo I'm Nora, yo, I suck. *

NORA

Edmund, you have the body of Dakota
Fanning in "I Am Sam".

DAD

You know, a lot of people your age
are getting jobs in the tech
industry. Web services, things
like that. These companies are
looking for young people like you.

GRANDMA

Yes, Nora. You do like computers.
Maybe you go back to China, work
for building Apple.

EDMUND

Like she could even get a job like
that. She's a loser.

NORA

Actually... Someone recently
offered me a tech job. Pretty
solid pay. Benefits too. I think
I might go for it.

DAD

That's great! So, what does this
job entail?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHENISE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A swanky, minimalist loft. Dimly lit with a ridiculous number of candles. Chenise lounges on her bed.

CHENISE

Okay my little Reptar, we're all set up. You can come out now.

NORA (O.S.)

I don't know about this, Chenise. This is weird. This whole thing. I mean, is this really what these webcam guys want?

Nora enters wearing a ridiculous, giant, clunky dragon-dungeoness outfit with a fake foam head and tail.

CHENISE

The paying customers been asking for an "Asian dragon lady."

NORA

Wait, you do know a dragon lady is different from an actual dragon, right?

CHENISE

Just come out!

Chenise indicates over to her laptop, where we see the faces of several of her webcam subscribers watching.

CHENISE

They're filling up. We gotta move-- You ready?

NORA

(regretting this, nervous)
Ya know, I'm just gonna, maybe... not? Cuz I have the high blood pressure from the Brazilian IUD, not to mention my bad knee. And I'm bloated from the Hot Pockets, so, yea... I'm just gonna... retreat.

Chenise slaps her in the face.

CHENISE

You are gonna get out there you are gonna shake that flat Mulan ass and make mama some goddamn MUH-NAY. THIS IS HAPPENING. YOU GOT THIS.

Nora, intimidated, gives a little nod. Chenise clicks on some sultry music. "GOOEY" BY GLASS ANIMALS plays. As Chenise turns on the webcam, she whispers to Nora:

CHENISE (CONT'D)

Now dance.

Nora can't dance sexily. She attempts a whip-nae-nae.

CHENISE (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe more sensual.

Nora gets low and attempts to do the worm.

CHENISE (CONT'D)

I don't know how but I think they're liking it.

On Chenise's laptop, the subscribers are enjoying this.

CHENISE (CONT'D)

Okay, start taking off your shirt.

Nora tries to sexily take off her shirt but it gets stuck on her giant dragon head.

NORA

I can't, it's stuck.

Chenise comes over and tries to help pull Nora's shirt off, but it gets stuck in her hair.

NORA (CONT'D)

I think maybe if I take off my head--

CHENISE

Let me just try and get it over the nose--

NORA (CONT'D)

Okay wait, ow. Chenise -- it's caught in my hair.

CHENISE

Stop moving, you're making it worse. I got it!

With a hard YANK, Chenise rips off Nora's shirt, along with a huge chunk of Nora's hair. Nora is thrown into a mass of lit candles, setting her costume ON FIRE.

NORA

Oh my god! I'm a fire!

As Nora screams, Chenise, panicking, rips off Nora's giant tail and starts hitting her with it. The fire escalates.

NORA (CONT'D)
It's getting worse Chenise!

CHENISE
Hang on!

Chenise takes an aerosol can and sprays it at the fire, exacerbating it yet again.

NORA
THAT IS DRY SHAMPOO YOU IDIOT!

Nora claws at her suit as she's engulfed in flames. Nora turns and looks at the webcam, addressing them directly:

NORA (CONT'D)
You freaks wanna see a show huh?
Well how about this? Thought I
could be an independent woman,
thought I could move out and pursue
my dreams but LOOK I'M FIRE NOW!

On Chenise's laptop, the subscribers exchange messages: "I don't like crying." / "She's killing my boner." / "Finished already." They all log out except for one subscriber.

NORA (CONT'D)
(crying, to webcam)
I HOPE ALL YOU FUCKERS ENJOY
WANKING OFF IN YOUR FULLY FURNISHED
HOUSES WHILE I SLOWLY DISINTEGRATE!

Chenise comes in and tries to bat down the flames with a roll of paper towels, but that catches on fire too.

NORA (CONT'D)
Stop you're making it worse!
(all is lost)
OH GOD I'M GONNA DIE A DRAGON!!!

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nora, with an eye patch and wrapped in a few ace bandages, sits in front of her laptop and keyboard in her furniture-less bedroom. She plays another SAD BEAT on an MPC. *

NORA
(into mic, autotuned,
drippy, corny emo)
*She sits in her empty dark room,
should I die later or soon? I am
so sad, I am so broke, I was set on
fire, that's not a joke.*

Desire enters and looks around.

DESIRE
Girl, what is goin' on? How is
your stuff still outside? It's
been a week.

NORA
(looking away, small)
I got burnt.

DESIRE
You gotta get it together. Do you
wanna end up like Susan? *

Through the door we see Susan on the couch, slowly licking a yogurt lid. *

NORA
Least she has stuff. I got
nothin'. No money. No job. No
man to rub aloe in on those "hard
to reach" places. *

Nora gives him eyes like, "wanna be that man?" Desire points to Nora's collection of CDs and vinyl.

DESIRE
If you need money so bad, why don't
you try selling some of this crap?
You got like hundreds of vinyls and
CDs. People will pay good money
for that.

NORA
My jams? No way, naw. I can't
sell those.

DESIRE

Girl, if you can't pay rent
Susan'll kick you outta here. You
wanna go back to living at home?

Nora looks to her keyboard and mic.

NORA

I guess I could try selling some
stuff.

DESIRE

Do it girl. Anyway, I gotta fly.

NORA

Desire?

DESIRE

Whassup.

NORA

Do you think I'm a loser?

DESIRE

Nah girl. But you definitely a
freak with absolutely no gaydar or
swag.

NORA

...Thanks. Hey, one last thing?
Can you by any chance help rub some
aloe on my upper inner thigh?

Nora flaps her leg open and gestures to her upper thigh.

NORA (CONT'D)

("helpless")

I tried, but I can't get up there!

INT. COFFEESHOP - DAY

Nora sits at a table with her laptop. She has made a listing
on Craigslist: "HIP HOP TREASURES FOR SALE: GOOD PRICE AND A
BITCH NEED THAT MONEY ASAP PICK UP ONLY \$\$\$...." The list
price is \$200.

NORA

(deep breath)

Here it goes.

She clicks "Publish". Just then a WAITRESS approaches.

NORA (CONT'D)

Hey, could I get another water?

WAITRESS

Weren't you here earlier? We kicked you out because you didn't buy anything and were just using our wi-fi.

NORA

No, that was someone else, that girl had glasses on.

WAITRESS

Um, no. That was you. I can tell because you're covered in ace bandages and you're missing a large chunk of hair here.

NORA

Well, well that sounds like racism to me. YA HEAR THAT FOLKS? WE GOT A RACIST WAITRESS OVER HERE.

Nora picks up her cellphone and pretends to dial.

NORA (CONT'D)

Hi there, ACLU? Yes I have a case of racism to report here at the Bearded Chum Cafe.

The Waitress exits, annoyed. Nora looks back at her computer. There is a reply to her listing: "I'll give you \$50 for everything". Nora replies: "there's more than 60 CDs and over 100 vinyls in there, it's worth way more than \$50". She gets a reply: "K no deal then. Wanna have sex?" *

NORA (CONT'D)

Ugh, gross.

A beat. Nora responds: "Send me a pic."

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nora packs up her CDs into a box as she commiserates with Chenise.

CHENISE

I can't believe you have to sell your records. Wish I could help you out, but all my money's in bitcoin.

NORA

Thanks girl, but it's cool. I gotta do this on my own anyway.

Nora points to a Ludacris CD: "Word of Mouf".

NORA (CONT'D)

Oh my sweet Luda. You helped me through the darkest times of my life. I'll never forget this one.

Chenise picks up a Nelly CD: "Sweatsuit".

CHENISE

Remember when we were twelve and you got braces?

NORA

I pretended they were Grillz even though they were just correcting my Class 3 malocclusion underbite.

Nora picks up a Soulja Boy CD: "souljaboytellem.com".

NORA (CONT'D)

And this gem. Soulja Boy.

CHENISE

He taught us all what it was to Superman that ho.

NORA

(looking around)
This is sad.

Chenise's phone BUZZES. She holds up her phone.

CHENISE

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Dude. My friend who blew Criss Angel just invited me to a hip-hop open mic down the street.

NORA

Okay.

CHENISE

Umm hello? It's an OPEN MIC for RAPPING with PRIZES. \$250!

NORA

(thinking, reluctant)
Damn. I mean, I just never performed in public before but...
(MORE)

NORA (CONT'D)

I mean it's \$250, Chenise. More money than I've ever seen in my lifetime.

CHENISE

\$250 is the most money you've ever seen in your lifetime?

(then)

Come on girl, you have to do this. This is a sign from above. You'll slay!

*

NORA

(smiles)

You really think I'll slay?... Okay. Sign me up.

CHENISE

Alright girl! At least then you can save your jams. Like...

Chenise picks up Shania Twain's "Come On Over" CD and holds it up judgingly.

NORA

What? What's wrong with Shania?

INT. GRAFTON STREET BAR - NIGHT

Flyers advertise for open-mic hip-hop night and the \$250 prize. Nora looks around nervously at the other contenders, some reading off notes, some practicing their raps.

NORA

Damn. Look at all these people. I'm feeling super nerve right now. My innards are like a Jamiroquai video. Shouldn't have downed all those oysters.

CHENISE

You'll be great. But also, yes you ate at least 35 oysters.

NORA

It's just, I'm real nervous. My tattoos are raised up, I'm feeling funky. Feel like I got bees up in my headspace. You ever feel like that? Like your body's in one place but your head's in a totally different place? Like in Sarasota.

*
*
*
*

The rapper onstage finishes up and the audience claps.

EMCEE

And next up, Nora from Queens?

CHENISE

Hey, you're up!

NORA

(reeling)

No, no, no. My head's spinning, I
don't think I'm ready--

Chenise shoves her on stage. Nora stands awkwardly in front
of the crowd.

NORA (CONT'D)

Uhhhhh...

(to sound guy)

DJ, let's hit it.

SOUND GUY

You didn't send us a backing track.

NORA

Oh. Yeah. I'm just gonna do this
acapella then.

Panicking, Nora looks out into the faces of the crowd. From
her POV, all the face spin and blur, suddenly turning into
oysters. Amongst the oysters she sees her dad, grandma, and
Edmund sitting at a table in the front.

NORA (CONT'D)

(completely losing it)

Oh shit, they're here?

DAD

You can't do this Nora.

GRANDMA

You fat.

EDMUND

Rap rap rap rap rap.

Nora looks over to see the Filene's Basement mannequin next
to Edmund with a camcorder in its hand.

MANNEQUIN

(Edmund's voice)

Youuuu suuuuuck.

NORA
(freaking out)
Oh no. Oh no. Oh HELL NO!

Nora grabs a plastic fork off the table and rushes towards the table. She starts stabbing the mannequin. CUT TO: reality, where Nora is attacking a table full of strangers.

BAR PATRON
OH MY GOD SHE ISIS!

Three huge bouncers SLAM Nora to the ground.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Nora and Chenise walk home.

NORA
Ugh. What was I thinking? Rapping at an open mic? Jesus.
(beat, sober tone)
I can't believe I actually thought it'd would work.

CHENISE
Look, you just ate too many oysters and went crazy. You just gotta stick with it, you'll catch a break.

Nora and Chenise arrive at Nora's building -- but her furniture is no longer on the curb.

NORA
Oh, okay. Now my shit's gone. This is GREAT! THANK YOU WORLD!
(now yelling)
HEY, DOES ANYONE HAVE A MUSKET ON THEM? IF SO, CAN YOU PLEASE COME OUT AND SHOOT ME IN THE FACE?

Desire appears at the window above them.

DESIRE
(calling down to Nora)
There she is! There's the lucky girl!

Nora looks up, confused.

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Nora's bedroom is now fully furnished with everything that had been on the curb.

DESIRE

Your furniture is all moved up!

NORA

What??! How?

DESIRE

I don't know, but whoever paid the movers left you this note.

Desire hands Nora a letter.

NORA

(reading)

"Hey dragon girl. Saw you online having a rough time. Figured out where you live from the dark web and wanted to help you out." Signed JR Robinson. Who the hell is that?

*
*
*
*

INT. CHENISE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Nora, dressed in her dragon costume and on fire, screams at camera. On Chenise's laptop we see that all the webcam subscribers watching have disconnected except for one guy, "JRRobinson".

*

INT. NORA'S BEDROOM - NORA'S APARTMENT - (BACK TO PRESENT)

CHENISE

Looks like you got yourself a fan.

NORA

(touched)

My first fan. That's dope.

DESIRE

And you can finally sleep inside tonight!

Nora pats the side of her bed and turns to Desire.

NORA

Wanna join me? It's full size but we can make like it's a California King.

DESIRE

Oh girl, I would but I'm very busy tonight with HO-MO-SEX-UAL related affairs, so... Imma dip bye!

Desire tiptoes out. Nora falls back on her bed.

CHENISE

See, you just needed a break.

NORA

You were right, Chenise. It's happening. I'm gonna slay.

(closes eyes)

Feels nice to be on a bed again...

As Nora drifts off:

CUT TO:

INT. CONCERT STAGE - NIGHT

The crowd is in a frenzy, calling for an encore.

CROWD

'Fina! 'Fina! 'Fina! 'Fina!

INT. GREEN ROOM - SAME TIME

Awkwafina SLAMS Henry Winkler against a wall, making out.

HENRY WINKLER

Look, we can take things slow.

AWKWAFINA

I'm gonna shunt you like a mongoose on meth.

HENRY WINKLER

Okay...

AWKWAFINA

FUCK ME LIKE THE FONZ YOU LIT BITCH.

As they go at it, we hear the faint sounds of the crowd still chanting Awkwafina's name. FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE