

UNTITLED NANCY DREW

"PILOT"

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Teleplay by

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Based on
THE NANCY DREW MYSTERY STORIES
book series

FAKE EMPIRE

2nd REVISED NETWORK DRAFT
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TEASER

EXT. THE BLUFFS - NIGHT (2000)

A LONE FIGURE (LUCY), in a PALE PINK DRESS, SASH declaring her SEA QUEEN, and CROWN BEJEWELLED by a SEAHORSE is illuminated by the FULL MOON.

*CHILDREN'S VOICES (V.O.)
Lucy Sable once was able, to look
upon the sea.*

She stares out at the waves pounding against the rocky beach below, LIGHTHOUSE shining in the FOG --

*CHILDREN'S VOICES (V.O.)
But someone got her in the water...*

Now Lucy is falling. Her hair flies in the wind, dress billowing out behind her like wings --

*CHILDREN'S VOICES (V.O.)
Now that's where she'll always be.*

Lucy's body lies smashed on the rocks. The tide takes her out. Leaving just her RIPPED DRESS snagged on a branch...

*CHILDREN'S VOICES (V.O.)
Count to five, enjoy the view.
Hope the killer doesn't get you!*

EXT. GRAVEYARD - NIGHT (2018)

A different GIRL in another PINK dress, SASH and seahorse CROWN. She spins around and around. Dreamily, eerily --

*CHILDREN'S VOICES (V.O.)
One, two, three, four, five...*

REVEAL -- She's being spun in a circle by TWO FEMALE FRIENDS. The children's voices are overtaken by --

*THE GIRL'S FRIENDS
You'll never get out of here alive!*

They LAUGH as they shove her, disoriented, toward A GRAVE. The modest headstone says LUCY SABLE (1983-2000).

She wobbles but rights herself, removing her crown and setting it on Lucy Sable's grave, beside the rusted remains of Sea Queen crowns past.

Then suddenly -- BAM! -- a FIGURE jumps out from behind the grave. The girls SCREAM!

But we quickly see that it's just the girl's boyfriend, a pink thrift store dress pulled over his chinos and polo.

BOYFRIEND

Dude, I totally gotcha! Ha!

He thinks he's hilarious. She laughs along; he brings her in for a kiss. But as she breaks, she SEES:

A SHADOWY FIGURE in the WOODS. Slender, ethereal, watching. Is this her imagination, a stalker, or something... else? Lucy..? Suddenly she takes off, giving chase.

BOYFRIEND (CONT'D)

Hey! Where're you going..?

We realize that she is no typical girl next door. Despite her shiny "Titian"-colored hair and good posture, there's something in her eyes -- a brightness. A perceptiveness. Nothing escapes her. This is NANCY DREW.

BOYFRIEND (CONT'D)

(calling)

Nancy..?!

IN THE WOODS

Nancy looks around. Nothing but the wind.

NANCY (V.O.)

My parents called it curiosity,
said I was born that way. But I
know that's not the whole truth.

EXT. DREW HOUSE - NIGHT (2004)

A FOUR-YEAR-OLD NANCY stands alone, watching her parents dig something up from under the cherry tree on the front lawn. CARSON and ELIZABETH (40s) are well-bred; the house is well-kept. But what they are doing right now seems *totally wrong*.

What they dig up is big. A trunk? A rug? Maybe... a body!? Nancy's terrified.

YOUNG NANCY

Mommy, Daddy! What are you doing??

She runs toward them. They look up, shocked. Elizabeth rises and catches Nancy in her arms.

ELIZABETH

It's just a dream, Sweetheart.

Nancy struggles to see over her mother's shoulder as she hurries her into the house --

NANCY (V.O.)

It wasn't a dream. I don't know what it was... But after that night, I had to chase the shadows. And Bayport had a lot of them...

EXT. BAYPORT - MAIN STREET - NIGHT (2013)

The entire town is out, led by CHIEF MCGINNIS (50s, self-important). They search en masse, flashlights probing every alley, behind dumpsters and under cars. Past a MISSING poster: a sweet-faced little girl, TRACY TURNBULL.

NANCY (V.O.)

When a local child went missing, the whole town went looking. But my parents wanted me to stay home. Almost as if they were afraid of what I'd find...

7TH GRADE NANCY walks with her grim-faced parents. They wave at a well-dressed MAN with a bag of groceries exiting a store. But as the man heads the opposite direction, Nancy's eyes narrow as she clocks an item in his bag: FROOT LOOPS.

NANCY (V.O.)

Nathan Gomber was a big-time realtor in town. He never married, never had kids. Maybe the guy had an ironic love of children's cereal. But maybe not...

Carson and Elizabeth turn back to see that Nancy is GONE.

EXT. BAYPORT - ALLEY - NIGHT (2013)

Nancy follows Nathan. She slips on a black beanie from her purse, pulling it low as he enters an OLD FACTORY BUILDING.

NANCY (V.O.)

Not exactly Nathan's latest million dollar listing...

Nancy watches him enter. She slides on gloves. Follows --

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT (2013)

Nancy pushes through the door. But inside, it's an empty box. Four walls. Nothing else. Creepy. *Where did Nathan go?* Determined, Nancy starts to feel along the first wall --

NANCY (V.O.)
There had to be a concealed door.
A hidden staircase, or --

Suddenly the wall behind her CREAKS! Nathan steps out. Nancy holds her breath, flattens herself against the wall. Nathan eerily whistles to himself, never seeing Nancy as he heads to the exit.

As soon as he's gone, she rushes to where he emerged. A BRICK is out of place. She turns it. The wall slides open!

INT. SPOOKY PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT (2013)

Nancy shines her FLASHLIGHT up a STONE STAIRCASE (and just may be clothed and posed in a way that reminds you very much of the cover of *The Hidden Staircase*) --

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT (2013)

POLICE CRUISERS spin their cherries. Little Tracy's parents hold her tight. LOCAL NEWS REPORTERS surround Nancy, ignoring Chief McGinnis, who can't help but be irked.

Nancy gets pulled away by her own parents, who exchange wary looks. *She could have really gotten hurt.*

NANCY (V.O.)
I ended up getting grounded. But
it didn't matter. I was hooked.
Mysteries were everywhere, and I
loved solving them.

INT. DREW HOUSE - NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (2018)

Nancy's bulletin board is filled with newspaper clippings; other mysteries solved by "Bayport's Girl Detective."

NANCY (V.O.)
It was just a hobby...

She sits before her laptop, an application to Columbia University open on her screen. Around her, info about their SCHOOL of JOURNALISM. Stacks of SAT guides.

NANCY (V.O.)
But who knows, maybe it could've
been something more.

And then she hears something downstairs. Muffled voices.
Crying.

INT. DREW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (2018)

Nancy finds Elizabeth and Carson wiping their eyes.

NANCY
Mom? Dad? What's wrong?

Elizabeth holds a packet of LAB RESULTS in her hands. She
tries to muster a smile for her daughter, but we know from
her tear-stained face -- *it's bad.*

NANCY (CONT'D)
Mom..?

NANCY (V.O.)
Until life dropped a real mystery
into my lap.

INT. DREW HOUSE - NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (2018)

Nancy is hunched over her computer again. This time
searching WEB MD for information on PANCREATIC CANCER.
Around her are BOOKS on EASTERN MEDICINE, MEDICAL JOURNALS...

NANCY (V.O.)
One that couldn't be solved.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY (2019)

We PULL out of the BLACK... revealing Nancy's FUNERAL DRESS.
She's standing over a fresh grave. The headstone reads:

**ELIZABETH DREW (1973-2019)
BELOVED WIFE AND MOTHER**

Nancy looks up from the grave, and into the camera... as a
dark, nightmarish fog gathers across Bayport.

NANCY (V.O.)
I don't go searching in the dark
anymore. Not after the darkness
found me.

MAIN TITLE

INT. DODD'S GARAGE - DAY (2019)

A classic 1940s BUICK ROADMASTER rocks back and forth.

TITLE CARD: TODAY

As we move in, it feels like it's possessed by some unholy spirit. Suddenly a hand from inside streaks the glass. Giving us a view of what possesses this car --

INT. OLD BUICK - CONTINUOUS

It's Nancy. Cheeks glowing. Chest heaving. Disentangling herself from NED "NICK" NICKERSON (19, African American, former high school athlete, current car mechanic.)

NANCY
(flustered)
Sorry... I... I never do this.

NICK
That's what you said last time.

Nancy catches his look. *That's fair.* She pulls up her WAITRESS UNIFORM, adjusting her name tag.

NANCY
Also never thought I'd be wearing this...

NANCY (V.O.)
His name is Ned Nickerson, but he goes by Nick, which is definitely the right call. No offense to all the Ned's out there. Showed up around the Fourth of July. And let's just say there've been fireworks ever since.

NICK
I'm not exactly where I thought I'd be either. That would be freshman tailback for the University of Florida, which is where I'm from, if you're curious.
(she's not)
You don't ask a lot of questions, do you?

NANCY
What can I say? Girls love mystery.

NANCY (V.O.)
Our relationship is complicated.
Or... I don't know, maybe it isn't?

She quickly kisses him on the lips, then hurries away.

QUICK POPS: NICK'S HANDS on Nancy's bare thighs. HER HAIR falling into her face. FINGERS entwined.

NANCY (V.O.)
All I know is that when I'm with
him, I don't think of anything
else. And that's a good thing.

BACK TO SCENE

Nancy scurries off, gets a look from a WOMAN with a FLAT.

NANCY
You have a customer!

EXT. BAYPORT - MAIN STREET - DAY

Nancy hurries through town on foot. It's the day of the Lobster Festival. Nancy glimpses a bunch of local TEENS (this year's SEA QUEEN and COURT) gathered around the floats. Excitement high. Carefree. Like Nancy was a year ago.

NANCY (V.O.)
Hard to believe that was me a year
ago. Or maybe what's harder to
believe is this is me now --

And the FRONT DOOR BELL CHIMES as Nancy enters --

INT. THE CLAW - DAY

An oceanfront lobster shack that brings together BLUE COLLAR WORKERS, TOURISTS, and SUMMER PEOPLE. Nancy hurries in and ties on her apron. But she doesn't get past GEORGE PHAN (18, Asian American, tough, tattooed, just don't ask her what they mean. Actually don't ask her anything).

GEORGE
Look who's late. Getting to be a
habit.

NANCY
Sorry. Had some... car issues.
Thanks for your concern.

GEORGE

As I'm sure you're aware, this isn't high school. You work for me now.

NANCY

Super aware, George. 100% total awareness, every time you bring it up.

NANCY (V.O.)

George Phan. Manager. Former high school classmate, major holder of grudges. One of which is apparently against me. I can't say I exactly blame her. There were nasty rumors. Not that I'm a gossip myself, but --

George suddenly gets in her face.

GEORGE

Drew! Coffee. Table 8.

NANCY (V.O.)

-- I'll tell you about it some other time.

Following orders, Nancy brings coffee to a table, passing another waitress who hands out silverware. BESS MARVIN (18). Make up. Manicure. And a taste for the finer things in life.

BESS

Here is your salad fork. And this fork is for your main course. Can I interest you in an *amuse bouche*?

Bess turns to find George waiting.

BESS (CONT'D)

Haven't been here long, but already know that look too well.

GEORGE

I told you. They get one fork. And keep your *bouche* shut. It amuses no one.

BESS

Excuse me for trying to bring some fine dining elegance to The Claw.

GEORGE

People don't come here for the elegance. They come here for fish. Preferably breaded. Deep fried. And eaten with one utensil.

Nancy watches as George stares down Bess until she gives in.

NANCY (V.O.)

Bess Marvin. Showed up at the beginning of the summer. Not from around here. As if the Cartier watch and Chanel flats didn't give it away. Taking a gap year from life in the city, crashing with her rich aunt in a mansion by the bluffs. And not a natural at the hospitality game.

Reluctantly removing the extra cutlery, Bess knocks over a water glass, spilling all over the table. Nancy jumps in to help, Bess giving her a grateful smile --

EXT. THE CLAW - SIDE ALLEY - LATER

TIGHT ON: Nancy's SOCIAL MEDIA FEED. A scroll of pics and videos of her OLD FRIENDS, now living their #bestlives. FRESHMEN embracing the fun and freedom of college life. DORM PARTIES. FOOTBALL GAMES. LEAFY QUADS. REVEAL --

Nancy sits on an upturned bucket. The image on her phone: Her EX-BOYFRIEND. Holding an SAE sweatshirt, surrounded by PLEDGE BROS. In a second pic, he's doing a keg stand.

ACE (O.S.)

Stalking an ex? Cool. We are more alike than we seem, Nancy Drew.

ACE (21, charming burnout, the Claw's DISHWASHER) looks over her shoulder. He smokes a joint.

NANCY

Yeah. At this rate he'll be a Supreme Court justice by forty.

ACE

So your ex is at college and you're here hanging with ole Ace? How did things work out so well for ya..?

Nancy shrugs, not something she's comfortable talking about.

NANCY

Tanked my grades. Missed sending
in my college applications.
(shrugs)
Life took an unexpected turn.

ACE

It often does. But as Zarathustra
spoke, "whoever does not want to
die of thirst must learn to drink
from dirty cups."

NANCY

Very wise words from a dishwasher.

George steps out the back, interrupting --

GEORGE

Is that what he is? Wouldn't know
it, looking at the two of you.

NANCY

State law says we are entitled to a
ten minute break every three hours.

ACE

She makes a good point.

GEORGE

And federal law says smoking pot is
illegal.

ACE

Another excellent point. You are
both very wise. I feel very lucky
to be surrounded in the workplace
by such strong, capable women.

GEORGE

Go. Wash. Dishes. Thanks to Bess
you have about a thousand forks
waiting for you.

Ace sucks down the joint as fast as he can before rushing
back inside. Before she can say a word to Nancy --

NANCY

I have three minutes and fifty two
seconds left on my break. Unless
wallowing in FOMO is also a federal
crime.

George rolls her eyes and heads inside. Nancy returns to her
phone.

But swipes closed the pictures of her friends and returns to her home screen. Nancy sits in a HOSPITAL BED, cuddled with her mom. Tubes and wires... but still hope.

Nancy sighs. Swipes it closed --

EXT. BAYPORT - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

QUICK POPS as the night of the parade falls. CROWDS gather on MAIN STREET. The MARCHING BAND tunes up. BATONS TWIRL. FLOATS maneuver into position.

INT./EXT. THE CLAW - NIGHT

Around here, it's empty. Everyone gathered elsewhere for the parade. George flips the "CLOSED" sign in the window.

Nancy and Bess wipe down empty tables. Nancy takes a moment to leave her PHONE perched on a window facing the PARKING LOT. Bess looks over at her questioningly.

NANCY

Recording the fireworks. They're my mom's favorite. This is the first year she's missing them...

BESS

She's skipping out on Lobster Fest? Isn't that illegal in this town?

Nancy considers telling Bess the truth. Just smiles.

NANCY

Good thing my dad's a lawyer.

Before Bess can inquire further -- there's a BANG on the door. Nancy and Bess jump! Look up to see --

Four WELL-DRESSED MEN peer into the window.

BESS

(calling)

Sorry. We're closing early today. For the parade --

Then George looks up. SEES who's knocking. Zeros in on the handsome man in front, RYAN HUDSON (36).

GEORGE

Uh, we could stay open a little longer...

She hurries to open the door. Bess eyes her suspiciously.

BESS
This sort of altruism is very
unlike you.

GEORGE
They're rich. Thought you liked
that.

Bess considers this as three men in white pants and polo
shirts follow behind Ryan --

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Mr. Hudson, welcome to The Claw. I
don't believe you've been in
before..?

RYAN
Thanks. We need a quiet table for
a private conversation.

GEORGE
Of course. Follow me.
(whispers)
Bess, do the fork thing.

George grabs menus and leads them to a booth. Bess looks at
Nancy, picks up a handful of cutlery.

BESS
Have you ever seen her be this nice
to anyone?

Bess crosses to join George at the table, where she's
finishing taking orders.

RYAN
... and could you bring something
to my wife?

GEORGE
Oh. Your wife is here..?

This seems to throw George, but she quickly covers.

RYAN
Outside. In the car.
(pushing away a menu)
Whatever it is, she won't like it.
Just make sure it's not on a bun.
And has no salt, or sauce, or
anything that would remotely make
it taste good.

He smiles good-naturedly. George nods and WE GO WITH HER as she hurries away from the table, passing Nancy --

GEORGE
Wife needs food. I need a minute.
Little help please?

Nancy looks up --

NANCY (V.O.)
Since when does George need help
with anything..?

INT. THE CLAW - LADIES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door whips open and George sits on the toilet, clearly shaken and trying to compose herself.

EXT. THE CLAW - LATER

Nancy exits out the front, balancing a tray of grilled fish and salad. TIFFANY HUDSON (28, trophy wife) is alone, leaning against her Porsche and talking on her cell.

TIFFANY
... this place isn't The Hamptons.
It's not The Vineyard. It's like --
do you remember that town in *Jaws*?
It's like that. But with no shark.
At least the shark made things
exciting.
(sees Nancy arriving)
I gotta go.

As she ends her call, Nancy notices her MASSIVE ENGAGEMENT RING, sparkling under the streetlights. Tiffany takes the tray, ungrateful.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
Can you bring me a glass of white,
crisp and mineral-y, no oak?

NANCY (V.O.)
Is this where I tell her our wine
comes from a box?

Tiffany takes a bite. Makes a face. Ew.

NANCY
I know just the vintage.

INT. THE CLAW - KITCHEN

Nancy enters to find Ace draining a box of white wine... straight into his mouth.

NANCY

What do you think you're doing?

ACE

Teaching Bess here how to party,
Bayport style.

Bess doesn't look up from filling the bread basket.

BESS

He was like this when I got here.

Stressed, Nancy pours the remaining wine into a glass. HONK, HONK! Tiffany lays on the horn outside. Bess jumps in --

BESS (CONT'D)

I'll go to the store room and get more wine. In the meantime, bring this out to her. See if it takes the edge off.

ACE

It did for me --

NANCY

Thank you, Bess. I mean it.

Bess exits with the empty box, grossed out.

ACE

I am definitely growing on her.

EXT. THE CLAW - SAME

Tiffany HONKS again, impatient for her wine.

INT. THE CLAW - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy heads past the men, who eat and talk in hushed tones. She notices George is not back. As she pushes open the front door -- the lights inside FLICKER, then GO DARK. The men at the table react --

NANCY

Looks like the whole block is out.
I'll be right back --

But the men are already using their PHONE FLASHLIGHTS, creating an eerie glow as Nancy steps out --

EXT. THE CLAW - CONTINUOUS

In the distance, parade sounds can be heard. But nothing else. Nancy comes toward the Porsche --

NANCY

Tiffany?

She almost steps onto a broken plate, lying on the ground. Tiffany's dinner. Now, more urgently --

NANCY (CONT'D)

Tiffany..?

It's dark out here. No streetlights or storefronts. As Nancy makes her way around the car, suddenly --

BOOM! FIREWORKS! Exploding overhead. Illuminating the sky and the street below. Nancy JUMPS. Then sees --

A FIGURE, sprawled across the ground.

TIFFANY

Her face frozen in an expression of horror. *She looks like she's seen a ghost.*

Gathering herself, Nancy goes to the body. She checks for a pulse. Nothing. Realizes she doesn't have her phone. Grabs Tiffany's, but it's shattered. Nancy calls out --

NANCY (CONT'D)

Help! Someone! Call 911!

George and Bess come from inside. Then Nick appears, sprinting. And they all freeze in terror at the sight before them.

NANCY (CONT'D)

She's... dead.

Off the four kids, standing over the body...

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE**EXT. THE CLAW - NIGHT**

Now a CRIME SCENE. POLICE CARS, an AMBULANCE. Nancy watches, shaken, as a BODY BAG is zipped up and carried off.

Ryan is distraught; Chief McGinnis tries to steady him. Then pats him on the back and hands him off to his friends as he turns to where our kids are gathered, in shock.

CHIEF MCGINNIS

Now what do you five have to say?

QUICK POPS:

-- Bess gives her statement:

BESS

I'd ask you to check the cameras in the storeroom because I'd totally be on there, timestamped, looking for wine. But we don't have cameras in the store room...

-- Then George:

GEORGE

I was alone. It's a single stall, so... yeah. By myself.

-- Nick:

NICK

(annoyed)

...I already said the garage was closed. Figure that implied it was empty...

-- Ace:

ACE

I was with our cook. Vinny. He can verify my whereabouts. And I can verify that he was wearing his hairnet. So I didn't commit murder and he didn't violate any health codes. We cool?

-- And finally Nancy. Knows none of this will sound good:

NANCY

I found her. My fingerprints will be on her food tray and cell phone. Other than the person who may have done this, I believe I was the last one to see her alive.

Chief McGinnis gives her a thin smile. Finally he'll be the one asking her questions. Turns to the BEAT COP --

CHIEF MCGINNIS

Ace here has an alibi. Bring the rest down to the station. Tell Hart to meet us there.

Ace raises his hand for a high-five, YES! But then realizes --

ACE

Oh. Sorry. You guys have to go. That was insensitive.

OFF NANCY and the others -- in for a long night.

INT. BAYPORT POLICE STATION - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

The kids (minus Ace) sit with warm sodas and cold coffee.

BESS

Why don't they let us go already..?
I'm so tired...

GEORGE

They say guilty people fall asleep when left alone in custody.

BESS

I'm not in custody.

NICK

Yet.

(off her)

They're trying to decide if we're just witnesses. Or if they have enough to charge us.

GEORGE

Charge us? With what?

NANCY

The death of Tiffany Hudson.

BESS

All of us?

NANCY
Or one of us.

GEORGE
Either way, this is not going to be
good for business.

BESS
There's no such thing as bad
publicity.

NICK
Says the rich white girl.

A pair of POLICE OFFICERS walk by. Recognize George. Give
her a wave. George nods back. Nancy notices.

NANCY
You know a lot of people here.

GEORGE
Not my first time in the building.

Just then, Chief McGinnis enters.

NANCY
Can we go now? We've told you what
we know. We're not suspects.

CHIEF MCGINNIS
You think? Ask me, we got some
pretty good suspects right here.
The town screw-up, ex-con, a city
girl. And... Nancy Drew.

BESS
(to Nancy)
Why does he say your name like
that?

CHIEF MCGINNIS
She used to get in the way of my
job --

GEORGE
You mean do it for you.
(off the group)
I don't like her, but I like him
less.

CHIEF MCGINNIS
Ms. Phan. Haven't thrown your mom
in the drunk tank this month.
Starting to miss her. Say hi.
(MORE)

CHIEF MCGINNIS (CONT'D)
(George nods, *totally*)
As for the rest of you --

BESS
It was one count of shoplifting. I
never did hard time.

GEORGE
I think you were the city girl.
But good to know.

NICK
He means me. Happened when I was a
minor, record's sealed. And time
served.

All eyes turn to him. Nancy is thrown --

NANCY
You never told me you went to jail.

NICK
One of the many things you never
asked about.

As George and Bess stare, realizing --

GEORGE
Ohhh so this is a thing. That's
why you came running when you heard
Nancy scream --

NICK
Just a concerned citizen.

Nancy appreciates his discretion. Looks to the Chief --

NANCY
What concerns me is why you aren't
questioning Ryan Hudson.

CHIEF MCGINNIS
Because he, unlike you four, has an
alibi. He never left the table
with his friends.

NANCY
Well he might have an alibi for the
time of Tiffany's death, but that
doesn't mean he's innocent. Just
like not having alibis doesn't make
us guilty. In a case like this,
you always have to look at the
husband first.

CHIEF MCGINNIS

You seem awfully eager to point a finger. Maybe you can share your theories in an interrogation room?

(then)

The rest of you can go.

The others react -- *really?* Look to Nancy who indicates she's fine; she had a feeling the night would end like this.
OFF a LAST LOOK between NANCY AND NICK --

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Chief ushers Nancy into a room where KAREN HART (40s) waits with the POLICE FILE on Tiffany's death. She's attractive, ambitious, and an old family friend of the Drews.

HART

Hey Nancy.

NANCY

Karen, hi...

CHIEF MCGINNIS

"Officer Hart" in here, if you don't mind. Now's not the time for a reunion. Nancy was just filling me in on her hunches.

(quietly to Hart)

And she's usually pretty good at this stuff. Could use a lead.

MOMENTS LATER

Nancy sits opposite them, downloading her thoughts.

NANCY

... there were no signs of trauma. So maybe Tiffany had a health condition. Or a drug problem? Maybe foul play isn't even involved.

CHIEF MCGINNIS

We're pretty sure it is.

Enjoying being ahead of Nancy, he PUSHES PLAY on his phone.

911 OPERATOR (THROUGH PHONE)

911, what is the nature of your emergency?

A series of INDISTINCT NOISES. And then Tiffany Hudson's VOICE. A choked whisper, urgently into the phone...

TIFFANY'S VOICE

Please, help me... I'm at the
Claw... PLEASE, no --!

And then -- an eerily distorted HUMAN VOICE. The words are indistinct, but the tone is unmistakable: *threatening*. Then the line goes DEAD. McGinnis looks at Nancy, who's shaken.

NANCY

I didn't see anyone, I swear.

HART

We believe you, Nancy.

The Chief shoots her a look -- *speaking for yourself*.

NANCY

(thinking)

Did Ryan notice anything missing?
The car was still there. But maybe
something inside? Or her wallet,
watch... Jewelry --

(realizing)

Her ring!

Nancy FLASHES on these IMAGES as she describes them:

NANCY (CONT'D)

She had it on when I first came
out, but not when I found her on
the ground.

CHIEF MCGINNIS

Bet a woman like Tiffany Hudson had
a very nice ring. Could be a game-
changer for anyone. Get you out of
that diner to start. Maybe help
your dad? Bet he could use it.
Medical bills do add up...

NANCY

Wow. My mom dying is somehow a
motive for murder? I thought you
wanted my help?

Hart throws McGinnis a look, tries to get things on track.

HART

Nancy, we know you're a good girl --

CHIEF MCGINNIS
Can't say the same for your new
friends, though. If you're
covering for them --

NANCY
They are not my friends.

McGinnis and Hart share a look. Nancy rises.

NANCY (CONT'D)
If you're not charging me, I
believe I'm free to go?

McGinnis nods, motions to the door.

CHIEF MCGINNIS
But not too far. You're still a
suspect. You all are.

Nancy exits, shaken. A beat, then Hart follows --

INT. BAYPORT POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Hart calls --

HART
Nancy, wait. I'm sorry about
McGinnis. But given your current
circumstances, who he found you
with --

NANCY
(emotional)
None of this is a choice. I don't
want to work at a diner with no
friends, no mother, and a dad who's
always at work.

HART
Speaking of --?

NANCY
No. Do not mention this to him.
I'm fine. Everything's fine...

But it isn't --

HART
Nancy, I loved your mom like a
sister and I know you wouldn't do
this. But a socialite killed on
parade night?
(MORE)

HART (CONT'D)

The Chief is going to have to solve this case fast and you're on his radar big time.

NANCY

Please, do not call my dad.

EXT. BAYPORT POLICE STATION - SAME

Too late. Carson Drew rushes up the stairs. He stops in his tracks when he sees Nick (who is waiting for Nancy). Clearly Carson recognizes him. They LOCK EYES. There's a story here and not a good one.

INT. BAYPORT POLICE STATION - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carson enters from the street as Nancy enters from the hallway. They both stop. *Who is more mad at whom?*

NANCY

Karen was totally out of line, calling you. I didn't ask for a lawyer.

CARSON

How about a father?

NANCY

I'm 18.

CARSON

Still living under my roof.

NANCY

Really? Haven't noticed.

He lowers his voice, which makes him seem more angry.

CARSON

I've just been buried at work --

NANCY

Poor word choice, Dad. Given recent events --

CARSON

You know how much I treasured every moment I got to spend at your mother's side, but that doesn't mean now that she's gone, I don't have to attend to everything I neglected --

NANCY
 Does that include your daughter?
 (off him, stung)
 You're not the only one whose life
 was turned upside down.

Nancy brushes past him. He follows her out --

EXT. BAYPORT POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Carson calls --

CARSON
 Nancy, I'm sorry. At least let me
 drive you home. We can talk in the
 car.
 (she ignores him)
 Will you at least call me while
 you're walking home angry?

NANCY
 I left my phone at work.

Hart steps out, sees Nancy disappearing down the street --

CARSON
 That went super well.

HART
 It was a conversation. You guys
 have to start somewhere.

Carson sighs, knows she's right.

CARSON
 A police station in the middle of
 the night is definitely *somewhere*.

EXT. BAYPORT - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Parade detritus litters the deserted street. From the
 BLUFFS, Nancy hears --

VOICES
Lucy Sable once was able...

Then LAUGHTER. Is it this year's Sea Queen doing the ritual,
or a Queen from long ago? Just then, a rustling sound behind
 her! Something brushes against her cheek and Nancy jumps.
 Reveal -- it's just a festive STREAMER come loose from a
 storefront. Spooked, Nancy speeds up --

As she passes the front of a DRESS SHOP, Nancy catches a glimpse of her reflection. But wait. *Is that her reflection?* She instinctively jerks her hand to her head to feel for what looks in the window like a CROWN. But there's nothing there.

She speeds up.

EXT. THE CLAW - NIGHT

Nancy slows. Tiffany's car is gone; crime scene tape across the door; A COP in a POLICE CRUISER parked out front, head tipped back, asleep.

EXT. THE CLAW - BACK ALLEY

Nancy stands on the bucket she sat on earlier, hoists herself into a bathroom window --

INT. THE CLAW - LADIES ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She tumbles in, ungraceful but unhurt. Freezes to make sure no one has heard. All good. Nancy pushes open the door --

INT. THE CLAW - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nancy steps out and almost slams right into --

NANCY
(whisper-yells)
Bess?!

Bess is shocked to see Nancy but covers.

BESS
Hi. You're probably looking for
this.

She holds up Nancy's cell phone, slightly nervous.

BESS (CONT'D)
I remembered you left it in the
window.

NANCY
And you thought you'd break into a
crime scene and get it back for me?

BESS
I came back for this.

She holds up her ASTHMA INHALER, takes a toot.

BESS (CONT'D)
Just doing you a favor. Would've
texted. But --

NANCY
(feels bad)
I didn't have my phone. Got it.

BESS
But now that you're here, don't you
want to see what's on it?

NANCY (V.O.)
I do. But apparently not as much
as Bess...

BESS
(re: the phone)
Looks like it kept recording.

Nancy scrolls back to the FIREWORKS, then back before that.

ON THE SCREEN: A clear view of Tiffany, leaning into the car.
Her back to us. She HONKS the horn twice. These are the
moments leading up to Tiffany's death.

Tiffany *slowly* looks behind her. Her face towards us -- and
just then -- *something* suddenly moves in the shadows.

A shape, materializing, *fast*. It's blurry, ethereal -- you
can almost see right thought it. Only it's not an "it"; it's
a she. An unmistakably feminine wraith in a pale pink dress.

ON SCREEN: Tiffany, a look of fear taking over her face --
and then the LIGHTS GO OUT.

In the darkness, we hear Tiffany's LAST WORDS, calling for
help on her cell phone.

BACK WITH NANCY AND BESS

Watching, frozen. Terrified by what they've just seen.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. THE CLAW - BASEMENT STORE ROOM - DAY**

Mismatched pleather chairs surround an Arborite table in a room lined with kitchen supplies. Bess holds up Nancy's phone for George and Ace. Nancy watches, arms crossed.

They get to the moment of the blurry figure. Bess screams!

BESS

Sorry. Gets me every time.
Tiffany Hudson murdered by a ghost.

NANCY

Can I have it back? It's just a
reflection on the window. Maybe
the fireworks --?

Bess hands Nancy her phone.

ACE

Dunno, think my girl Bess nailed
it.

BESS

Not your girl. Never will be.

ACE

(undaunted)
And not just any ghost --

GEORGE

Not sure she's a credible
alternative suspect here, Ace.

BESS

(ignores this, to Ace)
She who? You all know the ghost?

ACE

Dead Lucy. 20 years ago she was
crowned Sea Queen and never seen
again. Blood on the rocks. Scrap
of her dress...

BESS

Oh, it's definitely her.

NANCY

Except definitely not.

GEORGE

Because ghosts aren't real.

ACE

Lucy gets blamed for a lot of stuff around here. Kid puts a baseball through a window -- Dead Lucy. Wife finds an strange earring in bed -- husband blames Lucy.

(then)

Never had a murder pinned on her, though...

GEORGE

Unlike us.

(realizes the time)

We should get up there.

INT. THE CLAW - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

George, Bess, and Nancy enter to find Nick pouring himself a mug of coffee.

GEORGE

I'm sorry, do you work here now?

Nick motions to his coffee --

NICK

Hope this is okay. Usually Nancy brings me one. But this morning she didn't show. Thought maybe learning about my past might've scared her off.

Nancy reacts, miffed. Speaks quietly to him.

NANCY

The truth? You haven't told me anything about how you ended up in jail. What it was for, if you were innocent or guilty or --

(then, stops herself)

I thought you'd wait for me outside the police station. So you could explain --

She notices all the eyes now glued on her.

NANCY (CONT'D)

-- more fully. And in private.

GEORGE

You seemed to have no problem
talking about my sex life back at
Bayport High..?

NANCY

I never spread any of those rumors.
(off George, really?)
Nick and I are -- or at least were -
- seeing each other. Primarily in
the backseat of a Buick Roadmaster.
He seems to have an issue with me
not acknowledging this publicly and
has decided that now is the time to
rectify this.

She looks at him. A beat. He smiles.

NICK

Consider it rectified. I feel much
better, thanks.

NANCY

Other than the fact that we're
still all potential murder suspects
and the video evidence -- or lack
thereof -- only makes us look more
guilty when it's Ryan Hudson the
police should be looking into.

(explains)

Did he have money problems? In
love with someone else? Or maybe
he just didn't like Tiffany. I'm
sorry, but she was very high
maintenance.

GEORGE

And if she likes her sex how she
likes her fish -- that'd be dry and
flavorless -- I'd say, not a lot of
fun in bed.

(off them)

Think that's relevant here.

NICK

A guy like Ryan, would he really
get his own hands dirty?

BESS

After OJ, I think rich guys started
doing their own killing? John
DuPont, Phil Spector, Robert Durst.

GEORGE

I buy it. How do we prove it?

NANCY

We need evidence of a motive.

NICK

Which we'd find where?

As Nancy talks, pacing, she instinctively finds herself drawn into her old ways of thinking. They all listen, rapt --

NANCY

In their house. In their room.
Husband and wife, it's an intimate
relationship. To start, were they
even sharing a bed?

GEORGE

See? Relevant --!

NANCY

Was either of them on medication?
Did they have a secret cell phone
they kept hidden from the other?
Is there a document that would tell
the story -- a new will, post-nup,
or insurance policy? Is the stolen
ring evidence of a botched robbery -

NICK

Or is that what it's supposed to
look like?

NANCY

(exactly)
We find the motive --

GEORGE

-- we find the killer. And get the
police off our backs.

Suddenly, Nancy comes back to her senses.

NANCY (V.O.)

Except I don't do this kind of
stuff. Not anymore...

NANCY

I just meant, that's where I would
start. If I was going to start
something. But I'm sure the police
will figure it out on their own.

Just then some CUSTOMERS enter; Nancy bee-lines to seat them.

NICK
Think she'll change her mind?

GEORGE
Not so sure. She's been different
since her mom died.

This is a surprise to Nick. Also to Bess, who overhears.

NICK
Her mom died?

GEORGE
You guys really got to know each
other before you started boning...

EXT. BAYRIDGE DRIVE - NIGHT

Big glass houses glowing from within, lush gardens and private drives. Where the rich folks live. Nancy checks the address pulled up on her phone.

NANCY (V.O.)
This is it. The home of Ryan and
not-killed-by-a-ghost Tiffany
Hudson.
(beat)
You came, you saw. Time to leave.

She moves off. A beat as WE HOLD at the foot of the driveway. Then Nancy walks backwards into frame.

NANCY (V.O.)
Or maybe I'll just stand here a
minute and see what happens.

And what happens is -- Ryan's garage opens! Shit! Nancy ducks, hides. He goes to his car, checking himself in the window first. Adjusts his hair. Satisfied, he climbs in.

NANCY (V.O.)
Are grieving widowers really that
worried about their hair..?

And as he passes her at the end of the driveway, she starts sprinting toward the garage. If he turns, she's busted --

INT./EXT. HUDSON HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy ducks and rolls -- just makes it.

NANCY (V.O.)
Okay, since I'm here... What would
it hurt to take a little look
around?

BEEP BEEP BEEP. She scrambles to the door.

INT. HUDSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She slams a finger into the key that says DISARM. The beeping stops. Nancy breathes. Then moves to a video display of the HOUSE CAMERAS. Takes them OFFLINE.

Then she rummages through her bag. And smiles. Pulls out her trusty black beanie and gloves.

INT. HUDSON HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

It's a mid-century maze, long corridors hung with art that feel menacing in the shadows. She pushes on --

MASTER SUITE

Nancy enters. Minimalist everything. Neat as a pin. She goes to a bedside table. Opens it and --

BAM! Suddenly the door across from Nancy SLAMS SHUT with a gust of wind. A HUGE JOLT. Nancy wheels back in shock, knocking into a pedestal with a VASE on top -- it tips. She catches it before it hits the ground. Disaster averted. Or so she thinks, because --

Overhead, a light sensor blinks on. A SILENT ALARM.

EXT. BAYRIDGE DRIVE - NIGHT

A 1980s Chevy short bed truck is parked in a ditch. Inside we find Nick, eyes on Ryan's house. He ducks down as he sees a PRIVATE SECURITY CAR... turning into the Hudsons' driveway.

INT. HUDSON HOUSE - MASTER SUITE - SAME

Nancy checks under the bed.

NANCY (V.O.)
This is usually the part where most
people stop looking.

Suddenly she notices a piece of loose wood hanging from the bottom of the other bedside table. *That's weird.*

Nancy goes to the table. Opens the drawer. Feels along the inside -- and FREEZES. The drawer has a FALSE BOTTOM.

NANCY (V.O.)

But for better or -- these days --
worse, I'm not most people.

Nancy carefully lifts it away, REVEALING two OBJECTS hidden inside: A SILVER CHARM, carved with strange esoteric symbols. And a NOTE, written in a scratchy scrawl: To Tiffany - for your protection. HB. Nancy picks up the charm, turning it over in her hand when --

IN SHALLOW FOCUS BEHIND HER - a GHOSTLY FIGURE steps out from the darkness. Wearing a pale dress. Nancy senses it before she sees it, and slowly turns. When suddenly --

Nancy's grabbed from behind! Reveal -- it's Nick! Nancy jumps back, terrified --

NANCY

Nick, what the hell-!?

He puts his fingers to his lips. Whispers.

NICK

Security company.

JUST THEN - the silhouette of the SECURITY GUARD passes in front of the window. Nancy pulls Nick against the wall. Bodies close. Their eyes meeting for a charged moment, picking up pieces of a phone call --

SECURITY GUARD (ON PHONE)

No sign of a break in... silent
alarm... Hudson. Send a car...

NICK

We have to get out of here. Now.

EXT. HUDSON HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

Nick and Nancy race outside. Moonlight reflects on the massive pool. In NANCY'S HAND, REVEAL: The CHARM and NOTE. She took them with her!

NICK

Down here.

As Nancy ducks under a tree, her beanie snags on a branch. She wants to stop for it but a POLICE CRUISER arrives.

NICK (CONT'D)
No time. Run!

EXT. THE DREWS' STREET - NIGHT

Traditional colonial homes and big old trees. Nancy and Nick make their way down the street. Still a little breathless...

NICK
Gotta say, I didn't take you for such a bad ass. You think that guy killed his wife and you break into his house?!

NANCY
Yeah. I did. To try and help our case. What were you doing there? Following me?

NICK
Maybe. Hearing you talk today, thought you might do something dangerous. Turns out, I was right.
(off her)
And you're welcome. Because yes, I have a record, and yes, I put myself at risk going in there. But it was worth it.

They stop in front of a trim TWO STORY with a BLUE ROADSTER (perhaps a 1960s SUNBEAM TIGER) parked in the driveway.

NICK (CONT'D)
(thrown)
I thought you said your dad would be at work --?

NANCY
He is. That's my mom's car. It doesn't run or I'd be driving it.

Nick seems relieved about her dad. But takes the opening --

NICK
If you ever want to talk about your mom. Or anything...?

NANCY
My mom? Who told you?

NICK

Nancy, I like you, okay? I'll tell you about my past if you tell me about yours. From what I hear, you got a lot of stories. Finding missing kids, solving shit that the cops couldn't.

(off her)

I'm sure there's a story there. Whenever you're ready...

Nancy's eyes flit to the CHERRY TREE on the lawn.

EXT. DREW HOUSE - FLASHBACK (2004)

QUICK POPS OF: FOUR YEAR OLD NANCY watching her parents dig something up from under the cherry tree. Nancy running towards them. Nancy is carried away. The door slams SHUT.

BACK TO PRESENT

NANCY (V.O.)

How do I tell him I'll never be ready?

Nick leans in for a kiss, but Nancy steps back, walls up.

NANCY

You know, maybe it doesn't make sense for us to start anything serious. This time next year, I'll be in college --

NICK

And I'll still be here? Stuck in Bayport, going nowhere fast.
(off her, hardening)
Yeah. Maybe you're right.

As he heads off, she regrets it immediately. Calls after --

NANCY

Nick, that's not what I meant. I'm sorry -- See? This is why it's better not to talk!

But he doesn't turn around. Nancy watches him go.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. THE CLAW - MORNING**

Not open yet. Nancy brews coffee. Sneaks a peek of the CHARM she stole from Tiffany's bedroom, tucked into her apron. She looks over to George, debating --

NANCY (V.O.)
If you ask George Phan for help,
she will never let you forget it.
Just remember that. When it's too
late.

Nancy tries to act casual.

NANCY
So George, you come from a long
line of fishermen...

GEORGE
Also alcoholics and highly fertile
teenage moms.

She sees Nancy now holding up the charm. Recognizes it.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
That's a mariner's good luck charm.

NANCY
Yeah... I looked it up online, but
there's not a lot of info.

GEORGE
Oh, so you're seeking my expert
opinion? Like, I know more than
you?

NANCY
In this limited area of seamen's
jewelry, yes.

GEORGE
Girlfriends would put messages in
the charm. When their guys were
out at sea, they'd dissolve the
seal in salt water and find the
note.

(then)
Where'd you get it?

NANCY
I... found it...

George stares at her.

GEORGE
Where?
(off Nancy, guilty)
Oh my god. You're an amazing
burglar but a terrible liar. You
broke into Ryan's house!

Bess lands with a tray of clean cutlery. Overhearing --

BESS
And stole Tiffany's jewelry?!

NANCY
Coming from the admitted ex-felon.

NANCY (V.O.)
... who was snooping around my cell
phone.

BESS
It was a misdemeanor. And I'm just
saying, I'm impressed.

GEORGE
Hate to admit it, but so am I.
Breaking and entering, shacking up
with mechanics with dark pasts.
This is not the Nancy Drew I grew
up with.

BESS
Why didn't you tell us you were
going?

GEORGE
Because you don't trust us.

NANCY
It was a spur-of-the-moment thing.
And I'm telling you now.
(shows the girls)
It was in a hidden compartment in
Tiffany's nightstand. With a note.

BESS
(reading)
"For your protection?" From what?
And who's "HB?"

NANCY
That's what I need to find out.
If I can just have those back..?

Bess holds the note up to the light. George rubs the charm.

GEORGE
We gotta crack this thing open. I
bet there's a clue inside.

George is on the move, heads to the back. Nancy follows.

NANCY
Where are you going? That's mine.

Bess follows George.

BESS
Technically stolen property.

And as Nancy chases both of them --

NANCY (V.O.)
This is why I work alone.

EXT. BAYPORT PIER - DAY

The charm in her palm, Nancy lowers her hand into the water. She scoops it up and the girls watch. *And slowly*, the charm POPS open -- and out tumbles a SMALL BEJEWELLED SEAHORSE.

BESS
It worked.

GEORGE
Don't sound so surprised.
(re: the seahorse)
Too bad there's nothing but junk
inside.

But it's not junk. Nancy's eyes are wide --

NANCY (V.O.)
I've seen this before.

QUICK CUT (FLASHBACK): Nancy lays her SEA QUEEN CROWN on DEAD LUCY'S grave, covered in old crowns. All adorned with the same SEAHORSE.

BACK TO SCENE

George is examining the charm itself.

GEORGE
There's an address on here.
"107 Gallows Lane."

Nancy pulls out her phone. Searching.

NANCY
It's a medium.

BESS
Medium what?
(then)
Oh. Because Tiffany was being
haunted!

NANCY
Still not helpful.

Bess won't let it go. She points to the silver charm.

BESS
Then explain that. You broke into
the Hudson house and you didn't
find pills or a new will or a
murder weapon -- you found this.

GEORGE
Maybe Tiffany was like Bess. If
she believed in ghosts, she
could've tried to communicate with
one. Or protect herself from it.
Even though that's crazy. Also
like Bess.

NANCY
If this medium met with Tiffany,
that's a lead worth following.

BESS
Great. Let's go.

NANCY
Guys, this is a tough conversation,
but I tend to do this by myself.

BESS
We're all suspects, right?

GEORGE
And you wouldn't even know about
the medium if it wasn't for my
extensive knowledge of mariner's
lore.

BESS
Plus you don't believe in ghosts,
which a medium will pick up on
right away.

GEORGE
Admit it. We're helpful.

Bess and George stare Nancy down. She's outnumbered.

NANCY (V.O.)
I admit nothing.

NANCY
Just follow my lead.

INT. HUDSON HOUSE - DAY

Ryan Hudson moves through his house with Chief McGinnis and Detective Hart following.

CHIEF MCGINNIS
And have you noticed anything
missing?

RYAN HUDSON
I didn't. But something or someone
definitely tripped the alarm.

CHIEF MCGINNIS
Whoever they are, they're pretty
damn smart. Got in and out without
breaking a window. Disarmed the
security system, turned off the
cameras. Probably assumed we'd
blame it on Bayport's spotty wifi --

Hart is getting a bad feeling about who the culprit might be.

HART
I'm gonna check the perimeter.

INT. HUDSON HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

Hart sweeps the area. No sign of forced entry on the door.
And then something catches her eye -- she moves towards a
tree. Drops to her knees. And sure enough... Nancy's black
beanie. Hart grabs it, eyeing it.

CHIEF MCGINNIS (O.S.)
You find anything?

Hart makes a quick decision. She stuffs the hat into her jacket pocket. Rises as McGinnis approaches.

HART
Nope. Nothing here.

McGinnis sighs, walks off. Hart exhales. Pulls out the hat. Looks at it more closely.

HART (CONT'D)
Oh Nancy, what have you done..?

INT. OLD HARRIET'S - FOYER - DAY

Once a stately mansion, now fallen on hard times. Furniture covered in sheets, art removed from the walls. Nancy, George, and Bess face an elderly medium, OLD HARRIET, in a motorized wheelchair. She's eyeing the mariner's charm.

OLD HARRIET
I'm surprised you found that.
Tiffany told me she'd have to keep
it hidden. Her husband had no
patience for her... superstitions.
Sounds like he didn't have patience
for a lot of things.

The girls exchange looks, on the right path.

NANCY
Anything you could tell us about
her would be greatly appreciated --

OLD HARRIET
(shuts down)
I'm afraid our conversation is
private. Medium-client privilege.

GEORGE
Is that really a thing?

OLD HARRIET
Is to me.

Bess looks to the girls, mouths "she wants money."

BESS
Well, if we paid you then we'd be
the client.

OLD HARRIET
That's true, isn't it..?

BESS
Shoot. Forgot my purse. Nancy?

NANCY
Sorry, I don't pay for information.

OLD HARRIET
(holding up the charm)
Mariner's charms keep sweethearts
safe at sea. Also keep spirits
safely on the other side.
(off the girls)
I sell them to people who are
afraid of someone. Someone who
died at sea.

Bess looks at the girls, mouths, "Dead Lucy." It's too
tantalizing. George reaches in and pulls out a week's worth
of tips. Harriet takes it, satisfied.

OLD HARRIET (CONT'D)
Now you can ask Tiffany your
questions directly.

The girls look at each other. Not what they signed up for.

INT. OLD HARRIET'S - PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

Old Harriet sits at the head of a round table. Motions for
the girls to join her --

NANCY
A seance isn't necessary. If I
could just ask you a few
questions..? I brought a notepad.

Harriet lights three CANDLES. The girls quietly confer.

GEORGE
Just sit. Let her put on her show,
then you can ask your questions.

NANCY
It's ridiculous...

BESS
It's awesome.

OLD HARRIET
You coming? Best not to keep the
dead waiting...

Old Harriet smiles. Gulp. Off this --

INT. OLD HARRIET'S - PARLOR - LATER

Lights out, drapes drawn, candles flickering. The girls hold hands. Old Harriet has her eyes closed. The mariner's charm on the table in front of her. Bess squirms in George's grip:

BESS

Ugh. Do you ever moisturize?

OLD HARRIET

Do not break the circle. Stay focused. Breathe together, in and out, in a welcoming state.

The girls follow Old Harriet's instructions.

OLD HARRIET (CONT'D)

Repeat after me. Spirit, we welcome you.

NANCY/BESS/GEORGE

Spirit we welcome you...

Nancy and George are skeptical, but say the words.

OLD HARRIET

Breathe it. Mean it. Let her in!

NANCY/GEORGE/BESS

(more committed)

Spirit, we welcome you!

OLD HARRIET

Tap to let us know you're here.

BANG! *Holy shit.* The whole table jumps. So do the girls. Old Harriet opens one eye, surprised, but covering --

OLD HARRIET (CONT'D)

Don't break the circle. She's here with us. Spirit, we have many questions. But first, is there anything you want to tell us?

Old Harriet goes quiet. Her head lolls. The girls open their eyes. It's unclear if she fell asleep? When suddenly -- her eyes OPEN WIDE. Her voice raspy, jagged, and creepy AF:

OLD HARRIET (CONT'D)

Find the dress. FIND THE DRESS!

It's too scary. Bess lets go. The circle is broken. Old Harriet's eyes flutter. Then she blows out the candles.

OLD HARRIET (CONT'D)
Get out. That wasn't supposed to
happen --

NANCY
What wasn't?

OLD HARRIET
I heard a voice -- from the dead --

GEORGE
You're a medium. Occupational
hazard.

OLD HARRIET
The charm is a scam and so is this
seance. I'm a fraud! I'm supposed
to light some candles, tell you I'm
hearing things -- but I heard it --

NANCY
So did we. Whose voice? Whose
dress?

OLD HARRIET
Young lady, isn't it clear? That
wasn't Tiffany.

BESS
That was Dead Lucy.

And as a chill runs up even Nancy's spine --

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. DREW HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

Nancy's beanie sits on the coffee table. Carson sits staring at it as Karen Hart does her best to explain.

HART

I found it at Ryan Hudson's house.

CARSON

It's a black hat. It could be anyone's --

HART

It's cashmere, cable stitched. Elizabeth knit it for Nancy when she went on that camping trip to Shadow Ranch.

(then)

Not to mention the long red hair inside...

CARSON

You found this at Ryan Hudson's house? And it's here now, on my coffee table --

HART

Yes. I took it. From a crime scene. And now I'm giving to you. To destroy.

CARSON

Karen, you could lose your job.

HART

And Nancy could lose a helluva lot more. I don't think she had anything to do with Tiffany Hudson's murder. But trying to prove her innocence is going to end up making her guilty.

CARSON

(grateful)

I don't know what to say.

HART

How about -- now let me get some kerosene and a lighter and make sure no one ever finds this?

Carson nods, smiles. Overcome with appreciation.

CARSON
You've been so good to this family.

HART
Sometimes I'm not so sure...

And they kiss, it grows. *Clearly not the first time.* It builds, until --

NANCY
What the hell?

Nancy stands in the doorway. Carson and Karen break. *Shit.*

CARSON
Nancy. Karen was here with evidence you broke into Ryan Hudson's home --

Nancy's eyes go to the black beanie. *Uh oh.* But still --

NANCY
And as my lawyer you're willing to do anything to protect me?

CARSON
Don't turn this around on me.

Karen tries to be the peacemaker --

HART
Your father is worried about you. And so am I. Not just as a police officer, but as your friend --

NANCY
Friend? Is that what you are? Is that what you were to my mom?

Karen looks off, feels horrible.

CARSON
This isn't how I wanted you to find out --

NANCY
That makes two of us.

HART
I'm going to go.

NANCY

Good idea.

CARSON

You could try saying thank you!

HART

It's not necessary. You guys need a little father-daughter time, call me later --

NANCY

I was just leaving. Need to find myself some new legal representation. If only I could get a new father too --

Nancy grabs the hat, keeps walking. Carson follows.

CARSON

Get back here now, young lady!

NANCY

Please. You don't get to go missing for the last year and suddenly expect the dad routine to work.

CARSON

That's not fair. I've done my best.

NANCY

Looks to me like you've been doing just great. Have you even been going to work? Or that's just your excuse?

CARSON

You're right. I haven't been honest about Karen. I was trying not to upset you. Which I realize I still did. So let's just talk about it. Okay? All of it.

Nancy wheels on him.

NANCY

There's nothing left to talk about. I'll reapply for school and get the hell out of here. And you can get back to your secret life.

EXT. DREW HOUSE - NIGHT

Nancy blows out the front door, Carson on her heels.

CARSON
Nancy. Stop!

But she takes off running, no intention of looking back.

EXT. BAYPORT STREET - NIGHT

Nancy runs through the empty Bayport streets. Through the mist and the pools of light from the streetlamps. Not just running away from everything, but towards something as well --

PRE-LAP: Banging on a door --

EXT. BAYPORT LOFT - NIGHT

Nancy beats on the door of a modest storefront apartment. Finally the door opens. It's Nick. Shirtless. Was asleep, now confused --

NICK
Nancy? You okay --?

NANCY (V.O.)
I'm breathless. And sweaty. And
banging on your door late at night.
So, no. I'm not.

NANCY
Yeah. Totally. Hi.

NICK
How'd you even find me?
(realizing)
Oh right, the whole girl detective
thing.

NANCY
Also, you live upstairs from the
garage.

REVEAL -- Nick's apartment is above the shuttered garage.

NICK
You make a good point.

NANCY
I've wanted to believe that this
isn't my life.
(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)

That I'm not here, that my mom
isn't dead, that Columbia isn't a
pipe dream. But all this is true.

(off him)

This is my life. And I want to get
to know you. I have so many
questions --

The words he's been waiting to hear. But he wasn't expecting
them just now. He's flustered.

NICK

Wow. That's so, yeah -- I'd invite
you in. But this place is a mess,
wasn't expecting guests --

NANCY

Then we'll keep the lights off.

INT. NICK'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Nick fall back onto Nick's bed. Clothes coming
off. For Nancy, in this moment, it feels good to hide in the
darkness. The only light the moon outside the window.
Hovering over the fog-shrouded sea...

INT. NICK'S LOFT - MORNING

Nancy wakes up. Nick still asleep. Nancy stares at the
ceiling... Checks her phone. Multiple missed calls from her
dad. Texts as well. *Just tell me ur safe.*

NANCY (V.O.)

How do I even begin to answer that?

EXT. DREW HOUSE - MORNING

Nick's truck pulls up in front of Nancy's driveway. Nancy in
the passenger seat. Listening as Nick finishes his story.

NICK

And when I heard my knee pop, I
knew it was over. Scholarships.
Future. All of it. For a long
time, thought my life was over...

(then)

But maybe things are starting to
turn around...

He smiles at her. She smiles back. It's sweet. Then --

NANCY

Was that before or after you went
to jail?

Nick, avoiding this, gestures to her house.

NICK

Hey, look where we are.

Before she can protest (or pry) he gives her a long kiss.

NICK (CONT'D)

Girls love mystery. Right?

INT. DREW HOUSE - MORNING

Nancy enters to see Carson, waiting. Dressed for work, full
thermos of coffee in hand. He's relieved to see her. But
also pissed --

NANCY

I'm sure you have a million
questions.

CARSON

Nope, just one. I saw who dropped
you off. What are you doing with
Ned Nickerson?

It's hard to surprise Nancy Drew. But Carson just did.

NANCY

What do you know about Nick?

CARSON

More than you, clearly. Look, I
know I've screwed up. Let you
down. And maybe my words don't
mean much to you. But if they mean
anything, please listen to me.
Stay away from that kid.

Nancy processes this. Now her wheels are really turning.

NANCY

Omigod. Were you his lawyer?

CARSON

You know I couldn't discuss it,
even if I was. Just trust me on
this.

(then)

(MORE)

CARSON (CONT'D)
I'm late. Let's talk later? A
real talk?

NANCY (V.O.)
That's totally a yes.

Nancy just nods, still spinning. As Carson exits --

INT. DREW HOUSE - CARSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Alone in the house, Nancy opens the doors to her father's office. Eyes landing on the file cabinet in the corner. Screwdriver in hand. She approaches the cabinet.

NANCY (V.O.)
C'mon. Like I was ever seriously
considering not opening it.

Fuck it. Nancy jams the screwdriver into the lock and jimmies it open. QUICK CUTS of Nancy rifling through the files. Until she finds it. Nickerson, N.

Nancy pulls the file, drops to her knees. Opening it. And she is clearly unprepared for what she finds.

CLOSE ON - the file. Nick's mugshot. And his CONVICTION: **Manslaughter.** *OMG.* Nancy reads the accompanying notes out loud...

NANCY
"Defendant was found guilty after
the testimony of a single key
witness..."

And then a name, alongside a picture.

NANCY (CONT'D)
"... Tiffany Hudson."

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. DREW HOUSE - DAY**

A DIRECT PICK UP, as Nancy stares down at Nick's file, her mind reeling. Just then, she's JOLTED by a noise outside. BEEP BEEP BEEP. She hurries to the door, opens it to SEE --

IN THE DRIVEWAY

Nick backs up a TOW TRUCK to her mom's car. Seeing Nancy, he smiles and waves.

NICK

Let's see if we can get this thing
running again!

Nancy drops the file behind the door. Waves back. Forced --

NANCY

Great!

And she watches him, handsome in his coveralls, doing this sweet gesture. All the while, thinking:

NANCY (V.O.)

Nick may be a really good kisser.
But he's also a real suspect. With
a real motive for killing Tiffany
Hudson. Revenge.

(then)

But if I couldn't trust him, who
could I trust?

With that, we begin an AROUND-THE-HORN SEQUENCE of enigmatic answers to Nancy's question. MUSIC UP.

INT. BAYPORT PIER - EVENING

Bess and Ace walk together. Get to the end of the BOARDWALK.

BESS

Ace, even with a murderer on the
loose you don't have to walk me to
my car. I'm fine. I have bear
spray in my purse.

ACE

I see what's happening here.
You're a refined young lady; I'm a
humble dishwasher.

(MORE)

ACE (CONT'D)
You think if I peep your sick ride,
things will get weird between us.

This never crossed her mind, but if it makes him go away..?

BESS
Wow... you really get me.

ACE
But you don't get me. Because I
believe the measure of a man is his
character, not his car. The socio-
economic abyss that divides us
means nothing to me.

BESS
Still, maybe better not to risk it?
Good night, Ace.

ACE
(as she moves off)
Damn! What is it? Jag? Aston
Martin?!

EXT. SHITTY PART OF BAYPORT - EVENING

Bess walks alone. Finds a BEAT UP VAN parked in an alley.
And looks around before *getting into the back*.

INT. BEAT UP VAN - EVENING

The van is packed -- sleeping bag, piles of clothes, a
cooler. She starts to undress, changing into a sweatshirt,
settling in. *Holy shit. Bess lives here.*

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Ryan Hudson is filling the tank of his Mercedes. Looks up
when he senses someone standing there. It's George. He's
surprised, concerned --

RYAN
What are you doing here? This is
dangerous --

GEORGE
Relax. Just thirsty.

George holds up a Slurpee. Takes a long sip from her straw.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Besides. I'm not in high school
anymore. And you're not married.

As she tosses her drink in the trash, her fingers graze his hand. The slightest gesture, but it means everything.

AT A TRAFFIC LIGHT, Chief McGinnis idles. Watching these two. His eyes fixed on George Phan...

INT. MECHANIC'S GARAGE - NIGHT

Elizabeth Drew's blue roadster is parked. But Nick isn't under the hood -- he's in the backseat. With a CROWBAR.

He yanks on the seat, which is stuck tight. Finally it comes free, and he reaches his hand down behind it... revealing a small, neat PACKAGE wrapped in brown paper. *What seemed like an act of kindness might be more one of self-preservation...*

INT. BEAT UP VAN - NIGHT

Bess rummages through the cooler and pulls out a ZIPLOC BAG. Inside is TIFFANY'S HUDSON'S RING. She puts it on her finger. *WTF. Bess is definitely a thief. Is she a killer too??* MUSIC DOWN.

INT. DREW HOUSE - NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In her nightgown, Nancy heads down the hall. Thinking...

NANCY (V.O.)
"Find the dress." Where would I
find a dress...?

INT. DREW HOUSE - ATTIC - NIGHT

Nancy emerges through the crawl space.

NANCY (V.O.)
I used to love to rummage through
my mom's closet. Now this is where
you'll find her clothes --

She walks toward the BOXES and BAGS overflowing with WOMEN'S CLOTHES. Nancy picks up an Hermès scarf and holds it close.

And just then -- BOOM, the power goes out. The house is PLUNGED into darkness. Nancy's breath catches. A beat of pure, disorienting terror...

And then Nancy fumbles her way to a credenza, looking for a flashlight. She finds a box of matches and a candle -- when she hears something, *behind her*.

A RIPPING sound. Nancy slowly turns...

With shaking hands, Nancy lights the candle --

REVEALING a piece of loose wallpaper. Was it like that before? Nancy shivers and draws closer. There's a MESSAGE scrawled beneath the wallpaper: **LUCY SABLE ONCE WAS ABLE...**

Terrified but determined, Nancy RIPS back the wallpaper...

And sees that the scrawled nursery rhyme CONTINUES. Nancy pulls off the paper, following the message, *suspense building*. The words grow more frenzied...

Until she reaches the back of the ATTIC -- where there sits a lone TRUNK.

FLASHBACK (2004)

Carson tries to shield the dug-up object from Nancy. We can see now -- it's a trunk. THIS TRUNK.

BACK TO PRESENT

With shaking hands, Nancy kneels down and opens the trunk -- revealing a LIGHT PINK DRESS. Faded with time. *Identical to the one Dead Lucy wore the night she died.*

Nancy looks up into the camera, her voice tinged with fear.

NANCY (V.O.)
Why is it always the ones you love
most who have the most to hide?

BLACKOUT.

END OF PILOT