

EVERYTHING HAPPENS TO LEAH CHEN

Written by

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EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The Manhattan skyline. Buildings sparkle like jewels against the night sky.

We TILT DOWN to a reveal a ROOFTOP PARTY in ASTORIA, QUEENS that is overlooking the skyline. There are about a hundred twenty-somethings milling around, drinking, dancing, etc. Music BLASTS from some speakers.

It looks like a lot fun.

We CONTINUE to TILT DOWN until we are window-level with an apartment directly below the party. We see a young woman sitting on her bed, ALONE, staring at her laptop, a glass of red wine in her hand.

This is LEAH CHEN, 25, Asian-American. She has a youthful, sweet face and intelligent, soulful eyes.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Now inside Leah's room, we can clearly see that this is someone who has not gotten her life together. The room is a mess - piles of dirty clothes, along with unwashed plates, cups, and empty snack bags overwhelm the space.

On her computer we can see she's streaming ROMY & MICHELE'S HIGH SCHOOL REUNION.

ROMY (ON-SCREEN)

Swear to God, sometimes I wish I was a lesbian.

MICHELE (ON-SCREEN)

Do you want to try to have sex sometime just to see if we are?

Then, a video chat invite BEEPS, interrupting the film. Leah tries fixing her hair through the built-in computer camera and in the process spills wine on her comforter.

LEAH

Shit!

She clicks "Accept" and a window pops up. MITCH COLLINS (26) is on the other end. He is ADORABLE, the sort of guy who grew into his looks late.

MITCH

Hey, Stranger!

LEAH

Hey, you! Uh, can you, um, just hold on a second...

She gets up and searches through the dirty laundry on her floor. Mitch looks confused.

MITCH

Is this a bad time?

LEAH

No, no. Just spilled some wine on my bed, you know? "Typical Leah." Ha.

She finds a ratty t-shirt and uses it to dab the spot.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Aw, fuck. I think it's ruined.

MITCH

I can call back.

LEAH

No, no. Everything's fine.

MITCH

If you try seltzer...

LEAH

It's okay! I'll just live with it...

She crawls into bed and faces the screen.

MITCH

So... What's up?

LEAH

Not much. Just spending another Friday night with my good pal, Netflix.

MITCH

Romy and Michele?

LEAH

You know it. Also, my mom sent me a care package today and it was literally, like, a year's supply of tampons.

MITCH

Aw, that's sweet.

LEAH

No, it's weird. I live in Queens, I'm not backpacking through Tibet.

MITCH

She's just worried about you. I bet she lies awake at night, staring at the ceiling in a cold sweat, fretting over her daughter's bloody bush and what she can do to help.

LEAH

Oh my God, you're so gross!

Mitch cackles.

MITCH

My mom sends me tampons all the time. It's totally normal.

Leah laughs.

LEAH

So what's up with you? Isn't it, like, four am your time?

MITCH

Couldn't sleep. I figured you'd be up.

LEAH

Yeah? Is everything okay?

MITCH

Yeah. I've just got a lot on my mind.

LEAH

Like leaving England?

MITCH

Yeah.

LEAH

Are you having second thoughts?

MITCH

Maybe.

LEAH

Well, *I'm* excited. I feel like I haven't seen you in forever.

MITCH

It has been, what... three years?

LEAH

No I mean, this.

She gestures back and forth at the screen and at herself.

LEAH (CONT'D)

I feel like we haven't done this in a while.

MITCH

I know. I'm sorry. I've just been trying to spend as much time with Charlotte as I can before I have to leave.

LEAH

You guys aren't going to do long-distance?

MITCH

Well, we've talked about it, but that rarely ever works so...

Mitch goes quiet, reflecting sadly on this.

LEAH

Mitch, don't take this the wrong way, but you're *always* dating someone. Maybe this is an opportunity to just be single for a while.

MITCH

I know. You're right. It's just... you know when you're holding someone you really love, and you're smelling them, and listening to the sound of their breathing, and you feel so warm and... complete?

LEAH

(soft)

Yeah...

She doesn't know.

MITCH

It's just really, really hard to walk away from that.

Mitch suddenly lets out a monster YAWN.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Sorry, it's late.

LEAH

We can pick this up later. You should get some sleep.

MITCH

I'll see you soon, okay?

LEAH
Okay. Bye, Mitch.

MITCH
Bye, Leah.

He disconnects. Leah stares at her paused movie for a beat, then opens another tab. It's FACEBOOK. She clicks through Mitch's photos, looking sad.

BLACK.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Leah is asleep, sprawled out stomach-down on her mattress. A fan oscillates nearby.

AMIR (O.S.)
LEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAAH!

She stirs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

LEAH'S BEDROOM DOOR swings open. She looks hungover.

Her tiny gay Persian roommate, AMIR, 27, is sitting on the couch in his pajamas, pouring a box of cereal straight into his mouth.

LEAH
What?

AMIR
(mouth full)
Don't 'what?' me. Your phone has
literally been ringing on and off for the
last half hour.

Leah blinks.

LEAH
Are you eating my cereal?

Amir stares at Leah for a long beat.

AMIR
No.

On cue, the phone starts ringing again. Disoriented, Leah looks around the living room for the source of the sound. She finds it in between the couch cushions and answers.

LEAH

Yes?

The person on the other end has a THICK INDIAN ACCENT.

BIMALA (O.S.)

Hey, Butthole. Do you know what time it is?

It takes a moment for this to register.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Leah BURSTS IN, now very awake. She start rummaging through mountains of clothes.

LEAH

Shit shit shit...

INT. LEAH'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Through the doorway of her bedroom we see Leah spray her work shirt with Febreeze. Then the crotch of her pants. She has her cell phone propped to her ear.

LEAH

Hi, Jim. I'm on the train right now. Massive delays. We've been sitting here for twenty minutes. But I'm on my way. We should be moving any second.

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - DAY

A Vietnamese/soul food fusion restaurant - one of those Brooklyn eateries that's a little too full of itself. It's pretty busy right now.

BIMALA BIDAMI, 24, tiny and Indian, the woman on the phone earlier, approaches a table with a very, very WHITE FAMILY of three (think khaki shorts and ill-fitting polo shirts).

BIMALA

Hey, how are you guys doing today?

WHITE MOTHER

Oh my gosh! You have just the cutest accent! Where are you from?

Bimala gives them a big smile which may or may not be forced.

BIMALA
Delhi. Where are you guys from?

WHITE FATHER
Minnesota.

BIMALA
(with effort)
Wow! You don't say!

WHITE FATHER
Our Caitlin here is starting her junior
year at NYU, so we're just helpin' her
get settled into her *first* apartment.

REVEAL CAITLIN, 20, sitting to the side of her parents
and slouching. She gives Bimala a sullen look.

BIMALA
Can I get you guys something to drink?

WHITE FATHER
Coffee for me, please.

BIMALA
Okay. One coffee. Anything else?

WHITE MOTHER
(delighted)
Oh my gosh! Can you say that again?

BIMALA
What? Coffee?

The father and mother lose it. Bimala fakes it with them.

WHITE MOTHER
That is so cute! Isn't she cute, Caitlin?

Caitlin doesn't give a shit.

EXT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - DAY

Leah runs her ass off toward the restaurant. She flings
the door open with force and...

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

...hurls herself inside. Bimala notices her arrival.

BIMALA
You *guuuuuuys*. I'll be right back.

Bimala approaches Leah. She immediately drops her faux-friendly facade.

BIMALA (CONT'D)

If one more of these Caucasian
cuntfuckers coos over my accent I'm going
to shit in their food. I swear to God.

LEAH

Is Jim pissed?

BIMALA

He hasn't said anything yet so I think
you might be--

JIM (O.S.)

Leah! May I please speak with you?

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - STOCK ROOM - DAY

Leah follows her manager, JIM, 60s, through the kitchen
and into the stock room.

LEAH

Sorry, sorry! There's been construction
on my line all summer.

Jim stops in front of a shelf stacked with dried food. He
checks inventory off on his clipboard.

JIM

You're a smart girl, Leah.

LEAH

I suppose?

JIM

Oh come on. Don't be modest. Not just any
Tom, Dick and Harry went to Columbia.

LEAH

I guess not.

JIM

So I hope you understand when I say that
it hurts me to see so much potential go
to waste.

LEAH

I'm sorry that it hurts you.

Jim turns around and faces Leah.

JIM

You know, Leah, when I was in high school I knew this kid. He wanted to play football more than anything in the world. But, the coach said he couldn't because he was retarded.

Beat.

LEAH

Huh.

JIM

Do you think that stopped him?

LEAH

For the purpose of your story I'm going to assume that it did not.

JIM

No. No, it didn't. It just made him try even harder. He spent hours every day after school lifting weights and running miles and miles with his fucked-up legs. Then his lungs collapsed and he died. Do you get what I'm saying?

Leah's face is completely blank.

JIM (CONT'D)

My point is, you aren't retarded, are you?

LEAH

Um, that's not the exact nomenclature I would use, but to the best of my knowledge, no, I am not.

JIM

Then I want to see you work to reach your full potential around here. You can start by showing up when you're scheduled, 'kay?

EXT. MANHATTAN AVE - DUSK

Leah and Bimala walk down Manhattan Avenue, smoking cigarettes, beat from a long day.

BIMALA

Do you want to go to McCarren Park and make fun of couples?

LEAH
Can't. Steve and I have plans.

BIMALA
Hmm. Haven't heard that name in a while.

LEAH
He's been really busy. The bookstore is under new management.

BIMALA
Uh-huh.

She gives Leah a "look".

LEAH
What?

BIMALA
Okay, don't take this the wrong way...

LEAH
(quickly)
He's not cheating on me.

BIMALA
Maybe not, but the signs are there...

LEAH
Steve doesn't have a cheating bone in his body. He won't even watch porn with me because he feels guilty looking at other women.

BIMALA
Even if he isn't, you've been with him for, like, three years now and he's still acting like a fucking flake. We both deserve men who will worship us like the classy bitches we are.

Two PREPPY BOYS, ages 12 and 13, pass them.

TWELVE YEAR OLD
(yelling)
Smoking kills!

BIMALA
(yelling back)
Suck my dick! What? Oh yeah? Well it's bigger than yours!

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Leah and Steve are having sex. Steve is on top, pounding away quickly and without rhythm, his eyes closed tight.

STEVE

Oh, fuck yes. Fuck yes.

LEAH

(faking it)

Don't stop.

STEVE

You like that? You like that?

LEAH

(not really)

Yeah, I like that.

STEVE

I'm gonna come. I'm gonna come.

LEAH

Wait--

Too late. He pulls out and starts jerking himself off.

STEVE

Do you see us getting married someday?

LEAH

Uh...?

STEVE

We've been together for a while. It could happen, right?

LEAH

I guess?

STEVE

Oh my God. You could be the mother of my children.

LEAH

Where is this coming from?!

Steve continues to jerk off. He looks terrified.

STEVE

Oh my god! Oh my god! Oh my god!

He climaxes and collapses on top of her. For a beat they just lie there, Steve on top of Leah, catching their breath. Then, Steve's body begins to quietly shudder.

LEAH

...Steve?

Steve rolls off of her. He's been sobbing.

LEAH (CONT'D)

(alarmed)

Steve?!

STEVE

I'm sorry.

LEAH

(bewildered)

What is going on?

STEVE

(heavily sobbing)

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

LEAH

Steve, it's fine.

Leah wraps her arms around him in a comforting manner. Steve continues to sob. They sit like that for a while.

STEVE

(softly through tears)

I think I'm gay.

There is no reaction from Leah. She just holds him. Then:

STEVE (CONT'D)

OW!! Hey!

Leah lets go. She's been slowly digging her nails into him.

LEAH

(stunned)

What did you say?

He puts on his horn-rimmed glasses and looks at her.

STEVE

I... I don't know.

LEAH

(skeptically)

You don't know?

Steve quickly shakes his head.

STEVE

Nope.

LEAH

You said... you think... you're...

Steve looks nervous.

LEAH (CONT'D)

(soft)

...gay?

Steve is tight-lipped.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Are you?!

STEVE

I'm sorry.

Leah is thoroughly appalled.

LEAH

This was the best moment you could tell me?!

STEVE

This isn't an ideal scenario for me either.

LEAH

How long have you known?

STEVE

It's not that simple, Leah.

LEAH

(pointed)

How long have you known?

STEVE

Maybe ten years, maybe just now. I don't know. It's complicated.

LEAH

Complicated?!

STEVE

This isn't fair. I'm not the only one who's been lying in this relationship.

LEAH (CONT'D)
What is wrong with you?!

BIMALA
There's this thing called cruelty. I'm
really good at it. Get up.

Leah flicks food out of her hair and closes her laptop.

LEAH
If you're not going to be sympathetic
could you just go? Please?

Bimala sighs and sits on the edge of the bed.

BIMALA
Look, I know you're in pain, but you need
to get some perspective. Steve sucked
ass. It's like, "We get it. You watch
documentaries and drink kombucha. You're
a special snowflake."

LEAH
That's not the point. I thought he at
least *liked* me. It was nice knowing
someone did.

Leah buries her face in her hands, humiliated.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Everyone is going to feel so sorry for
me.

BIMALA
Then screw them! What's there to feel
sorry for? You had a crappy gay boyfriend
and now you're single. That's a good
thing! Being single is great! Oprah is
single and nobody feels sorry for
freaking *Oprah*.

LEAH
What about Stedman?

Beat.

BIMALA
Shit. I forgot about him.

LEAH
Everybody does.

Leah's phone starts ringing.

BIMALA

Are you going to get that?

LEAH

Just ignore it. I'm not ready to face the outside world yet.

BIMALA

Oh, for God's sake--

She takes Leah's phone and looks at the incoming call.

BIMALA (CONT'D)

It's Mitch.

Beat.

Leah grabs the phone and answers it.

LEAH

Heyyyyy! What? Where are you? It sounds loud!

(beat)

Oh my God! You rescheduled your flight? Why?!

(listens; happy)

Ooooh. I miss you too!

(laughs)

Are you drunk?

Bimala watches this without expression.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Friday? Let me check my calendar.

(pause)

Yep, I'm free! Ahhh! I can't believe I'm finally going to see you in person!

(listens; laughs)

I can't really talk now... I'm with Bimala. I've told you about her. Okay!... See you soon!

Leah hangs up the phone.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Mitch is having a get-together Friday. You're invited.

Her entire mood has done a 180. Bimala gives her a curious look.

BIMALA

Oh. Mitch is back?

LEAH
He's flying out tomorrow.

BIMALA
(sly)
Hmm. Interesting...

LEAH
What?

BIMALA
"What" what?

LEAH
You were implying something.

BIMALA
Implying? What could I possibly be
implying? It's not like you lit up like a
fucking Christmas tree when he called.

LEAH
Mitch has a girlfriend.

BIMALA
I thought you said they're breaking up.

Leah is quiet.

BIMALA (CONT'D)
Mhmmm. I gotta go to an audition. Have
fun killing your Sims.

Bimala pats Leah on the head, gets up and leaves.

Leah, alone with her thoughts, smiles softly.

INT. LEAH'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

RUTH CHEN (50s), Asian-American, is cleaning her kitchen
counter-top as she talks on SPEAKERPHONE. She has a thick
Long Island accent.

RUTH
Did you get my package?

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Leah is standing over the toilet, shaving her pubic
region (below-frame). Her CELL PHONE is on the sink. Ruth
speaks through speakerphone. Intercut.

LEAH

Yeah, Mom, I did, thanks. You know, you don't have to keep sending me tampons. I live across the street from a CVS.

RUTH

Well, I know how those little expendables can add up.

LEAH

Don't worry about me. I'm making good tips at the restaurant.

RUTH

You sound funny. Am I on speaker-phone?

LEAH

Yeah.

RUTH

It's hard to have a meaningful conversation when you sound so distant.

LEAH

I'm actually running late, so--

RUTH

Are you studying for the MCAT? I went on Google and saw the next test date is at the end of August.

LEAH

Great. Good to know.

RUTH

Did you sign up?

LEAH

Yep. Already did.

RUTH

And I'm supposed to believe you when you said you'd take the one in June--

LEAH

Mom, I had mono. I promise I'll take the test.

RUTH

Okay. I'm just saying, you're going to be twenty-six soon. If you don't go back to school next year, then by the time you get to your residency--

LEAH

Mom, I'm sorry, I really need to go.

Ruth enters her LIVING ROOM, walking past her husband, ALAN CHEN (60s). He sits in a chair reading The Economist.

RUTH

What's the big rush?

LEAH

I told you. Mitch is having a welcome-back dinner tonight.

RUTH

Oh, how nice! Is Steve going?

Leah hesitates.

LEAH

We... broke up, Mom.

RUTH

Well. That's sudden.

LEAH

We've been growing apart for a while.

RUTH

You're hiding something from me.

Leah cuts herself and shrieks.

LEAH

Shit! Motherfucker fuckfuck!

RUTH

What's going on?!

LEAH

(wincing)

I'm shaving my, uh, legs.

RUTH

Since when do you swear like that?

LEAH

I know, I'm sorry. I don't... usually.

(looks down at her crotch)

Can we talk about this later?

RUTH

Look, honey, I know you're probably sad about Steve, but you should see this breakup as an opportunity to focus on yourself and what you want out of life. Sometimes you get into a serious relationship too quickly and then the next thing you know you're a stay-at-home-mom, wondering where your dreams went while your you-know-what dries up like some dying flower.

LEAH

I have to go, Mom. I'm bleeding.

She hangs up.

INT. BRAZILIAN/JAPANESE FUSION RESTAURANT - WAITING AREA

Leah and Bimala are standing in the waiting area of a hip West Village restaurant. Leah is DRESSED UP. Bimala is taking HANDFULS of mints from a candy dish on the hostess's podium and dumping them into her purse.

LEAH

(re: the mints)

I don't think you're allowed to do that.

BIMALA

Fuck off, man. I make \$5.65 an hour and yesterday I caught my roommate masturbating with my hairbrush. I'm taking the mints. They're all I have right now.

MITCH (O.S.)

Hey, Stranger.

Leah whirls around to find Mitch standing behind her. Her face lights up.

LEAH

Oh my God!

He wraps her in a big hug and lifts her off the ground.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Ah, I can't breathe.

He puts her down. She looks him up and down. He looks very stylish.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Damn. You look amazing! I love your sweater. Is it cashmere?

MITCH

Thanks. Yeah, Charlotte got it for me.

LEAH

How was your flight?

MITCH

Oh, just eight hours of sitting in front of that kid who likes to kick the seat because he's bored.

LEAH

You should have murdered him.

MITCH

I think infanticide is still illegal when you're over international waters. You look really nice too, by the way.

He smiles and lightly brushes the bangs out of her eyes. It's a nice moment, kind of intimate.

Bimala clears her throat. They notice her.

LEAH

Oh! Mitch, this is my friend, Bimala. We work together.

BIMALA

Nice to finally meet you.
(offering)
Mint?

INT. BRAZILIAN/JAPANESE FUSION RESTAURANT - DINING AREA

Bimala and Leah follow Mitch to the table. Old friends of Mitch and Leah's are already seated:

SPENCER (26), short and nebbish; MADDY (26), dressed like she should be in a board meeting; and Maddy's boyfriend, DEREK (early 30s), finance guy, probably rowed crew at Georgetown.

MADDY

Oh my God! Leah! It's been so long!

She gets to her feet and hugs her. Spencer does the same.

LEAH

This is my friend, Bimala. Bimala, this is Maddy and Spencer. We all went to college together.

BIMALA

(shaking hands)

Hi.

MITCH

Maddy is at Yale Law and Spencer writes for Jacobin.

MADDY

(gestures)

Leah, have you met my boyfriend, Derek?

LEAH

Once, at a party a long time ago. Nice to see you again.

DEREK

I think last time we talked you had just gotten into medical school! Have you decided what you want to specialize in?

Awkward beat.

LEAH

Oh. Yeah. I was going to focus on Obstetrics, but I'm actually... taking a sabbatical right now.

SPENCER

Wow! Really? Where the hell have I been? Sorry, I don't use social media so it's been really hard for me to keep track of what everyone's been doing.

BIMALA

I'm not on social media because I hate everyone.

MITCH

(distracted)

There she is!

(to Leah)

Leah, I'd like you to meet someone.

Leah turns and her face falls. CHARLOTTE WALKER (24), FASHIONABLE and GORGEOUS, is approaching the table. She carries herself with the confidence of a rock star.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Leah, this is Charlotte. Charlotte, this is Leah.

CHARLOTTE

Hiiiiiiii.

Her British accent is like silk. She leans in and kisses Leah on both cheeks, which throws Leah off-guard.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

It's so wonderful to finally meet Mitch's childhood friend!

LEAH

Thanks. You're... pretty.

(then)

Mitch, you didn't tell me Charlotte was going to be here too.

MITCH

Well, we have some news.

Mitch and Charlotte furtively glance at each other.

CHARLOTTE

We're... getting married.

A shocked silence falls over everyone. Then, Maddy abruptly SQUEALS.

MADDY

Ahhh! Oh my God! Ahhhhhhhh!

Hugs are exchanged among everyone, except for Leah who stands there looking shell shocked. Mitch reaches out and wraps her into a hug.

MITCH

You're trembling.

LEAH

I... I'm just so surprised...

MADDY

When did this happen?!

CHARLOTTE

Literally right before he flew out.

LEAH

"Literally right before?"

MITCH

I was in a cab halfway to the airport and
I told the driver to turn around.

CHARLOTTE

It was by far the most romantic moment of
my life.

MADDY

Oh my God! That's like a movie!
(glares at Derek)
Sounds nice...

Bimala leans in and stretches out her hand to Charlotte.

BIMALA

Congratulations. I'm Bimala.

CHARLOTTE

Hiiiiiii.

Charlotte does the kiss-kiss thing.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Your accent is so cute. I love Indian
people.

BIMALA

Aw. Historically that hasn't always been
the case.

INT. BRAZILIAN/JAPANESE FUSION RESTAURANT - TABLE - LATER

The food has been served and everyone is eating. Spencer
and Bimala are awkwardly paired together at the end of
the table.

Bimala is drinking a glass of wine as Spencer talks her
ear off.

SPENCER

(to Bimala)

...so, in the end I voted for Gary
Johnson, even though I'm a socialist. I
just think the whole two-party system
needs to go, you know?

Bimala throws back the last of her wine.

Leah, stone-faced, WATCHES Mitch kiss Charlotte. They
look so in love...

MADDY
(to Leah)
Where's Steve?

LEAH
(distracted)
Huh?

MADDY
Steve. Is he working tonight?

Leah starts playing with her food.

LEAH
Uh, I'm not sure what Steve's doing. We broke up.

MADDY
Oh no!

MITCH
Wait, really? Why didn't you tell me?

LEAH
It just happened.

CHARLOTTE
Are you seeing anyone new?

LEAH
We broke up a few days ago.

CHARLOTTE
That doesn't mean you can't have some rebound fun.

MITCH
Charlotte's friend is having a party for her tonight. You should come. Meet some new people.

LEAH
I have to work tomorrow, but thank you.

CHARLOTTE
Are you sure? It'll just be a small gathering.

LEAH
Then I wouldn't want to impose.

MITCH
You wouldn't be imposing.

LEAH

I shouldn't. Thank you, though.

Mitch looks disappointed. Spencer is still making conversation with Bimala.

SPENCER

What brought you to New York?

BIMALA

Acting. I got a scholarship at Strasberg.

SPENCER

How's that going?

BIMALA

Oh, just peachy. Casting directors are really jumping at the bit to cast a dark-skinned Indian girl with a thick accent.

Awkward beat.

SPENCER

Right. You know, it's good we're talking about this. Creating a dialogue is the first step toward change.

Bimala takes a big swig of wine.

Leah tries to make conversation with Charlotte.

LEAH

So, Charlotte, what do you do? I thought Mitch said you were still in school.

CHARLOTTE

I am, but I'm taking a year off to plan the wedding and work on my art.

MITCH

You should see her stuff. She just got an apprenticeship with Kiki Smith here.

CHARLOTTE

Mitch...

MITCH

Someone needs to brag for you.

CHARLOTTE

(to Leah)

What about you? Mitch told me you studied medicine.

Leah and Mitch exchange a look.

LEAH
Yeah. Used to.

MITCH
Leah's taking a break right now.

LEAH
Maybe indefinitely.

Mitch raises an eyebrow.

MITCH
Oh. Indefinitely?

LEAH
Maybe. I haven't decided.

MITCH
Huh. Okay.

LEAH
What?

MITCH
Nothing. You just always said you were going to go back.

LEAH
It's just something I've been thinking about recently.
(then)
I've... actually been considering nursing school.

MITCH
Why would you do that?

That was not the reaction Leah wanted.

LEAH
What's wrong with nursing?

MITCH
I dunno. If you can be a doctor, why wouldn't you be a doctor?

LEAH
(offended)
Because it's a completely different job! If I want to focus on patient care it would make more sense for me to be a nurse than an MD.

MITCH

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

LEAH

You think nursing would be a step down from being a doctor.

MITCH

I didn't say that.

LEAH

No, but it was in your tone.

MITCH

It wasn't a criticism! I meant it in a nice way. It means I think you're smart enough to be a doctor.

LEAH

You have to be smart to be a nurse, too!

MITCH

Right. I didn't mean -- I'm sorry.

A loaded silence descends between the two of them. Everybody can feel it. Maddy jumps in.

MADDY

(to Charlotte and Mitch)

Sooooo do you two have a date set?

CHARLOTTE

Not yet, but we were thinking spring...

Leah finishes her drink, annoyed.

EXT. BRAZILIAN/JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Leah sits outside the restaurant, smoking a cigarette pensively. After a moment, Mitch exits.

MITCH

You said you were quitting.

LEAH

Sorry, Dad. They give me an excuse to take breaks at work. Where's Charlotte?

MITCH

In the loo.

LEAH
(raising an eyebrow)
"The loo?" Mitch, you're from Long
Island. You sound like a tool.

Mitch takes a seat next to Leah.

MITCH
So... what did you think?

LEAH
Of Charlotte? She's... very beautiful.

Mitch's face falls.

MITCH
You don't like her.

LEAH
It's not that.

MITCH
Then tell me.

Leah considers her words carefully.

LEAH
Well... I think this happened a bit fast.

MITCH
We've been together a while.

LEAH
And honestly... she seems... pretentious.

MITCH
Oh, come on!

LEAH
I'm sorry!

MITCH
It's the accent, isn't it?

LEAH
Mitch, you wanted my opinion.

MITCH
I know, I know.
(smiles)
But you're wrong, you know that?

LEAH
I did just meet her.

MITCH
Come to the party with us.

LEAH
It's late.

MITCH
It would mean a lot to me if you came.

LEAH
I have to work tomorrow.

Mitch nods. A moment of silence. Then, he yanks the pack of cigarettes from her hand. Leah shrieks.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Mitch!

MITCH
Come to the party.

Leah tries to take the pack back, creating a playful tug-of-war between the two of them.

LEAH
Mitch, give them back!

MITCH
(laughing)
Nope!

LEAH
This isn't funny! You know how expensive cigarettes are in this city!

He stands and holds the pack out of reach.

MITCH
Come to the party or I'm throwing these out!

He rushes for a trash can. Leah gives chase.

LEAH
Mitch, I'm serious!

She jumps on his back and reaches for her cigarettes. He holds them out of arms reach.

MITCH
(in jest)
You lied to me! You're a filthy liar,
Leah Chen!

Leah playfully pounds on his back. Mitch pretends to stumble. They're LAUGHING as they "fight".

LEAH

You are so fucking self-righteous!

MITCH

Liar! Liar! Filthy liar!

Charlotte exits the restaurant.

CHARLOTTE

Babe.

Leah and Mitch stop and turn to look at her.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I told Cécile we'd be there at eleven.

Leah releases herself from Mitch's back. Mitch hands Leah's cigarettes back to her.

MITCH

It's not even ten-thirty yet.

Charlotte pouts. It's intended to be cute and kind of is.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I guess we should go.

Charlotte's already hailing a cab. One stops and she gets inside. Mitch gestures for Leah to follow him.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Come on. Like old times.

Leah hesitates, then looks over her shoulder.

LEAH

Hey, Bimala! Are you going to be okay?

CUT TO A WIDE to REVEAL Bimala and Spencer making out like dogs in heat nearby. Bimala flashes Leah a thumbs up sign.

Leah gets in the cab. Mitch follows her inside.

INT. FANCY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leah, Charlotte and Mitch enter the party. It is sick -- full of beautiful, well-dressed people, many of whom look like they came straight from a fashion magazine. The place is PACKED.

LEAH

This is a small gathering?

Some elegant friends of Charlotte's, ODINE, MAHSOOMA, and YUKI, approach them.

KENDRA

Charlotte! We heard the good news!

Hug. Kiss kiss.

ODINE

Is this the beau?

Mitch outstretches his hand.

MITCH

Mitch. Nice to meet you.

ODINE

Odine. I've heard so many great things about you.

CHARLOTTE

Odine writes for Vogue, Mahsooma is a food critic for the New Yorker, and Yuki, is a highly acclaimed performance artist.

YUKI

I was featured in Spike Jonze's latest video.

MITCH

This is my friend, Leah. We've known each other since we were thirteen.

Leah gives an awkward wave.

ODINE

(to Leah)

I love your jacket. Very Janet Reno.

LEAH

Oh. Thanks?

KENDRA

(to Mitch)

So, Mitch, I hear you're a Rhodes Scholar.

MITCH

Yeah, I got my masters in economic development.

ODINE

How impressive! What are you doing now?

MITCH

I just got hired as a hedge fund consultant, but I'm not sure how long I'll be doing that. I'm more interested in the social aspect of econ. When I was an undergrad I studied abroad in Greece--

YUKI

Wow, yeah, that's so interesting.

Yuki pulls out a COCAINE BULLET and takes a bump.

YUKI (CONT'D)

(offering)

I got this from my agent. It's great.

Mitch takes the bump and inhales. Leah watches this, surprised. Charlotte and the other girls take bumps as well. Leah declines.

CHARLOTTE

(to Oline)

Are you going to Paris this weekend?

ODINE

I'm considering it.

CHARLOTTE

Could you stop by Juliet's? I left my scarf there.

Someone on the other side of the room (GIGI, 20s, fashionable as fuck) sees them.

GIGI

Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE

Gigi!

GIGI

Get over here you big slut! You're getting *married*?!

Charlotte and her girlfriends make their way across the room to say hello, leaving Mitch and Leah alone together. Leah surveys the party.

LEAH

Charlotte seems to be adjusting to New York pretty well.

MITCH

Yeah, she's a pretty popular girl. I'm usually known as "Charlotte's boyfriend" when we--

LEAH

(interrupting)

Is that Jonathan Taylor Thomas?!

Sure enough, JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS, 36, is standing across the room, sniffing a glass of white wine.

MITCH

Where?

LEAH

(nodding)

Over there.

MITCH

Ooooooh. Yeah, you're right.

LEAH

How the hell does Charlotte know JTT?

MITCH

No idea. Honestly, I can't keep track of half of Charlotte's friends, she has so many.

He SNIFFS and rubs his nose.

MITCH (CONT'D)

So since when do you maybe not want to go back to medical school?

LEAH

So since when did you start doing coke?

Mitch balks.

MITCH

I mean, it's not like I do it regularly.

LEAH

So you've done it before?

MITCH

I wasn't a Boy Scout at Oxford.

(off Leah's look)

Do you have a problem with me doing coke?

LEAH

No. I was just surprised. You didn't even hesitate.

Mitch sighs.

MITCH

Do you want to get something to drink?

LEAH

Yes.

INT. FANCY APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Mitch pops open some beers and passes one to Leah.

MITCH

Cheers.

They clink and sip.

MITCH (CONT'D)

So, listen, uh, I have to go to Cape Cod tomorrow for this, like, week-long corporate retreat thing my company is making the new recruits do. Charlotte has a gallery opening on Sunday and I was wondering if you wanted to go.

LEAH

Why? I don't even know her.

MITCH

Well, she's going to be my *wife*. I would like it if you got to know her.

Leah hesitates, then deflates.

LEAH

I'm sorry. What time is it?

MITCH

It starts at four.

LEAH

I can make that.

She forces a smile. He smiles back.

LEAH (CONT'D)

You're getting *married*.

MITCH

I *know*.

Leah leans over and hugs him tight, like he's a soldier going off to war. It's a touching, intimate moment.

Then Charlotte bursts into the kitchen, squealing.

CHARLOTTE

There you are, Babe! I thought I lost you.

She squeezes his face and sloppily kisses his cheek.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(to Mitch)

Come on. There are so many people who want to meet you.

(to Leah)

Would you excuse us for a second?

MITCH

I'll be right back.

As Charlotte pulls Mitch out of the room, he sees someone.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Oh! Leah, this Charlotte's friend, Cécile.

Leah looks and sees the ultimate caricature of a young French woman standing in the kitchen entryway, wearing all black and smoking a cigarette. She exhales coolly.

CÉCILE

Bonsoir.

MITCH

(to Cécile)

Leah speaks French. You guys should talk.

He and Charlotte excuse themselves. Cécile narrows her eyes at Leah.

CÉCILE

(heavily accented English)

You speak French?

LEAH

(in French; slow)

Yes. I studied it in college. How do you know Charlotte?

Cécile takes a drag. Exhales.

CÉCILE

(in French)

I was birthed into this barren, godless existence against my will and for twenty-five years I struggled against the bondage of my own flesh. One night I met Charlotte at a Paris discotheque. We did a lot of ecstasy. The drugs made me feel tactile, human, but I still yearn to feel the sweet embrace of oblivion's womb once more.

Leah takes a swig of her beer and looks for an exit.

INT. FANCY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Leah makes her way through a crowd, searching for Mitch. As she passes people we hear pockets of conversation.

PARTY-GOER

...I've known Zoë Kravitz since we were kids. To be honest, I think she jacked my style...

A crowd of people part, revealing Mitch making out with Charlotte in the hallway. Leah stops in her tracks. She looks like she was just hit in the solar plexus.

Then, Jonathan Taylor Thomas approaches her and taps her on the shoulder.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS (O.S.)

Excuse me?

Leah turns and coughs - surprised and a little star struck.

LEAH

Hi. Yes? Hi.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

Do you want to sign this? It's for Charlotte and Mitch.

He hands her an engagement card: "CONGRATULATIONS ON FINDING YOUR PERSON!"

A moment. There's a lump in Leah's throat.

She hastily signs the card, hands it back and walks out of the party.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Leah is in sweats, looking unwashed.

LEAH
(mocking British accent)
I'm Charlotte. I'm so British! Do you
know Jonathan Taylor Thomas? Well, I do
for some fucking reason.

She pours cereal, then milk, into a large GLASS MEASURING
BEAKER until it overflows.

LEAH (CONT'D)
My pussy tastes like honey and my nipples
are made of chocolate kisses.

Cornflakes and milk spill all over the floor.

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - STOCK ROOM - DAY

Leah enters. Her work uniform is wrinkled and filthy and
her hair isn't particularly combed. Jim is there.

LEAH
You wanted to see me?

JIM
Yes. I know about your breakup.

LEAH
How?

JIM
Please. Leah. A good manager can sense
when something is bothering an employee.
And I overheard you and Bimala talking
about it.

LEAH
Oh.

JIM
I dated this chick a while back. Dakota
Darting Hummingbird. She sure was
something. Beautiful, full-blooded
Cherokee woman. Dynamite in the sack. I
was sure she was the one. But then her
meth problem got out of hand and last I
heard she was working the craps table at
a casino on the Shinnecock Reservation.

Leah's face is unreadable.

JIM (CONT'D)

My point is, breakups are hard. However,
I need you to wash your hair and smile
more, okay? This is not Port Authority.

EXT. MCCARREN PARK - AFTER WORK - SAME DAY

Bimala and Leah are sitting on a park bench, eating
street vendor food and people watching. A PLEASANT-
LOOKING COUPLE with a dog pass them.

BIMALA

I wonder where she likes to have him cum.

Leah notices something on Bimala's neck.

LEAH

Is that a hickey?

BIMALA

Oh. Yeah. Your friend has a mouth like a
vacuum, man.

LEAH

Did you sleep with him?

BIMALA

No. We went back to his place, made out
for a bit, then he started mansplaining
Woody Allen so I pretended to fall
asleep.

LEAH

Do you like him?

BIMALA

(offended)

No. I was drunk.

LEAH

He's kind of cute.

BIMALA

Fuck you. He looks like Rachel Maddow.

Leah hesitates before she speaks again.

LEAH

So what did you think of Charlotte?

BIMALA

She's a chode. I bet she slaps the help.
She seems like the type.

LEAH

I can't believe he's marrying her.

BIMALA

I can. She's hot and rich as shit. *I'd* marry her if she would let me.

LEAH

They don't even have good banter...

BIMALA

That's one of my life rules. Don't bang people you can't banter with.

LEAH

Will you come to Charlotte's gallery opening with me?

BIMALA

Can't.

LEAH

Please. It's going to be so weird.

BIMALA

I have an audition and then I told Spencer I'd go to a Buster Keaton retrospective with him.

LEAH

I thought you didn't like him.

BIMALA

Not as much as Chaplin.

LEAH

No, I meant Spencer.

BIMALA

Oh. No, I don't. He's a tool.

Leah nods like she understands.

INT. PRETENTIOUS ART GALLERY - DAY

A large gray space. Charlotte is surrounded by a posse.

Leah stands ten feet away looking out of place, wearing her work uniform and carrying a Jansport backpack.

A host walks by with a plate of hors d'oeuvres.

HOSTESS
Caviar and crème fraîche tartlet?

LEAH
Yes, please.

She takes about SIX. The hostess gives her an odd look.

Leah turns and looks at a piece of art. We do not see it.
Cécile and Charlotte approach her.

CÉCILE
Oh. Salut.

LEAH
Salut.

CÉCILE
(re: the painting)
Isn't she brilliant?

Leah pretends to study the work.

LEAH
Oh. Yes. It's... vivid.

CÉCILE
The sublime beauty of the sexual
signifier takes on a disturbing new
context in light of your last
Presidential election.

REVEAL THE PAINTING. It's a massive portrait of a vagina.

LEAH
I agree.

She pops a tartlet in her mouth.

CHARLOTTE
Cécile!

Charlotte approaches Cécile with Odine (from the party)
in tow. Hug, kiss kiss, etc. A circle is formed, cutting
Leah out. She stands awkwardly to the side.

CÉCILE
Charlotte! I think this may be better
than your London show.

ODINE
It's really quite breathtaking.

Leah decides to join the group, but can't find an opening in the circle so just kind of awkwardly hovers behind Charlotte for a bit. Odine notices.

ODINE (CONT'D)
 (to Leah)
 And you are...?

Charlotte turns around.

CHARLOTTE
 Oh! I'm so sorry. This is Mitch's best friend, Leah. Leah, this is Odine.

LEAH
 (to Odine)
 We've actually...
 (then - never mind)
 Nice to meet you.

ODINE
 And what is it you do?

LEAH
 I - uh - it's not important.

She eats another tartlet. SOMEONE IMPORTANT passes by and grabs Charlotte.

SOMEONE IMPORTANT
 Charlotte! There's someone from the Whitney who wants to speak with you.

And she's quickly whisked away, leaving Leah alone with Charlotte's glamorous friends. Leah smiles sheepishly at them.

LEAH
 (re: Charlotte's vagina painting)
 So, is that a self-portrait?

They stare blankly at Leah. Awkward...

LEAH (CONT'D)
 I just realized I'm exhausted. I should go.

ODINE
 Nice of you to stop by.

LEAH
 Thanks. It was nice-- meeting you.

She awkwardly leaves, accidentally bumping into someone on the way out.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Leah sits on the couch with Amir. They are watching SCREAM 2 and eating junk food. On-screen Courtney Cox is running from danger.

AMIR
(enthralled)
Oh my God. Oh my *fucking* God.

LEAH
Do you want to do something tonight?

AMIR
Nah. I'm trying to save money.

LEAH
(deadpan)
You're so frugal.

ON TV: Boo! The killer pops out from behind a door.

AMIR
Oh my God, he's *everywhere*!

LEAH
There's a screening of My Best Friend's Wedding at IFC. Wanna go?

AMIR
Not really. There's a "Love and Hip Hop" marathon tonight.

Leah sighs.

AMIR (CONT'D)
Just go. You've been farting all night.
(off Leah's look)
Do you really think I didn't notice?

INT. IFC CENTER - NIGHT

A mostly-empty theater with maybe four or five people in the audience.

Leah enters, takes a seat and looks around before stealthily removing a carton of Chinese food from her bag - chopsticks and all. She opens it and begins eating.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
...Leah?

Leah turns around and is genuinely surprised. Charlotte is standing in the aisle.

LEAH
(mouth full)
Charlotte?
(swallows)
Hi! What are you doing here?

CHARLOTTE
I love this movie.

LEAH
Where are your friends?

CHARLOTTE
(sheepish)
They didn't want to come.

An awkward moment. Neither knows what comes next.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)
Mind if I sit?

LEAH
Oh! Yeah, of course.

Charlotte takes a seat next to Leah and adjusts her position. They sit together in silence. Leah returns to her Chinese food. Charlotte watches.

LEAH (CONT'D)
(to Charlotte; mouth full)
Want some?

CHARLOTTE
Sure?

Leah pulls out a second carton of Chinese food and hands it to her. Charlotte smiles, charmed.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - LATER

The girls sit at a bar deep in conversation. They're enjoying themselves as they shout over the music.

LEAH
28? 28?! They made a pact to get married
at *twenty-eight*?!
(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

Did they do that while living inside a fucking Jane Austen novel?

CHARLOTTE

I remember in Romy and Michele they said they would have sex with each other if they weren't married by thirty.

LEAH

Shut up! I love Romy and Michele!

CHARLOTTE

Me too!

LEAH

Mitch likes to make fun of me because I've been obsessed with that movie since middle school.

CHARLOTTE

I don't trust anyone who doesn't like Romy and Michele.

Leah takes a sip of her drink.

LEAH

I'm really glad I ran into you. I don't do this much anymore.

CHARLOTTE

Do what?

LEAH

Go out.

CHARLOTTE

Oh. What do you do for fun then?

LEAH

Umm...

She thinks about this for much too long.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Huh.

CHARLOTTE

Well, what makes you happy?

LEAH

Nothing. I don't believe in happiness.

CHARLOTTE

How can you not believe in happiness?

LEAH

I guess I don't think it's real. Lasting happiness, I mean. I think life is mostly boredom and depression punctuated by moments of pleasure.

CHARLOTTE

I'm happy.

Leah balks at this.

LEAH

That's not possible. No one is actually happy.

Charlotte shrugs nonchalantly and has a sip of her cocktail.

CHARLOTTE

I am.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - LATER

The bar is mostly empty now and the girls are completely shit-faced. Leah is resting her head on the bar.

CHARLOTTE

Steve is gay? I'm so sorry.

Leah lifts her head.

LEAH

Yeah, it was a fucking waste. But you know what? I'm *fine*. Because I...
(points to herself)
...*I* know who I am. I feel sorry for *him*.

They raise their glasses to that.

CHARLOTTE

That's the spirit! When did you guys start dating?

LEAH

It's kind of a funny story, actually. After we graduated Mitch and I were supposed to go to Governor's Ball together, but he was dating this girl at the time who didn't want him to go because she thought that was inappropriate...
(voice suddenly tight)
(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

And Maddy said Steve was looking for a ticket, so we went together and I got really drunk and kissed him and that was that.

(choked up now)

Sorry, I don't know why I'm-- I get emotional when I drink.

Charlotte looks Leah directly in the eyes and says very seriously:

CHARLOTTE

You are a strong, beautiful Chinese princess. Don't you ever forget it.

Leah blinks, taken aback by Charlotte's drunken intensity.

LEAH

Oh. Okay.

CHARLOTTE

Now say it.

LEAH

I'm a Chinese princess.

CHARLOTTE

Louder!

LEAH

I'm a Chinese princess!

CHARLOTTE

LOUDER!

LEAH

I'M A GODDAMN CHINESE--

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Leah and Charlotte stand outside the bar, smoking cigarettes. Leah is on the phone, her balance wobbly.

LEAH

...And you know what, Steve? I've moved on. I've fucked lots of dicks. More than you ever will. And you know why?

(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

Because I'm cute and I'm cool and I'm funny and I'm smarter than you and better looking than you. I'm a *Chinese princess* and I never needed your lying gay ass.

She hangs up the phone. Charlotte gives her a high-five.

INT. CHARLOTTE AND MITCH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A modern-looking apartment on the Williamsburg waterfront. Leah and Charlotte drunkenly stumble inside.

LEAH

Fuck! This is *nice*. How much do you guys pay?

CHARLOTTE

It's my parents, actually. My dad likes to invest in real estate. Wine?

LEAH

Sure.

Charlotte goes to her kitchen. Leah wanders through the living room in awe.

INT. CHARLOTTE AND MITCH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leah wanders into Charlotte's bedroom. It is very spacious and well-decorated. Gorgeous paintings hang on her walls (think Alice Neel).

Charlotte walks in behind Leah with two glasses of white wine. She hands one to Leah.

LEAH

Did you paint these?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah.

They're looking at a HAUNTING PORTRAIT of a little girl. You could get lost in her sad eyes.

LEAH

Who's this?

CHARLOTTE

Me.

LEAH

Oh.

(then)

Beautiful painting.

CHARLOTTE

Fanks.

Leah uneasily sits down on Charlotte's bed. She spills a little wine.

LEAH

Whoopsies.

Charlotte joins her.

CHARLOTTE

Don't worry. Happens all the time.

They laugh. Charlotte drunkenly leans her forehead against Leah's. Leah has a view of Charlotte's cleavage.

LEAH

You have amazing boobs.

CHARLOTTE

Thanks. Grew 'em myself.

Charlotte smiles and brushes Leah's bangs out of her eyes, exactly the way Mitch did at the restaurant. Leah's breath catches. It's a charged moment.

LEAH

I... should go. I'm really drunk. This was fun, though. Let's hang out again.

CHARLOTTE

Definitely.

Charlotte does the kiss-kiss thing. Leah laughs and does it as well. Charlotte abruptly leans in and kisses Leah on the mouth.

Charlotte puts her hand on the back of Leah's neck and starts kissing her with intensity.

Leah is shocked at first, but gets into it. They fall back onto the bed, drunkenly making out.

FADE OUT.

INT. CHARLOTTE AND MITCH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Morning light creeps in on Leah's face, slowly waking her. Her bleary eyes flutter open. She's FULLY DRESSED and her hair is plastered across her face. She grabs her head in pain and looks around. Everything is swaying.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

We had a great time last night.

Leah looks over and sees a blurry figure standing in the corner of the room.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Just a girls night on the town. We really hit it off.

The figure comes into focus. It's Charlotte. She looks effortlessly good in short-short pajamas bottoms and a tank top. She's on the phone.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Okay, call me tonight. Love you too.

She hangs up and approaches Leah.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

Leah hacks up some phlegm and blinks.

LEAH

Um, like hell. You?

CHARLOTTE

Fine. I don't really get hangovers.

Charlotte crawls back in bed. Leah scoots away from her.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I was just talking to Mitch.

Leah tries to nonchalantly move farther away from her.

LEAH

Mitch, yeah? You told him about last night?

CHARLOTTE

He's so happy we're having fun. Would you like an aspirin?

LEAH

Sure. Yeah.

Charlotte gets out of bed and leaves the room. Leah winces as memories of last night come back to her.

Charlotte returns with aspirin and water.

CHARLOTTE

Here you go.

LEAH

(taking it)

Thanks.

Charlotte gets back in bed. Leah unsuccessfully tries to hide her discomfort.

LEAH (CONT'D)

So, listen, I should get going.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah?

LEAH

Yeah. I was gonna try to get some... bird watching in while the weather's still good.

CHARLOTTE

Bird watching?

LEAH (CONT'D)

Ornithology...

Charlotte and Leah stare at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. CHARLOTTE'S ELEVATOR - LATER

Leah stands in the elevator. She grimaces at her own lameness.

LEAH

(to herself)

Bird watching? *Stupid...*

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - SAME DAY - LATER

Leah trudges inside holding a big bottle of Gatorade. She looks terrible. Amir is on the couch watching the "Martha Stewart and Snoop Dogg" show. He turns when she arrives.

AMIR

There she is! Where were you last night?
Doing the horizontal mambo? Burying the
bone? Making the beast with two backs?

LEAH

I have a deadly hangover and I'm going to bed.

Leah slams her bedroom door shut.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leah collapses face-down on her mattress. After a moment of peace, there's a BUZZ.

AMIR (O.S.)

LEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAHAH!

Leah slides off the mattress and falls to the floor.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Leah opens her front door revealing Ruth standing in the hallway, holding shopping bags.

RUTH

Hi, honey. I came into the city today and thought I'd drop by and check on you.

Ruth lets herself in. She pulls a dress out of a bag.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I got you a dress for Vicky's graduation.

LEAH

Mom, that's not until next August.

RUTH

I know, but you always wait until the last minute. Oh, and these...

She pulls out a box of tampons and hands them to Leah.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Did I wake you? I was starting to wonder if your buzzer is broken.

AMIR

Nah, she definitely hasn't been sleeping.

Ruth notices him.

RUTH

I'm sorry. Who are you?

AMIR

Amir. I'm Leah's roommate.

RUTH

Are you a friend from school?

AMIR

Craigslist, actually.

RUTH

(confused)

Who's Craig?

LEAH

Mom, why are you here?

RUTH

I just wanted to check in. Don't worry, I'm not trying to pry into your personal life.

LEAH

Good. That's why it's called a personal life.

She plops down on the couch.

RUTH

Did I tell you your sister made the Dean's list again?

LEAH

No, you didn't. Look, Mom, you caught me at a bad time. I'm actually feeling really sick today.

Ruth feels her forehead.

RUTH

You're clammy. Have you been drinking that tea I sent you?

LEAH

No.

RUTH

It's good for your immune system. I'll make you some.

She goes into the kitchen. Leah and Amir exchange looks.

Then, Leah's phone rings. She reaches into her back pocket and answers.

LEAH
(answering)
Hello?

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Hey, Babe. How's the birdwatching?

Intercut. Leah furtively looks back toward the kitchen
and LOWERS HER VOICE.

LEAH
Uh, I didn't make it out...

CHARLOTTE
That sucks. What are you up to?

LEAH
Um, not much. What's up with you?

CHARLOTTE
I'm dreadfully bored. Do you want to get
brunch?

LEAH
I can't. My mom is here.

CHARLOTTE
Well, when does she leave?

Leah gets up and slinks into her bedroom. Amir watches.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leah closes the door behind her. She continues speaking
to Charlotte in a low voice.

LEAH
I don't know. She just dropped by and
surprised me. Maybe you should try
someone else.

CHARLOTTE
Maybe I want to see you.

LEAH
I don't know if that's a good idea.

CHARLOTTE
Why?

Beat.

LEAH
I feel... weird.

CHARLOTTE
Why?

LEAH
I think you know why, Charlotte.

Charlotte laughs.

CHARLOTTE
Oh my God. Are you really freaking out
over what happened? We got drunk and made
out. It's not a big deal.

LEAH
Well, it's a big deal to me.

CHARLOTTE
Why?

LEAH
Because I've known Mitch since middle
school.

CHARLOTTE
So?

LEAH
(hushed)
So? You're his *fiancée*.

CHARLOTTE
Are we going to get bogged down in
semantics or are you going to get over
here and let me fingerfuck you?

KNOCK KNOCK. Ruth enters.

LEAH
I have to go.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)
Leah! I'm *joking*!

Leah hangs up. Ruth hands her a mug. She looks around
Leah's messy room with disapproval.

RUTH
Since when do you live like a crackhead?

LEAH
Sorry. I've been busy.

Ruth moves around Leah's room, surveying it.

RUTH
Who were you talking to?

LEAH
Mitch's fiancée.

RUTH
Oh, right! Laurie and Dean e-mailed me a picture of them in Italy. She's so beautiful. I can't wait to meet her.

LEAH
Don't you think they're a little... young for marriage?

RUTH
Why do you say that?

Ruth continues to inspect the room.

LEAH
I feel like if Steve and I had gotten engaged you wouldn't have approved.

RUTH
You need to focus on you right now. Have you been studying for the MCAT?

LEAH
Yes.

RUTH
You're a terrible liar.

LEAH
I have. Really.

Ruth picks up an MCAT book on Leah's desk. It's still in its plastic wrapping.

RUTH
Really?

Leah can't come up with a lie quick enough. Busted.

Ruth tosses the book on Leah's bed and leaves the room, clearly pissed. Leah follows.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ruth passes Amir and angrily gathers her shopping bags.

LEAH

Mom...

RUTH

Do I look stupid to you?

LEAH

No.

RUTH

You told me you'd re-take the test *this month*.

LEAH

I will! Calm down.

RUTH

How do you expect to do well if you haven't been studying?

LEAH

Mom, I know the material.

RUTH

Oh really? I guess that's why you're in this position in the first place. Because you know the material so well.

LEAH

You don't think I can do a good job?

RUTH

Of course I think you can do a good job! That's why I'm upset! Do you realize that you are jeopardizing your *entire* future? Do you realize that the longer you wait the harder it will be to go back?

LEAH

Okay, well, what if I didn't go back? Then what?

Ruth blinks, surprised.

RUTH

You have an Ivy League education. You're almost thirty--

LEAH

Mom! I'm twenty-five!

RUTH

Twenty-six in a week! Do you want to spend the rest of your life paying off your student loans on a server's salary? Because that's where you're headed.

And with that, she takes the rest of her shopping bags and leaves.

Leah grabs a couch pillow and buries her face into it, making a guttural animal noise.

AMIR

All right, let's not get dramatic.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Leah is in bed with her laptop open. She's Facebook-stalking Charlotte, whose social media presence is just as glamorous as you'd expect.

Leah thinks for a moment. She opens Google and types in "lesbian sex". She clicks on a video.

We can hear the sound of REALLY AGGRESSIVE MOANING through the laptop speakers.

PORN STAR (O.S.)

You like that you dirty, dirty slut?

Leah looks disgusted and quickly shuts the computer.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - LATER

Leah is lying alone in her bed, WIDE AWAKE, unable to sleep.

A "DING" from her phone. She checks and sees a text from her mom: "*are you studying???*"

Beat.

Suddenly, she sits up.

LEAH

Fuck it.

INT. CHARLOTTE AND MITCH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

There's a knock at the door. Charlotte opens it wearing a big t-shirt and no pants.

LEAH

Hey.

CHARLOTTE

Hey.

They stare at each other, unsure how to act.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Would you... like a cup of tea?

Leah enters, passing Charlotte.

LEAH

Why are you doing this?

CHARLOTTE

Doing what?

LEAH

You know exactly what. Kissing me, making innuendo, calling me to "hang out". Are you making fun of me?

CHARLOTTE

No.

LEAH

Then what?

Charlotte shrugs.

CHARLOTTE

I don't know. I like you, Leah. I want to see you.

Leah looks genuinely surprised.

LEAH

You... like me?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah.

LEAH

What happened Saturday night, I was drunk. It's not something that I... do.

Charlotte takes a step toward Leah.

CHARLOTTE

Yeah? But... you *did* do it.

They draw closer. It's like watching two magnets.

LEAH

I can't let you cheat on Mitch with me.

CHARLOTTE

I'm not going to make you do anything you don't want to do.

Charged beat.

LEAH

I'm glad we established that.

Charlotte grabs Leah and smothers her with kisses.

It takes Leah a second to collect herself, but when she does she kisses Charlotte back with equal fervor.

Charlotte pushes them toward her bedroom.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charlotte pushes Leah onto her bed and climbs on top of her. Leah sits up and throws her hands up.

LEAH

Wait! Wait, wait, wait, wait!

CHARLOTTE

What?

LEAH

I don't know what I'm doing.

CHARLOTTE

Me either.

Charlotte shoves Leah back down.

INT. CHARLOTTE'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Leah slowly opens her eyes. Charlotte has been watching her sleep. They are both naked.

CHARLOTTE

Good morning.

LEAH

Good morning. How long have you been awake?

CHARLOTTE

Quite a while. You talk in your sleep.
Did you know that?

LEAH

Yeah, I've been told.

Charlotte lights a joint.

CHARLOTTE

Do you want some pot?

LEAH

(jittery)

Yes. Wait, no. I don't. Sorry.

CHARLOTTE

Are you okay?

LEAH

Yeah, I'm fine.

(sits up)

I'm sorry, I... do you feel guilty?

CHARLOTTE

No.

LEAH

Not even a little?

CHARLOTTE

No. This doesn't mean anything. It's just sex.

LEAH

It's never just sex.

CHARLOTTE

This is. I'm twenty-four and I'm getting married in ten months. I want to have some fun before I take the plunge.

LEAH

So you want to do this again?

CHARLOTTE

Sure. Don't you?

Charlotte stares at her, waiting for answer.

LEAH

Yeah... but just until Mitch gets back.

Beat.

CHARLOTTE

Right. Yeah. That makes sense.

Leah assesses the situation, shakes her head and laughs.

LEAH

I only had sex with, like, two people before you.

CHARLOTTE

Oh?

LEAH

Yeah. Is that surprising?

CHARLOTTE

Not really. When I first met you I thought you looked like that primary school teacher who goes behind the headmaster's back to teach the children about Jesus.

Leah laughs and pushes her, mock hurt.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Sorry! It's true!

LEAH

That's okay, because when I first met you I thought you looked like a bitch.

CHARLOTTE

Well, I guess we had each other pegged right away then.

LEAH

(grinning)

Yeah, I guess we did.

They kiss and fall back into bed.

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - DAY

Leah leaves a table of patrons and walks to the kitchen window. She's wearing makeup and there's a spring in her step. Bimala sees her.

BIMALA

Oh my God!

LEAH

What?

BIMALA
You have a hickey!

Leah balks.

LEAH
What? No I don't.

BIMALA
Yes you do you big slut! I'm not stupid.
What's going on? Who's the dude?

LEAH
There's no dude. I burnt my neck with a
hair straightener.

BIMALA
Bullshit. You don't own a hair
straightener.
(notices; gasps)
And you're wearing makeup! What the fuck.
I can't believe you're not telling me
anything. I want details, man.

A COOK drops two steaming hot entrees off at the window.

COOK
Table six ready!

Leah takes the plates and heads toward the table. Bimala
follows her.

BIMALA
Was he hot? Where did you meet him? I
need to know, man!

Leah reaches the table and starts setting the plates
down. Bimala stands right behind her.

BIMALA (CONT'D)
Did you "S-U-C-K" his "C-O-C-K"?

PATRON
I can spell, ma'am.

LEAH
Excuse her. Enjoy your meals.

Leah pulls Bimala aside.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Would you stop? You're going to kill my
tips.

BIMALA

I'm hurt you would keep something like this from me.

LEAH

I burnt myself with a hair straightener. I swear.

Bimala gives her a skeptical look.

LEAH (CONT'D)

There's no guy. I promise. Besides, for as long as you've known me have I ever been the sort of person who just hooks up with someone on a whim?

INT. CHARLOTTE AND MITCH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON LEAH'S FACE: She's climaxing.

Charlotte collapses next to Leah. They lie in silence for a while, catching their breath.

Leah looks at Charlotte and starts giggling.

CHARLOTTE

What?

LEAH

(giggling)

Nothing.

CHARLOTTE

What?

But Leah can't stop laughing. Charlotte kisses Leah to silence her. They start getting hot and heavy again when suddenly...

Charlotte's cell rings.

LEAH

Ignore it.

CHARLOTTE

Let me just see who it is.

LEAH

Don't--

Charlotte pulls her cell phone out from under her pillow. She checks the incoming call and answers it.

CHARLOTTE

Hey, Babe!

Leah goes white.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Oh really? Oh, Babe, I'm so sorry.
Listen, don't worry about your boss.

LEAH

(mouthing)

What are you doing?!

CHARLOTTE

(into phone)

No. Honestly, he sounds like a dick...
(listens)
I miss you too! A week feels like a
decade without you.

Charlotte mouth "sorry" to Leah.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(giggling into phone)

No, you stop! I love you... Oh my God,
that sounds *amazing*... I know the owner I
should be able to get us in... (giggles)
I love you... Okay!... (giggles) I love
you!

Leah watches Charlotte talk to Mitch, guilt written all
over her face.

INT. Q TRAIN - ELEVATED TRACK - LATER

Leah is riding the train. Her phone DINGS! She looks at
the message.

ON-SCREEN we see a text from Mitch: *"Happy birthday!"*

Another DING!

"I get back tomorrow. Do you want to get a drink?"

Leah's finger hovers over her keyboard. She decides
better of it and turns her phone off.

INT. PHO SO RESTAURANT - DAYS LATER

Leah is by the kitchen window. A cook drops off some
plates of food. Leah picks them up.

MITCH (O.S.)

Hey, Stranger!

Leah SHRIEKS and drops the plates. Mitch is standing right behind her.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck.

LEAH

It's fine.

(turns around)

Julio, I need another number three.

The cook swears at her in Spanish.

MITCH

Do you have a second?

LEAH

Technically, no. But my manager is at Burning Man. What's up?

She goes and gets a broom from under the bar.

MITCH

Uh, is everything okay? You never answered my texts.

LEAH

Sorry. I've been busy.

MITCH

Do you want to get a drink after your shift?

LEAH

I better not. I'm trying to save money.

She starts sweeping up the spilled food.

MITCH

Oh come on. I'll buy.

LEAH

(snippy)

I'm not a charity case, Mitch.

Mitch is taken aback.

MITCH

I... I didn't mean it like that -- Is this a bad time?

LEAH
Yes, it's a fucking bad time! I'm at
work. Christ.

Leah bends over and sweeps the food into a dust bin.
Mitch clearly isn't quite sure how to respond.

MITCH
(take it easy)
Okay...? Can you stop by my place when
you're off? You left your hoodie there.

LEAH
Yeah, sure.

Mitch leaves.

COOK (O.S.)
Number three for table six!

Leah turns around and heads for the window.

INT. MITCH'S BUILDING - SAME EVENING

Leah, still dressed in her uniform, exits the elevator
and walks toward Mitch's apartment, which has been left
opened and unlocked.

INT. MITCH AND CHARLOTTE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Leah steps inside.

LEAH
Mitch? Hello?

MITCH (O.S.)
One second!

Suddenly, ten or fifteen people emerge.

GUESTS
SURPRISE!!!

Leah is shocked. Mitch appears, holding her hoodie with a
cheeky grin.

MITCH
I believe this is yours.

LEAH
Oh my God...

She turns and tries to leave but Mitch playfully grabs her around the waist and pulls her away from the door.

LEAH (CONT'D)
(squealing)
Aah! Put me down you weirdo!

He does. A cake is brought forward and everyone sings "Happy Birthday". Leah covers her face, embarrassed. She reluctantly blows the candles out.

INT. MITCH AND CHARLOTTE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Spencer is cutting into Leah's birthday cake. Bimala is by his side.

SPENCER
(to Bimala)
Do you want to split a piece?

BIMALA
Are you implying something?

SPENCER
What?! No!

BIMALA
Skinny bitches don't have titties like these. I'll have my own, thank you.

SPENCER
Are you like this with every guy you date or am I just special?

Leah is drinking and talking to Maddy and Derek. Maddy is showing off her ENGAGEMENT RING.

LEAH
Congratulations. When did it happen?

MADDY
A couple days ago. We're making it Facebook official tonight.

LEAH
Oh. Wow. That's great.

DEREK
This is your birthday party?

LEAH
Yep. Twenty-six.

DEREK

Oh, man. Twenty-six was the year I realized that someday I'm going to die.

Beat.

LEAH

Cool.

MADDY

We don't have a date set yet but...

As Maddy talks, Leah's eyes drift and survey the crowd. Across the room, she sees Mitch talking to some people.

He catches her eyes and SMILES. Leah SMILES BACK. It's like they are sharing a special inside joke.

Then, Charlotte enters frame and puts her arm around Mitch. He averts his attention from Leah and gives Charlotte a kiss.

MADDY (CONT'D)

...Anyway, we better go. It's past our bedtime.

LEAH

Really great seeing you.

They hug.

MADDY

(as she leaves)

We're getting old, Leah!

Leah looks miserable. She goes to the liquor table and pours herself a large glass of Evan Williams.

MITCH

Excuse me, everyone! Can I just say something really quick?

Everyone turns their attention to him.

MITCH (CONT'D)

When I was in the seventh grade, my family moved to Long Island in the middle of the school year. I was kind of chubby and really shy and I didn't relate to a lot of my classmates. Then, this super quiet girl in my English class got detention for refusing to stand for the pledge and I thought, "That girl is cool.

(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

I wanna be friends with her." And ever since a week hasn't gone by where I haven't felt the need to check in on her, or update her on my life.

(raises his glass)

To Leah -- who's been my best friend for over a decade. A great friend, a great person... sorry, I guess this speech kind of sucks. Happy birthday! You're great.

Close on Leah's face. She looks sick.

INT. MITCH AND CHARLOTTE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Leah drags Bimala, who is in the middle of eating a giant piece of cake, into the bathroom and closes the door behind her. Bimala stares at her, confused.

BIMALA

(mouth full)

...What?

LEAH

(hushed)

I am not proud of what I'm about to tell you.

BIMALA

Okay?

LEAH

You have to promise it will never leave this room.

BIMALA

Promise.

LEAH

Swear to God?

BIMALA

Which one?

She snorts and high-fives herself.

BIMALA (CONT'D)

Sorry, little Hindu humor for you. Yes, I swear to God.

Leah looks anxious.

LEAH

I've been doing a really bad thing and I hate myself for it.

BIMALA

Dude, I'm sure whatever it is you're blowing it out of proportion.

LEAH

I slept with Charlotte behind Mitch's back.

Bimala is stunned. For the longest time she doesn't say anything.

Then someone tries to enter the bathroom. Bimala slams the door in their face.

GUEST (O.S.)

Hey!

BIMALA

We're shitting!

(to Leah)

Are you fucking serious?

Leah nods contritely.

LEAH

I've just been feeling so bad about myself. It felt good to feel like I was exciting to someone.

BIMALA

Do you like her?

Leah hesitates. Bimala GASPS.

BIMALA (CONT'D)

Oh my God! You *like* her!

(cackles)

This is *amazing*!

LEAH

I don't know! I don't know what it is! My whole life I've watched girls like Charlotte have *everything* I want. The looks, the confidence, the boyfriend. And now that girl wants me! Charlotte chased me. It made me feel so powerful.

BIMALA

Since when did eating pussy become the same as sitting at the cool table in high school? Can't you go shoe shopping with her like a normal person?

There's a knock on the bathroom door.

BIMALA (CONT'D)

GO AWAY!

SPENCER (O.S.)

Bimala?

Leah opens the door. Spencer peeks his head in.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Hey, guys. Um, sorry to interrupt but there's a bit of a line growing out here.

BIMALA

Spencer! We've talked about this! Boundaries!

She slams the door on him.

INT. MITCH AND CHARLOTTE'S APARTMENT - LATER

The party has thinned. Bimala is lying on the couch, very DRUNK and rambling to a very "over-it" Spencer.

BIMALA

...My dream was to be in the *Hunger Games* movies, but then they cast that white bitch instead...

Spencer sighs.

Leah is in the middle of saying goodbye to Mitch.

LEAH

Thanks again. I had a really nice time. Almost felt like we were back in college.

MITCH

Let's hang out, just you and me. We haven't done that in a while.

LEAH

You're right, we haven't.

Charlotte approaches. Leah's body language stiffens.

CHARLOTTE
Leah, you're leaving?

LEAH
Yeah. I've got a long ride back.

CHARLOTTE
Aww. Well, it was so good seeing you.

She reaches out and gives her a hug. Leah flinches.

LEAH
Okay... bye.

She quickly leaves.

INT. CHARLOTTE AND MITCH'S BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Leah exits the apartment and pushes the button for the elevator. After a moment, Charlotte follows after her.

CHARLOTTE
Hey.

Leah turns.

LEAH
Oh. Hi.

A loaded silence.

CHARLOTTE
You didn't answer my texts.

LEAH
I know.

The elevator doors OPEN.

CHARLOTTE
Can I walk you out?

Leah doesn't say yes or no, she just gets inside.
Charlotte decides to follow.

INT. MITCH AND CHARLOTTE'S BUILDING - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Leah and Charlotte stand awkwardly on opposite sides of the elevator car. Neither seem to know what to say.

CHARLOTTE
Are you mad at me?

LEAH

No. I'm sorry. Of course not. I just don't want us to make another mistake.

CHARLOTTE

I know.

LEAH

Mitch is back. This is needs to be over.

CHARLOTTE

Right. I completely agree.

LEAH

Good.

CHARLOTTE

Good.

Silence. The elevator doors OPEN.

LEAH

So, friends, right? We're just going to be friends?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah.

They stare at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Leah and Charlotte lie in bed together, naked. Leah looks nauseated by her lack of willpower.

A long period of silence, until:

LEAH

I never thought I'd turn out to be such a shitty person.

CHARLOTTE

You aren't a shitty person.

LEAH

Yes I am. I'm such a fuck-up.

Charlotte faces Leah and brushes her hair away.

CHARLOTTE

Hey. You are not a fuck-up.

LEAH

I work a dead-end job with 80k in student debt and I'm fucking my best friend's fiancée behind his back. This is not how I pictured adulthood for myself.

CHARLOTTE

You seem to *really* hate your job. Why don't you just get a different one?

Leah hesitates, debating whether or not she should confess. Finally:

LEAH

Because I flunked out of medical school, Charlotte. I fucking *failed*.

We can tell Leah hasn't been able to say this out loud, until now. Like a weight has been lifted, she begins to speak as candidly as she would if she were in therapy.

LEAH (CONT'D)

My whole life all I ever heard was how smart I was and how much "potential" I had. I knew I wanted to do something to help people, so I thought I could do that by being a doctor, which obviously my parents loved. Then I got to medical school and I *hated* it. It was so toxic. Everyone was self-involved and hyper-competitive and I was overworked and always stressed and just so, so miserable. At the end of my first year, I was in the middle of my exams, and my mind just went... blank. It felt like a switch inside my brain flicked and all of a sudden I was empty. I couldn't remember anything and I bombed the exam. So instead of moving back home with my tail between my legs, I just stayed here and got the first job I could find, and next thing I know a shitty summer turned into two shitty years.

She looks at Charlotte, who's just watching her intently.

LEAH (CONT'D)

I'm depressed. I've been depressed for a long time. And I'm so afraid of failing again and letting myself and everyone else down that I don't do anything to change that, so I just get more depressed.

Charlotte thinks for a while.

CHARLOTTE

I think you were right when you said no one is really happy.

(beat)

I don't want to marry Mitch.

LEAH

What?

CHARLOTTE

I know. I just can't think of a reason not to. He's the best boyfriend I've ever had... and I've had a lot of boyfriends. He's smart, successful, my friends like him, my parents love him...

She pauses, also unsure if she should continue.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I remember when I was little, I was watching Pirates of the Caribbean at a slumber party. All the girls were going mad for Orlando Bloom and all I could think was, "But why should I like him? Keira Knightley is so pretty."

LEAH

I used to make out with my pillow and pretend it was Orlando Bloom.

CHARLOTTE

Guys started getting really obvious when my tits came in. When I was fourteen I had sex with this older guy in Uni. All my friends said he was so hot and I just thought, "This is what I'm supposed to do. This is what everyone else does."

Charlotte starts crying. Leah is uncomfortable with Charlotte's sudden outpouring of emotion.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

You're the only girl I've been with.

Leah blinks. She is shocked.

LEAH

...What?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah. I don't know. I think I was afraid if I tried it I would like it too much.

This revelation visibly affects Leah.

Charlotte intertwines her fingers with Leah's. She smiles sweetly at her. Leah gently pulls her hand away.

LEAH

I don't want to do this anymore.

CHARLOTTE

What?

Leah is unable to look directly at Charlotte.

LEAH

This. It was fun for a while, but it needs to stop.

Charlotte looks at Leah. Her expression goes from gutted to angry. Without another word, she gets out of bed, collects her clothes and leaves.

Leah lies back and closes her eyes, hating herself.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - NEXT MORNING

Leah sits near her windowsill pensively smoking a cigarette through the open window. She clearly hasn't gotten any sleep.

She looks down at the WINE STAIN on her bedsheet.

Then -- as the pressure from the pent-up guilt, anger and confusion becomes too much -- she starts to cry.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

CLOSE ON LEAH'S KNEE, BOUNCING ANXIOUSLY.

REVEAL Leah waiting alone at a booth, drinking a glass of wine. She checks her phone, nervous.

Suddenly, Mitch rushes inside and slides in across from her.

MITCH

Sorrysorrysorry. Something came up at work.

LEAH

It's fine. Thanks for coming.

She tosses back her wine.

MITCH

So, I've been out of the office for fifteen minutes. Let's see how many e-mails my boss has sent me.

(checks his phone)

Oh, only eighteen.

LEAH

That's more than an e-mail a minute.

MITCH

(turning his phone off)

I've started keeping a Costco-sized aspirin bottle in my desk.

(then)

You okay? You sounded stressed on the phone.

LEAH

Yeah.

Leah grabs a passing waiter by the arm.

LEAH (CONT'D)

(re: wine)

Can I get another? Thanks.

MITCH

(to Leah)

So, what's up? What did you want to talk about?

Leah takes a really deep breath, preparing herself.

MITCH (CONT'D)

You aren't dying, are you?

LEAH

No. Maybe we should order.

MITCH

Wait, no. Tell me what's going on.

LEAH

I'd rather eat first.

MITCH

(joking)

Tell me or I'll kill you.

Leah looks at him, then down at her empty glass.

LEAH

(quiet)

Are you... sure you want to marry
Charlotte?

A moment. Mitch's face is unreadable.

MITCH

Uh-huh. Okay. What makes you ask that?

LEAH

I was just wondering.

MITCH

(skeptical)

You asked me out to dinner because you
were just "wondering" this?

LEAH

I have my reasons.

MITCH

And what are they?

LEAH

I... think Charlotte may be hiding things
from you.

MITCH

What things?

Leah hesitates.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Is she cheating on me?

LEAH

NO! It's just a... vibe I get from her. I
think she has secrets.

MITCH

A vibe? Are you serious?

LEAH

Mitch, I know what I'm doing is
incredibly inappropriate, so please trust
me when I say that I would not be saying
this to you if I didn't have very good
reasons.

MITCH

Then you're going to need to give me more
to go on than a fucking vibe.

LEAH

(increasingly heated)

All right. Okay. Okay. Okay. It's not just the vibe. She's just... not right for you! We used to make fun of girls like Charlotte and now you're *marrying* her?! I remember when you wanted to be a climate change specialist and now you're doing coke and working at a douchey hedge fund and living in some culture-less glass box in fucking Williamsburg that her *parents* pay for?

MITCH

Leah, I haven't wanted to be a climate change specialist since when we were in high school.

LEAH

I just feel like you're changing yourself to be with her which is, like, *really* bad!

Mitch scoffs, incredulous.

MITCH

You're jealous.

LEAH

What do I have to be jealous of? I'm not the one throwing my life away.

MITCH

No, you're just avoiding yours.

Leah stares at him for a beat.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Get your life together. And stay out of mine.

Leah takes a moment. That stung.

LEAH

I'm sorry I said anything.

She gets up and storms off. Mitch watches her leave.

INT. DOLLAR PIZZA - LATER THAT NIGHT

Leah eats a greasy slice of pizza, cell phone to her ear. She looks miserable.

LEAH

Hey, Mom.

RUTH (O.S.)

Hi, Honey. It's good to hear from you.

Leah nods, holding back tears.

LEAH

(choking up)

Yeah, it's good to hear your voice.

RUTH (O.S.)

Is everything okay?

LEAH

(sniffling)

I just had a really bad night.

RUTH (O.S.)

What happened?

LEAH

I don't know who I am anymore, Mom.

RUTH (O.S.)

I don't understand.

LEAH

It's like, I thought I knew who I was and what I was all about, but now that person is gone.

Ruth sighs over the phone.

RUTH (O.S.)

Sweetie, your father and I have been talking about your situation and we think it might be a good idea for you to move home.

LEAH

What?

RUTH (O.S.)

Just while you get ready to go back to school, okay? New York is such a stressful city.

Leah looks to the ceiling. "Why God?"

LEAH

Yeah, okay. Thanks, Mom. I'll consider it.

They hang up. Leah looks down at her phone, feeling hopeless.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Leah is playing THE SIMS and listening to "IT ENDS TONIGHT" by THE ALL-AMERICAN REJECTS (or another mid-2000s throwback). ON SCREEN her Sim family is burning to death in a house fire.

Then her cell phone rings. She answers it.

LEAH

Mitch?

MITCH (O.S.)

Hey, Leah.

(nervous beat)

I'm outside your apartment. Can I come up?

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leah opens her door to reveal Mitch in her hallway.

LEAH

You look terrible.

Mitch enters her apartment.

MITCH

I had a panic attack.

They walk into Leah's living room. Amir is on the couch, clipping his toenails.

AMIR

(to Mitch)

'Sup.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter Leah's room and shut the door.

LEAH

What's going on?

Mitch plops down on her bed and starts rambling.

MITCH

Last night Charlotte and I were going over our wedding plans. Apparently we have to get married in some old Scottish chapel her parents tied the knot in. Vera Wang can personally design her dress. Oh, and since her dad is the CFO for British Airways we get to take a private jet to the honeymoon after the reception.

Leah sits down next to him.

LEAH

(flat)

You poor thing.

MITCH

I was just watching her talk about the guest list and the string quartet and I thought about what you said, and I felt it. I felt it so deep I couldn't breathe. My dad is an accountant. I grew up in Syosset. What am I *doing*? The wedding, the fucking dicks at my job, the expectations-- it's a lot of pressure. I'm only twenty-six years old. I've only had sex with six girls. I just woke up this morning and realized I'm so not ready for this.

LEAH

So call it off.

MITCH

I've been thinking about the sort of person I used to want to be and it didn't involve working on Wall Street and marrying some hoity socialite.

LEAH

Who did you see yourself getting married to?

They make eye contact.

MITCH

Someone more like you, I guess.

That's all Leah needs. She kisses him with a passion we haven't seen from her before.

She swings one leg over Mitch's lap to straddle him and continues kissing him with intensity.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Wait!

LEAH
What?

MITCH
Are you sure?

LEAH
Yes.

She smothers his mouth with hers.

CUT TO them fucking. Mitch is on top. Leah stares up at him. There's intense eye contact.

LEAH (CONT'D)
I'm so glad this is happening.

Mitch averts his eyes and looks up at her headboard instead.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Amir is still in his spot. Moans can be heard through Leah's door. He lowers the volume on the TV to eavesdrop.

POST-COITUS

Leah lies in Mitch's arms, writhing around in postcoital bliss. Mitch looks wracked with guilt.

LEAH
God, I want a cigarette.

She reaches for her purse and takes out a pack.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Want one?

MITCH
(quiet)
That's okay.

A phone starts ringing. Mitch grabs his pants off the floor and takes his cell phone out of his back pocket.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Hey, Babe.

Leah's face falls. Mitch gets out of bed and starts getting dressed.

MITCH (CONT'D)
Yeah, I just stepped out for some coffee.
I have to go to work in a bit.

Mostly dressed, Mitch is buttoning his shirt.

MITCH (CONT'D)
I'll call you during my lunch break.
Friday sounds perfect. Okay, love you
too.

Mitch runs out of Leah's room holding his shoes.

A moment with Leah. She looks crushed.

VOICEMAIL BEEP.

INT. LEAH'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Leah is on her phone, pacing.

LEAH
Hey, Mitch, it's Leah. Please call me
back when you get this.

EXT. ASTORIA FRUIT MARKET - ANOTHER DAY

BEEP.

Leah looks at kumquats while on her cell phone.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Hey, Mitch, please call me back. I really
need to talk to you.

BEEP.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Leah is walking down the street on her phone.

LEAH
Hey, Mitch. Is your phone getting
messages? Because I remember there was
that one time--

BEEP.

INT. ELEVATED SUBWAY CAR - ANOTHER DAY

Leah is on her cell phone. She hangs up, frustrated.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON - A WEEK LATER

Leah, visibly depressed, is lying in bed on the phone.

BIMALA (O.S.)

...And then on the train he told me he wants to be with someone nicer.

LEAH

"Nicer"? Spencer said "nicer"?

BIMALA (O.S.)

Sorry, I believe his exact words were, "pleasant". He's looking for someone more "pleasant". It's like, take the tampon out of your pussy and wipe your tears with it, why don't you?

There's a KNOCK on her door.

LEAH

What?

Amir pops his head in.

AMIR

Hey, Leah. Um, you got an invitation from that girl you were having sex with. I guess she's getting married.

LEAH

Amir! I told you not to read my mail!

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Leah goes into the living room and sees a fancy envelope on the table. She takes the card out and looks at it.

LEAH

Motherfucker...

BEEP.

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - STOCK ROOM - DAY

Leah is in the stockroom, cell phone to her ear.

LEAH

Hey, *Mitch*. It's me... *again*. Got something in the mail from your *fiancée* today.

(MORE)

LEAH (CONT'D)

Look, I really don't know why you think it's okay to invite me to your engagement party and not return my calls for two weeks but --

BEEP. Mitch is calling her back. She answers.

MITCH (O.S.)

Hi, Leah. I can't really talk long.

LEAH

Mitch, *please*. Can we just talk about what happened?

We can hear Mitch sigh over the other line.

MITCH (O.S.)

I would like you to come to the engagement party. I know my parents want to see you and honestly it would just feel wrong if you weren't there.

LEAH

Mitch--

MITCH (O.S.)

But please, please don't make a scene.

Click. He's hung up. Leah shakes her phone, frustrated.

LEAH

Fuuuuuuu--

The door opens. It's Julio, the line cook.

LEAH (CONT'D)

Julio! I'm busy!

The cook stomps his foot and explodes.

JULIO

You are not busy! You are never busy! I can see you! You are on the phone! ENOUGH! Every day with the texting and the instagram and the snapchat and the *giggle giggle giggle* it is making me crazy! You are crazy! Crazy bitches!

Long beat.

LEAH

Did you just call me a bitch?

JULIO
Pinche idiota!

He slams the door shut.

INT. FANCY EVENT SPACE - NIGHT - LATER THAT WEEK

Leah and Bimala enter the elegant ballroom of a hotel. Music, happy people, rich people, etc. Mitch's mom, LAURIE (50s), fried blonde hair, approaches. Leah stiffens.

LAURIE
Leah, sweetheart!

LEAH
Mrs. Collins!

They hug.

LAURIE
Oh, and you brought a friend!

LEAH
Yeah, this is Bimala. We're work buddies.

They all shake hands, exchange "Nice to meet you's", etc.

LAURIE
Has anyone ever told you that you just have the cutest accent?

BIMALA
Nope, you're the first ever. What's your name again?

LAURIE
Laurie.

BIMALA
Well, forgive me if I forget tonight. You people all just look so similar to me.

Bimala laughs. Laurie doesn't.

BIMALA (CONT'D)
Where's that bar at?

She leaves.

LAURIE
(to Leah)
Can you believe our Mitch?

LEAH

No. I cannot.

Bimala approaches the bar. Spencer is there.

SPENCER

Bimala.

BIMALA

Spencer.

The negative tension is palpable.

SPENCER

Let's not do this here, Bimala.

Leah is still talking to Laurie. Ruth and Allan approach.

RUTH

Congratulations, Laurie!

They hug.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You must be thrilled!

LAURIE

We are. Charlotte is such a lovely girl.

RUTH

So beautiful. Are her parents here?

LAURIE

Unfortunately, they had to go to Hong Kong at the last minute and couldn't make it. Her au pair is around somewhere, though...

Leah notices Mitch and Charlotte far away amongst the crowd, mingling. To any bystander they would look like a perfectly happy couple.

Mitch makes brief eye contact with Leah, then diverts his attention back to his fiancée.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

So, Leah, your mom tells me you're going back to Mount Sinai next year?

Leah blinks, distracted.

LEAH

What? Oh, yeah.

(then)

Sorry, would you excuse me?

She makes her way into the party. Laurie and Ruth look confused.

Bimala stands alone amongst the guests, holding a glass of champagne. Jonathan Taylor Thomas approaches her.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

I hate these things.

BIMALA

I know, right? I fucking showered. I fucking put on a dress. I'm fucking smiling. How much more effort am I supposed to put into this?

JTT smiles, charmed.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

I'm Jonathan.

BIMALA

Bimala.

They shake hands.

BIMALA (CONT'D)

Have we met before? You look really familiar.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

Yeah... I used to be an actor. I was on this TV show... but I quit.

BIMALA

Why?

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

Honestly, it just got to the point where I felt like I was doing it more for other people than for myself.

BIMALA

Oh. Well, actually I'm an actor.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

And do you like it?

Bimala thinks about this for a moment..

BIMALA

Yeah. I do. There's a lot of bullshit I have to put up with, but when I'm actually doing it, yeah. I love performing.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

Then keep doing it. I stopped because it wasn't fun anymore.

They smile at each other. There's a connection.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS (CONT'D)

Speaking of fun, I know how we can spice this party up.

JTT pulls out a cigarette case, opens it and shows her a pill.

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS (CONT'D)

Fresh from L.A.

He gives her a devilish grin. Bimala is intrigued.

Leah watches Mitch from afar. He separates from Charlotte. Leah makes a beeline for him when there's a sizeable distance.

MITCH

Not right now.

LEAH

Just five minutes. Please.

MITCH

This isn't an appropriate setting.

LEAH

Oh really? Should we wait until your honeymoon?

Mitch looks around, paranoid.

MITCH

Fine. Let's go somewhere private.

They head toward the kitchen. Charlotte watches them.

CUT TO: Bimala and JTT dancing to BASS-HEAVY CLUB MUSIC. Bimala grinds on JTT.

CUT TO A WIDE SHOT to reveal no one else is dancing and the music is ACTUALLY a four-piece string quartet playing Mozart. Guests are staring. Spencer looks on, jealous.

INT. FANCY EVENT SPACE - KITCHEN

Leah leads Mitch back into the kitchen.

MITCH

I asked you not to make a scene.

LEAH

We aren't making a scene. We're in the kitchen. Talking in the kitchen is not making a scene.

Mitch furtively checks the space. They are indeed alone.

MITCH

(hushed)

I know I've been a asshole... I just can't talk to you without feeling sick.

LEAH

Mitch, you're obviously not ready to get married.

MITCH

No. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you. I was scared and I made a huge mistake, but that doesn't mean I can't make things right.

LEAH

Jumping into a commitment you're not ready for is not making things right!

MITCH

(paranoid)

I can't talk about this. I need to mingle.

He goes to leave but Leah grabs him and pulls him back.

LEAH

No! Mitch! Forget about what happened between us for a second. Think about *you* and *your* future and the fact that you are about to make a *huge* mistake.

MITCH

It's not a mistake. I wasn't thinking clearly. I love her.

LEAH

Mitch! For God's sake! Just because you think you're supposed to do something or feel something doesn't mean you have to.

MITCH

I can't have this conversation right now.
I'm sorry we had sex. I hope you can
forgive me someday.

Mitch turns again to leave and his face pales. Charlotte
is standing in the doorway to the kitchen. She looks
CRUSHED. Who knows how long she's been there or what
she's heard.

There's a long moment where no one does anything.

LEAH

Fuck.

Charlotte turns around and leaves.

MITCH

Charlotte!

He chases after her. Leah looks like she might puke.

INT. FANCY EVENT SPACE - BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leah exits the kitchen. She looks one way and sees Mitch
scurrying after Charlotte.

She looks another way and sees Bimala grinding on
Jonathan Taylor Thomas in a crowd of black-tie attendees.

BIMALA

Hold my titties.

He does. Leah runs for Bimala.

LEAH

We have to leave.

BIMALA

What? Why?

LEAH

We have to go. Trust me.

BIMALA

Who did you do now?

Laurie gets up on the stage that's housing the band and
taps her finger on the microphone.

LAURIE

Excuse me. Excuse me.

The music cuts out. Everyone pays attention.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

I'm Mitch's mother, Laurie. I'm so glad you all could make it tonight. Can we all just take a moment to raise our glasses to the happy couple?

The guests raise their champagne glasses and clink their forks. Charlotte and Mitch, in the middle of a hushed fight, look up at everyone, momentarily distracted.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

In honor of Charlotte and my son, I'd like to take this opportunity to--

Charlotte abruptly raises her hand.

CHARLOTTE

Excuse me! EXCUSE ME!

LAURIE

Yes, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE

I hate to interrupt, but I've suddenly felt inspired to say something myself.

LEAH

(horrorified)

Oh God.

LAURIE

Well, of course, Charlotte. Everyone, Charlotte, the bride-to-be.

Everyone applauds. Bimala CATCALLS. Mitch tries to subtly pull Charlotte away as she makes her way onto the stage.

LEAH

(to Bimala)

Move it.

She grabs Bimala by the arm and pulls her through the massive crowd. Bimala rubs every head they pass.

CHARLOTTE

Um, hello everybody. Hi. I'm really touched you all took time out of your night to come here and celebrate this beautiful occasion with Mitch and I.

Mitch is in the crowd forcing a pained smile. Charlotte exhales, nervous.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

It's all just so fitting, isn't it? My whole life, all everyone has ever told me is that I have it all. Which never really resonated with me, because I always felt like there was something missing.

(beat; smiles wide)

But now, as I look out at you all, here in this perfect venue, as I stand on stage in a perfect dress, wearing perfect shoes, with perfect hair and makeup, toasting the upcoming matrimony between my perfect fiancé and I... I can't help but think that they must have been right. I suppose I do have everything. So, in honor of having it all, I'd like to share an old Gaelic proverb with you tonight...

(thinks)

God. I'm drawing a blank. How does it go? I'm pretty sure it's Irish. Maybe Scottish. Something about the sea... Oh yeah. I'm gay.

The crowd starts murmuring. Mitch's face drops in shock.

Bimala stops in her tracks and turns around, stunned. Leah grabs her to keep going but she doesn't budge.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Yes, that's right. I'm a big lesbian. God, it feels so good to finally say that out loud. And I never would have come to terms with this part of myself if not for my Chinese princess, Leah Chen.

She gestures toward Leah.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Who I was having a torrid affair with for the last month. I'm really sorry to have wasted everyone's time, and yours, Mitch. Well, I'm not that sorry.

She saunters offstage, owning it.

After a stunned moment, the entire party turns and stares at Leah. No one says anything for what feels like an eternity. Then:

BIMALA

I... I'm on drugs!

A distinguished GENTLEMAN cautiously stands up.

GENTLEMAN

I haven't paid income taxes in a over decade!

An ELDERLY LADY stands.

ELDERLY LADY

I fucked Eleanor Roosevelt!

Jonathan Taylor Thomas can't contain himself:

JONATHAN TAYLOR THOMAS

I donated sperm to multiple lesbian couples! I have at least three kids!

Spencer stands.

SPENCER

I cry myself to sleep every night!

Cécile erupts:

CÉCILE

Je suis Québécoise!

Mitch tries to leave the party. Leah races for him and gets stopped by Ruth.

RUTH

Leah, what is she talking about?

Leah ignores her mother and pushes her way through.

INT. FANCY EVENT SPACE - LOBBY

Leah runs into the lobby and sees Mitch heading for the door. She makes a mad dash and grabs his arm.

LEAH

Mitch, I...

Mitch gives her the most poisonous of looks.

MITCH

Is it true?

Leah doesn't respond.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I hope it was worth it. Because you just lost a friend.

He shakes his arm free and leaves the building. Leah stands alone in the lobby, totally defeated.

Then, Ruth exits the main event space. She spots Leah.

RUTH

Leah!

Leah tries to run but Ruth catches up to her. She's surprisingly fast.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, Leah, you could have told me you're a lesbian. I would have understood. You know I love Ellen.

LEAH

Mom! There was nothing to tell you. I'm not a lesbian.

RUTH

Are you confused? Is this a phase?

LEAH

I don't know! I can't really explain it.

Leah turns to go. Ruth grabs her.

RUTH

I am not done talking to you!

LEAH

What do you want from me?!

RUTH

I want you to go back to school! I want you to follow your dreams! You have so much potential.

LEAH

Jesus, Mom! I don't *want* to go back! I *hated* school. I fucking hated it!

Ruth explodes.

RUTH

THEN WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!

Leah is taken aback by Ruth's outburst.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I don't care what you do! I just want you to do *something*, okay? I want you to be happy.

Leah is silenced.

RUTH (CONT'D)
What do you *want*, Leah?

Beat.

LEAH
I don't know.

Leah goes to leave, then remembers something and turns around again.

LEAH (CONT'D)
But *please* stop sending me tampons!

She exits the building.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

Leah is in pajamas and a bigger mess than we've ever seen her. She pours herself another bowl of cereal in a gallon-sized glass beaker.

INT. LEAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Leah sits down on the couch next to Amir and sullenly eats breakfast. Amir watches her.

AMIR
Something on your mind?

Leah nods.

LEAH
(choking up)
Yes.

Leah starts crying. Amir hands her a tissue.

AMIR
You wanna talk about it?

Leah nods and blows her nose.

LEAH
I'm sorry-- Everything's just fucked...
Charlotte...

AMIR
Charlotte? Yeah. Okay, no offense but...

LEAH

Yeah...?

AMIR

I've been watching you for a while and, well, have you ever thought that maybe it's not Charlotte's fault things are fucked right now? Maybe it's yours?

Leah stares at him.

INT. LEAH'S BEDROOM - LATER

Leah is gutting her room. She throws her trash into a massive garbage bag. She tosses her CIGARETTES in too.

She stops over the WINE STAIN on her bed. Stares at it.

CUT TO Leah stripping her bed.

CUT TO Leah tossing the sheets into the trash bag.

EXT. LEAH'S BUILDING - DAY

Leah throws her trash on the curb.

EXT. ASTORIA, QUEENS - DAY

Leah rides her bike along the waterfront. She's pensive. The leaves have begun to change color - the first sign of fall.

INT. PHO SHO RESTAURANT - KITCHEN DAY

Leah knocks on Jim's office door, her expression neutral. She has a HAIRCUT and looks like she's put more effort into her appearance.

LEAH

Yes?

JIM

Take a seat, Leah.

LEAH

(sitting)

Is something wrong?

JIM

No, just wanted to check in. I noticed you've haven't been late in a while.

LEAH

Yeah. I've been trying to do better.

JIM

I really appreciate that. And I wanted to see if you had any interest in taking over the assistant manager position.

LEAH

Excuse me?

JIM

April's moving to Scottsdale. Do you want her job?

LEAH

Oh. I hadn't really considered it. Did you hear that I did?

JIM

No, but, I mean, I assumed you didn't want to just be a server forever.

LEAH

No. I don't.

Jim nods. Silence.

JIM

Leah, did I ever tell you about my daughter, Alice?

Leah is surprised. Jim has a daughter?

LEAH

No?

JIM

She was something. Smart as a whip. Wanted to be a marine biologist. I took her to the aquarium every weekend. Then my wife caught me cheating on her with the Kindergarten teacher and the courts gave her full custody. They moved to San Diego and you know what my daughter does now? She works at Sea World. As a goddamn custodian. And you know what, Leah? You remind me a lot of her.

LEAH

Wow.

JIM

I've wanted to say something to you that I should have said to my daughter long ago: Life is a gift. Don't waste your potential. And Leah, you have assistant manager potential. Maybe even manager potential, someday. Don't pass that up.

Leah thinks about this.

LEAH

Uh, thank you... but, you know, um, yeah, I'm- I quit.

She stands up and walks out.

INT. INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE - DAYS LATER

Leah and Bimala are browsing the LGBT section.

BIMALA

How about this one? Bi Any Other Name: Bisexual Woman Tell Their Stories.

LEAH

This is stupid.

BIMALA

I'm being supportive. How about some bisexual erotica?

LEAH

I don't know if I want to call myself bisexual. Can't I just be whatever?

Bimala peruses the pages of a coffee book.

BIMALA

This is what passes for sexy these days? Stilettos? Legs spread? Jesus fucking Christ. Where's the subtlety?

STEVE (O.S.)

Leah?

Leah turns around. Steve is standing near the end of the aisle wearing a name-tag.

LEAH

Steve? You work here?

STEVE

Yeah. The Strand was getting too commercial. What are you doing in the Queer section?

LEAH

Oh, you know, just trying to figure some stuff out.

STEVE

About me?

LEAH

No... about myself.

INT. BOOKSTORE CAFE - A LITTLE LATER

Leah and Steve sit drinking coffee.

LEAH

...I have an interview tomorrow for a caretaking job at an old folk's home. I'm considering nursing school, but I want to see if patient care is a good fit for me first.

STEVE

That's great. I'm glad you finally quit the restaurant. I know you hated it.

LEAH

Thanks. So... what's up with you?

STEVE

Well, I'm dating someone, actually. His name is Greg. We met on OKCupid.

Leah nods, jaw tight.

LEAH

I'm glad you're happy.

STEVE

I am really sorry. For lying to you. I know this doesn't excuse anything, but I really was confused. I think because I liked you so much it took me a while to realize what I really wanted.

LEAH

Thank you. I appreciate that. Really.

She smiles at him. He smiles back.

STEVE

(then)

I should get back to work.

LEAH

Yeah, I should get going too.

They stand.

STEVE

I'm glad I ran into you. I had thought about calling you, but I was afraid you'd be too angry to talk to me.

LEAH

You should have. I mean, I was already mad at you. What did you have to lose?

STEVE

Yeah. I know.

(smiles)

Take care, Leah.

He leaves the cafe. Leah watches him go.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - LATER

Leah and Bimala stand in the subway, both holding the pole. Bimala is texting someone on her phone. She giggles. Leah leans over and looks at Bimala's phone.

LEAH

Why is Jonathan Taylor Thomas texting you pictures of Jennifer Lawrence?

BIMALA

It's an inside joke.

She giggles again. The train pulls into the UNION SQUARE station. The doors open and Leah watches people leave the train, THINKING.

LEAH

I'm going to get off here, actually.

BIMALA

What? Why?

LEAH

(stepping off)

I'm going to Mitch's.

BIMALA
What?! Are you cr--

The train doors shut.

INT. UNION SQUARE SUBWAY STATION - DAY

An AWESOME SONG starts playing. Leah runs through the massive subway station. Finds the L-Train. There's PINK TAPE over the entrance - OUT OF SERVICE.

EXT. UNION SQUARE - DAY

Leah bounds up the steps of the station and runs down the street. She hails a cab and gets inside.

LEAH
Thank you so much! Williamsburg, please!
North 6th and Kent.

CAB DRIVER
Oh... I don't go to Brooklyn.

EXT. WILLIAMSBURG BRIDGE - LATER

Leah rides a CITI-BIKE, huffing and puffing up the Williamsburg Bridge. She looks sweaty and irritated.

EXT. METROPOLITAN AVE - DAY

Leah runs down the street. She reaches Mitch's building and pushes a button on the intercom.

LEAH
Chinese delivery.

MITCH (O.S.)
Go away, Leah. I know it's you.

LEAH
Mitch, please let me up.

MITCH (O.S.)
Are you insane? I never want to see you again!

A resident of Mitch's building opens the door. Leah sneaks in behind her before it shuts.

INT. MITCH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leah raps on Mitch's door.

MITCH (O.S.)

Go away!

LEAH

Mitch, please! Just hear me out!

Mitch finally opens the door. He's clearly not happy.

He steps aside and allows her to enter. Almost all of his stuff is packed into boxes.

LEAH (CONT'D)

What's going on?

MITCH

I left the firm and I'm moving home. When you hate your job and your lesbian fiancée cuckolds you with your best friend it's probably a good time to re-evaluate your life.

Mitch looks at Leah and very suddenly, he loses it.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Did I do something to you?!?!

LEAH

What? No! What?!

MITCH

Were you trying to hurt me? Because this is not the Leah I know.

LEAH

I know! I'm sorry! I'm so, so sorry! I've been depressed and I've been scared and instead of confronting my issues like a grown-up I went and made a really stupid mistake.

MITCH

It wasn't just a one-time mistake, Leah! You had an *affair*. You had a full-blown affair behind my back.

Leah struggles to keep her emotions in check.

LEAH

I know you have no reason to trust me, but please believe me when I say that I really didn't mean to hurt you. When you came back from England you had this whole new life that I didn't recognize and didn't feel a part of and -- you know what? You're right. I was jealous. I think maybe sleeping with Charlotte was, like, this psycho, convoluted way of feeling like I had a place in your new life. Because the truth is...

(hesitates -- then takes the plunge)

I love you. I've been in love with you for a long, long time and I've been so scared to say it, but fuck it, man, what do I have to lose now? I love you and I'm so sorry and--

MITCH

(interrupting)

Leah, Leah, *Leah*.

Leah stops talking. Mitch stares at her for a long time, processing this. Finally, he speaks:

MITCH (CONT'D)

You're not in love with me.

(then)

You're in love with the idea of someone who hasn't existed since we were twenty.

Leah's face falls. The heartbreaking realization that he's right is written all over it.

Leah shifts on her feet, uncomfortable. She clears her throat.

LEAH

For what it's worth, I really am sorry and I hope you can forgive me someday.

She quickly leaves.

EXT. MITCH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Leah exits Mitch's apartment building, looking dejected. Bimala is standing outside, waiting for her.

BIMALA

So... what happened?

LEAH
I don't want to talk about it...

They start walking. Leah looks sad. They walk in silence for a bit.

LEAH (CONT'D)
Do you think he's going to stay mad at me forever?

BIMALA
I don't know. But I don't think it matters.

LEAH
Why?

BIMALA
Because you need to be thinking of yourself right now. Not him.

Bimala puts her arm around Leah. Squeezes her shoulder.

Reminiscent of the final shot of Casablanca, they walk off into the fresh sunset together. **We SLOWLY FADE OUT:**

BIMALA (CONT'D)
Do you wanna go try on Fall jackets at Uniqlo?

LEAH
I'd rather make fun of couples in the park.

BIMALA
You ass! You already bought one!

LEAH
I didn't mean to! I just walked by the one on Broadway...

THE END