

FLATBUSH MISDEMEANORS

"102"

by

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EXT. DAN AND KEVIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

KEVIN and DAN take out trash bags. They turn to see the LANDLORD sitting on the steps, smoking a cigarette.

LANDLORD

Throw out the trash down the street.
City's slow to pick it up. Let it smell
bad over there.

DAN

Okay. Also, Ms. Abed, I think our roof
has a hole in it? It leaks when it rains.

LANDLORD

It's not raining right now.

KEVIN

Right. But sometimes it rains.

LANDLORD

But when it's nice, you get sun... What
apartment are you guys?

KEVIN

3D. Top floor. Where rain comes through.

LANDLORD

3D is a one-bedroom. You both live there?

KEVIN

Oh, nah, nah, no, it's um-

LANDLORD

I charge rent for one person. If it's
two, I charge more.

DAN

It's just me living there. Kevin is just
my friend who's visiting.

LANDLORD

I see him all the time.

KEVIN

I visit a lot.

Landlord stares, takes another drag of cigarette.

LANDLORD

I need to check your apartment.

DAN

Hang on, hang on.

KEVIN

Wait, wait, wait-

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'm cat-sitting for Dan.

LANDLORD
There's no pets here.

DAN
He meant house-sitting. Similar words.

LANDLORD
He house-sits while you're here?

DAN
You know, just good to have an extra pair
of eyes on the place.

LANDLORD
Where do you live?

KEVIN
Bushwick.

LANDLORD
Why don't you guys hang out there?

KEVIN
Who the fuck wants to be in Bushwick? And
your spot's nice.

Kevin gestures to the entrance, with chipped paint and a broken door handle. Landlord stares at them, considering. She tosses her cigarette on the ground, steps on it.

LANDLORD
I hate Bushwick, too.

DAN
Yeah. All right. We'll take my trash down
the street now. Then Kevin's heading home
to Bushwick.

Landlord stares. Dan and Kevin back away, then walk off.

INT. BODEGA - MOMENTS LATER

Dan and Kevin eat M&Ms in a bodega, killing time.

DAN
Couple more minutes.

EXT. DAN AND KEVIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

They approach their apartment. Landlord is gone.

KEVIN

We're good.

INT. DAN AND KEVIN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Dan and Kevin enter their apartment. Landlord sits on the couch, surrounded by Kevin's CLOTHES. Two stacks of mail. Two people live here.

LANDLORD

I'm raising the rent, \$500 extra.

Landlord exits past Dan and Kevin, who stand, beaten. Suddenly, we hear THUNDER. RAIN. Water begins to LEAK through the ceiling, trickles on both of them. On-screen, a subtitle appears: "**(bummer.)**"

END COLD OPEN

SUPER OVER BLACK: "**part i: life (saturday night)**"

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

ZAYNA, AMAYA (16), and JUNE (16) walk down the block, LAUGH to themselves, joking, whispering.

ZAYNA

I'm finna be dangerous! It's a bad bitch party-

ZAYNA (CONT'D)

and you can't get in!

AMAYA

and you can't get in!

Zayna LAUGHS, dances with Amaya. June flashes her phone.

JUNE

Ooo, look at Zeke story. Dami in there. You gonna fight her for taking your belt again, Zay?

AMAYA

Stop being messy, June. No drama tonight.

ZAYNA

Period.

JUNE

Will there too, Zay.

ZAYNA

Okay? Ain't nobody worried about him,
with all the little hoes he got.

JUNE

Sis, stop. You know that's your boo.

Zayna shakes her head, embarrassed. June and Amaya laugh.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - MOMENTS LATER

Zayna, Amaya, and June enter. KIDS dance, drink, play Uno. Amaya moves towards food. June hugs a FRIEND.

We follow Zayna, who sees WILL talking to a TALL GIRL (15) across the room. Zayna looks on, frustrated, then turns to see DAMI who takes a selfie with some friends.

Meanwhile, ZEKE (17) lights a blunt near Amaya, who stands by the food.

AMAYA

Damn, y'all already ate all the pizza?
Y'all all greedy.

We pan back over to Zayna, who turns to her left and almost walks into... Dami. They both freeze for a moment.

Zayna steps around Dami with disdain. She smiles at Will, who stands newly alone. She excitedly quick-steps over.

ZAYNA

Who was that girl you was talking to?

WILL

Hmm? She's nobody. It's calm, just chill,
but- Yo, you look good. I like your belt.

ZAYNA

Mhm. Thank you.

WILL

Yeah, shit's nice. Hey, let me show you
something in here? It's kinda quiet.

Will takes Zayna by the hand and leads her into the bathroom. As the door SHUTS, we pan over to see EAGLE (17), witness, bursting with excitement.

EAGLE

Oh shit. Zeke! Zeke!

Eagle darts across the room. He STOPS when he sees June seductively dancing.

EAGLE (CONT'D)

Damn, so you just gon' show out, huh?

Eagle starts to dance with June as Zeke approaches.

ZEKE

Yo, what happened, bro?

EAGLE

Oh, Will fuckin Zayna in the bathroom...

Zeke and June's eyes widen, LAUGH. Suddenly, we see BLUE AND RED lights. A SIREN sounds. Eagle jolts, panicked.

EAGLE (CONT'D)

Yo, cops, cops! Put your dicks away, fam!

Teenagers quickly rush for the exit, pushing each other toward the door, leaving the apartment, ending the party.

EXT. PATTY SHOP - SIMULTANEOUS

KEVIN lowers the gate to the patty shop, which has the lights off. He closes up, while DAN stands adjacent, holding a bag of food and reading off his phone.

DAN

"I know this is last minute, but I'm having a small get together for my birthday. Manchego Koko's tomorrow night. Would love to see you."

KEVIN

Sounds like a normal invitation to me.

DAN

Yeah, but she said "would love to see you." She also signed it "J" instead of "Jess," that's affectionate and she only sent it to me.

KEVIN

Maybe she invited everyone else already.

DAN

Maybe... I gotta get her a gift. What's something that says, like, 'I love you' but also, 'I respect that you are my professional superior'?

KEVIN

Why would you get a gift for someone who makes more money than you?

Kevin locks the gate.

DAN

Shit, I left my charger in there.
(off Kevin's look)
I can get it tomorrow.

Kevin takes the food from Dan. They stand in front of the shop while they scroll on their phones in silence.

KEVIN

Yoooo...this shit actually worked.

DAN

What?

KEVIN

I joined this Facebook group for old people and just DM'ed them offering to paint a loved one, dead or alive. This lady will pay me to paint her dead husband by Monday.

DAN

Dude, that's huge. First sale! That could also be a big market. Old people die a lot and I don't see them painted much.

A car pulls up blasting music. DREW winds down his window. BLUE and JON are also in the car.

DREW

Why you niggas look like you waiting on the bus?

Kevin and Dan look up, startled. Blue and Jon laugh. Kevin walks up, hands Drew the food.

KEVIN

Hey, how much longer you gonna need free food?

Drew, Jon, and Blue laugh in Kevin's face. Drew's phone RINGS. He answers.

DREW

What? It's over already? Na. Don't take the train. Zay, don't take the train! I'ma come get you.

Drew speeds off with the food. Dan and Kevin start to walk home. In the distance, we see TWO OFFICERS in an undercover car, looking on, in hiding.

SUPER OVER BLACK: "**part ii: osiris (sunday afternoon)**"

EXT. STOOP - DAY

Eagle, Will, Zeke, and TRISTAN (15) chat on the stairs.

ZEKE

Nigga, if June had her same face, but Karina's body? She'd be bad as fuck.

TRISTAN

You buggin', June body nice. If she had Amani's eyes, though? Pshhh.

EAGLE

Na here it go. If June had Amani's eyes, Kali's 4C baby hairs, Yvette's toes, and Mike Epps sense of humor? Nigga!

ZEKE

Fuck is you talkin' bout?

TRISTAN

This nigga wanna build a bitch.

EAGLE

My bad. I thought we was playing a game.

ALI (19) approaches and daps up his friends.

ZEKE

Son, where was you at last night? Party was fuego. Pack you got me had me lifted.

ALI

I told you. That LA shit different.

EAGLE

Fuck all that. *Will* different. Nigga killed Zayna last night in the bathroom.

Will attempts to wave off Eagle. Ali LAUGHS, eyes Will.

ALI

Why? She not even bad.

EAGLE

You body shaming, nigga, I love a stocky girl. I get to fuck and lift at the same time. I know he had her in the air. She was like, "Will- Oh my god, it's so big."

Ali studies Will's poker face. Will remains silent.

ALI

Zayna? Nigga, you ain't beat.

ZEKE

Fuck that. Why Will not sayin' nothin'?

Eagle pulls out his phone, starts filming Will.

EAGLE

Yo, that's a fact, boi. Stop being scared. Let 'em know you a slut.

Will looks at his friends, pressuring him to confirm.

WILL

You know Zayna's shit, I was clapping her shit in the bathroom.

EAGLE

Doggin' it out. That's what I'm talking 'bout, boi-

WILL (CONT'D)

You know how we do.

ZEKE

That's a fact. GMB. You know what it is.

TRISTAN

Deadass. Deadass.

EAGLE

GMB. Flatbush. It's a different breed.

Through an Instagram story on a phone screen, we see Will and the other boys laugh.

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Amaya watches the story on her phone. We're in the lobby of a new upscale apartment building. June works behind the desk, wearing a blue blazer. Zayna leans against the desk, listening to June.

JUNE

Ughhhh, Zay, why our food taking so long to get here?

AMAYA

Oh my gosh, bro, why you ain't tell me Will hit?

ZAYNA

What are you talking about?

AMAYA

It's on Eagle Instagram. Look.

Zayna snatches Amaya's phone, watches Instagram story of the scene we just witnessed. June watches on her phone.

JUNE

Zay, you wasn't gonna tell us?

ZAYNA

Tell you what? I didn't do anything.

June's face sarcastically says "ok."

AMAYA

I believe you.

ZAYNA

(re-watching on phone)

Them niggas ain't shit.

AMAYA

What you wanna do? We should make a video and say they lying.

JUNE

I don't know. I see how she be looking at him in Miss Herrera class.

ZAYNA

And? You be looking at frogs, don't mean you fucking them.

RESIDENT walks in. Zayna and Amaya take a few steps back. June speaks in her work voice, hands over a package.

JUNE

Good afternoon, Mrs. Brooks. You have a package.

RESIDENT

Oh. Thank you, June.

Resident walks off. Zayna and Amaya return to the desk.

JUNE

I'm just sayin'-

ZAYNA

June, you don't even know what the fuck you be talking about.

JUNE

I know niggas not talking about running through me.

ZAYNA

Cause you not nothing to talk about.

JUNE

Bitch, fuck you.

ZAYNA (CONT'D)

Fuck you.

AMAYA

Y'all need to chill cause this ain't helping nobody.

ZAYNA

Fuck her!

AMAYA (CONT'D)

Zay, you mad at the wrong person.

JUNE

(softly)

This why Dami don't fuck with you anymore.

RESIDENT 2 walks by with a dog. Zayna does not move.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Afternoon, Mr. Lindsberg.

Zayna rolls her eyes at June's work voice. JUNIOR enters the building, holding a bag of food.

JUNIOR

For Zayna? It doesn't say what apartment.

Zayna signals it's her. Junior hands over the food.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)

That's \$25.60.

ZAYNA

I get it free. Drew's my uncle.

(off Junior's confused look)

My uncle Drew...we eat for free from your restaurant.

JUNIOR

Why? Who told you that?

ZAYNA

The big headed boy with the spacey teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN AND KEVIN'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

Kevin cleans a cup over the sink. He sniffs it. It reeks. JASMINE sits on the couch. They're mid-conversation.

JASMINE

You sleep on a couch. Don't come for me.

KEVIN

Okay? You stay at your grandma crib.

JASMINE

Yeah, but I have a bed.

Kevin walks over to the couch to join her.

KEVIN

A bed just a couch without back support.

JASMINE

What? Nigga, shut up.

Jasmine hits Kevin's balls before he can sit down.

KEVIN

Fuck!

Kevin pins Jasmine down on her back. Jasmine LAUGHS, KICKS her feet, knocking over a bowl of chips.

JASMINE

See, you play too much.

They put the chips back in the bowl as Jasmine looks at Kevin's paintings on the wall.

JASMINE (CONT'D)

What do you think about when you paint?

KEVIN

Ummm, it depends. Sometimes a feeling. Sometimes a person. The best ones come out when I'm not thinking at all.

JASMINE

Lemme see the one you're about to sell.

Kevin shows Jasmine just-finished PAINTING of OLD WOMAN'S HUSBAND (shielded from audience).

JASMINE (CONT'D)

Oh. It's nice.

Jasmine does not look excited. Kevin, dejected, puts the painting back, turns to Jasmine. Just then, Dan and KAREEM, Dan's stepdad, enter, mid-conversation:

KAREEM

You thinking way too hard about this.

DAN

She said she always forgets to water her plants, so maybe like a cactus? Because those can be watered less?

KAREEM

The fuck kinda gift is that?

DAN

That's not a bad idea. That doesn't deserve that 'fuck' you gave it.

(turns to Kevin)

What's up, man. Jasmine, right?

JASMINE

Hi, you're Dan? And you're...

KAREEM

Dan's father. Pleasure.

DAN

This is Kareem- don't introduce yourself that way, don't do that-

Kareem eats chips from the bowl, turns to Dan.

KAREEM (CONT'D)

You going over to her house, right?

DAN

Na, it's at a bar nearby. Manchego Koko.

KAREEM

Ah! Be sure to try the Pulpo a la Gallega. It's fresh on the weekends.

DAN

Okay. I need an idea, man.

(to Jasmine)

A birthday gift for someone.

JASMINE

Is she your girlfriend?

DAN

She's the Vice Principal where I teach, but we have good chemistry.

KEVIN
 (to Jasmine)
 No, she's not.

JASMINE
 Depends what she likes, but a guy got me
 a Sephora gift card for my birthday. You
 can't go wrong there- it lets her choose.

KEVIN
 What about that mood board I made you?

Jasmine pauses, nods unconvincingly. Kevin looks at her,
 frustrated, then disconnects by retreating to his phone.

KAREEM
 Dan, look at me, okay? You don't need a
 gift. *Show* her you care. Action. Bigger
 the action, the more she knows you give a
 fuck. Knock someone out in front of her.
 Find someone who disrespected her, spit
 on his shoes. That's how you show you
 care. Not some fuckin' gift. That's how I
 got your mom-

DAN
 Okay, let's not-

KAREEM
 I remember, her birthday was coming up.
 Now, I did not know what *day*, but I knew
 the season. NBA Playoffs. We're walking
 down the street. She'd told me this dude
 was harassing her. Man would not stop. He
 pulled that shit in front of me, man, I
 picked up a dead baby pigeon and-
 (pantomimes throwing hard)
BAM. Smacked him right in the eye. That
 man never bothered your mother again.

JASMINE
 I'm dead.

DAN
 That was your birthday gift
 to her?

KAREEM
 Na, I got her flowers, *but* when I tell
 you, she did not care for those
 daffodils. That throw is when she knew I
 cared. He coulda fought me. I was ready.
 That's love. Throwing a dead pigeon.

JASMINE
 Yeah... Get her a gift card.

Dan considers. He looks over to see Kevin sketching, headphones in, fully removed.

Kareem eats a chip, starts COUGHING. He then drinks the water and CHOKES as it goes down his throat. Dan sighs. Jasmine looks at Kareem, then Dan. A beat, then:

JASMINE (CONT'D)
Y'all are related?

INT. GENTRIFICATION PLANT STORE - DAY

Kevin holds his unwrapped painting of the OLD MAN, not visible to the audience. He watches Dan, who wanders the aisles, debating between bizarre, extravagant plants.

KEVIN
I don't know why you stressing about this Jess thing. You hang with her a lot.

DAN
Not like a night, social hang. Like we'll go to lunch together, but it's always work-adjacent. Like, I just want to show I care about *her*, not just work.

EMPLOYEE approaches. Dan turns to her.

DAN (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm looking for something that doesn't need a lot of water or attention.

EMPLOYEE
Let me check the back.

Employee exits.

DAN
Sorry if I interrupted you and Jasmine earlier.

KEVIN
You good. I'm done with her.

DAN
You brought her over. You must like her.

KEVIN
Man, I don't care about her.

DAN
You wouldn't be annoyed at me asking about her if you didn't care about her.

KEVIN

Dan, can you stop? I don't wanna think about her. I'm selling my first piece to a stranger tonight. It feels good to sell to someone other than you or Georgia. And Georgia only offered to pay me to quit painting..

DAN

I'm glad you put yourself out there, like-
Kevin's phone rings: WORK. Kevin shows Dan.

KEVIN

Bruh, somebody probably ain't show up.

DAN

Don't answer it. What time are you dropping the painting off?

KEVIN

Headed there as soon as I get it wrapped.

Employee returns holding a LARGE POTTED PLANT.

EMPLOYEE

Our Begonias. Our best-selling plants. They only need to be watered once a week.

Kevin eyes the tag: "\$70.95". Kevin turns to Dan.

KEVIN

I know a spot that's cheaper.

DAN

Great.
(to Employee)
We'll be back.

EMPLOYEE

If you follow us online, you can save 5% on your ninth purchase for items \$90 or-

Dan and Kevin walk out as she's talking.

INT. FLATBUSH CATON MARKET - CLOTHING SECTION - DAY

A plain-clothed MAN watches soccer behind a booth with A GIRL (3). Kevin and Dan idly wait for his attention.

KEVIN

You got a cactus?

MAN

You gonna buy it?

KEVIN

Yeah, that's why we're asking.

MAN

Twenty dollars.

Dan hands him a \$20. Man finally looks up.

KEVIN

Oh, and some wrapping paper.

Man stares at Kevin. Kevin adds one dollar.

MAN

Peggy! Where'd you put that cactus I found? Peggy?!...Mama?!

Man exits. Kevin waves at the Little Girl. She stares. Kevin's phone rings: WORK again. Kevin scoffs, ignores. Kevin stares at his painting, tilts his head, uncertain.

KEVIN

What do you think of this?

Kevin shows Dan the painting, still hidden from audience.

DAN

It's great. I love it.

KEVIN

Yeah?

DAN

Yeah. It's supposed to be an old man, right? Yeah, he looks just like one. But there's nuance to it. I don't know. I can't really describe it, but it's cool.

KEVIN

If this were your dead grandad, would you pay for it?

DAN

For sure. I didn't like my grandfather, but yeah, this guy seems nice.

Kevin nods, grateful. His phone rings: WORK again. He ignores. A text from WINSTON: "KEVIN, COME INTO WORK."

KEVIN

You lucky you get the weekends off.

DAN

I still have to lesson plan and grade and give Zayna an award every week 'cause of Drew, like- I don't know. She was supposed to do a five-minute research presentation on Friday, but she just showed her favorite TikToks.

KEVIN

I have to steal from work for him, so...

DAN

I don't know how we'd, like, get away from him. Maybe after the school year...

Kevin receives a call: "UNKNOWN NUMBER." Kevin answers the phone. We hear WINSTON screaming.

KEVIN

....Okay.
(hangs up, turns to Dan)
I gotta go to work.

DAN

What? Now? No. You gotta drop off your painting. Your art matters. That's your passion. It's your first sale. That's way more important than-

KEVIN

You can come pick up your charger.

DAN

Oh, that'd be great actually, my phone's at like 2%.

SUPER OVER BLACK: "**part iii: vortex (sunday night)**"

INT. PATTY SHOP - NIGHT

An impatient CUSTOMER stands in front of Junior.

CUSTOMER

Damn. Y'all don't have shit left. Lemme just get some plantains cause that mac & cheese look like it give strep throat.

Kevin and Dan enter the shop. Dan holds the CACTUS. Kevin holds his now-wrapped PAINTING.

JUNIOR

About time. Have fun.

Junior takes off hairnet, throws it at Kevin, walks out.

KEVIN

Yo, what are you-

Kevin turns to Junior, who's already gone. Customer turns to order from Kevin, who rushes to kitchen. Dan follows.

CUSTOMER

Can I get some service?!

INT. PATTY SHOP - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Kevin and Dan enter to see DISHES, Kevin's co-worker, lean against a counter near a RUNNING faucet. He plays on his phone, which is charging.

KEVIN

Yo, what's going on, man?

DISHES

Winston said you have to close tonight.

KEVIN

Why? I'm not even on the schedule.

DISHES

Something about giving away free food.

KEVIN

Bro, what the fuck!

Kevin storms out of kitchen. Dan creeps towards Dishes.

DAN

I- I think that's my charger.

INT. PATTY SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Customer hands Kevin a DEBIT CARD. Kevin points to a SIGN: "For Card, \$17.50 minimum."

CUSTOMER

"\$17.50", where y'all get these numbers from?

Customer starts counting his coins. Drew enters, focused.

DREW

Yo, Kev! Where that white boy at?

CUSTOMER

Bro, wait to order-

DREW

Fuck outta here. Where that white boy at?

KEVIN

I- I haven't seen him.

Dan emerges from the back. Drew sees, turns to Kevin.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Oh, there he is.

DAN

Drew, Zayna got an "A", we're okay.

DREW

Come here.

Dan hesitates, ducks underneath the counter to Drew.

DREW (CONT'D)

You know this kid Will from your class?
Where does he live at?

DAN

Why...Why do you need to know?

DREW

Why you asking me what the fuck I need? I
asked **you** a question. Where does he live?

DAN

I can't give you his address, Drew.

DREW

Did this nigga fuck my niece? Hmmm? Did
he fuck my niece and post about that shit
online? Or is he lying?

DAN

I don't- I don't know, I don't know!

DREW

You don't know? You they teacher, right?

DAN

Yeah.

Drew slaps Dan's chest.

DREW

So what are you gonna do about this?

DAN

I can't- I can't tell you where he lives.

Drew slaps Dan's chest harder.

DREW

I said, what you gonna do about this?!

DAN

Okay, I can't- I can't give you his address. I could lose my job if I-

Drew pushes Dan against the table where the cactus is. Dan YELPS. It's thorny. Kevin approaches.

KEVIN

Yo, Drew, let him go-

DREW

What are you gonna do about *this*?

DREW (CONT'D)

(to Kevin)

Nigga, back up!

Drew grabs Dan's neck and points him out the window where he sees: Zayna outside. She looks sad, defeated, broken.

DREW (CONT'D)

Look at her! Look! What are you gonna do about this?

DAN

Okay, okay! I'll go with you, just to- make sure it's all okay.

DREW

So let's fucking go.

KEVIN

Dan, do you-

DAN

I'm fine. I'm okay. I'll see you.

Drew and Dan start to exit. Dan doubles back.

DAN (CONT'D)

Wait, sorry. Sorry.

Dan rushes back to the counter to grab his cactus.

DAN (CONT'D)

I just have a birthday party after.

Drew glares at a nervous Dan, who exits. Drew follows. Customer continues to count coins, looks up at Kevin.

CUSTOMER

If I can't afford the whole chicken, how much for just the skin?

INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Drew drives. Dan sits in the back next to Zayna, on her phone, headphones on. On her phone, we see: "1 missed call - Dami". Dan searches for something to say.

DAN

(to Zayna)

Might do a pop quiz on Thursday.

Zayna ignores Dan. On her phone, we see Will's profile: "Are you sure you want to block Will?" Zayna clicks "Yes." They drive in silence.

INT. PROJECTS - HALLWAY

Drew, Zayna, and Dan stand outside an apartment door. Drew BANGS on the door.

JANELLE (O.S.)

Who is it?

DREW

It's Dominoes, nigga, open up!

JANELLE (35, Erykah Badu vibes, Will's mom) opens door.

JANELLE

Excuse me?... What is this?

Drew, taken aback at Janelle's beauty, falls quiet. Dan looks at Drew, turns to Janelle.

DAN

Hi, Ms. Mitchell. We met at a PTA thing, I'm Will's teacher. This is Zayna and-

DREW

I'm Zay's uncle. Andrew. Will did some awful things to my niece. Can we talk inside for a bit?

Janelle sighs, opens the door.

JANELLE

Come in.

JANELLE (CONT'D)

(to Zayna)

You want some tea?

ZAYNA

No-

DREW

DAN

I'll take some Chamomile.

Just ice water for me.

*

INT. PATTY SHOP - NIGHT

Kevin, behind the counter, checks his phone, opens text exchange with Dan, who has not answered Kevin's last text: "u good?". WOMAN (40s) pokes her head in.

WOMAN

Excuse me, what's the name of that other Caribbean restaurant? The one like this, but with better food.

KEVIN

MangoSeed. 'Round the corner.

Woman exits. Kevin receives a TEXT: "Kevin, I'm going to sleep soon. I will cancel our deal if you're not here shortly." He sees previous TEXTS: "Hello??" "Hello??!?"

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Fuck...

Dishes emerges from the kitchen with bags.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You leaving? You do the dishes?

DISHES

Nope. Boss said to leave all the work for you tonight. He's very mad at you.

KEVIN

You can't help me? We'll get done faster.

DISHES

I helped. I turned off the office lights.

Dishes exits. Kevin makes up his mind to leave, too. He urgently grabs his painting and FLICKS OFF the lights.

INT. PROJECT - APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Janelle, Zayna, Drew sit from left to right on a couch. Janelle eyes her son, Will, who sits on a chair across them. Dan sits on a chair on the opposite side. Drew blows the hot chamomile tea. VISIBLE STEAM.

JANELLE

You gonna apologize or you gonna make us sit here all night?

Will can't bring his eyes up to look at Zayna.

WILL

My bad. I ain't mean to do you like that.

JANELLE

Will, who you are talking to? Lift your head up and look this young lady in her eyes. Apologize for putting that trash out there and you better mean it.

Will raises his head, looks Zayna in her eyes. Zayna stares back. Drew eyes Janelle, distracted. Dan taps his thighs. Will fidgets in his chair for a beat, then-

WILL

I'm sorry for saying what I said about you, Zay. It was stupid. I wasn't thinking about how it'd make you feel and I wish I could take it back. I'm sorry.

Drew, absorbed in Janelle, waves off Will.

DREW

Cool, we got the apology. Zayna forgives him, everything's good. Love, can I get some honey for this tea?

Janelle walks to kitchen. Drew stands up, forces Zayna to switch seats with him, so Drew can sit next to Janelle.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Kevin holds the painting under his arm while swiping his MetroCard: ERROR. Train arrives. Panicked, he swipes again and again. He places the painting horizontally above the turnstile, sneaks underneath, takes his painting, then turns to see... The train doors shut.

INT. PROJECTS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dan texts Jess: "Train delayed. Be there soo-" as his phone DIES. Panicked, he CLICKS frantically. Dead.

Janelle now sits next to Drew as Will and Zayna text each other in secret. Texts appear on screen as subtitles.

JANELLE

You know, I'm really sorry about all this-

Will: "why u actin so weird?"

Zayna: "why u lie so damn much?"

DREW

It's all good.

Will: "i ain't lie. Stop calling me ousside my name."

JANELLE

No, it's not. I...it's really hard raising this boy.

Zayna: "u are a liar."

DREW

I know the feeling.

Will: "u actin like u didn't come in the bathroom."

JANELLE

He's at that age where, beating him would hurt my body more than it would his, so I just- I don't know what to do with him.

Zayna: "fuck that got to do with u putting it on ig?"

DREW

You're doing what you can. Don't worry, he's a good kid.

Zayna: "u a liar and a bitch."

JANELLE

Thanks for bringing her by.

Will: (text bubbles appear... then disappear)

Zayna: yea fuck outta here.

DREW

Nah, thank you. This means a lot to Zay. She appreciates you.

Zayna: "and ya mama ugly af".

Dan looks at the time. Clock ticking on Jess's party.

DAN

Okay, I think we'll head out now, right,
An-drew? Thank you, Ms. Mitchell.

Zayna and Dan walk to door. Drew turns to Janelle.

DREW

Hey, you single?

JANELLE

What?

DAN

Oh, no.

DREW

I think we could be good for each other.
Matter of fact, I got y'all a little
peacemaking gift.

Drew snaps to Dan, gestures to his cactus. Drew stares at Dan, who sighs, reluctantly presents it to Janelle.

JANELLE

I don't want that fuckin' thing.

DREW

True, that was his idea. That shit sucks.

Drew turns his back to Dan, who bites his lip, enraged.

DREW (CONT'D)

I'm not gon lie, I was coming over here
to beat your son's ass, but after seeing
you and learning your situation- baby,
you could benefit from somebody like me.

JANELLE

Nigga, look around my apartment. Does it
look like I need a man?

Drew looks around the beautifully-decorated apartment, processing, taking it all in. He looks at her, struck:

DREW

You gay?

JANELLE

Okay. Bye.

INT. OLD WOMAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Kevin knocks on the door. We hear steps SLOWLY approach as Kevin impatiently waits. IRENE (70, Jewish) answers.

IRENE

Sorry, I was putting my grandbaby to sleep. It takes forever to get her down.

KEVIN

No, it's okay. I'm sorry I'm late. So here this is...

Kevin hands her the painting. Irene unwraps it. We finally see the PAINTING: A carefully-crafted illustration of a MAN on a park bench. An intricately-drawn face. Accurate portrait of a man, in a rich, vibrant environment. A surreal blend of worlds in the background, beautifully merged, bursting with potential.

IRENE

You forgot his hat.

KEVIN

He wasn't wearing a hat in the picture.

IRENE

This doesn't look like the Percy I loved.

Irene hands the painting back to Kevin.

KEVIN

But you sent me a picture. I painted exactly what you gave me.

IRENE

It's very accurate, but it's not... flattering... He looks so heavy.

KEVIN

He was heavy!

IRENE

I know, but... He shouldn't just be shown the way he was. You know what? I'm going to just use my niece's painting. Let me show it to you. She did such a great job.

Irene reaches to a nearby counter and shows Kevin a finger painting of Percy on notebook paper. He is a stick figure with X's for eyes, tan skin, and a black hat.

IRENE (CONT'D)

You tried, but you didn't know him.

KEVIN

Mam, I spent all weekend painting this, I spent 6 hours on the shading alone. I just left my job because you said you needed this thing tonight, so I'll probably get fired. I did all of this for you. Now you're telling me- what are you telling me? You're not gonna pay me?

IRENE

Why would I pay you? I don't need it.

KEVIN

You told me you **needed** it!

Kevin looks into the eyes of Irene, a widow, softens. He hangs his head. Irene looks at Kevin, sympathetic.

IRENE

You should take my niece's cookies.

Irene ducks into the apartment. Kevin awaits, confused. She returns, holding a box of GIRL SCOUT COOKIES.

IRENE (CONT'D)

They're Peanut Butter Patties.

Kevin, defeated, reaches for the Girl Scout Cookies.

IRENE (CONT'D)

They're \$20.

EXT. ROOF OF DAN AND KEVIN'S APT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Kevin finishes his last Girl Scout Cookie on the roof. He drinks a beer, sways his dangling legs over the edge like a kid at a doctor's office. Faint sounds of the city. Cars pass. A COUPLE argues. He's not alone, but he feels that way. He drinks again. Halfway through a six-pack.

Dan opens the creaking door, which doesn't shut all the way. He elbows it shut, GRUNTING, angry, annoyed.

KEVIN

You make it to Jess's?

DAN

Hm? Yeah, it was fine. It was good.

Dan, heated, lost in thought, walks towards Kevin. Kevin stays seated, drinking, in profile to Dan.

KEVIN

Did she like the cactus?

Dan paces back and forth, shakes his head to himself.

DAN

I'm fucking done with Drew, man. I can't-
it's just too much. We gotta cut him out.
We can't see him or talk to him again.

Kevin takes a drink.

KEVIN

So what? We supposed to just say, 'Hey
Drew, it's been cool, but I think we're
growing apart'?

DAN

We report him. Get a restraining order.

A motorcycle REVS up, drowning out Kevin.

KEVIN

No, man, I'm not-

DAN

Wait, speak up.

More motorcycles REV up. Biker gang. Super loud.

KEVIN

(slightly louder)
I said no.

DAN

Dude, I can't hear you.

KEVIN

*I'm not getting a restraining order on a
nigga!*

The motorcycles take off. For a moment, it's quiet.

DAN

Why? Why not? A judge rules he can't come
near us. If he does, he's arrested.

KEVIN

He's not gonna listen to that shit. He
doesn't give a fuck about the law. A
restraining order won't stop him. But say
it works and he's arrested. Then what?

DAN

"Then what"? He goes to jail.

KEVIN

So he doesn't have friends? How long is he gonna be locked up for?

SIRENS: An AMBULANCE approaches. Dan paces, shakes his head, frustrated, in denial. Ambulance gets LOUDER.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

What happens to his niece?

DAN

That's not our problem. That's-

Dan rubs his eyes as ambulance passes. Siren fades. Calm.

DAN (CONT'D)

I don't fucking know, man.

Dan pulls out bottle of Xanax, takes one. Kevin watches.

KEVIN

You good?

DAN

It's just- when I'm stressed. It's okay.

Dan sits next to Kevin, who drinks more beer.

KEVIN

I might quit my job.

DAN

Why would you quit?

KEVIN

That's the only way he been getting to us. If I quit, he can't really get to us-

DAN

He could still show up to the school.

KEVIN

You got security there.

A beat. Dan offers Kevin a pill, but Kevin waves it off.

DAN

I didn't actually make it to Jess's party. Like, by the time I got there, everyone was gone.

Kevin offers Dan a beer, but Dan waves it off.

DAN (CONT'D)

It's all just too fucking stressful.

KEVIN

What do you mean?

DAN

Just running around. For my job, my mom, Kareem, you-- you know, you help. Not you. But this Drew shit just makes it too much. I can't- maybe I try to transfer?

KEVIN

Na, without you, the kids wouldn't learn...the subject you teach...

DAN

Yeah... Don't quit. We just avoid him. When he shows up, run into a precinct. Stay in public. Keep a distance. Treat him like an alligator.

KEVIN

You think that'll work?

DAN

No, but maybe he'll get bored and find someone else to bully.

KEVIN

Right. Okay.

DAN

Okay...did that lady like your painting?

KEVIN

Yeah. Loved it...

The sound of cars HONKING. Dan and Kevin look over the ledge. We see A MAN MOONWALKING ON A CAR.

SUPER OVER BLACK: **"part iv: empathy (monday morning)"**

INT. ZAYNA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight creeps into Zayna's room. A HAND, Drew's, pushes Zayna awake. Zayna covers herself with the blanket.

DREW

Wake up, girl. Why you still sleep?

ZAYNA
I don't feel good.

DREW
Man, take yo lying ass to school.

Zayna begrudgingly gets out of bed and walks out of her room. Drew, closely behind, jokingly mocks her groans.

INT. PATTY SHOP - MORNING

Kevin stands behind the counter. He stares off. Winston BARKS at him, while walking around, setting up the shop.

WINSTON
My food, Kevin! You been giving my food to children? For free? How you think I make money?

KEVIN
I didn't- I just said that, but I-

Winston holds up dirty pots and pans.

WINSTON
I mean, look at this. What is this? You didn't clean shit.

KEVIN
That's Dishes, that's not me-

WINSTON
He told you to do it. You think I'm playing games? I'm cutting your hours.

KEVIN
Mr. Winston, it's not that serious-

Drew enters, silently approaches the counter, listening.

WINSTON
It is that serious. Don't try that. And I know you closed early last night. My sister came by five minutes before closing, said you'd already closed.

KEVIN
I closed it ten minutes before.

Kevin looks at Drew. Winston, unfazed, continues to bark.

INT. BEAUFORD DELANEY HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Zayna enters school late. The hall is full of STUDENTS. Zayna sees Amaya and June LAUGHING with Will, Tristan, and Eagle. They don't see her. Are they talking about her? Laughing at her? They have to be.

JESS approaches the group.

JESS

Get to class, kids, the bell is not a suggestion!

Zayna hides in a nearby bathroom as Will and friends disperse. We follow Jess, who walks into...

INT. ADMIN. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jess enters her office, which reads, "JESSICA HELTON: VICE PRINCIPAL." Dan stands inside. Jess shuts the door.

JESS

Hey Dan. Thanks for- do you want to sit?

Dan sits. Jess sits behind her desk.

DAN

Hey, I'm sorry I missed your party. It was just- last night was hectic and-

JESS

That's okay! You didn't miss much. It was a really small hang. I had like three drinks, then ended up dancing by myself, so- probably best you didn't see that.

Dan squints, unsure how to appropriately respond.

DAN

Yes.

JESS

Anyway, that's not why I- sorry. I have to ask you. Okay, so, I was working in the lounge this morning and I heard some kids joking in the halls. And one said, you better be careful, or Mr. Joseph would come to your house...

Dan stares, shakes his head.

DAN

Weird... Who said that?

JESS

I couldn't tell, I just overheard, but- you've never threatened to go over to a kid's house have you?

DAN

No. I've never threatened to- no.

JESS

Right. I knew that. I knew that. Like it sounded so unlike you, I heard that and thought, 'Dan would never say, 'I'm gonna show up at your house.'"

DAN

No. Yeah. No. I wouldn't say that.

JESS

I figured...I have real problems with Mr. Catalano. He threw a chair at a student. He's gotta be sent to the rubber room.

DAN

On the third floor with the art?

JESS

What? That's the art room.

(off Dan's confused look)

It's a disciplinary measure. The district sends you to a room with other teachers until they finish an investigation. It's like a holding cell for teachers.

DAN

Oh yeah, yeah, I knew that. I knew that.

JESS

Yeah. Sorry I had to ask about-

DAN

All good...Oh, for your birthday, I got-

Dan hands Jess a Sephora gift card.

JESS

Aw! Look at that. Thank you, Dan!

DAN

I almost got you a cactus, since-

JESS

Ohhhh. Yeah, they would live longer! That's sweet. They're so ugly, though.

DAN

Oh yeah. I wouldn't have actually got one-

PRINCIPAL DOUGLASS (40s, worn-down) enters with CPS AGENT (30s, clean cut, suit).

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Joseph, can we talk to you outside?

DAN

Yeah?

Dan stands, follows CPS Agent and Principal out the door.

JESS

Principal Douglass, what's-

PRINCIPAL

I have it from here, Jessica.

INT. PATTY SHOP - SIMULTANEOUS

Winston continues to chew out Kevin. Drew waits silently.

WINSTON

You think I was born yesterday, boy? Just get out of my sight.

Kevin starts walking out.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

KEVIN

Home. You just said to--

WINSTON

After you clean the dishes properly and help this customer.

(in Creole)

Fucking idiot.

Winston, fed up, storms to kitchen. Drew chuckles a bit.

DREW

What they pay you here? 15 a hour?

KEVIN

9 plus tips. Nobody tips. The usual?

Drew watches Kevin, head down, slowly gathering his food.

DREW

Yo, I appreciate how you and what's-his-name are looking out for Zayna.

KEVIN

It's nothing.

DREW

Na, it's something. I was just telling my boy, Zay need some regular role models. Some regular niggas with regular 9 to 5's with regular ass lives. Show her life ain't easy. That's why I don't want her eating here for free. Your friend should tutor her, make sure she earns those A's. She's gotta work for what she wants. I don't want her to grow up and be one of these bum ass bitches that eat off of other niggas hard work.

(assertively)

Put more gravy on the rice.

Kevin puts more gravy on the rice, per Drew's request.

KEVIN

You ever work a regular job?

DREW

Hell na, nigga, I like money.

KEVIN

True.

DREW

This shit a trap. These niggas get comfortable disrespecting you, then you get comfortable being disrespected. Don't let 'em walk all over you, son.

Kevin, conflicted, finally makes eye contact with Drew. For the first time, he looks at Drew with admiration. His pride, his confidence, his self-respect. As Kevin hands Drew his food, we hear a SIREN faintly in the background.

WINSTON (O.S.)

Kevin! Where is my phone charger?

KEVIN

I'll see you, man.

Kevin walks to the back, where an angry Winston awaits. Drew leaves \$20 in the tip jar, exits the shop.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Zayna, dressed in gym clothes, hangs her belt in her gym locker. Amaya sits on the bench, tying her laces. In the background, Dami faces her locker, listens in.

ZAYNA

Amaya, you supposed to be my friend. Why were you talking to those boys knowing they put that shit out there about me?

AMAYA

Zay, don't get mad at me, just 'cause other people talking. I can't stop them.

Zayna SLAMS her locker, exits into...

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Amaya and Zayna emerge from the Girls' Locker Room. Dami exits a couple steps behind.

Eagle hustles out of the Boys' Locker Room, turns back.

EAGLE

Yo, meet me in the bathroom later, Zay.

Eagle runs ahead, LAUGHS with his friends. Zayna, hurt, inhales, but keeps walking. Dami observes from afar.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - EARLY AFTERNOON

COACH MASON (30s, heavy) watches STUDENTS play wall ball.

Eagle THROWS the ball, which BOUNCES off the wall and HITS Zayna's leg. Zayna should run to touch the wall, but she doesn't move. She doesn't want to play. Tristan picks up the ball and throws it at the wall.

TRISTAN

Zayna out!

Zayna walks off the court and sits against a nearby gate. HERBERT (16, overweight), also out, slides over to Zayna.

HERBERT

Hey...I heard what happened, Zay. It's fucked up. I'm here if you need anything.

Zayna doesn't react. Herbert grabs Zayna's hand.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Really, anything you need.

ZAYNA

Get the fuck away from me, Herbert!

Herbert, confused why she's not into him, slides away.

In the game, the ball SLIPS out of Eagle's hands. He races to the wall, which he TOUCHES to stay in the game.

EAGLE

Damn, that ball wetter than a bitch in a bathroom.

Some of the students LAUGH, glance over at Zayna.

Dami is fed up. She catches the ball and hurls it at Eagle. *BAM*. It SMACKS him right in the eye. Eagle falls to the ground.

DAMI

Talk that shit now, nigga!

STUDENTS

Oooooooooooooooooo!

Students LAUGH. Mr. Mason rushes over to Eagle.

MR. MASON

Shit! Someone get the nurse. Dami, go sit on the sidelines!

Dami sits right next to Zayna. On-screen subtitle: "**(dami woulda thrown a dead pigeon if she could have)**"

Dami and Zayna laugh as Eagle winces in pain.

EAGLE

Owwwwwww. It burns.

MR. MASON

Okay, don't be weak.

Mr. Mason picks up Eagle and carries him away. Some kids follow. Zayna and Dami smile and tilt their heads toward each other, friends again. On-screen, a final subtitle: "**(sweet as hell)**".

INT. EMPTY SCIENCE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dan sits across from CPS AGENT, who flashes his ID.

CPS AGENT

Mr. Joseph, my name's Carlos. I'm with New York Child Protective Services. We have an open case on one of your students whose safety is at risk. Can you answer a few questions?

Dan looks at Principal, who is as serious as an officer.

DAN

Sure.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

We watch from the hallway, through the glass window of the closed door as the CPS Agent speaks.

We cannot hear what the CPS Agent is saying. He appears calm. Principal folds her arms. Dan pauses. CPS Agent pulls out a pen and small notepad, readies to take notes.

Dan starts to speak...

END.