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LIKE FAMILY

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CHARACTERS

AUBREY - (20s-30s) Optimistic. Trusting. Romantic disaster area. She was the kid in foster care who always believed her mom would come and take her back. Currently a nanny, but dreams of being a pastry chef - food is both a passion and an obsession. She takes risks, gets knocked down, then gets back up again. And often doesn't learn from it.

ARTIE - (20s-30s) Dry. Scared. Scarred. Seems tough, but it's all surface. He's mistrustful and annoyed by everything, especially people his age who he sees as lazy and entitled. His soft spot is Aubrey and he is very protective of his "sister." Terrified of being poor again, he always has a bunch of jobs going. Unlike Aubrey, he's cautious about taking risks in life or in love. That's where Aubrey steps in. Frequently.

MASON - (20s-30s) Cocky. Spoiled. Typical millennial. Completely self-assured with nothing backing it up other than a lifetime of his parents telling him he's great. Still "finding himself," his dreams and enthusiasms pivot from week to week. His confidence - often bordering on rudeness - is so compelling that most people just do his bidding. Including women - which makes Artie jealous and annoyed.

CAMILLE - (late 30s-40s) Vain. Self-involved. Overwhelmed. Will do absolutely anything to stay young and beautiful. Writes a rich lady type blog (like GOOP), makes rich lady candles (from beehives on the roof), has rich lady friends and rich lady problems. Constantly busy, but taking care of her children is not at the top of her list.

JESSIE - (14) Anxious. Awkward. Unparented. Camille's daughter and complete opposite. Desperate for approval and attention and some parenting from someone, she spends a lot of time with Aubrey and Artie.

HOLLIS - (4) Destructive. Terrifying. Almost feral. Camille's unseen little boy who wreaks havoc.

ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

AUBREY AND ARTIE (6-8, DIFFERENT RACES) SIT IN A WAITING ROOM. ARTIE WEARS A "KNICKS 1994 NBA CHAMPS" T-SHIRT.

AUBREY

What's gonna happen?

ARTIE

I don't know.

AUBREY

My name is Aubrey.

ARTIE

I'm Artie.

AUBREY POINTS TO ARTIE'S SHIRT.

AUBREY

They didn't win.

ARTIE

They make both. They give the wrong
one away for free.

AUBREY

So that's a loser shirt.

ARTIE

(SHRUGS) Yeah.

A BEAT.

AUBREY

I think my mom's gonna come get me.

ARTIE

Mine's not.

AUBREY

You want to play something?

ARTIE

There's no toys.

AUBREY

(LOOKS AROUND) We can use those.

AUBREY GETS UP AND STARTS TAKING CUPS FROM A WATER DISPENSER.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

We can turn them into things.

ARTIE

(NERVOUS) I don't think you're supposed to do that.

AUBREY

It's okay.

ARTIE

We're gonna get into trouble.

AUBREY

We're not gonna get into trouble...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FROZEN YOGURT SHOP - DAY (20 YEARS LATER)

AUBREY AND ARTIE, AS AUBREY FILLS A SAMPLE CUP.

AUBREY

We're not gonna get into trouble!

ARTIE POINTS TO A SIGN READING "THREE SAMPLES MAXIMUM."

ARTIE

It says three samples.

AUBREY

(CALLING OUT) Excuse me! Fifth sample!

ANGLE ON: THE TEENAGE CASHIER, WHO SHRUGS INDIFFERENTLY.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

See? It's froyo. They factor
stealing into their costs.

ARTIE

Yeah, well, stealing was one of the many
things my dad went to prison for. It's
triggering. I wouldn't even open my
birthday presents until I saw a receipt.

AUBREY

(RE: SAMPLE) This is like two cents
worth of sugary milk. Your dad stole
VCRs and camcorders from Circuit City.

ARTIE

None of those things are around
anymore. (WRYLY) Including my father.

SFX: TEXT ALERT. AUBREY LOOKS AT HER PHONE AND SQUEALS.

AUBREY

This is it. I need to remember this
moment because I'm going to tell this
story a million times.

ARTIE

What? What?

AUBREY

Remember that time I met a guy at a party and texted you, "I just met the love of my life. This is fate." But then it turned out he was there with his girlfriend, who was super nice, and I came home crying?

ARTIE

Yeah. Long night.

AUBREY

Well they must've broken up, because I just matched with him! This is fate.

ARTIE

Aubrey, maybe don't get too--

AUBREY

Awww, he has a dog!

AS SHE CONTINUES LOVINGLY SCROLLING THROUGH HIS PICTURES:

ARTIE

I could never date someone with a dog. She'll always love it more than you. You get attached to the dog and then when she breaks up with you, you miss her and the dog. I'm getting depressed just thinking about it. No dogs. Maybe a fish. Maybe.

AUBREY

He's so hot. Wanna see?

ARTIE

Long hair, beard, looks like Jesus?

AUBREY

Okay, I have a type.

ARTIE

It's a weird type.

AUBREY

Not my fault. When I hit puberty we were placed with that super religious family that only let us have one poster on the wall...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SMALL BEDROOM - NIGHT (FIFTEEN YEARS AGO)

CLOSE ON JESUS POSTER. PULL BACK TO REVEAL AUBREY AND ARTIE (12-14) KNEELING NEXT TO A BED, EYES CLOSED, HANDS CLASPED.

AUBREY

And thank you Jesus for being so merciful and forgiving. And loving... (LOOKING AT POSTER) and handsome. Your kind eyes, flowing hair... healing touch...

ARTIE LOOKS AT HER ASKANCE.

FLASH FORWARD:

INT. FROZEN YOGURT SHOP - PRESENT DAY

AUBREY

It's complicated with me and Jesus.

ARTIE

Not me. Just another adult saying he's going to come back some day.

(MORE)

ARTIE (CONT'D)

(THEN) Aubrey, you get too revved up about these guys, and every time you get your heart broken.

AUBREY

That just means I'm due for a good one. Haven't you ever gambled? You worry about you. (GRABBING HIS PHONE)
Let me see your matches.

ARTIE

Give that back.

SHE TYPES IN THE PASSCODE AS HE TRIES TO GET IT BACK.

AUBREY

(RE: PICTURE) How about this one?

ARTIE

(LOOKS, SHAKES HEAD) Beret.

AUBREY

Good call.

SHE KEEPS SCROLLING AND THEN DOES A DOUBLE-TAKE.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

Oh my god, that's her, right?

AUBREY POINTS TO A GIRL, BLAIR (20S) IN THE SHOP. ARTIE LOOKS AT THE GIRL AND THE PICTURE.

ARTIE

It *is* her. So weird, seeing a dating app person in the wild.

AUBREY

No filter, not surrounded by less attractive friends. It's like she's naked. (THEN) Go talk to her.

ARTIE

What? No. You can't mix apps and real life! The whole point of apps is to avoid this part. (THEN, NOTICING) Wait, what are you doing?

AUBREY

Messaging her for you. And send.

ARTIE TRIES TO GET THE PHONE BACK BUT IT'S TOO LATE. THEY LOOK OVER AT BLAIR AS SHE GETS THE MESSAGE.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

Got it, reading it...

ARTIE

(TURNING AWAY) I can't watch this.

AUBREY

She's looking at your picture... making a face. Ooh, bad face...

ARTIE

I'm hideous.

AUBREY

...really bad face.

SFX: SNEEZE

AUBREY (CONT'D)

Ohh, it was just a pre-sneeze face!

ARTIE

This is torture.

AUBREY

Now she's... putting her phone away?

(ON THE MOVE) How dare she ignore you?

Swipeless B.

ARTIE

Aubrey, no. No no no, nononono.

BUT AUBREY IS ALREADY STRIDING OVER TO BLAIR.

AUBREY

Hey! Excuse me, but you just flat-out

ignored a message from my brother.

BLAIR

(LOOKS OVER) Your brother?

AUBREY

Well, not actually my real brother, we

were in foster care together. (OFF

BLAIR'S SYMPATHETIC LOOK) Nuh-uh, do not

make the sad face. We're not all effed-

up pity cases who got beaten and abused,

although, not gonna lie, does happen.

(SPOTS, GASPS) Whaat? Pumpkin spice

latte, how did I miss that one? (AS SHE

FILLS SAMPLE CUP) But, like, despite all

that, Artie is an amazing guy who has

worked super hard, he has like a million

jobs cuz he's terrified of being poor

(MORE)

AUBREY (CONT'D)

again. His family was practically eating rats. (TAKES LICK, SWOONS) Sooo good, right? Why don't they have this flavor all year? It's not like this thing is hooked up to a pumpkin patch. Anyways, will you give him a chance?

BLAIR

Well--

AUBREY

Thank you! Artie, come over here.

ARTIE, MORTIFIED, COMES OVER.

ARTIE

Hi. Sorry. Her. Artie.

BLAIR

Blair. Hi. Nice to meet you.

ARTIE OFFERS HIS HAND, BUT AUBREY GRABS HIS WRIST.

AUBREY

Wait. His hands are always sweaty.

SHE TAKES A NAPKIN AND WIPES ARTIE'S PALM. THAT DONE, HE AND BLAIR FINALLY EXCHANGE AN AWKWARD HANDSHAKE. AUBREY BEAMS.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

I feel good about this. I definitely deserve another sample.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

SCENE BINT. CAMILLE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

AN UPSCALE CITY KITCHEN. AS AUBREY BLENDS A GREEN SMOOTHIE:

AUBREY

(CALLING OUT) Jessie, school! Hollis,
put that down!

SFX: LOUD CRASH

AUBREY (CONT'D)

Not what I meant!

AUBREY FINISHES BLENDING AND POURS IT INTO A CUP AS CAMILLE
(40ISH, SELF-ABSORBED) BREEZES IN.

CAMILLE

Ah, look at that healthy goodness. A
green smoothie is the only way to
start the day.

CAMILLE TAKES A SIP AND NEARLY GAGS.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

I can't do it! I want to be a green-
smoothie-in-the-morning person, but I
just can't do it! All day long, I'm
going to be around women who had green
smoothies for breakfast and what am I
supposed to say?

AUBREY

Maybe don't bring it up?

CAMILLE

That's like not bringing up you're on a
cleanser or that you already went to the
gym or that you're feeling fat today.
You can't keep those things inside! Oh
god, I just want to wash my hair.

AUBREY

So... wash it?

CAMILLE

Don't you read my blog? Washing hair
is the worst thing you can do to it.
Washing hair is the new smoking.
(SIGHS) It must be so easy being you.

JESSIE (14, AWKWARD STAGE) ENTERS, EAR TO HER PHONE.

JESSIE

(INTO PHONE) Just going into the kitchen.

CAMILLE

Oh, sweetie, is that what you're
wearing?

JESSIE

It's my uniform. (INTO PHONE) Yeah, my
mom. (LAUGHS) Oh my god, that's so mean.

CAMILLE

Who are you talking to, Jessie?

SHE SHOWS A BLANK PHONE SCREEN.

JESSIE

No one.

CAMILLE

(PUZZLED) What now?

JESSIE

Aubrey told me when I feel anxious or awkward to pretend to be talking on the phone.

AUBREY

It's something I used to do. When you're the new kid all the time it makes you seem less unpopular.

CAMILLE

That is brilliant. (TO JESSIE) People will think you have friends. (THEN TO AUBREY) They give cell phones to foster kids?

AUBREY

I found a broken one in a dumpster. Dumpsters were kind of like my Apple Store. Sometimes I found apples.

CAMILLE

Jessie, listen to her sad stories. You can use them for your college essay.

JESSIE

That's okay. I have my own.

AUBREY HANDS JESSIE A PAPER BAG.

AUBREY

Lunch. Backpack's by the door.

JESSIE

Bye, Aubrey. Bye, Mom.

CAMILLE

Bye, darling.

JESSIE EXITS. AUBREY STARTS CLEARING BREAKFAST DISHES.

AUBREY

I'll take Hollis to the park in a few.

CAMILLE

Oh, good. And if you run into any of my friends' nannies, could you please pretend Hollis can read? And let it slip that the reason he doesn't talk is one of those "actually he's a genius" things boys have now.

(EXHALES) Parenting is exhausting.

How am I going to handle a third one?

AUBREY

Camille, you're pregnant?

CAMILLE

Oops, did I let that slip? Look, Aubrey, I consider you a friend, and I know you consider me a role model.

AUBREY

Uh--

CAMILLE

Anyway, Brant wants to have another child and I said no way.

AUBREY

So, you're not pregnant.

CAMILLE

I can't ruin my body with another baby. (PLAYFUL SINGSONG) But I know some body who mi-ight...

AUBREY

Wha?

CAMILLE

(STILL PLAYFUL) Someone who already doesn't care how she looks in a bikini.

AUBREY

I care how I look--

CAMILLE

Good, you know it's you. So what do you think? Will you be our surrogate?

AUBREY

You want me to have a baby?

CAMILLE

It wouldn't be yours, silly. You'd just carry it and give birth to it and take care of it and help get it into college. But it's our baby.

CUT TO:

SCENE C

INT. AUBREY & ARTIE'S APT. - MORNING - LATER THAT MORNING

ARTIE IS DRESSED IN WORK CLOTHES. AUBREY IS PIPING FROSTING ON AN EXQUISITE LOOKING CAKE AND OCCASIONALLY INTO HER MOUTH.

ARTIE

Ninety thousand dollars?! What did
you say?

AUBREY

I said I'd think about it.

ARTIE

I don't know, Aub. This all sounds a
little *Handmaid's Tale*.

AUBREY

I know... I'd be "OfBrant." Which
makes me sound like the knockoff stuff
the state used to give us at
Christmas.

ARTIE

Yeah, nothing says you're the poor kid
like wearing "Adidos."

HE LOOKS TO ADD SOMETHING TO HIS COFFEE, HOLDS A CARTON.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

When did we all just go, "Yeah, almond
milk."

AUBREY

(MOUTH FULL) It's healthy.

ARTIE

(AMUSED) You're eating frosting.

AUBREY

I'm cooking.

SHE SQUEEZES SOME FROSTING ON ARTIE'S FINGER.

AUBREY (CONT'D)

Taste. Jessie's school's bake sale.

ARTIE

(TASTES) That's soo good.

AUBREY SQUEEZES SOME MORE IN HER OWN MOUTH AND SWOONS.

AUBREY

God, I love sugar. If I ever had to give up sugar, I wouldn't want to live... I wonder if that's how my mom felt about heroin? Although you can't compare the two addictions. Sugar is way more fattening.

ARTIE

Maybe let's not go down the "why heroin is better" road. (THEN) You really are talented.

AUBREY

That money would sure pay for culinary school... what's your day, when can we really talk about this?

ARTIE

Construction job this morning, Uber
after that, bartending tonight.

AUBREY

Wow, long day.

ARTIE

Hey, no one's paying me to get
pregnant.

AUBREY

That's true. Men's bodies have very
little commercial value.

ARTIE

Those girls who sell their virginity
for a million dollars? Literally
couldn't give mine away.

AUBREY

Ninety thousand dollars. Can you
imagine not worrying about money?

ARTIE

I can't. But... (MIMES PREGNANCY)

AUBREY

I know. It's a huge decision. That's
why I need to be completely rational
and unemotional.

SFX: TEXT SOUND

AUBREY (CONT'D)

Oh my god, he texted me! Forget
Camille, I want to have a baby with
Jesus! I mean the guy who looks like
Jesus!

ARTIE

Aubrey--

AUBREY

(RE: PHONE) I texted him: "Hey." And
he texted back: "Hey yourself." We
already have bits! Our kids are going
to be so funny. Should I ask him out
now or wait?

ARTIE

Definitely wait.

AUBREY

Should I?

ARTIE

Yes.

AUBREY

But *should I*?

ARTIE

Yes! Look, I just don't want you to
get hurt again. Last time was bad.
You didn't get out of bed for a week.

AUBREY

And I can't wait to tell him about it
and hear him say "Who would hurt you
like that?" (THEN) I'm just gonna do
it. (TYPING) I'm a strong, secure
woman. If he's not interested, that's
fine. (SENDS, BEAT) Why hasn't he
texted back yet?! (RE: PHONE) C'mon,
dot dot dots, c'mon! (THEN, EXCITED)
Dots! (THEN) No! They're gone! Come
back! Come back, dots!

SFX: KNOCK AT DOOR. AS ARTIE CROSSES TO OPEN IT:

ARTIE

This is what I'm talking about.
Insanity is doing the same thing over
and over and expecting a different
outcome. I keep telling you this over
and over and you never listen to me.

ARTIE OPENS THE DOOR. MASON (20S, PLEASED WITH HIMSELF)
ENTERS, CARRYING A LARGE JAR FILLED WITH A YELLOW LIQUID.

MASON

I come bearing homemade limoncello.

ARTIE

Mason, it's 9 A.M.--

MASON

I'm surprised I'm up this early, too.

AUBREY

I'll have some. (OFF ARTIE'S LOOK)
What? I don't have to pick up Hollis
until noon.

ARTIE

Well, I have to get to work. (TO
MASON) I know, a novel concept for
you.

MASON

That's pretty ironic, you're saying I
don't work while before you is the
limoncello that took me a month to make.

ARTIE

It didn't take you a month. You put
lemons and vodka in a jar and left it
in a closet for a month.

MASON

I kept an eye on it. And just now
added syrup and fresh lemon zest.

AUBREY

Did you do that or your mom?

MASON

The point is, it got done. And I saw
to it that it got done. Apology
accepted. (THEN) Why does it bother
you so much that I still live with my
parents?

ARTIE

Because it doesn't bother you at all.

MASON

My parents enjoy supporting me and understand it may take some time to find the perfect career to fit my special skillset. Speaking of which, I want to invite you to the first public performance of my improv group: Open To Suggestions.

ARTIE

Don't do improv.

MASON

No, that's our name.

ARTIE

I stand by my statement.

MASON

It's my new passion. Check out my spacework. (MIMING) I'm in a box.

AUBREY

(LOOKING AT PHONE) Shut up!

MASON

Yeah, I suppose the box should go without saying.

AUBREY

No. My future husband said yes! (TO ARTIE) Now we both have dates.

MASON

Artie? A date? Baller.

ARTIE

I'm gonna cancel.

MASON

Artie, Artie, Artie.

ARTIE

What?

MASON

Look at me, look at me, look at me.

ARTIE

Stop saying things three times.

MASON

With respect, your game is crap. You canceling a date with a real-life human woman? Not an option, bro.

AUBREY

He's right. How about we make it a double date? I'll be there to support you, you'll be there to check out my perfect guy.

MASON

And you will all come to my improv show. To quote myself, a woman laughing is a woman conquered.

ARTIE

You didn't say that, Napoleon did.

MASON

Two conquerers. One mind.

ARTIE

We're not doing this.

AUBREY

I already texted her.

ARTIE

Give me my phone.

AUBREY STARTS TO HAND IT BACK, BUT MASON GRABS IT.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MASON

(AS HE DOES) I'm changing your
background pic to a super-hot girl.
On you date, say she's your ex and you
just dumped her ass. That's
attractive.

AUBREY

It so is. Such a good idea.

MASON

Artie needs the help.

AUBREY

He really does.

AS ARTIE GRABS HIS PHONE BACK WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOSCENE D

FADE IN:

INT. BAR/CLUB PERFORMANCE SPACE - NEXT NIGHT

ANGLE ON A SMALL STAGE WHERE A COMIC IS FINISHING HER SET. PAN TO AUBREY AND ARTIE AT A TABLE, ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR THEIR DATES TO ARRIVE. MASON APPROACHES.

MASON

Hey, guys. Do me a solid? When I ask for audience suggestions, yell out "horny dentist." I got a bit.

ARTIE

You do realize if you take the improv out of improv, you literally have nothing.

SFX: TEXT SOUND.

AUBREY

That must be him. (LOOKS AT PHONE)
Ulch, from Camille.

SHE PRESSES A BUTTON AND WE HEAR A VOICE TEXT.

CAMILLE (V.O.)

(SINGING) Having my baby/What a lovely way of showing how much you--

AUBREY STOPS IT.

AUBREY

She's bugging me for an answer.

MASON

Do it. It'll ruin your body, but
you'll have the money to fix it.

AUBREY

Excellent point. Speaking of, how do
I look?

MASON

Like if you had a father, he'd tell
you to go put some clothes on.

AUBREY

(PROUDLY) Exactly what I was going
for.

MASON

(TO ARTIE) Now you, dude. Next time,
consult me. Experts say to dress for
the future you want. You look like
you want to die alone.

ARTIE

Doesn't matter. She's not gonna show.

AUBREY

She's here.

ARTIE TURNS TO SEE THAT BLAIR HAS ENTERED. SHE WAVES TO HIM.

MASON

Whoa. That's a full house and you're
holding eight-high.

ARTIE

What do I do?

MASON

Bluff.

ARTIE GATHERS HIMSELF AND HEADS OVER TO BLAIR.

BLAIR

Hi, Artie.

ARTIE

Blair. You're here. Amazing. (LONG BEAT) I'm realizing I only prepared what I'd say to myself when you didn't show up. I should have put more time into what I'd say to you if you did.

BLAIR

How about "Can I get you a drink"?

ARTIE

Wow, you know just what to say to a girl.

BLAIR LAUGHS, THEN SPOTS AUBREY, WHO WAVES.

BLAIR

Oh. Aubrey's here.

ARTIE

Yeah, she's waiting for her date.

BLAIR

Y'all are so close.

ARTIE

"Y'all"?

BLAIR

Oops. I usually try to hide my red state roots on a first date. (THEN) Oklahoma.

ARTIE

You like country music?

BLAIR

I don't admit that 'til the third date.

ARTIE

Aubrey and I were once placed with this family that was really into country music, and we got hooked. We do this thing called "Sad Country Song Friday Night" where we listen to super-depressing country songs and do a shot of bourbon every time we hear the word "lonesome." You can get pretty drunk.

BLAIR

You're an interesting guy.

ARTIE BEAMS, THEN NOTICES AUBREY ANXIOUSLY SCANNING THE DOOR.

ARTIE

Hold that thought, grab a table, order whatever you want, I'll be right there.

HE CROSSES OVER TO AUBREY.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

You okay?

AUBREY

Why isn't he here yet?

ARTIE

Don't start freaking out.

AUBREY

I texted him but he's not responding!

ARTIE

(WORRIED) How many times did you text him? More than three?

AUBREY

(BEAT) It's a multiple of three.
Look, I'm cool, go back to your date.

ARTIE

You sure?

AUBREY NODS. ARTIE CROSSES BACK TO BLAIR.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Sorry about that.

BLAIR

I ordered a pitcher and I couldn't decide between onion rings or fried calamari so I got us both.

ARTIE

They teach you red state girls right.

BLAIR NOTICES THE HOT GIRL PHOTO ON ARTIE'S PHONE.

BLAIR

Who's she?

ARTIE

Uh... my ex. I wasn't feeling it.

BLAIR

(INTRIGUED) Really.

ARTIE IS SURPRISED AND PLEASED THAT IT WORKED.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

So why only sad country songs?

ARTIE

Well, first of all, there's nothing sadder. And somehow listening to those songs with someone else when you've had a lot of sadness in your life makes you feel less--

ARTIE IS AGAIN DISTRACTED BY AUBREY WHO IS NOW STARING AT HER PHONE, DISMAYED.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Last time. Promise.

HE CROSSES TO AUBREY.

AUBREY

He just texted me that he's not coming. Why does this keep happening to me? What did I do wrong?

ARTIE

Nothing. Look, the guy's no good. Even his voice-- (STOPS, REALIZING)

AUBREY

What?! You *called* him?

ARTIE

I did, but I just wanted to make sure
he was in it for the right reasons.

AUBREY

In it for the right reasons? This
isn't *The Bachelor*! You scared him
away! How could you?!

MASON

Who feels like laughing?

MASON AND HIS TROUPE TROT OUT ON STAGE AS AUBREY LOOKS AT
ARTIE, HURT AND ANGRY.

MASON (CONT'D)

Hello, everyone, I'm Mason and we
are... Open To Suggestions.

THE AUDIENCE HECKLES INSULTS: "GET OFF THE STAGE", "LOSE
WEIGHT", "SUCK MY--"

MASON (CONT'D)

Oh-kay. First we're gonna need a
place. Maybe a box.

MASON DOES SOME OF HIS BOX SPACEWORK. AUDIENCE MEMBERS YELL
OUT PLACES INCLUDING "TRAIN STATION."

MASON (CONT'D)

Train station. Now we need an object.
Maybe a box?

MORE SPACEWORK. AS AUDIENCE MEMBERS CALL OUT OTHER
SUGGESTIONS, ANGLE ON: ARTIE AND AUBREY, STILL FURIOUS.

AUBREY

You had no right to interfere that
way! What did you do, take my phone?

ARTIE

You take my phone all the time! I was just trying to protect you!

AUBREY

Stop protecting me! You ruined everything!

MASON

Okay, now we need a type of person. Anyone?

MASON CONFIDENTLY POINTS TOWARDS ARTIE AND AUBREY'S TABLE.

AUBREY

(CALLING OUT) A horrible brother!

ARTIE

(CALLING OUT) A *concerned* brother who doesn't want someone to get hurt again!

BLAIR

(PISSSED) A date who's paying more attention to his "sister"!

MASON

Okay, I heard "horny dentist." Let's begin...

AS THE TROUPE BEGINS TO CAPER ABOUT, AUBREY RISES AND STORMS OFF, ARTIE FOLLOWS.

ARTIE

Aubrey, wait! (THEN TO BLAIR AS HE PASSES) Be right back, promise.

RESET TO:

INT. CLUB - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

AUBREY RUNS INTO A NEARBY HALLWAY WITH FRAMED PHOTOS OF COMICS ON THE WALL. ARTIE FOLLOWS.

ARTIE

Aubrey, please stop.

AUBREY

I had such a good feeling about this guy, Artie. What if he was the one?

ARTIE

Then he would have showed up! You build these guys up and think they're gonna, what, come save you? It's the foster kid dream all over again, that parents are going to show up and everything will be wonderful. You've just replaced parents with men.

AUBREY

Or maybe you don't want me to be happy and fall in love and abandon you. The ultimate foster kid nightmare.

ARTIE

Of course I want you to be happy. But you've got to be more practical. Think things through. You're living in a fantasy world.

AUBREY

And you live in a world of fear. And
I think that's worse.

BLAIR ENTERS THE HALLWAY.

BLAIR

I'm going home.

ARTIE

Blair, I'm really sorry about tonight.
I'll call you. (OFF HER LOOK) Or never
speak to you again. That's also an
option.

BLAIR

This brother-sister thing y'all got
going is just a little too weird for me.

BLAIR EXITS, ARTIE TURNS TO AUBREY.

ARTIE

Great. Because I had to look out for
you, my date was ruined.

AUBREY

So leave me alone. She's right, our
thing is weird. Are we family, are we
friends, it's all mixed up. (BEAT)
Maybe it's time, y'know? Start living
our own lives. Maybe always insisting
we be together messed us up from the
beginning. I think that I could've
gotten adopted without you.

ARTIE

Well, I know I could've-- (HE STOPS HIMSELF)

AUBREY

What?

ARTIE

Nothing. Forget I said it.

AUBREY

What do you mean you could've?

ARTIE

Remember that couple, we were about nine, I kind of looked like the dad?

AUBREY

Crooked nose, weird body?

ARTIE

No need for specifics. They asked if I wanted to be their son and I said only if they took you, too.

AUBREY, STUNNED, TAKES THIS IN.

AUBREY

How dare you put that on me? How dare you say because of me you didn't have a family?

ARTIE

Aubrey, I didn't mean to--

AUBREY

Stop. I'm moving out. Tonight.

SHE EXITS. ARTIE STARTS TO FOLLOW, BUT GIVES UP. WE HEAR THE SOUND OF TEPID APPLAUSE ON STAGE. MASON ENTERS THE HALLWAY, EXCITED.

MASON

We killed! Hey, if they want an encore, yell out "clumsy men's room attendant." I've got a thing. (THEN) Dude, you look miserable.

ARTIE

Aubrey's moving out. Blair left.

MASON

(OFFERING HUG) C'mere, man.

ARTIE

No thanks.

MASON

C'mon, bring it in.

ARTIE

That's okay.

MASON

You need it, bro.

ARTIE

Okay fine. (HUGS, THEN) Y'know, this actually is helping.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Let's give it up once again for Open To Suggestions!

MASON

That's us! (THEN) Dude, get off me.

HE PUSHES ARTIE OUT OF HIS ARMS AND TROTS OUT, LEAVING ARTIE ALONE.

AND WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREESCENE E

FADE IN:

INT. ARTIE AND AUBREY'S APARTMENT - A WEEK LATER - DAY

MASON IS THERE, ARTIE CHECKS HIS PHONE.

MASON

Artie, stop. You're checking your phone like a chick.

ARTIE

You're right. She wants me out of her life, fine. I just, y'know, want to know she's okay.

MASON

Hey, now that she's not living here anymore, can I date her?

ARTIE

What? No! No way am I gonna let her--
(CATCHES HIMSELF) No longer any of my business. And what has looking out for her ever gotten me anyway? I remember this one time I was trying to stop these guys from picking on her...

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

AUBREY AND ARTIE (12-14) FACING OFF-SCREEN BULLIES.

AUBREY

Don't you even think about hitting Artie!

(MORE)

AUBREY (CONT'D)

He's my brother and I love him and
he's too nice to fight back!

ARTIE

Not helping, Aubrey.

INT. AUBREY & ARTIE'S APARTMENT - BACK TO PRESENT

ARTIE

Man, they beat the crap out of me.
But it's funny... before I blacked
out, I thought - that's the first time
someone ever said that they loved me.

MASON

(NOT LISTENING) I've never dated a pregnant
chick before.

ARTIE

What?

MASON

It's a real big boobs vs. morning sickness
situation.

ARTIE

Aubrey's pregnant?

MASON

And now I'm remembering she told me
not to tell you. But, in fairness, no
one should tell me something they want
me to keep secret. That's on her.

CUT TO:

SCENE HINT. FERTILITY CLINIC - LATER THAT DAY

A WAITING ROOM MOSTLY FILLED WITH WOMEN AT SOME STAGE OF PREGNANCY. AUBREY WATCHES AS AN UNCOMFORTABLY PREGNANT WOMAN WADDLES BY, GRUNTING IN PAIN. ANOTHER VERY PREGNANT WOMAN, EVA, AND HER HUSBAND SIT NEXT TO AUBREY. AUBREY SNIFFS AND MAKES A FACE.

EVA

I'm sorry. I just can't control it.

AUBREY

No worries.

AUBREY PRETENDS IT'S NOT THAT BAD AS ARTIE ENTERS.

ARTIE

Aubrey.

AUBREY

Artie, what are you doing here?

ARTIE

Look, I know you told me to stay out of your life, but I can't let you do this.

AUBREY

Well, I'm doing it. I'm having this baby.

ARTIE

With your boss's husband?

EVA

(TO HUSBAND) They are like Cesar and Maria on *La Reina del Sur*.

AUBREY

(TO EVA) What did Maria do?

EVA

She married Cesar.

AUBREY

I can't marry him. He's my brother.

EVA

So was Cesar. (THEN) He's your
brother?

AUBREY

Well not technically, we met in--
Look, I don't have the energy to--

CAMILLE (O.C.)

There she is! There's my little oven!

WE SEE THAT CAMILLE HAS ENTERED WITH JESSIE IN TOW. CAMILLE
HOLDS TWO INSULATED BAGS AND EXTENDS ONE TO AUBREY

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

I brought sperm and soup.

AUBREY

Thanks, I'm hungry.

CAMILLE

Oops, that's the sperm. (SWITCHES
BAGS) It's cream of cauliflower.

AUBREY

Maybe later.

SHE SETS IT ASIDE. CAMILLE HOLDS UP THE SPERM BAG PROUDLY.

CAMILLE

Brant outdid himself. He was looking at a picture of me. Sincerest form of flattery right here.

JESSIE

I'm very uncomfortable.

ARTIE

Look, Camille, she's not doing this.

AUBREY

Yes, I am. You were right, I need to be more practical, stop living in a dream world.

ARTIE

But I also said you gotta think things through.

CAMILLE

I see what's going on here. Let me get my checkbook. Here, hold this.

CAMILLE HANDS THE SPERM TO A DISMAYED JESSIE SO SHE CAN OPEN HER HANDBAG.

JESSIE

But that's Dad's...

EVA

(APPALLED) She's your daughter?

CAMILLE

(FLATTERED) Shocking, right?

EVA

Yes.

CAMILLE QUICKLY SIGNS A CHECK AND HANDS IT TO AUBREY.

CAMILLE

Anything with four zeroes is fine.

(TO JESSIE) Now let's get this back there while it's still warm.

JESSIE

Would you please take it?

CAMILLE

Fine. (TAKES BAG) I hope this baby is a little more helpful.

CAMILLE AND JESSIE CROSS AWAY TO THE BACK.

ARTIE

Aubrey, this is not you.

AUBREY

Well, maybe it's the new me.

ARTIE

Just because they're paying you doesn't mean it won't be your baby. I know you. You cry when you have to say goodbye to other people's dogs. You of all people will never be able to give away a child. (BEAT) That was done to you.

AUBREY TAKES THIS IN.

AUBREY

You're right, I couldn't give away a baby. I mean, who could? (REALIZING)
No offense to any surrogates here helping a desperate couple, which is, like, amazing.

ARTIE

C'mon, let's get out of here.

THEY START TO EXIT, BUT BEFORE THEY DO, AUBREY TURNS.

AUBREY

Excuse me, I just want to say something: don't have a kid unless what you want is to really take care of that kid. Forever. If you don't want that, don't have one, and if you do, then do whatever it takes to care for and keep that child. Because it hurts to be given away and that hurt never ever goes away.

AUBREY TURNS AND COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH JAMES (20S) WHO LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE JESUS.

JAMES

Excuse me, but that was awesome.

AUBREY

Thank you.

JAMES

I'm just here helping my friend and her wife get pregnant. Maybe we could grab a drink sometime?

AUBREY

Weirdest pickup line ever? (THEN, QUICKLY) I mean, it worked.

ARTIE

Look, Aubrey, what do you even know about this--

AUBREY SHOOTS ARTIE A LOOK. HE STOPS HIMSELF AND STEPS AWAY AS AUBREY, SMILING, TURNS BACK TO THE GUY.

CUT TO:

SCENE J

INT. AUBREY & ARTIE'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

IT'S SAD COUNTRY SONG FRIDAY. ARTIE AND AUBREY (WEARING ARTIE'S 1994 WORLD CHAMPS TEE , NOW OLD AND FADED) WITH SHOT GLASSES AND A BOTTLE OF BOURBON SINGING ALONG TO HANK WILLIAM'S "I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY."

AUBREY/ARTIE

Hear that lonesome...

THEY BOTH TOSS BACK A SHOT.

AUBREY/ARTIE (CONT'D)

*Whippoorwill/ He sounds too blue to
fly/The midnight train is whining
low/I'm so lonesome...*

ANOTHER SHOT. THEY'VE ALREADY HAD A FEW.

AUBREY/ARTIE (CONT'D)

...I could cry.

AUBREY

Do you know how many men I've been
with because nobody loved me?

ARTIE

Do you know how many women I haven't
been with because nobody loved me?
(THEN) Aubrey, what I said, about
getting adopted--

AUBREY

You don't have to.

ARTIE

No, I do. Because what you said was wrong. You said that because of you I didn't have a family. But the truth is, because of you, I have a family.

AUBREY

(TOUCHED) Same.

ARTIE

And I need to trust you to make your own choices. Even if it means you might get hurt.

AUBREY

And I'll trust you to go after what you want.

ARTIE

I may need a little push.

BEAT.

ARTIE (CONT'D)

Here's where you're supposed to say "I may need a little pull."

AUBREY

Is it?

THEY LAUGH.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES - NIGHT

YOUNG AUBREY AND ARTIE ARE PLAYING WITH THE WATER CUPS.

ARTIE

Where do you thing we're gonna go?

AUBREY

Maybe we could go to the same place.

ARTIE

I hope so. I'm scared.

AUBREY

It's gonna be okay.

SHE TAKES HIS HAND.

ARTIE

Sorry it's so sweaty.

AUBREY TAKES A NAPKIN, WIPES HIS HAND, THEN HOLDS IT AGAIN,
AS WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW