

MAID

"Sky Blue"

Episode 109

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Inspired By

Maid: Low Wages, Hard Work, and a Mother's Will to Survive

By Stephanie Land

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1

INT. AN UNDEFINED DARKNESS/VACUUM - BLACKNESS (D1)

1

We're back in the pit with Alex, right where we left her in 108, surrounded by inky darkness. But some time has passed.

Alex has been in this (emotional) pit for 4-5 weeks now. She looks muted, drawn, pale. She stares off like a zombie.

Then, from far away, and high above her, a voice:

REGINA (O.S.)

Alex?

(then)

You in there?

Then there's a distinct: KNOCK KNOCK.

REGINA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's Regina.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Alex looks up. The top of the pit is far away. Too far away to even consider climbing. KNOCK KNOCK.

REGINA (O.S) (CONT'D)

Hello?

OFF Alex, staring straight ahead, frozen, we MATCH CUT to--

2

INT./EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER - MORNING (D1)

2

Alex is (actually) sitting on the couch, staring straight ahead, immobile with depression. Maddy is at her feet coloring in a coloring book. Sean appears, half-dressed with wet hair, irritated.

SEAN

Do you not hear the knocking?

Alex doesn't respond. Sean goes to the door and opens it.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Yeah? Can I help you?

Alex moves to the window, watches/listens from her POV:

REGINA

Is... is Alex here?

SEAN

Who's asking?

(CONTINUED)

REGINA (O.S.)

Regina. I'm... she cleans my house
sometimes, on Fisher Island. She
hasn't shown up in four weeks.

SEAN

Who gave you this address?

REGINA

Uh. Value Maids. I tried calling
her and emailing her but she didn't
get back to me. Is she home?

Sean glances at Alex.

***Pop to: Alex at the bottom of the pit, so far away, it's
exhausting to even think about climbing out.***

Alex shakes her head NO at Sean, she's not home.

SEAN

Nope. She's not here.

REGINA

Do you know when she's due back?

SEAN

I don't.

A beat. Regina pulls out Alex's notebook from her bag (which
we now know to be: MAID).

REGINA

Well, she left this at my house and
I was hoping to return it to her.

SEAN

Leave it with me.
(hand out)
I'll give it to her.

She hesitates.

REGINA

Sorry--I don't mean to overstep--
but I was hoping to give it to her
in person. Check she's okay.

SEAN

She's fine. She's standing on the
other side of this door, shaking
her head "no" at me, that she
doesn't want to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

2

Sean takes the notebook from Regina...

SEAN (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming by.

Sean closes the door in her face, then turns and heads directly back down the hallway to finish getting dressed.

We watch from Alex's POV as Regina steps away from the trailer, eyeing it with concern.

Regina glances at the window and catches sight of Alex. She's a somewhat shocking sight. Drawn and defeated. They lock eyes for a moment. Then Alex steps out of the light.

OFF Regina, stepping away and getting into her SUV.

3

INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - HALLWAY/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS (D1)

3

We TRACK with Alex down the hallway and into Sean's bedroom, where Sean is getting dressed to go to work at The Swan.

ALEX
Can I have it?

SEAN
I don't like you giving this address out.

ALEX
Can I have the notebook?

SEAN
You think I'm going to steal it?

ALEX
Can I please have my notebook.

SEAN
(points)
It's right there, Crazy. Calm down.

It's on their dresser. Her eyes land on the notebook. It exists. She exists. She clutches it.

SEAN (CONT'D)
(hot)
Why's Maddy still in pajamas?

ALEX
We're about to get dressed.

(CONTINUED)

SEAN

It's four o'clock. Fucking embarrassing, someone at the door, and she's not dressed for the day. Looks like trash lives here.

ALEX

(calm)

You were sleeping all day. We were trying not to wake you.

SEAN

She's a *kid*. She should be dressed at dinnertime.

ALEX

You're right. We'll do bath time right now, Sean.

Alex goes into the bathroom, turns on the bath. She has learned that this is her only move: agree and comply.

Sean exits without addressing Alex. She hears his KEYS.

SEAN (O.S.)

Maddy Moo! See you in the morning, okay? Who loves you?

MADDY

You do! Bye, Daddy!

The door CLOSES.

Then we hear his JEEP pull out. The moment it fades away, Alex turns off the bath water (no intention of doing a bath).

She looks at her MAID notebook and flips through it. It's a relief to see it all there, all her writing, her life.

She finds a business card tucked in the book. It's Regina's. On the back it says: "Call anytime xR." Alex pockets it.

INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D1)

With Sean gone, Alex's demeanor changes. She goes to Maddy and sits next to her on the floor, kisses and snuggles her.

ALEX

What are you coloring over here? Is that a mermaid?

Maddy NODS, a little sadly.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I love what you're doing here, with the ombre. That's what it's called, when colors go from dark to light like that, Genius Girl.

Maddy NODS, but it's unmistakable: she is glum. Alex knows what will cheer her up.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Any chance you want to go check on Candy and Sandy with me?

MADDY

YEAH!

Maddy lights up--gets up--starts putting her rain boots on.

EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER - DAY (D1)

Maddy and Alex come out of the trailer, in their coats/boots. They cross the paving stones and crouch down by Sean's bikes.

There are two purple CROCUSES popping through the grass.

ALEX

(faux confused)

She's Candy and she's Sandy.

MADDY

(pointing)

No! That's Sandy!

ALEX

Oh, okay. So this one's Candy?

MADDY

No! That one's Candy!

ALEX

Right, sorry.

(Maddy NODS)

Do you think they grew since yesterday?

Maddy NODS. Alex looks at her daughter, petting the crocus in the mud with her little finger.

Alex SCANS the property, the ominous wall of trees that are still trapping her in this place.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

ALEX (CONT'D)

Well, I guess we should get in the bath now. I guess we definitely shouldn't jump in these puddles.

OFF Maddy's face, that's a yes--we GO WIDE on--

6 **EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER - DRIVEWAY - DAY (D1)**

6

Maddy and Alex jumping in puddles, getting their pajamas muddy and wet. Alex does a vaguely running-man type move, which Maddy tries to emulate. They LAUGH. Through this all, Alex has kept one thing constant: she is a great mom.

7 **INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - MADDY'S ROOM - NIGHT (N1)**

7

Alex is in Maddy's tiny toddler bed with her, where she sleeps most nights. Alex strokes Maddy's back. She's all cleaned up and sound asleep.

Alex hears BRAKES screech to a halt outside. Sean's Jeep.

She gets up and goes to the window, looks out.

Sean staggers out of his car, drunk, and heads towards the door. Alex bolts into Maddy's room, where, from the slightest crack in the door, she can watch/listen.

We hear the CRASH of keys on the floor; the POP of a BEER CAN opening. Then he PEES loudly. Then he walks past Alex to bed.

Alex EXHALES. She climbs back into bed with Maddy.

8 **INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING (N2)**

8

Hank is pulling a casserole from the oven.

HANK

The Seahawks are a lock for the division title.

Hank pulls the foil off a casserole and sets it on the table. Sean finishes setting places.

SEAN

I don't know, the Rams are pretty stacked.

HANK

Alright gang, chow time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alex has been watching this from the carpet, where she's sitting next to Maddy on the floor.

HANK (CONT'D)
(to Maddy)
Get over here, my honey bee.
Grandpa'll get you into your chair.

Maddy gets up and heads to the table, he helps Maddy sit on her booster seat. He pats her head, puts her napkin in her lap.

HANK (CONT'D)
Sean, grab me another O'Douls, will ya? Whatcha drinking, Alex? Pop?

Alex doesn't respond. The betrayal of Hank being here weighs heavily on her. Sean's promise in 108, now a distant memory.

Pop to: the pit, Alex at the bottom of it.

SEAN
Alex. What do you want to drink?

ALEX
Nothing for me, thank you.

SEAN
Look at this feast!

HANK
Shar gets all the credit. I'm just the delivery boy. She sends her love. Tied up with the twins today.

SEAN
Smells delicious. Thanks, again.

HANK
Mind if we say grace?
(to Maddy)
Can you give Grandpa your hand?

SEAN
(to Alex)
Where are you going?

Everyone looks up. Alex was leaving, going to Maddy's room.

ALEX
I'm not hungry.

(CONTINUED)

SEAN

Your Dad brought us a home-cooked meal.

ALEX

I don't feel good. I'm going to lie down for a bit.

SEAN

We're about to eat.

HANK

It's okay - we'll save her a plate. There's plenty.

Alex nods and starts towards the bedroom. But Sean is up now.

SEAN

(quietly)

Hey. You're being fucking rude.

Alex stops. She keeps her eyes averted away from Sean.

ALEX

I don't want to eat.

SEAN

Sit down.

ALEX

Sean, I don't--

SEAN

Sit. Down.

A beat. Alex, her face emotionless, sits down at the table.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. Where were we?

Hank stares at Alex, their eyes locking for a moment. They both know what Hank just witnessed was dark, not right.

SEAN (CONT'D)

You were gonna say grace.

HANK

Oh. Right. Sure.

(putting hands together)

Bless us, O Lord, and these, Thy gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen..

(CONTINUED)

OFF Alex, muted and not eating, we cut to--

9 **INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - MADDY'S ROOM - NIGHT-TIME-LAPSE (N2-8)** 9

Next to Maddy in bed, Alex hears the BRAKES SCREECH outside. Sean's Jeep. She goes to the window. Watches him stagger out of his Jeep. She listens for: Keys. Beer can pop. Pee. Bed. Then she exhales, goes back to Maddy.

- And again: BRAKES. Another night. Alex goes to the window, looks out. Sean's so drunk, he's stumbling up the steps. She listens for: Keys. Beer can pop. Pee. Bed. Exhale.

- And again: BRAKES. Another night. Alex goes to the window, looks out. Sean's hit a trashcan when he pulled in. Trash is strewn everywhere. He leaves it. Keys. Beer can pop. Pee. Bed.

- Bright morning of day. Alex on her hands and knees, picking up all the trash, putting it back in the trashcan. Maddy smiles at her. She's playing with Candy and Sandy.

- And again: BRAKES. Another night. Keys. Beer can pop.

- Again. BRAKES. Keys. Beer can pop.

- Again. BRAKES. Keys. Beer can pop.

- Again. BRAKES. Keys. Beer can pop. And then... something different. Alex hears the voice of a woman, STELLA (20s).

She goes to the window. Sean is indeed with a girl. They are JOKING around, leaning into each other as they head inside.

Alex hears the FRONT DOOR. Keys. Beer can pop.

SEAN (O.S.)
Want one of these?

STELLA (O.S.)
What's all this kid stuff? Do you have a kid?

Another Beer can pop.

SEAN (O.S.)
She's asleep. That's why you have to keep your voice down...

He says something we can't hear and she giggles. Then there's a long pause, that sounds like hooking up. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

SEAN (CONT'D)

This way.

Alex peers out the cracked door.

Sean's leading Stella to his bedroom, already got her shirt off. They're in the hallway, against the wall, going at it.

Alex steps away and gets back into bed with Maddy.

Staring at the ceiling, she listens as Sean and a stranger fuck. We don't have to flash to the pit; this *is* the pit.

EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER - DUSK/EVENING (N9)

Alex and Maddy are outside checking on Candy & Sandy. Maddy appears to be constructing a fence around them, with sticks.

ALEX

Are you making them a yard?

Maddy NODS.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Very nice.

Alex looks up when Sean's JEEP suddenly appears, pulling in.

He gets out. He's in his Swan uniform, carrying a six pack.

ALEX (CONT'D)

That was fast. Why are you home already?

SEAN

I got fired.

ALEX

What? Why?

SEAN

I fucked up the count when I closed on Thursday.

ALEX

Again?

SEAN

Could you not? I'd like to see you count out hundreds of dollars at 4:30 in the morning.

11 INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS (N9) 11

Sean goes into the house, clanks the beer down on the table. Alex follows him inside. (Not that we should notice this at all, but Maddy follows Alex inside, too.)

ALEX
So call the owner and explain. Phil loves you.

SEAN
It's Phil that fired me. Fucker told me I was drunk behind the bar.

ALEX
Were you?

SEAN
No, Alex. I buy-back shots for my regulars. That's how bartending fucking works. How you make money.

Beer can pop. Sean tosses it across the room into the trash.

SEAN (CONT'D)
This is when you make me feel better. That we'll be fine.

ALEX
I... don't know if we will be, without that job.

SEAN
Or you could do that. Make me feel fucking worse. THANK YOU.

ALEX
I'm not trying to make you feel anything, Sean. I'm having my own honest reaction to this news--

He turns away from her, heads to his bedroom.

SEAN
We'll be flush when the carpentry pans out, but until then you're gonna have to get back on WIC.

ALEX
I can't get benefits without proof of employment.

SEAN
Well, then I guess not.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

We need food for our daughter.

SEAN

MAYBE YOU WEREN'T LISTENING? I JUST
LOST MY FUCKING JOB!

ALEX

Maybe instead of a six pack you
could've brought some food home?

SEAN

JESUS FUCK! FUCK!

That's it. Sean THROWS the blender, barely missing Alex.

Sean storms to the front door, leaving the door wide open,
and heads to his JEEP. Alex watches him. He peels out.

Alex swallows her terror, recovers, breathes. Then....

She realizes that she doesn't see Maddy.

ALEX

Maddy?

Alex looks around, suddenly panicked.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Maddy?

Alex goes into Maddy's bedroom and looks for her. Pulls the
covers off the bed. Looks under the bed. Nope.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Where are you, honey?

She searches the living room now. The couch. Behind the
chair. This kid has vanished.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Maddy, you're scaring Mommy! Come
out!

Alex is growing more and more frantic... she rushes outside--

Alex stands on the steps outside the trailer and shouts.

ALEX

MADDY??! MADDY!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is absolutely no sight of her. She's gone.

Behind Alex, in the kitchen, she hears a MUFFLED CRY.

Her eyes land on the cupboard below the sink. She goes to it and opens the door, and sure enough, there is Maddy, hiding.

The child looks terrified. The sight SNAPS Alex awake.

Pop to the image from 105: Alex in the cupboard hiding from Hank, in terror. A striking match cut to Maddy in there.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oh, Maddy. Oh, baby. Come here.

I'm okay. You're okay...

Alex pulls Maddy out and clutches her to her chest, the horrible parallelism of this moment dawning on her.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Mommy's okay...

Flash to image from 105: Paula opening the cupboard, her lip bloodied. Reaching for Alex to comfort her.

PAULA

Mommy's okay.

ALEX

I'm so sorry. I'm gonna get you out of here right now. We're leaving.

Pop to: the pit, where Alex, suddenly mother cub and alive, starts to climb up. She's clawing, working hard.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hold on to me. Tight.

Alex scoops Maddy up in her arms, grabs Maddy's jacket, and RUNS OUT THE DOOR.

EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER - BACKYARD - NIGHT (N9)

Clutching Maddy to her chest, Alex SPRINTS across Sean's property towards the thick dark forest wall trapping them.

She doesn't hesitate at all. She runs right at it and breaks through it, without ever breaking pace.

OFF Alex, running, panting, not looking back...

14 **EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - LATER (N9)** 14

Alex slows her pace to a light jog, Maddy on her back now. She pauses, catches her breath. They are in the deep woods.

Far off in the distance, Alex sees HEADLIGHTS. A road.

ALEX

You okay back there, bug? You cold?

MADDY

I'm okay.

ALEX

Just hang on to me a little while longer, okay?

Alex walks in the direction of the headlights.

15 **EXT. ROAD - NIGHT (N9)** 15

Now Alex walks along a dark rural road, Maddy on her back.

16 **EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT (N9)** 16

Finally, Alex arrives at the nearest gas station.

She's absolutely exhausted. She approaches the first human she sees. It's TOM (40s), pumping gas.

Alex can barely talk, she's so exhausted and parched.

ALEX

Excuse me. Can I use your phone?
It's an emergency.

Tom looks at her and then at Maddy. He hands her his cell. Alex pulls Regina's business card out of her pocket.

17 **EXT. GAS STATION - AN HOUR LATER (N9)** 17

Alex sits crosslegged on the curb, with Maddy asleep across her lap. Alex's coat draped over her.

She looks up as Regina's SUV pulls in. Alex raises a hand in greeting. Regina waves back, parks. She gets out.

She looks at Alex, on the curb. Alex looks back at her.

Regina opens the back door for her. We see Leo is in there, asleep in his car seat, an extra car seat next to him.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

Alex gets Maddy into the backseat, buckling her in. Then Alex gets into the front seat. Regina starts the car.

18 **INT./EXT. REGINA'S CAR (MOVING) - MOMENTS LATER (N9)** 18

Regina and Alex drive in silence. Their kids in the backseat, sound asleep. Alex stares ahead.

ALEX

Thank you for coming.

REGINA

Of course.

ALEX

I didn't have anyone else to call.
We need a ride. To 351 Hurley
Avenue. Can you take me there?

REGINA

Would you rather come to my house?
The guest room's made up.

ALEX

No, I need to go to that address.
Thank you so much.

Regina puts the address in her phone.

Alex falls into silence again, looking out the window.
Occasionally, Regina casts a concerned look at her.

OFF Regina driving. Two sleeping babies in the backseat.

19 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE SHELTER - NIGHT - LATER (N9)** 19

Regina pulls up in front of the McMullen House.

ALEX

Right here, on the right.

REGINA

Do you want me to go in with you?

ALEX

You can't.

Alex gets out and starts to get Maddy out of the backseat.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thank you, Regina.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

Alex closes the door and heads to the gate.

20 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - FRONT GATE - CONTINUOUS (N9)** 20

Maddy in her arms, Alex rings the BELL on the gate.

It's not until Denise appears in the frame, coming towards us with security guard Cal, that Alex starts to CRY.

Denise opens the gate and Alex falls into her arms, WEEPING.

DENISE

Alright. You're here.

Cal waits, holding the gate open. He knows to give them the space they need. Alex SOBS in a way that's almost childish, clinging to Denise in the dark.

OFF Regina, taking this sight in before pulling away...

21 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER (N9)** 21

Denise unlocks the door to their apartment. It's a different place from the one they stayed in before, but it's also exactly the same. Same couch, same kitchenette, same carpet, same TJ Maxx painting of a woman on the beach.

ALEX

Same painting.

DENISE

Hm?

Denise is turning on the lights in the apartment.

ALEX

(pointing)

This was in my old room.

DENISE

They're in all the rooms, babygirl.

Denise checks the bathroom has towels, etc.

DENISE (CONT'D)

(gently)

Okay. We'll talk in the morning, do your intake then. Only thing I need to know now is: are you injured or in need of medical attention?

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

ALEX

No.

DENISE

Is Maddy?

Alex shakes her head, no.

DENISE (CONT'D)

May I have your cell phone please.

ALEX

I don't have one. I have nothing.
No phone, no car, no money, no
clothes, none of her stuff... I
don't know what I was thinking.

DENISE

Get some rest. We can face all that
in the morning.

(then)

I'll bring you girls some pajamas.

ALEX

Thanks, Denise.

Denise exits. OFF Alex, back in the place she started--

22

INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - LATER (N9)

22

Alex lies awake in bed, stroking Maddy's back. Maddy's
asleep. They're both in dry pajamas from Denise.

But Alex can't sleep. She gets up and paces around the
apartment. Her eyes land on the carpet, then the painting, of
the woman at the beach. Something about it is unsettling.

She gets up and walks to...

23

EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT/COURTYARD - NIGHT (N9)23

Outside, we see Alex's apartment in the context of the
shelter. The long row of apartments, on two floors.

Alex looks at the door to her apartment, number 23.

**Pop to: a quick flash of Danielle's face, from 102, laughing
in this very doorway. The two of them talking right here.**

Alex sits with this memory for a sec, then goes back inside.

23A INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (N9A) 23A

Maddy is asleep in Alex's bed. Alex lies next to her staring at the ceiling, unable to sleep.

23B INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (N9B) 23B

Maddy is still asleep in Alex's bed. Now Alex sits on the edge of the bed staring at the painting of the woman at the beach.

23C INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (N9C) 23C

The middle of the night. Alex is finally asleep next to Maddy, both in a deep restorative slumber.

24 INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - MORNING (D10) 24

It's two days later. Maddy is pulling on Alex's arm. She's dead asleep.

MADDY
Mom. Mom! Mom!

ALEX
What, beautiful?

MADDY
The fairy's back!

ALEX
She is?

Alex sits up and yes: we hear a soft DOUBLE TAP at the door.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm up.

She gets out of bed and goes with Maddy to open the door.

A tray with two clamshells of breakfast awaits them outside their door. One for Maddy, one for Alex.

ALEX (CONT'D)
The breakfast fairy came again!

MADDY
Where'd she go?!

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

ALEX

I don't know, but let's say thanks,
fairy. If she can hear us.

MADDY

(waving)

THANK YOU, FAIRY!

Alex picks up the tray of breakfast.

25 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D10)** 25

The two of them are snuggled up in bed together, just recovering, eating Jello. Alex still looks quite tired.

MADDY

What's the fairy's name, Mom?

ALEX

I don't know, baby. Food Fairy?

MADDY

(thinks that's hilarious)

FOOD FAIRY!

ALEX

Should we draw the food fairy a
picture?

OFF Maddy, nodding--

26 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APT. - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D11)** 26

Alex is doing Maddy's hair now, at the kitchen table. Maddy holds up the last of a dozen drawings for the food fairy.

ALEX

Excellent. What should we write on
there? Hi, Food Fairy?

MADDY

SILLY MOMMY!

A SOFT DOUBLE TAP at the door. Maddy smiles and JUMPS UP and runs to the door, trying to catch the fairy but...

No one's there. Just a tray with lunch on there.

ALEX/MADDY

Thanks, food fairy!

(CONTINUED)

MADDY
More jello!

OFF Alex and Maddy, settling in with their jello...

27 INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ROOM - DAY (D12) 27

A bright new morning. Alex and Maddy step outside the apartment for the first time. We TRACK with them...

28 INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY (D12) 28

As they make their way through the courtyard...

29 INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY (D12) 29

...and into the office, where Denise is sorting out forms.

DENISE
Well, hello.

ALEX
Hi.

DENISE
(warmly)
You two get some rest? How are you feeling?

ALEX
How long were we in there?

DENISE
Few days.

ALEX
Do I need to...does anyone need to be told I'm here? Legally?

DENISE
The law gives you twenty-one days to notify him, when you're in an emergency shelter. Don't think about that today. Miss Maddy, how are you doing today, sugar plum?

Maddy smiles shyly.

DENISE (CONT'D)
There's a playgroup for kids your age in a few minutes.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

DENISE (CONT'D)

Is that something you'd like to do?
(to Alex)

It's supervised by a certified aide, Miss Rita. She's been working here a very long time.

ALEX

Great. Want to meet some kids, Mad?

She NODS.

DENISE

Miss Rita's gonna show you a super fun time. Today is arts & crafts.

Maddy likes the sound of that.

DENISE (CONT'D)

(to Alex)

You and I can do some intake and then, I'll take you shopping.

ALEX

...shopping?

OFF Alex, not in the mood to go shopping...

30

EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY (D12)

30

Denise and Alex walk past the apartments, to what looks like a second building, in a back area we haven't been before. [Almost like it's a converted carpark or storage area.]

Denise leads them to a door, up ahead of them.

DENISE

You had stuff with you last time you were here, so you probably didn't see this, did you?

ALEX

No, I've never been back here.

There's a laminated sign on the door, "HOURS: 10 to 4"

DENISE

Some women, when they get here, only have the clothes on their back. So we started doing this.

Denise opens the door and they go in.

31 INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - BOUTIQUE - CONTINUOUS (D12) 31

We see: a room that has been transformed into a DIY boutique.

There are racks of clothes on the walls, a table of accessories/bags. There's a few shelves with shoes and belts, a makeshift "changing room," a check-out area.

DENISE
This is the boutique. All second hand or donated, very gently used.
(pointing)
There's a kids section in the corner, too.

She hands Alex a little shopping basket and points to BRANDI (20s) behind the cashier station.

DENISE (CONT'D)
This is Brandi, a fellow resident. She can help you if you have any questions.
(bye)
I'll check in on Maddy. You take all the time you need.

ALEX
Wait, I don't have any money.

DENISE
Oh, it's all free. The tags are blank, just for decoration.
(showing her)
No prices.

ALEX
So it's not a real store?

DENISE
(softly)
The boutique isn't open to the public. It's for our residents to come in and pick out what *they* like. To have that sense of self again. Alright, girls, have fun.

Denise exits.

BRANDI
Hey. Here if you need me.

ALEX
Hi. Thanks.

Alex wanders a tad aimlessly through the racks for a few moments. She feels uncomfortable, tight-chested, anxious.

She stops to look at a dress and then a blouse--maybe holds it up in front of her and looks in the mirror--but she quickly feels overwhelmed and moves on.

As she puts it back she sees HER HAND IS SHAKING slightly.

BRANDI

What size are you? We've got more stuff in the back, for spring.

ALEX

No thanks. I'm not... I'm gonna come back later.

BRANDI

But you didn't get anything.

ALEX

(wobbly)

I don't... know what to get...

BRANDI

Okay how about not sweatpants? Unless this is your signature look?

A beat. Alex doesn't laugh. She looks lost.

ALEX

I don't know what I like anymore.

BRANDI

Sit here. We won't overthink it. Just gonna pull you some basics, okay? Some pants, some tees, few pairs of socks...

Brandi starts thumbing through the racks, pulling items.

BRANDI (CONT'D)

Couple sweaters...

(then)

What size is your kid?

ALEX

4T or 5T.

BRANDI

Oh we've got some good shit for her, too. She like unicorns?

(CONTINUED)

Brandi puts a handful of stuff for Maddy and Alex down on the counter, folding it into piles.

BRANDI (CONT'D)

Everybody gets overwhelmed the first time they come in here. It's cuz our circuits are completely fried by what we've been through. Took me weeks to remember my favorite color.

Alex NODS, realizing she can't remember hers, either.

ALEX

Why is there a cash register if everything is free?

BRANDI

So it feels normal.

Brandi starts placing the clothes in shopping bags.

ALEX

This doesn't feel normal.

BRANDI

(laughs)

Well I'm the one who's putting pretend purchases into pretend shopping bags right now.

ALEX

Why do you do it then?

BRANDI

Cuz it feels normal to work.

Brandi gets ribbon out and starts tying the bags closed.

BRANDI (CONT'D)

Look. You get a pretend bow, too.

Brandi smiles at her. OFF Alex, watching Brandi curl ribbon--

INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - COMMON ROOM/COURTYARD - DAYS LATER(D13)32

MISS RITA is leading the children in a class (on salt painting) in the background. Alex watches from her spot at the picnic table in the courtyard, still quite tired.

RITA

Now you use the glue to draw a picture or a design on the paper.

(CONTINUED)

Maddy is having a great time squeezing Elmer's glue on paper.

Denise approaches and sits down across from Alex with an old laptop and a small cardboard box, too.

DENISE

Group Therapy is at eleven. And we have a resume-writing workshop after that, if you're interested.

(then)

I think it would be good for you.

ALEX

Yeah, sounds good.

DENISE

We have a refurbished phone for you. Just came in.

Alex looks up. Denise hands her the box. Alex looks in.

ALEX

That fast?

DENISE

Wiped clean, all yours. Course you'll have to go outside to use it, once we get service for you.

Alex pulls out her the phone and looks at it. It's an important step back to life. Denise opens her laptop.

DENISE (CONT'D)

The FCC has a Lifeline program for discounted phone service for people in emergency shelter. But like all things run by the government, there's a lot of red tape, so buckle in for this application.

(pushing the laptop over)

You start by typing your social in.

Alex hesitates.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Do you not know your social?

ALEX

I'm just not sure I'm ready to be online. He's waiting for me in my inbox.

(CONTINUED)

DENISE

We won't check e-mail then. Today's just about getting your phone on. E-mail's for another day.

ALEX

And this phone number won't be listed anywhere, right? He can't find me?

DENISE

Nobody has this number but you.

OFF Alex, liking the idea of that...

32A

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MCMULLEN HOUSE - DAY (D13)

32A

We TRACK with Alex as she emerges from the McMullen House, and walks down the street to the area where she can use her cell phone.

We might notice that SPRING has sprung, as Alex takes in the street, the grass, the blooms. She walks and breathes.

33

EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - DOWN THE STREET - LATER (D13)

33

The phone area down the block. Some other VICTIMS are checking their phones. Alex holds her new phone in her hand.

She dials the only number she knows by heart. Straight to voicemail, BEEP.

ALEX

Hey, Mom. I have a new phone, this is my new number. Maybe you've been trying to get a hold of me? Maybe you haven't, I don't know. But I haven't had a phone for a while and now I do. Please don't share this number with anyone.

(then)

I want to know how you are. Can you call me? I love you.

Alex hangs up.

Alex looks over at the women, all on the phone. She considers calling someone else. She pulls Regina's business card out.

Finally, she DIALS another number. **"Calling 360-555-0136."**

INTERCUT WITH:

34 INT. REGINA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (D13)

34

Regina is unloading the dishwasher wearing her AirPods (her phone on the kitchen counter), annoyed.

REGINA
Just get whatever's organic.

ALEX
...What?

REGINA
What?

A beat.

REGINA (CONT'D)
Who is this?

ALEX
It's Alex. Your... maid.

REGINA
Oh! Alex. Sorry. I thought you were
the guy doing my InstaCart
substitutions, he keeps calling me.
(then)
Hi.

ALEX
Hi.

REGINA
How are you doing?

ALEX
Good.
(then)
You said I could call you anytime.
Did you mean it?

35 INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - PORT HAMPSTEAD - DAY (D13)

35

Alex FOLLOWS a SERVER (let's call her NORA, 30s) through a small restaurant to the best seats: the ones looking out on the water. Regina is a regular here. She looks up, waves.

REGINA
Have you been here before?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

No.
(to Nora)
Thank you.

Alex sits down in the chair across from Regina. Out in the world, Alex looks like someone who is still recovering from a trauma. Nora hands them two lunch menus.

NORA

Still or sparkling?

REGINA

Sparkling for me. Does that work for you?

ALEX

Sure.

REGINA

And I'll have a super-hot flat white, right off the bat. Please.

NORA

Of course. Chef has one addition to the menu today: a pan-fried fillet of Barramundi with an asparagus and sunchoke gremolata.

REGINA

Thank you.

Nora disappears. Alex studies the menu. Regina watches her.

REGINA (CONT'D)

This is my treat, so please. Get whatever you want. Be my guest.

ALEX

I should be buying you lunch, after what you did for me.

REGINA

Well, I invited you to lunch, so.

Regina smiles at her.

REGINA (CONT'D)

You look well.

ALEX

This is my first time leaving the shelter in sixteen days.

(explaining)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

35

CONTINUED: (2)

35

ALEX (CONT'D)

That was a shelter you dropped me
off at.

REGINA

How is it to be out?

ALEX

Weird.

A beat. Regina studies Alex. This was wrong, a fancy lunch.

REGINA

You want to get out of here?

ALEX

Yes, please.

Regina holds up her finger to call the waitress.

36

EXT. SEASIDE DOCK - DAY (D13)

36

Alex and Regina walk along the waterfront.

REGINA

How's Maddy?

ALEX

Good. They have a daycare playgroup
that she really likes. They're
making plastic snow-globes today.

REGINA

Sweet.

ALEX

How's Leo?

REGINA

I hired a nanny, so he's excellent.
She's a linebacker, basically. Went
in there Day One and turned his
sleep regression around. So now
he's really happy and smile-y.
Which is great, because I had to go
back to work last week.

ALEX

Was that hard?

REGINA

No. I just ugly-cried both ways on
the ferry. And all day at work.

(CONTINUED)

Alex smiles knowingly. Maybe takes a seat on a nearby bench.

REGINA (CONT'D)

So I read your notebook, that you left in my office.

ALEX

I wondered.

REGINA

At first I thought maybe you left it for me. A hand-written present. But somewhere around "Pubes House" I realized you must've left it by accident and I was invading your privacy. But by then I couldn't put it down. You're good.

ALEX

Thanks.

REGINA

Who's the Porn House? 'Cause I gotta get eyes on that couple!

ALEX

I'll never tell.

Regina laughs.

REGINA

I'm The Cunt House.

ALEX

(a pause, then)
I didn't know you yet.

REGINA

It's okay. You passed out from hunger in my house, and I stiffed you. Failed to recognize you in public. My house was aptly named.

ALEX

Well, I stole your dog and drank your wine and swam in your hot tub and had a guy from Tinder over.

REGINA

Really?
(delighted)
Did you give my house a show?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

No. You came home early and ruined everything.

Regina laughs at that.

REGINA

Why was your notebook in my office?

ALEX

I was using your computer to apply to college while you were napping.

REGINA

Which college?

ALEX

Montana College of Fine Arts. I got in, actually. I got a scholarship.

REGINA

When do you leave?

ALEX

Oh, I'm... I'm not going anymore.

REGINA

Why not?

ALEX

I didn't accept the scholarship. I never responded or enrolled or--

REGINA

I'm sure that's an easy fix.
(then, direct)
Do you want to go?

ALEX

Yes. But even with the scholarship, it was too expensive.

REGINA

So take student loans out. Everyone has student loans.

ALEX

Sean would never agree to me going.

REGINA

Why does he get a vote? I read your notebook, he doesn't get a vote.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

We have shared custody of Maddy.

REGINA

Says who?

ALEX

The court. Laws. They said we have to share custody because emotional abuse isn't considered domestic violence in the state of--

REGINA

Hold up. You know I'm a lawyer.

ALEX

Yeah, but like big business right?

REGINA

Corporate law. But I have a colleague in family law who's a fucking beast. You find out if you can still enroll, I'll text her and see if we can set a meeting.

Regina gets her phone out, starts texting her friend.

ALEX

There's no way I can afford her.

REGINA

Good because she won't take money from you anyway.

A beat. Alex studies Regina.

ALEX

Why are you being so nice to me?

REGINA

Maybe I'm not a cunt?

OFF Alex and Regina, somehow two friends on a bench...

Alex takes a deep breath. We see: she is seated in front of the public-use computer at the shelter.

It's scary to do this. We watch her go back and forth. Finally, she signs into e-mail for the first time in months.

Denise is there filing things, keeping half an eye on Alex.

(CONTINUED)

Her inbox appears on the screen. She scrolls through. There's some SPAM garbage; some government-benefit e-mails; some emails from Regina (with the subject: **Hello? And Notebook?**).

...and several from Missoula. They all have subjects with the word "Final" in them. [**"Final Deadline for Financial Aid."** **"Final Admissions Notification"** **"Enrollment Deposit Due."**]

Alex writes a bunch of information down on scrap paper.

She finishes going through.

DENISE
Everything okay?

ALEX
No trace of him. He hasn't e-mailed me at all.

Denise nods, good, and returns to her stuff.

At the very bottom of Alex's inbox, she sees a single e-mail response to the cleaning Ad she posted in 108. Subject: **"Cleaning Job?"**

She opens the email: **"Saw your Ad. Can pay \$10 hour. Special situation."**

Alex writes back: **I'm avail if you still want clean. LMK**

Alex gets up and heads outside.

At the phone area, Alex dials the Missoula number she's written on scrap paper. Next to her, a few WOMEN are texting.

ALEX
(on phone)
Hi. I got into this college in March and I got a scholarship, but then because of a family emergency, I wasn't able to respond. Is it too late for me to enroll?
(then)
Great, what's that number?

Alex has a pen and paper but doesn't have anything to write on. She used her thigh, awkwardly. Writes down a number.

Quick Shots:

ALEX (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Hi, I'm not sure if I need
Registration or the Bursar's
Office. Can you help me?

Then:

ALEX (CONT'D)

(on phone)

And how do I check on the status of
a FAFSA form?

Then:

ALEX (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Hi, I need to request a FAFSA form
please.

Then:

ALEX (CONT'D)

I need to request an extension to
file my FAFSA form.

The WOMEN watch her, somewhat amused.

ALEX (CONT'D)

How do I know if I have a PIN?

EXT. HOARDER HOUSE -13 MILLER LANE -PORT HAMPSTEAD -DAY(D14) 39

Alex gets out of the cab (the same one from 102), and heads
up the sidewalk to a small, one-story house. She has no
cleaning supplies with her, but seems to be headed to work.

She KNOCKS on the door.

It opens only a few inches. PENNY (late-20s) peers through.

ALEX

Hey, I'm Alex. The cleaner.

Penny nods then opens the door enough to reveal her large,
pregnant belly. She looks like she could go into labor now.

PENNY

Thanks for coming. I'm Penny.

(then)

You saw in my note, right? I can
only pay \$10 an hour.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

That's fine. I don't have supplies,
so I don't expect more than that.

PENNY

It's just...you might see the job
and want to ask for more money and
I need you to understand that I
can't pay more. I can't afford this
at all, but I'm too pregnant to do
it so my sister lent me the money.

ALEX

Can I come in?

Penny hesitates for a moment, her face twists with emotion.

PENNY

This is my little secret.

Penny opens the door enough for Alex to step inside.

CUT TO:

INT. HOARDER HOUSE - OPEN FLOOR PLAN - CONTINUOUS (D14)

Alex's mouth DROPS OPEN as she takes the room in....

It's a hoarder nightmare.

There's a NARROW PATH to the front door, but otherwise, it is
floor to ceiling stuff. Clothes, papers, plastic, backpacks,
shoes, books, papers, tupperware, recycling, pillows, bras--
they cover every available space in the tiny, cramped house.

PENNY

(emotional)

I'm so sorry.

Alex can also see in the kitchen where the counters are piled
high with dirty dishes... and worse.

ALEX

No, no it's...

Alex's eyes linger on a pile that appears to be used diapers.
The enormity of this job is almost unfathomable.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...fine.

PENNY

You can back out if you want.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

No way. I'm staying.
(steeling herself)
You're my first customer. I'm not
turning away my first customer.

PENNY

Well, I'm sure it's up from here.
(to a pile of garbage)
Do you want to help her pack?

We realize, as Alex does, that there's a little boy (STU, age 5) sitting in the middle of this mess. He waves shyly.

ALEX

Oh hey, little guy.

PENNY

That's Stu. He's not verbal.

ALEX

Nice to meet you, Stu.

PENNY

I've got two more. But they're at
school. Benji and Samara.
(struggling not to cry)
I want to do better than this, for
my kids. I do.

A beat. Alex takes in her vulnerability and illness.

ALEX

Of course you do. We all do.
(cheery)
Your e-mail said you're packing?
Where are you going?

PENNY

We're moving Saturday. Into a
smaller place. That's why I need
your help. I can't bring all this.

ALEX

No.

PENNY

(fighting tears)
I know it looks like junk, but it's
my kids' childhoods. You can't just
throw those years away.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

You need to make space for them to
grow, too. The new place'll be a
clean start. It'll feel so good.
Let me help you.

Penny closes her eyes tight, NODS.

PENNY

Okay. I have industrial-sized
garbage bags in the kitchen.

ALEX

Got any music?

Penny points to a very tall stack of CDs.

A fun vintage CD, maybe The Eurythmics (?) takes us into...

INT./EXT. HOARDER HOUSE - DAY (TIME-LAPSE) (D14)

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Alex shoves the clutter in a trash bag: junky Happy Meal
toys, yellow newspapers, moldy food, mildewed clothes.
Occasionally she'll toss an intact toy or usable piece of
clothing into a save pile.

- Alex lugs two garbage bags to the curb.

- Sweat drips from Alex's forehead as she works her way
through the clutter. She looks over her shoulder and sees
Penny going through a trash bag and removing items and
putting them in the save pile.

- Alex lugs two more trash bags out to the curb.

- Methodically, Alex works her way across the living room
opening up clear space. She's making real progress.

The music PAUSES.

PENNY

You have to stop. That's time. I
can't pay for you for more hours.

ALEX

(keeps working)
Don't worry about it.

PENNY

No, it's not right.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

ALEX

(weirdly happy)

Well I'm in this now, Penny. I've got summit fever. Stu, hit it!

- The music UNPAUSES. Alex gets back to work.
- Alex finds the floor. She sweeps up the smaller bits of debris into dustbins.
- Alex adds a few more trash bags to the already huge pile on the curb.
- More bags. More bags. More bags. More bags. More bags.
- Last bags. Alex is exhausted. The sun is setting...

42 INT. HOARDER HOUSE - EVENING (N14)

42

REVEAL: Alex and Penny stand in the middle of the living room. It's not a miraculous transformation, but it's way less cluttered. A home that someone could now pack for a move.

PENNY

Thank you so much.

ALEX

You're welcome.

Penny pushes the money into Alex's hand.

ONSCREEN: "\$80"

Alex starts to the front door.

PENNY

I'm a member of this online support group, for hoarders. We have trouble keeping cleaning ladies.

(then)

Maybe--I could recommend you?

ALEX

I'd appreciate that. Thank you. Good luck with the move. Bye, Stu.

Alex exits with the satisfaction of a job well done.

43 EXT. STREET NEAR HOARDER HOUSE - EVENING (N14)

43

As Alex watches her TAXI pull in (to take her home from Penny's), her phone PINGS. It's her first text message. **"Unknown number."**

(CONTINUED)

43

CONTINUED:

43

Her heart jumps a beat. Who has this number? She opens it.

"Penny told me about u. When r u avail to CLEAN?"

Alex smiles, relieved. She starts to write back, but another text message comes in. **"Unknown number."**

"Hey. I'm a friend of Penny's. What is your rate?"

OFF Alex's face, streaked with hope, as she gets in the taxi.

44

EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - DOWN THE STREET - DAY (D15)

44

We TRACK with Alex as she leaves the shelter gate and walks a few blocks, to the "phone corner" where the victims use their phones. She's ready to roll calls this time.

She has all her Missoula forms with her and has a tray table from the common room, which she sets up on the corner.

A few women (FELLOW VICTIMS) watch her, what's she doing?

Then she dives in, makes her first call.

ALEX

Yes, I'm calling to inquire about family housing.

(then)

I'd be a full-time student, yes.

She writes it down in her notebook.

INTERCUT WITH:

45

EXT. HOARDER HOUSE 2 - FRONT CURB - DAY (D16)

45

Alex walks a bunch of garbage bags to the curb in front of a [hoarder] house that already has a lot of garbage bags.

We see her earnings tick up, from \$80 before to...

ONSCREEN: \$125

46

EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - DOWN THE STREET - DAY (D15)

46

Back on the curb at McMullen House with the tray table:

ALEX

What's the deposit needed on that?

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

ALEX (CONT'D)

Is there a waiver on the deposit if
that presents a financial hardship?
(then)
Can you connect me to that office?

The women are amused by her. Are somewhat paying attention.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sliding scale? Uh. Zero. I'm good
for exactly zero.

47 **EXT. HOARDER HOUSE 3 - FRONT CURB - DAY (D17)** 47

Alex walks more garbage bags to a huge pile of garbage bags
on another curb in front of another hoarder, done.

ONSCREEN: \$190

48 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - DOWN THE STREET - DAY (D15)** 48

Back at her corner office:

ALEX

That would be great but I don't
have a permanent address right now.
Can you email it to me?
(then)
Is there a way to expedite that?

49 **EXT. HOARDER HOUSE 4 - FRONT CURB - DAY (D18)** 49

Alex walks a bunch of garbage bags to the curb in front of a
house that already has a lot of garbage bags, done.

ONSCREEN: \$240

50 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - DOWN THE STREET - DAY (D15)** 50

Back at the corner office:

ALEX

Hi. I'm calling to digitally sign a
promissory note for my student
loan, can you help me with that?
(reading off a form)
Yep I have it right here...
45612. Great. How soon would those
funds disperse?
(writes something down)
If I did summer semester, how soon?

51 **EXT. HOARDER HOUSE 5 - FRONT CURB - DAY (D19)** 51

Alex walks a bunch of garbage bags to the curb in front of a house that already has a lot of garbage bags, done.

Bags. Bags. Bags.

ONSCREEN: \$305

ONSCREEN: \$375

ONSCREEN: \$425

52 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - DOWN THE STREET - DAY (D15)** 52

Back on the curb:

ALEX

Langley is my mother's maiden name.

(then)

June 7th is when the housing can
begin? That's great, what do I have
to do to secure that, call FAFSA?

(then)

Can you e-mail that form to me?

She gives the women on the corner a THUMBS UP. They look at her blankly. OFF Alex, getting all these ducks in a row...

53 **EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET/PARKING LOT - PORT HAMPSTEAD-DAY(D21)**53

Alex climbs into the front seat of a green USED JEEP. Immediately, her hand goes to her nose. The car reeks.

ALEX

Jesus Christ... what is that smell?

BRETT (40s, a mechanic) stands outside the truck door.

BRETT

Oh. The last owner left a carton of
milk in the trunk.

ALEX

(trying to breath)

...oh my God...

BRETT

It was so foul when we found it.
All cottage cheese and maggots.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

How many miles are on this?

BRETT

One ninety-five.
(points)
Priced to sell.

He's pointing at the sign on the windshield. A sign: **\$900.**

ALEX

I'll give you four hundred for it.

BRETT

Sold.

OFF Alex, the proud owner of this stink bomb...

INT. ALEX'S JEEP (MOVING) - DAY (D21)

Alex DRIVES the Jeep through Port Hampstead, now with Maddy in the backseat, in a second hand car seat (donated to the shelter).

All the windows are down, airing the stench as much as possible. Maddy is holding her nose.

ALEX

So? What do you think we should name our new car?

MADDY

STINKY POT PIE!!

ALEX

Stinky pot pie??
(ugh)

How about Jade? Because of the color?

MADDY

STINKY POT PIE. STINKY POT PIE!

ALEX

Okay. Stinky Pot Pie it is.
(then, proud)

Mommy bought this car for us. With the money she made from her job.

MADDY

What's your job?

ALEX
(a pause, then)
I help people.

Alex smiles at Maddy. She smiles back. It's a good answer.

ALEX (CONT'D)
But I do think Stinky Pot Pie is
missing something. Don't you? To
make this officially our car?

Alex hits play on her phone/Aux-- and "SHOOP" plays.

MADDY
SHOOP!

ALEX
Think I still know the words? I
don't know, it's been a while...
(then, perfectly:)
*Felt it in my hips so I dipped back
to my bag of tricks. Then I flipped
for a tip, make me wanna do tricks
for him. Lick him like a lollipop
should be licked...*

OFF Alex and Maddy, jamming to SHOOP, we go to...

...Alex pulls into Regina's driveway. They hop out and head
to the front door, holding hands. KNOCK on the door.

After a moment, Regina opens the door (maybe with Leo).

REGINA
Come in, come in.
(re: the car)
You left all your windows open.

ALEX
No, that's intentional. Hi.

REGINA
Hi. Miss Maddy, do you remember me?

Maddy looks away shyly as they come inside.

REGINA (CONT'D)
That's okay, I remember you. Your
mom told me you're into fairies
right now, is that true?

56 INT. REGINA'S HOUSE - FOYER/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS (D21) 56

Regina disappears, returns immediately with a large set of PURPLE fairy wings, for dress up. (Kids LOVE these.)

REGINA
Want to try these out?

Maddy takes them, really excited.

ALEX
Did you say thank you, Mad?

MADDY
Thank you!

Regina leads Alex over to the dining room table.

REGINA
(leading)
I'll hang with Maddy and let you
two talk. Tara, this is Alex.

TARA (40s) is sitting at the table. She's smartly dressed, highly competent, hand already out.

TARA
Hello. So nice to meet you.

ALEX
Thanks for speaking to me, it's
very generous of you.

TARA
Please. My pleasure.

REGINA
(a joke)
Plus she has to do at least fifty
hours of pro-bono a year.

TARA
(they're friends)
The ever-charming Regina. Get outta
here, girl.

REGINA
Pot of coffee's brewing. Have fun.
Hey purple fairy! Want to help me
take Baby Leo out in the stroller?

Maddy NODS. Regina exits with Maddy to the baby nursery.

(CONTINUED)

TARA

So first of all: your ex cannot stop you two from moving to Montana and he *will not* stop you.

ALEX

Don't I have to get his permission?

TARA

You do not. All you need to do is inform him that you're moving. We draft up something called a "Notice of Relocation" and serve him.

(then)

Once he agrees, you two amend the parenting plan. Then you're free.

ALEX

What if he doesn't agree?

TARA

Technically, he has thirty days to raise an objection. If he does, we have to go duke it out in court.

ALEX

But I don't have thirty days. I told the shelter I'm moving out on the sixth. It will save me a lot of money to go directly to Montana instead of renting an apartment here. I worked it all out and enrolled in summer session. I put a deposit down on housing.

TARA

Do you anticipate Sean raising an objection to the notice?

ALEX

Definitely.

Tara pauses. Considers this.

TARA

Okay. If he objects, we drop a legal A-Bomb on. We slap him with a No Contact Order -- that's a restraining order--and we move for you to get immediate emergency custody of Maddy because he's an abuser. This is a safety issue.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

We can do that?

TARA

Oh yeah. And we can keep going.
File a police report, maybe even
get a child endangerment charge,
sue him for emotional distress and
damages. We can crush his soul, but
it would take time.

(then)

The fastest way to get you to
Missoula for summer semester is for
him to just sign the Notice of
Relocation.

Alex glances out the window, where she sees beautiful Maddy
in her fairy wings running around on the beachfront yard.

ALEX

Who serves him the notice?

TARA

Someone else. There's a service we
use, third-party.

ALEX

Can I do it?

Tara looks up, slightly surprised.

TARA

(dubious)

I don't know if...is that wise?

ALEX

I'll do it in a public place.

(then, resolute)

I want to tell him. I want him to
see I'm not afraid of him anymore.

TARA

(a pause, then)

Okay. I'll draw up the paperwork.
We'll notarize in the AM and file
it with the judge.

OFF Alex, some fire left in her...

Back in Stinky Pot Pie, the windows all down, Alex and Maddy
head back through town, after their visit with Regina.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Maddy's fallen asleep in the backseat, an afternoon nap.

They pass a block of restaurants, shops, galleries.

Alex pulls up to a STOP LIGHT that's red. Her eyes ROAM down the street, just taking in the day. But then she SITS UP.

She sees: Paula's very distinctive car, the El Camino. It's parked in a small lot off the street.

The LIGHT changes and Alex instinctively drives towards it. As she gets closer, we see the El Camino has some stuff in the trunk, covered by a TARP. But otherwise: it's the same.

Alex pulls over, parks. She gets Maddy out of the backseat.

MADDY

What are we doing?

ALEX

Just looking for somebody.

MADDY

Who? The FOOD FAIRY?!

ALEX

Maybe! Can you help me look?

EXT. STREET - PORT HAMPSTEAD - CONTINUOUS (D21)

Alex takes Maddy's hand, and leads her down the street. Alex is looking into storefronts, up and down the block, for Paula. At the end of the street, they turn the corner...

EXT. TOWN CENTER - FARMER'S MARKET - P.H. CONTINUOUS (D21)

Alex sees the farmer's market by the pier. It's a small-town affair. A handful of fruit and vegetable booths. One for jam and cheese. A few doing art and jewelry and dreamcatchers.

Alex sees Paula before Paula sees her.

She's at a booth that sells ceramics, bongos, jewelry, and star-shaped paper lanterns. She looks good, surrounded by the glow of many star-shaped paper lanterns, being charming with a CUSTOMER. Behind her, an IMPOSING MAN sits in a folding chair. He looks like an asshole. (He is. This is MICAH, 50s.)

As Paula's customer moves away, Alex approaches her.

ALEX

Mom.

(CONTINUED)

MADDY

GRAMMY!!

Paula looks up, surprised. But Maddy's already flying towards her in her fairy wings for a bear hug.

PAULA

Oh my goodness, it's MADDY! *Who is this big beautiful fairy?* Oh I have missed you so much! How are you?!

MADDY

Good good.

PAULA

Lemme look at your little face. Lemme see that ancestral spark of life in your eyes. Oh, it's still there. IT IS! I love you so much.

MADDY

Love you, Grammy.

ALEX

I saw your truck. I didn't know you were back in town.

Paula stands up, looks at Alex now. Her face darkens.

PAULA

I never left town.

ALEX

I assumed, you and Basil...

PAULA

You assumed we what?

(cold)

What did you *assume* about me, Alex?

ALEX

I assumed that you two didn't stick around, after he signed you out of your court-mandated inpatient care.

PAULA

Well, you would be wrong. I used Basil to break me out of the prison my own daughter stuck me in, but then I kicked him to the curb. Got my car fixed, got this great job, and my art's on a whole new level. I've never been happier.

(CONTINUED)

MICAH

(faux friendly)

What's going on over here? Is it
break time?

Micah has come up behind Paula. He holds her waist in a way
that lets us know that they are clearly a couple.

PAULA

This is my daughter. And her
daughter. This is Micah.

MICAH

You're a grandmother?

PAULA

No. I have a daughter who has a
daughter.

(to Alex)

Micah is the genius who makes all
of the original glass work you see
here. And I make the lanterns,
which I can do with my bum hand, so
it works out good. He and I have
sorta convened in an artistic
meeting of the minds, a summoning
of the Dionysian creative energies,
you could say.

MICAH

(pointing)

Babe, customer.

Paula moves away from them, speaks to a customer:

PAULA

These are all 3 for 50. Handmade by
a celebrated local artist.

MADDY has picked up something and is looking at it.

MICAH

(asshole:)

If she could not touch the merch.

Paula returns, after giving change to a customer.

PAULA

Anyway, I'm in a *really good* place.
Really feeling centered, really on
my voice as an artist. But we
always get a POP right at the end
of the day, so I really can't talk
right now.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Can we meet up later?

PAULA

(blow off)

Yeah. I'll text you.

ALEX

What time are you finished working?
I'll come back.

PAULA

Are you really gonna make me say
it? I don't want to talk to you.

ALEX

Cmon, Mom. Let me take you for a
beer. One beer.

PAULA

(a pause, then)

Fine. But we're going to Portland
tonight. Micah's got a booth at the
flea market there in the morning.

ALEX

When are you back?

MICAH

(pointing)

Babe, customer.

PAULA

I don't know. Afternoon tomorrow.

ALEX

Can you do six o'clock?

PAULA

Fine.

(to Maddy)

One more hug my big sweet ladybug!

She gives Maddy one more mammoth hug.

MICAH

Paula.

PAULA

Okay, okay.

Paula moves away from them. Alex takes Maddy's hand and leads
her back to the car, casting a final glance back at Paula,
smiling and joking around amid a sky of star lanterns...

60 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APT./COURTYARD - LATER (N21)** 60

Alex and Maddy are outside their apartment door, scotch-taping a bunch of signs that Maddy has clearly made. They say: "Thank you, Food Fairy." "I love you, Food Fairy."

Maddy puts down a small bowl of strawberries down.

ALEX

Are you sharing your strawberries with her? That is very kind.

She has some wildflowers on a paper plate. She sets them up in a circle around the door. A sorta shrine to the Food Fairy.

ALEX (CONT'D)

She's gonna love that, Maddy.

They head inside for the night. OFF the CLOSED DOOR --

61 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING (D22)** 61

Alex is up early, a coffee mug in her hand, staring at the TJ Maxx painting in her living room, of the woman at the beach.

Maddy is sound asleep in her tiny bed.

Alex is going to face Sean this morning. We're just with her for a moment, alone and silent, with that painting.

Then: A DOUBLE KNOCK at the door. Maddy bolts up, immediately wide awake, and SPRINTS to the door, RIPPING it open.

Alex follows her. REVEAL: everything they left for the food fairy is gone. In its place are two clamshell breakfasts and a tiny heart-shaped note.

ALEX

She wrote you a note?! Oh my goodness, let me see...

Maddy runs the heart note over to Alex, to read it aloud.

ALEX (CONT'D)

"Thank you, Maddy. I love you. Your friend, The Food Fairy."

Maddy BEAMS. It's a tiny moment, but somehow--it's the end of a chapter for them. They're okay. They're through something.

With that feeling in mind...

62 **EXT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY (D22)** 62

We TRACK with Alex as she makes her way through the shelter and back to the boutique. We STAY with her the whole way...

63 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - BOUTIQUE - CONTINUOUS (D22)** 63

Alex enters the boutique. Behind the cashier's station, Brandi looks up.

BRANDI

Hey, Alex. Do you need help?

ALEX

No thanks.

Alex heads to the racks and starts flipping through. No anxiety, no uncertainty. Her sense of self, her sense of what she wants and what color she likes, is back.

She picks a blue sweater and some pants. Heads to check-out.

BRANDI

Will that be fake cash or fake credit?

ALEX

Fake cash, here you go.

Alex counts out a big wad of fake money.

BRANDI

That's a pretty blue.

ALEX

It's sky blue. That's my favorite color. Not cobalt blue, not navy blue, sky blue. What's yours?

BRANDI

Hunter green.

They smile at each other. Two women who know what's true.

63A **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - DAY (D22)** 63A

We watch Alex get ready to go somewhere. She does her hair, in her sky blue sweater. She looks herself straight in the eye in the mirror, feeling powerful...

64 INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY (D22)

64

CLOSE ON: Alex, a confident and powerful expression on her face. She's seated in a coffee shop area, waiting for Sean. She is dressed in the outfit she just picked out.

There are a few other customers at tables sipping coffee or snacking on a pastry. She is in a very public place.

She spots Sean the minute he walks through the door. He looks pale, not sleeping well.

SEAN
Hey. Sorry I'm late.

ALEX
Do you want to get yourself a coffee before we talk?

SEAN
No, I'm fine.
(then)
You look really nice.

ALEX
It's not for you.

She just stares at him, calmly and unapologetically.

SEAN
What's in the envelope?

ALEX
I'm serving you.

Alex slides the envelope across the table.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Maddy and I are moving to Missoula. I'm enrolled in college, I got us family housing, and there's a daycare program for full-time students. It's all nicer than anything we could give her here and we're leaving next week.
(re: envelope)
This is the Notice of Relocation. Here is a pen for you to sign it.

She hands him a pen.

SEAN
Where's Maddy right now?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Sean, this isn't--

SEAN

I want to know where Maddy is.

ALEX

My lawyer notified the court.

SEAN

You can't hold her hostage at a DV shelter again.

ALEX

She's safe with someone I trust.

SEAN

(a pause, then)

You are legally obligated to let me see my daughter.

ALEX

Actually, I'm not.

(then)

This is good for me. It's good for Maddy. Sign the form so we can go.

Sean looks at her, stunned.

SEAN

No. You're not taking my kid to Montana, no way.

ALEX

I'm doing you a favor, giving you the opportunity to sign this instead of hauling your ass into court. If you don't sign, it's gonna get really ugly for you.

SEAN

(laughs)

Ugly for me? It was you the judge called unfit last time.

ALEX

Things are different this time. I have a fancy lawyer who would love to make sure you never come within ten feet of me and Maddy ever again. But more importantly: I know what you did to me now. I know I have PTSD from it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

64

CONTINUED: (2)

64

ALEX (CONT'D)

And I know you will never control me again, you abusive, dark-hearted motherfucker.

SEAN

Guess I'll see you in court.

ALEX

Guess you will.

Sean gets up and walks off. Alex watches him go, and watches him toss the form into a trash can as he disappears.

65

EXT. BAR/CAFE - PATIO - EVENING (N22)

65

Paula is almost done with her beer. She's been talking about Micah for a very long time now.

PAULA

You've never seen a man blow glass, you don't know. It's incredibly sensual. The lips actually go on the glass - it's lip to glass. The whole thing is so dangerous, using your breath to tease, coax and meld glass. It's electrifying to watch.

ALEX

So - he's your boyfriend now?

PAULA

Oh, he would like that. All he does is tell me he loves me. But I got real bruised by Basil, so I gotta take things slow with Micah. Plus, he's got an ex-wife he still lives with for a bunch of fucked up reasons, so --

(to an unseen waiter)

Can we get some more peanuts?

(back to Alex)

Did I tell you about the collective?

ALEX

No.

PAULA

Oh, it's amazing. I'm part of this cutting-edge artist collective right now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (CONT'D)

They were Micah's friends at first, now they're my friends. Sculptors, painters. We eat together, live together.

ALEX

Where do you live?

PAULA

They've got a loft space down by the water in Port Renfrew. They gave me this gorgeous corner unit. You gotta come check it out.

ALEX

How do you pay for that?

PAULA

I've sold a bunch of pieces. And Micah pays me to work the booth. That's what I'm saying: I'm the best I've ever been. Making art all day. Staying up late, looking at the stars, talking to fellow artists. The collective has so much respect for me. How I bend towards the light.

ALEX

Well. You seem really happy, Mom.

PAULA

I am. The whole Basil thing was a real turning point for me.

A beat. Paula finishes her beer.

ALEX

I'm having one of those myself right now. A turning point.

PAULA

Oh yeah?

ALEX

That's what I was saying before. About Montana?

PAULA

Right. You left Seanie again.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

It's more than that. I'm moving to Missoula next week. To go to college.

Paula takes this in. News like this is complicated, always.

PAULA

Can you pay for that?

ALEX

No. But I took out student loans. Gonna clean houses full-time when I'm not in class.

(then)

It's gonna be hard but I'm really doing it. I found a place for us, got daycare lined up.

PAULA

Just like that, huh. Outta dodge.

ALEX

(a pause, then)

What do you think?

PAULA

I think: that sounds like an amazing adventure. Good for you.

ALEX

Really?

PAULA

I'm proud of you. I've taught you to reach up outta this town, and you are. It's good news. Let's drink. TO GOOD FUCKING NEWS.

ALEX

Thanks, Mom.

OFF Alex, toasting her mother --

Paula and Alex come out of the bar, pulling jackets on.

ALEX

Where's your car? I'll walk you.

PAULA

I'm fine. It's way over there.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

I don't mind. Stretch my legs.

PAULA

I'm fine, Alex. Give Maddy a kiss for me.

ALEX

Mom, I'm walking you to your car.

Paula gives in, lets Alex catch up with her.

PAULA

(sighs)

So dramatic, all the time.

They walk, side by side, the rest of the block.

ALEX

Can we do this again? Before I go?

PAULA

You betcha, kiddo. Okay, bye!

Paula is trying to wrap this up before they get too close to the car. But Alex is close enough to take the El Camino in.

[Alex saw it from a distance yesterday, but today, up close, she sees it with fresh eyes.] She's struck by the trunk full of stuff with a tarp over it.

ALEX

What is all this, Mom? Farmer's Market stuff?

PAULA

Yep. Thanks again for the beer!
Great to see ya, honey.

Alex clocks a picnic COOLER in the front seat, and a zip-lock bag of toiletries. Paula is getting in the driver's side.

PAULA (CONT'D)

TELL MADDY I LOVE HER!

As quickly as possible, Paula starts the car and pulls away.

OFF Alex, walking back to her car, processing what she just saw and what she knows it means.

67 **INT. ALEX'S JEEP (MOVING) - PORT HAMPSTEAD STREET -NIGHT(N22)**67

Alex's JEEP. She's driving, eyes straight ahead. We see: she's following the El Caminno. Not like a special agent, just gently following her. She's a couple cars ahead.

The El Camino stops at a RED LIGHT. Turns right. Alex does the same.

The El Camino pulls into a "Walmart" parking lot. Alex keeps some distance, but lingers to watch her mom, knowing her Mom has never seen her car before and won't know it's her.

68 **EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT - NIGHT - LATER (N22)** 68

From her vantage point, Alex parks and turns off her car.

She watches her mom pull into the far corner of the Walmart parking lot. There are a few other CARS there (mostly MINIVANS/STATION WAGONS), that are generously spaced out.

People who are sleeping in their cars.

Alex watches her Mom get out. She heads to the trunk, removes part of the tarp, and pulls out some stuff: a sleeping bag, a pillow, a sweatshirt. She takes off her cowboy boots, tucks them into the back.

Then, with a pillow and a blanket in hand, Paula climbs back into the front seat. The El Camino's lights turns OFF. Paula is in for the night.

OFF Alex in her car, understanding her mom is homeless...

END OF EPISODE