

Monte Carlo Story

by
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OVER BLACK:

ALICE (V.O.)
*Think of the future, and events
that will have already happened.*

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

ALICE PERRY (30s), her innate and amiable authority eclipsed only by a self-consciousness about her hair, afraid perhaps that she hasn't lived up to the promise of its red color, chalks "Futur Anterieur" in precise cursive at the board.

ALICE
*"By tomorrow, we will have flown to
France."*

She turns to face her TENTH GRADE FRENCH CLASS.

Though Alice's make up, earrings and practical flats are simple, there is an inherent elegance to their combination that hints at a more complex, if uncharted, interior.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Who can give me an example? Paul?

NOTE: Throughout, all blocks of italicized dialogue should be read as in FRENCH with ENGLISH subtitles.

PAUL
*"I will have completed the assigned
translation by the end of
vacation."*

ALICE
C'est bon! Amber?

AMBER
*I will have failed French again by
the end of the year.*

Alice pauses, regarding Amber with a pained sympathy.

ALICE
En francais si'l vous plait?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

EMMA
*So, the definition of the
derivative of the function "f" at
point "x" is..?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA LINDGARD (late 20's) rapidly scribbles a complex calculus formula at the board while all of her TWELFTH GRADE MALE STUDENTS avidly admire her shape in a tight, stylish skirt and heels. She turns suddenly, smiling brightly.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Okay! Kyle?

KYLE snaps his eyes up to Emma's face, tries to cover.

KYLE

Um... I guess I'm a little lost.

If optimists see a glass as half full, Emma's is in a constant state of cheerful, blonde overflow, even when a level of wilfulness is required.

EMMA

Try to follow along. I really want you guys to get this! David?

DAVID gazes back dumbly, stuck in an erotic fog.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Cindy?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HOME ARTS LAB - DAY

TWO GIRLS (17) laugh conspiratorially, dredging woven pot holders through an egg mixture and dropping them into a sputtering pan, as the rest of the CLASS makes French toast.

The girls sneak looks at MEG KELLY (30's) who tears recipes from a **Gourmet** magazine at her desk at the front of the room.

Dark hair pulled into a pony tail, face unadorned by makeup, Meg's natural sexiness is muted by an air of indifference.

She glances up when the pan erupts in flames and the girls leap back with a shriek, shakes her head.

The girls attempt to knock the pan from the burner with the handle of a broom when a pot lid bangs down, instantly snuffing the flames.

They shrink back as Meg waves the lid, clearing the smoke.

MEG

Do me a favor, and let's just try to get to vacation.

The class bell RINGS!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG (CONT'D)

You can burn the school down as soon as we're back.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Alice, a heavy bag slung over her shoulder, and her boyfriend RICHARD (30's, scruffily handsome in sweats and a coach's jersey), carrying three binders and a bag of baseball bats, exit the school among a crush of students.

Together, they cross a lawn dotted with patches of late snow, to the parking lot, stopping at Alice's weathered Volvo where Richard hands over the binders with a kiss.

RICHARD

Got practice until five thirty, then I'll be by.

ALICE

I'll see you then. Thanks.

They kiss again and Richard takes off for the athletic fields, passing Meg as she comes from the school, waves.

RICHARD

Hey, Meg! Bon voyage!

Alice offers a binder to Meg as she arrives at Alice's car.

ALICE

I finished our travel binders!

Meg takes the binder, looks it over.

MEG

Remind me again why we're taking phonebooks to France?

Alice gives her a look.

MEG (CONT'D)

I love my binder. I do.

ALICE

Where's Emma? She knows we're meeting, right?

MEG

Forgot her purse.
(watching the students)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG (CONT'D)

You know, for the first time in a long time, I feel just as lucky as any of these kids. They may have their whole lives ahead of them but we've got a week in Paris.

ALICE

Oh, that's right. I keep forgetting your life is completely over. So sad. I'm really going to miss you.

MEG

Funny.

EMMA

Well, that was a close call!

They turn to see Emma crossing the parking lot holding a quality knock-off designer handbag over her head.

MEG

Look at her. The only teacher in Racine County that wears four inch heels in six feet of snow.

ALICE

She always looks great, doesn't she?

MEG

(with affection)
Damn her.

EMMA

(arrives)
My passport was in here!

MEG

Where'd you find it?

EMMA

Second floor girl's bathroom.
Right where I left it. This morning--
(sees binder)
Ooh, binders! Great!

Alice passes one to Emma.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You guys were so nice to ask me to come with--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

Emma, we're a team.

EMMA

I'd just be sitting around the
condo, trolling e-Harmony...

MEG

The fact that you have trouble
finding a date--

EMMA

I'm telling you, it's this town!

MEG

Gives me less than no hope.

EMMA

You know what we should do, Meg?
When we're over there? We should
all treat ourselves. Find a *real*
salon. Total spa treatment. And
I'm gonna get my hair done. *Just*
like this!

She holds up a European tabloid she's pulled from her purse,
stabbing a finger at a photograph: CORDELIA WINTHROP SCOTT
(30's), a blonde heiress deflecting paparazzi in couture.

NOTE: EMMA and CORDELIA are played by the same actress.

ALICE

Look at us.

Meg and Emma turn to Alice, smiling.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(marvelling)

We're really going.

INT. ALICE'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice's passport and a brochure emblazoned with a logo:
Esprit de Corps Tours, sit on top of her dresser, next to a
framed photo of Alice and Richard at the Wisconsin Dells.

Alice struggles to close the overstuffed suitcase on her bed,
tugging at the stubborn zipper.

ALICE

Come on... Please...please...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The zipper tears away from the suitcase with a loud RIP!

INT. MEG'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Meg pulls a well-worn stuffed dog from her open suitcase on the couch, holding it up to her daughter, FINN (6) who wears a spangled tutu and cowboy boots.

FINN

She wants to see Paris, too!

MEG

Finn, if Edith goes to Paris with me, she can't go to Daddy's with you.

Finn's brows come together as she considers this, then reaches for the dog.

MEG (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

(calling)

Seamus!

SEAMUS, Meg's ten year old son, pounds down the stairs carrying an enormous backpack as Meg zips her bag closed.

MEG (CONT'D)

Toothbrush?

Seamus makes a face, drops his bag and heads back up the stairs as the doorbell rings.

FINN

Daddy!

EXT. MEG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

GLENN (30s), in a police uniform, watches Meg squeeze her children tightly.

MEG

(to Seamus)

Remember. Gameboy goes to bed when you do. Nine o'clock.

GLENN

Seam, why don't you take your sister to the car while your mom and I talk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINN

Can we get on the radio?

MEG

No.

GLENN

No.

Meg watches her kids run to the squad car parked at the curb, just as KARYN (30's, also in uniform) emerges on the passenger side to meet them.

GLENN

And no lights!

KARYN

Hey, Meg!

Meg lifts her chin in greeting, but that's it.

GLENN

I uh... I heard from my lawyer.
She said you'd signed your papers.

Meg watches her kids climb in the car with Karyn.

GLENN (CONT'D)

Guess that makes us official, then.

MEG

You and me?
(a nod to the car)
Or...

GLENN

You and me, Meg.

A beat as they look at one another, hold.

SEAMUS

Mom!

Seamus reappears, charging up the walk to pull Meg down to his level, hugging her.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)

Have fun.

INT. EMMA'S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Emma's packed suitcases stand neatly arranged by the door of the sparsely furnished, undecorated room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANSWERING MACHINE

You have no messages.

Leaning on the lip of the kitchen's bar, Emma presses the record button on her answering machine, then speaks with a put-on, coolly sophisticated, jet-setting accent.

EMMA

Hello. You've reached the home of Emma Lindgard. I'm afraid I won't be able to return your call right away, as I'm currently traveling. In Europe. But, please, do leave a message.

TV ANNOUNCER

"...She was known as 'The People's Princess'...

Emma turns at the counter to see Princess Diana touring an African encampment with children on the television.

EMMA

Ooh!

She hangs up the phone and sits herself down at the coffee table where a game of solitaire is laid next to a microwaved Lean Cuisine dinner.

She turns up the volume with the remote and gathers the cards, shuffling.

Eyes glued to Princess Diana on television, Emma suddenly shoots her hands three feet wide, rifling the cards in perfect vertical formation like a seasoned cardsharp.

EXT. ALICE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alice opens the door, kissing Richard who holds up a suitcase in one hand, a bottle of Champagne in the other.

RICHARD

Special delivery.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice zips the suitcase shut and raises her arms in victory as Richard pours the Champagne into two glasses.

ALICE

That's it! I am good to go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Richard brings a glass to Alice, nuzzles her ear.

RICHARD

I'm proud of you, you know.

Alice takes her glass and presses Richard down onto the bed, climbing on top of him.

ALICE

Like Christmas when I was a kid.
There's no way I'm going to be able
to sleep tonight--

RICHARD

Good for me.

They kiss.

ALICE

I mean, how long have I been
talking about this?

RICHARD

Mmm... You were reading Colette.
In the teacher's lounge. First
time we met. Long time.

Alice pauses as this lands somewhere deep inside.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

This is just the beginning.

ALICE

(brightening)

It feels like it.

They clink glasses and Richard watches Alice tip her glass back then stop mid-sip to peer down at the delicate diamond ring sitting at the bottom of her glass.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(stunned)

Oh. Richard... It's so... It's
beautiful...

Richard takes her glass and fishes out the ring.

RICHARD

Let's try it on.

ALICE

But, we can't even celebrate--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICHARD

What are you talking about? We're celebrating--

ALICE

But, I'm leaving. I'm--. I'm getting on a plane in the morning.

RICHARD

(laughs)

Maybe I want to make sure you come back--

(stops, sobers)

Wait. You're serious. Are you serious? You're serious.

ALICE

Let's do this when I get back. In a week.

RICHARD

Can you hear yourself?

ALICE

Honey, listen, it's just the timing. I wasn't planning on this tonight--

RICHARD

Whoa. I planned tonight. Tonight was *my plan*--

ALICE

And it's great. This is great. You're great. But, Richard, I feel like I just need to do this one thing first. Then I can do the next. Then I can do this.

(off his silence)

Can you understand? There's a world I haven't even seen yet...

Alice, hopeful, searches Richard's inscrutable expression a beat, then he turns away and gets up, ring in hand.

RICHARD

I thought we'd be seeing it together.

(pockets the ring)

Have a great trip, Alice.

He heads for the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALICE
(stricken)
Richard, come on. You're leaving?

RICHARD
(without looking back)
Maybe I'll see you in a week.

Alice listens to his footfalls and the slam of the front door, then falls back on the bed, striking her head on the open suitcase, wincing.

ALICE
(miserable)
I'm sorry...

PILOT (PRE-LAP)
Ladies and Gentleman, we are about
to begin our descent into Charles
de Gaulle International Airport...

INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Meg sleeps in an aisle seat of the dim coach cabin where all the window shades have been drawn down, Emma dozing beside her, a game of cards laid out on her tray table.

Alice brings her seat to the upright position as instructed and sits, hyper-alert, looking at her closed window shade.

A beat.

She reaches out and raises the shade a tentative crack, flooding their row with light.

She glances furtively around the cabin, then inches the shade higher, drawing in a sharp breath at what she sees.

She flings the shade up.

ALL OF PARIS is laid out below her; a magical nautilus-like wheel with the Eiffel Tower as its central axle.

Her breath steams the window as she drinks it all in.

She turns, eyes full, to Meg who cranes across Emma to share in the view and squeeze Alice's arm with a smile.

EMMA
Are we there?!

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

A CUSTOMS AGENT stamps Alice's passport with a thump.

CUSTOMS AGENT

Bien venue.

Alice looks up from her imprinted passport, smiles hugely.

ALICE

Merci.

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

Alice emerges with Meg and Emma, each struggling with their luggage, onto the thronged arrivals deck.

EMMA

There it is! Esprit de Corps!

Alice looks to where Emma points, seeing a small sky-blue flag at the end of a long staff held by MADAME VALERY (40s, pinched) their harried tour guide in a suit of the same blue.

ALICE

Excuse me, are you Madame Valery?

Madame Valery glances up from her clipboard beside their bus.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Hi, my name is Alice Perry--

MADAME VALERY

(gesturing)

Bags go under the bus.

ALICE

I'm traveling with my friends, Meg Kelly and Emma Lindgard--

MADAME VALERY

(flat)

I speak English.

EMMA

Well, that's great!

ALICE

We're so excited!

Madame Valery eyes Alice unfolding a map from her binder.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE (CONT'D)

*Now, I was hoping you could tell me
which route the bus will be taking--*

MADAME VALERY

(wearily predictive)

*You're not going to be a problem,
are you?*

EXT. PARIS - DAY

The battered Esprits de Corps Tours bus careens through the streets, listing wildly from side to side.

INT. TOUR BUS - DAY - MOVING

MADAME VALERY

(over bus's P.A.)

On your right...

Alice, squashed beside Meg on the over-crowded bus, whips her head up from her guidebook.

MADAME VALERY (CONT'D)

Was the Arc de Triomphe.

ALICE

This is ridiculous...

EMMA

Hey, Alice! Meg!

Alice and Meg turn to Emma across the aisle, who hooks a thumb at CARL and DEEDEE (late 60's, both stout) beside her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

*Can you believe? They're from St.
Paul! On their honeymoon!*

CARL

*Waited a long time for this! But,
we finally made it!*

EMMA

*Alice, that's like you!
(back to couple)
We're here celebrating my friend
Meg's divorce!*

EXT. THE LOUVRE - DAY

The bus hurtles around the drive, screeching to a halt, bouncing roughly on its shocks at the museum's entrance.

INT. LOUVRE - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma race past gallery after gallery, trying to keep Madame Valery's little blue flag in sight as it flies over the crowd in the distance.

Alice whipsaws her head at everything they're missing, making notes in her guidebook on the fly.

ALICE

Try to remember that! We'll double
back for the Chagalls!

INT. LOUVRE - DAY

Madame Valery leads the charge up the right wing of the Daru staircase, past the statue of Winged Victory.

Alice stops Meg and Emma in front of the statue, while Carl and Deedee try to catch their breath on the landing.

ALICE

(reading fast)

...Also called Nike of Samothrace.
Greek goddess Nike, meaning
victory. Two-twenty to one-ninety
B. C. Okay, go!

They head for the right stairs just as Madam Valery reappears, descending with her group on the left.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Oh.

Alice turns Meg and Emma around to come back down.

DEEDEE

Well, that saved us a climb.

INT. LOUVRE - DAY

Emma elbows her way out of a crush of raised cameras and cellphones to Alice and Meg who strain at the rear of the CROWD to view a painting, all but the top of its gold frame obscured.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA
(waving her camera)
I got it! I got it!

INT. BISTRO - NIGHT

Meg and Emma sit hunched over Emma's camera and its shaky, digital image of the Mona Lisa, squeezed in with Alice and the rest of their tour at too few tables.

EMMA
Alice, I'll e-mail it to you.

Meg looks up, catching Alice eyeing their surroundings.

MEG
(re: Mona Lisa)
At least she's smiling.

ALICE
(snaps to, smiling)
What? No. I'm--. I'm just a little tired.

EMMA
(a happy idea)
Hey! I'll bet you have jet lag!
We'll probably all get it!

Meg raises a glass of wine.

MEG
To jet lag.

Emma and Alice raise their glasses to toast as WAITERS plunk down identical plates of steak frites before them.

MEG (CONT'D)
To Alice. Best organizer. Best guide. Best friend.

EMMA
To Alice!

They clink glasses and Alice is suddenly jostled, just as she's about to sip, by Carl as he turns from the table behind her, spilling her wine.

DEEDEE
Oh, Carl!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARL
I am so sorry!

ALICE
(mopping her front)
It's okay--

DEEDEE
He was just looking for the catsup-

CARL
If you're not using it.

As Emma passes the bottle of catsup, Meg offers Alice her napkin, and waiters sweep their plates away, replacing them with creme brulees.

ALICE
Oh! No. Wait. *Pardon, Monsieur--*

CARL
(receiving catsup)
Merci!

He turns now, catsup in hand, to blink at the creme brulee that has replaced his own and Deedee's steaks.

Alice places a hand on Madam Valery's arm as she passes.

ALICE
Pardon, Madame, but...

Madam Valery slowly raises her eyes from Alice's hand.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but--

MEG
Are you apologizing?

ALICE
They've taken our dinners away--

Madame Valery taps her watch and then her clipboard.

MADAME VALERY
There were stragglers at the museum. Now, I am behind schedule.

EXT. LE PETIT SOMMEIL HOTEL - NIGHT

Esprit de Corps tour members disembark from their bus in front of a comically narrow and vertical Baroque hotel with its name in feeble buzzing neon: Le Petit Sommeil.

ALICE (PRE-LAP)

Look! Look at this picture and tell me what's different!

INT. LE PETIT SOMMEIL HOTEL - NIGHT

The women lower the travel brochure and its photograph of a tidy well-appointed suite, to regard the actual one in which they stand; dingy, impossibly small, crowded by an armoire that nearly meets the low sloping ceiling, with two spindly twin beds and a military-style cot.

EMMA

Toujour le suck-ez vous.

ALICE

I researched at least a *million* tours--

MEG

Well. This is the one we could afford.

A beat as they consider the room and their lot in life.

MEG (CONT'D)

It's only five nights--

EMMA

Five nights? Here?!

MEG

And, Alice, you said yourself,
we'll hardly ever be in our room.
(selling it)
It'll be like camping. At Eagle
River. It'll be fun!

Emma opens what is essentially a closet with a toilet.

EMMA

Here's your outhouse, Meg. Go nuts.

Alice joins Emma at the bathroom door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA (CONT'D)

Me? I'm going to try to hold it.

MEG

Okay, Emma. Let's just unpack--

She turns for the luggage, nearly falling over at the weight of Emma's suitcase as she reaches to lift it.

MEG (CONT'D)

Holy--! Alice, help--

Alice climbs onto one of the beds to help Meg lift.

ALICE

Emma, what have you got in here?

EMMA

Just the stuff you put on my list--
(off her look)
And a couple options.

The bag slips from Meg's grasp, crashing onto the foot of the bed which collapses, catapulting Alice onto the cot which flips up over her, knocking Emma into the tiny bathroom.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Hey! Come on, guys!

INT. LE PETIT SOMMEIL HOTEL - NIGHT

Alice gazes out a window that opens onto a narrow alley and the ugly backsides of buildings, as Meg and Emma sleep fitfully behind her.

She looks down at the cellphone in her hands, scrolling through her speed dial to stop at: 1. Richard.

She hesitates with her thumb over the "call" button.

She turns back to the miserable view, considering for a beat, then folds her phone away as she blinks back tears.

EXT. PONT DES ARTS BRIDGE - DAY

Madame Valery leads a diminished flock, bobbing her staff with its blue flag, in a forced march across the span of the ornate pedestrian bridge toward the waiting tour bus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MADAME VALERY

The Pont des Arts has it's name for
the vast number of art students
that come here to paint this famous
city view...

Meg and Emma, the worse for wear, trail Madame Valery at a
distance with Alice who now leads her own handful of tour
members, Carl and Deedee among them.

ALICE

It's called the Pont des Arts
because the Louvre was formally
known as the Palais des Arts...

Madame Valery stops ahead, turning back to take in Alice and
her cluster of appreciative followers.

MADAME VALERY

People! We must keep together!

EXT. NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL - DAY

Alice's group circles an inscribed stone medallion with a
star-shaped brass inset on the pavement outside Notre Dame.

DEEDEE

"Point zero. Dez roots dee France."

ALICE

It's from right here that all the
highway miles in all of France are
measured. They also say that if
you stand on this exact spot, you
are be destined to return to France
in the future.

MEG

Oh, I'm in! Come on. Everyone!

Together, they all step forward, arms entwined, laughing.

EMMA

I want a picture! Of all of us!

Alice looks up as Emma breaks away, to see Madam Valery
leading her dwindling group from the great church.

Madame Valery sends her charges to the bus, then heads
straight for Alice as Emma tries to enlist a JAPANESE COUPLE
to take a group photo with her camera.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MADAME VALERY

My head count was short in the cathedral.

ALICE

I'm sorry. I was explaining about Point Zero--

Madame Valery sizes Alice up and taps her staff as the group forms around them, joined by the Japanese couple.

MADAME VALERY

This flag? I do not carry it for my pleasure.

ALICE

We were just on our way inside--

MADAME VALERY

Well, now you may head to the bus.

ALICE

But, we haven't been--

MADAME VALERY

Which is why you must follow my flag!

ALICE

Okay. We will. I promise. But, these people haven't seen the cathedral--

MADAME VALERY

There are many churches on the tour.

ALICE

But, this is Notre Dame! They need to see this--

MADAME VALERY

I assure you, they will see everything they need to see--

ALICE

(losing it)

Well, what's the point if it's all a big fat blur? When nobody can see anything properly? Let alone experience it, or appreciate--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MADAME VALERY

You seem quite the Paris expert,
for someone who has never been.

EMMA

I'll bet she knows more about it
than you!

The Japanese wife frames the action with Emma's camera.

ALICE

I might not have ever been here
before, but...
(emotional)
I've waited my whole life for this
trip.

CARL

We've waited thirty years--

MEG

You tell her, Carl.

ALICE

You keep *rushing* us through, like
this is some kind of race--
(really hurt)
And you won't even speak French
with me.
(squares herself)
Now, I think I've been very nice.
We're from Wisconsin. But, I'm
telling you, I am not getting on
that bus until my friends and I
have seen Notre Dame.

Meg and Emma exchange looks as Alice plants herself with
folded arms and steely resolve before Madame Valery.

MADAME VALERY

*Perhaps, if Madame is not satisfied
with my tour she could conduct her
own.*

EMMA

What'd she say?

Alice's eyes narrow in regarding Madame Valery and all fall
silent a beat; a crowd anticipating fireworks.

CLICK! The Japanese wife snaps a picture of the standoff,
the sound of the shutter triggering Alice to action.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

With lightning speed, she seizes Madame Valery's flag.

CROWD

Whoa!

Madame Valery, nonplussed, reaches out to reclaim her flag, but Alice jerks it further away, while the Japanese woman snaps picture after picture.

DEEDEE

Carl, we're getting on the bus!

Madame Valery lunges for the stick.

EXT. NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL - DAY

The bus pulls away, revealing the Japanese couple who return Emma's camera with a bow, Meg, and Alice holding the flag.

EMMA

That was *fantastic*!

MEG

"A" plus!

Alice, cheeks flushed, watches Carl waving goodbye from the bus's rear window.

MEG (CONT'D)

Alice, you okay?

Alice brings the staff down across her knee, snapping it in two, casting the broken ends into the gutter as she raises herself to her full height.

ALICE

Now, the real tour can begin!

MEG

Let's kick this town's ass!

Alice marches forward as a few drops of rain fall.

EMMA

I think it's starting to rain--

ALICE

Who cares? We're in Paris! What's a little rain?

EXT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - NIGHT

Water pours in sheets from the sky as Alice, Meg and Emma splash down the Rue de Rivoli and duck beneath the shelter of the hotel's canopy.

They shake water from their arms and hair, pluck at their sopping clothes.

PHOTOGRAPHER 1

Cordelia!

They glance over at a few PAPARAZZI sharing the protection of the overhang on the far side of the entrance, as a camera flashes in taking Emma's picture.

Emma smiles, blinks, confused as another photographer admonishes the first.

PHOTOGRAPHER 2

You're wasting your film. That's not her.

EMMA

What're they saying?

Alice looks about in equal confusion, but stops short when she sees the opulent restaurant behind the window's glass.

ALICE

Oh.

Meg and Emma turn to gape as well at the DINERS and elegant tables inside as the rain hammers down.

ALICE (CONT'D)

That, mes amis, is Paris.

EMMA

You think they'd let me use the bathroom?

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Meg and Emma step into the lobby, a palatial world of marble, gold and flowers, as Alice confers with the DOORMAN.

EMMA

Wow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE
 (to doorman)
Merci.
 (joins Emma and Meg)
 Okay, Emma, it's down the hall to
 the left. Meg and I'll go and get
 us a table--

EMMA
 Meet you in there.

Emma heads for the ladies room, gaping at the lobby.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 Wow...

MEG
 Get us a table? Alice, we can't
 afford to eat here--

ALICE
 My treat.

MEG
 You can't afford--

ALICE
 (hooking Meg's arm)
 We're going to do one thing right
 in Paris. I don't care how much it
 costs.

They turn for the dining room, passing the front desk where
 CORDELIA WINTHROP SCOTT (dressed similarly to Emma, though at
 ten times the cost) unleashes her ire on the CONCIERGE.

CORDELIA
 And, just how do you propose I am
 to travel tomorrow, then?

CONCIERGE
 I am sorry, but, there is nothing--

A MANAGER enters from the back.

MANAGER
 Mademoiselle Scott, I have checked
 and there is no sign of a package--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CORDELIA

Marvelous. I'd like to see someone
who speaks English, please. If
there is such a person in France.

The concierge and manager look to one another and back.

MANAGER

This is not English we are
speaking?

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Emma swings through the door into the black marble bathroom,
grabbing a towel to swipe at her wet hair.

She stops abruptly, examines the towel.

EMMA

These are cloth!

She takes the towel into one of the stalls, closing the door
behind her just as Cordelia strides in, stops at the counter.

CORDELIA

(acid disgust)
France.

Cordelia's cellphone RINGS! and she pulls it from her purse.

EMMA (O.S.)

Hello?

CORDELIA

(into phone)
You would not believe these people.
So rude!

She takes her phone into the stall next to Emma's and closes
the door just as Alice and Meg enter.

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

And they wonder why none of us do
Paris anymore! What I've been
through--. And, Daddy is being
perfectly hideous--

Alice and Meg look at one another in the mirror, overhearing
Cordelia, as they pick up towels to dry off.

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

He's making me go to Monte Carlo!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Emma?

EMMA (O.S.)

Yeah. I'm here.

CORDELIA (O.S.)

I don't know. Some auction. One of those foundations--. But, have I heard from them? No. And they were to take care of the plane--. Well, I'm certainly not going to go if--. Wait, where are you?

(listens)

Reykjavik? Would I need a coat?

A toilet flushes and Cordelia opens her stall door, heads for the counter, oblivious to Alice and Meg who freeze with their towels, blinking at her uncanny resemblance to Emma.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Do you know if there's an evening flight--?

Alice and Meg turn to each other, then to Cordelia's reflection in the glass, their mouths hanging open.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Ooh, I think I can just make it. No. I won't even check out here. It's better if everyone thinks I'm being a good girl and taken the trip down to--

Cordelia stops when her eyes snag on Alice and Meg.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Let me call you when I get to the airport. It may take awhile...

She gives Alice and Meg a devastating look up and down.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

It appears to be raining outside. Quite hard.

She picks up her purse and exits without looking back just as Emma opens her stall door and joins Alice and Meg, who gape at her with towels in their hands.

EMMA

Did you see those are cloth?

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - RESTAURANT - NIGHT

MEG

No, Emma, I mean, *exactly* like you.

EMMA

Well, she *sounded* awful. And kind of mean.

Alice, Meg and Emma, punchy and a little drunk, enjoy wine from enormous glasses as they finish their meals.

ALICE

(draining her glass)

She should be ashamed. Can you imagine having a room here and then not staying in it?

An ANXIOUS WAITER races in, refilling Alice's glass.

EMMA

(perfect mimic)

Darling, I was thinking of ordering this entire menu, and then not eating it!

The waiter retreats, joining FIVE others standing at discreet, fearful attention, all careful not to look at Emma whom they've clearly mistaken her for Cordelia.

MEG

We should just take it. Her room.

EMMA

And her trip to Monte Carlo!

(to Alice)

That's still France, right?

MEG

Alice, how fast can you get a binder going on a trip like that?

ALICE

(laughs)

Oh, I'd love to see that. Us in Monte Carlo.

MEG

What's so funny about that? We got in here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA
(mimicking)
Indeed. It is pitiful how low the
standards here have fallen.

Two waiters step in to clear plates, hearing all.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(mimicking)
Remind me to have Daddy buy this
hotel so that I can knock it down.

Alice and Meg laugh with Emma as the waiters head for the
kitchen in panic.

WAITER
(whispers to other)
She is a monster!

MEG
Emma, you *could* be her!

EMMA
(mimicking)
Darling, Meg. Always making me
laugh!
(dropping it)
Who in their right mind would ever
believe that I was--

MANAGER
Pardon, Mademoiselle Scott?

The three look up at the manager in surprise.

ALICE
*I'm so sorry. Were we being too
loud?*

MANAGER
*No, no, we are all very happy to
see Mademoiselle Scott smile...*

A WINE STEWARD hustles up to the table with an ice bucket
stand and a bottle of Champagne.

MANAGER (CONT'D)
Please. In apology for our earlier
misunderstanding.

EMMA
Our misunder--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MANAGER

Your dinners as well. With our compliments...

The three women exchange glances as the steward begins to open the bottle and the manager bows, backing away.

EMMA

Excuse me, Monsieur?

MANAGER

Oui, Mademoiselle?

Emma smiles, broadly, batting her eyelashes as the steward pops the Champagne cork.

EMMA

(perfect British)

I so *hate* to be a bother, but I seem to have misplaced my room key.

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - SUITE - NIGHT

CLICK! The door swings open into the dark room, framing the three drunk laughing women.

Alice fumbles for a switch, hitting the lights, and their laughter cuts abruptly at the sumptuous interior of gleaming marble, gilt and silk.

MEG

Holy--

EMMA

Scheize.

Alice sees but one the thing: The Eiffel tower illuminated on the other side of a bank of French doors.

ALICE

A view! There's a view.

Alice races to push back the window sheers, revealing a staggering panorama of the city, the Seine, and the Eiffel tower in the pouring rain.

The entire city of light is reflected in her eyes.

EMMA (O.S.)

Now this is more like it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG

There's whole other room in here!

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice enters, steering around a tower of Louis Vuitton luggage, as Meg pulls a fresh bottle of Champagne from a bucket of ice.

ALICE

Wait. What are you guys doing?

Emma launches herself onto the enormous bed.

EMMA

This is the room we were supposed to have!

ALICE

On what planet? Come on. We were only going to take a look!

MEG

So, we're looking.
(pops the Champagne)
And we like what we see.

ALICE

Meg!

Meg takes the bottle and crawls up with Emma.

EMMA

Alice, take a break, would you? We walked eighty-point-four-six-seventwo kilometers... A lot happened today.

ALICE

But--

MEG

(pats the bed)
Alice, how many do chances do we get? For something like this?

Alice considers, looks out the window at the streaming rain.

ALICE

Okay. But, just until it stops raining. Then we go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG

(makes room for Alice)

Agreed.

Alice climbs up and together, the three pass the bottle of Champagne as they study the ceiling's ornate plasterwork.

MEG (CONT'D)

(laughs)

I'm sorry, I just keeping thinking
of the look on that woman's face!

EMMA

I'm glad I got pictures!

ALICE

I did surprise her--

MEG

Surprised me!

EMMA

Really loved that flag, didn't she?

ALICE

Poor Carl and Deedee...

EMMA

Do you think that if you sleep in a
bed like this every night your
dreams are different?

Alice rolls to her side and the view of the Eiffel tower.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Like, are they bigger? You know?
Do you dream a more amazing life?

Meg kicks off her shoes, lets them drop.

MEG

Well... We'll never know.

Seen from the bed, the light atop the Eiffel tower breaks
through the dissipating clouds to swing a searching arc
through the night sky...

MATCH DISSOLVE

The Eiffel tower gleams gold and orange in the morning sun.

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - BEDROOM - SUITE - MORNING

A telephone rings, stirring Alice. It rings again.

She reaches for it in her sleep as Emma sits up groggily beside Meg curled around the empty Champagne bottle.

ALICE
(answering)
Hello?

EMMA
What time is it?

Alice's eyes fly open as she snaps awake.

ALICE
Oh, yes. Yes...

EMMA
(shaking Meg)
Meg, wake up. We're in trouble--

Meg pulls herself up, sees Alice on the phone.

MEG
Oh, shiii--

ALICE
We'll be right down. Merci.

She hangs up.

EMMA
We were only joking! We didn't mean to--!

MEG
We'll tell them it was a mistake!

EMMA
Alice?

ALICE
Cordelia, your car is here.

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma attempt to conceal themselves behind Cordelia's tower of cases as it's wheeled from the elevator by two PORTERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The women scurry for the exit past the desk manager.

MANAGER
Mademoiselle Scott!

ALICE
Just keep moving.

The three women increase their pace, but the manager catches up to them with an express envelope.

MANAGER
Mademoiselle Scott, this came for
you this morning. The package you
were seeking?

Emma merely blinks at the offered envelope.

MEG
Take it. Just take it.

EMMA
(snatching it)
Thanks again!

They break for the door, but the manager follows.

MANAGER
I'm afraid there may still be some
photographers outside--

EMMA
What?

EXT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - DAY

As they emerge, the manager and doormen hustle Alice, Emma and Meg towards a waiting car and driver, as paparazzi call and shoot from across the boulevard.

ALICE
*Thank you so much but I think we'll
walk--*

MANAGER
(laughs)
*But, you can not walk to the
airport.*

ALICE
(stops fast)
The airport?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat, as Emma and Meg look to Alice for direction and the frenzied calls of the paparazzi increase.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

ALICE

It's fine. It's fine. We'll just
have him drop us off...

Alice and Meg look out the back window at the manager who waves them farewell, the doorman shooping photographers.

MEG

They *really* do think she's her...

RIP! Alice and Meg spin to Emma as she spills the envelope's contents.

EMMA

What? I want to know where we're
going.

ALICE

We're going back to our hotel--

Emma holds up an itinerary with a big mischievous grin.

EMMA

No. We're going to Monte Carlo!

ALICE

No. We're not.

MEG

(taking itinerary)
Let me see that--

EMMA

Alice, what's "prive?" Is that
like an airline?

ALICE

Emma, for crying out loud. Meg,
you want to help me out here?

MEG

Hold on... I'm reading...

EMMA

See? Meg wants to go. Don't you,
Meg?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

No, Meg, doesn't.

Meg looks up from the itinerary, shrugs.

MEG

Trip's paid for, whether that girl takes it or not.

ALICE

Oh! And somehow that magically makes taking it right?

EMMA

What's the worst that could happen?

ALICE

I can think of a lot of things--

MEG

You're in charge. You want to go back to that hotel, okay by me.

A beat while Alice looks between Meg and Emma, trapped.

MEG (CONT'D)

Totally your call.

EMMA

(full-on Cordelia)

And, darling, we'll completely understand if you feel we shouldn't go.

EXT. AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAY

The car drives across the wide stretch of runway on a trajectory for a waiting private jet.

INT. PRIVATE JET - IN FLIGHT - DAY

The women swivel around in their plush seats at the POP! of a cork as a STEWARD opens a bottle of Champagne.

ALICE

Okay. We go. We take a look around. We get on a train and come right back...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG

Anything goes wrong, we say it was
a language thing, that we didn't
understand--

EMMA

Now, I like that idea, because it's
true!

They fall silent as the steward appears with glasses of
Champagne, wait for him to retreat.

ALICE

Go, look, come right back. It's a
good plan.

Alice, Meg and Emma clink glasses.

MONTAGE:

EXT. AIRPORT - NICE - DAY

The steward helps the women from the plane, where another
UNIFORMED MAN waits on the tarmac to escort them further.

INT. NICE AIRPORT - DAY

Their escort opens a door ahead of them to a roof deck, wind
spilling in to the stairway they climb.

EXT. NICE AIRPORT - ROOF DECK - DAY

They emerge onto the deck, Emma squealing and grabbing Alice
when she sees their waiting helicopter.

INT./EXT. HELICOPTER - IN FLIGHT - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma delight as the helicopter banks along the
coast, the Mediterranean glittering in blue and green below.

A craggy ridge falls away and all of MONTE CARLO unfolds in
step upon step of coral rooftops, cream and gold.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Alice, Emma and Meg step from a limousine, blinking in the
bright sunlight to take in the square in front of the hotel,
its fountain and the adjacent casino.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Okay! What do we want to do first?
Check out the palace, or the beach?

MEG

Beach!

EMMA

Palace?!

ALICE (CONT'D)

Let's find a map--

JEAN-PIERRE

Mademoiselle Scott!

They turn as JEAN-PIERRE MICHAND (late 30's), sophisticated in jeans and a sportscoat but with a warm bohemian air, comes down the steps, an oversized envelope tucked under his arm.

EMMA

Well, bon jour me.

JEAN-PIERRE

You made it! I was getting a little frantic--. When I did not hear from you--. So I sent your travel--

(laughs at himself)

But, you are here.

(off her blank look)

Forgive me. Jean-Pierre. Michand.
With the foundation--

He pauses in shaking Emma's hand as his eyes land on Alice with friendly curiosity, a charge.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)

Welcome--. I--. I didn't realize you would be bringing--

EMMA

Oh, I'm sorry! This is Alice Perry and Meg Kelly. Two of my dearest friends. Visiting from America!

ALICE

(shaking hands)

Hello.

Jean-Pierre has trouble pulling his eyes from Alice as he shakes Meg's hand.

JEAN-PIERRE

It is a pleasure to meet friends--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA

I'll say.

Emma sneakily indicates Jean-Pierre's empty ring finger to Alice and Meg as he consults his wristwatch.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(whispered aside)

No ring.

JEAN-PIERRE

I'm terribly sorry, but, I am already late for a meeting--

MEG

We won't keep you--

JEAN-PIERRE

I just wanted to make sure you arrived safely and that I was here to greet you.

(an afterthought)

Oh. And, of course, to deliver your invitations for the week, and the foundation's report--

EMMA

Invitations for the week--?

JEAN-PIERRE

Various events. Leading up to the auction--

(the watch)

Again, I am so sorry, but, I am reluctant to keep His Highness waiting.

EMMA

His Highness?

JEAN-PIERRE

The Prince. But, we will see each other at the casino for tonight's game. Please, bring your friends--

ALICE

You are very generous, and we'd love to, but, I'm afraid Cordelia has other plans this evening--

Jean-Pierre turns, charmed by Alice's perfect French, and alarmed by this news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JEAN-PIERRE

But--

ALICE

We're very sorry--

JEAN-PIERRE

*(mounting anxiety)**Perhaps we have misunderstood each other. Mademoiselle Scott--. She must be there for tonight's game. The prince. His Highness has asked to be seated across from her--*

EMMA

What's he saying? *Which prince?*

Jean-Pierre looks imploringly between the three.

JEAN-PIERRE

Please. It is for the foundation.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Within a glossy brochure: A collage of "snapshots" shows happy African children grouped outside their new school; raising their hands at their desks in a pristine classroom; finding their country on a glossy globe.

ALICE

(anguished)

Oh, would you look at these kids?

MEG

No, I can't. I can't stand it.

Emma reads to Alice and Meg from the brochure in the seating area of their luxurious suite, enjoying none of it, nor the incredible balcony view of Monte Carlo's marina and bay.

EMMA

"With your help The Michand Foundation is able to sow the seeds of education, transforming lives, families, and villages, one child at a time..." She didn't say anything about a school!

MEG

Schools, with an "s." More than one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE
(miserable)
In Africa.

MEG
That horrible, irresponsible girl!
I've never stolen a thing in my
life, now I've taken a trip from
school children.

ALICE
In Africa.

Meg hangs her head.

EMMA
Reykjavik! That takes some nerve!
They're counting on her for a
charity auction and she doesn't
even show up!

ALICE
Only she did.

Emma reaches for a gigantic wrapped fruit basket.

EMMA
She did?

MEG
Do not touch that!

ALICE
You, Emma. If you're Cordelia.
They've seen you. You're here.

EMMA
Well, I can't go to that thing
tonight.
(a beat)
I don't have anything to wear.

The phone RINGS! and Emma snatches it up before Alice can.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(perfect British)
Hello?

Alice gestures for Emma not to say anything, to hang up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Oh yes, please. Send it up... Um.
Yes, all of it. Everything. Thank
you, ever so. Merci!

She hangs up and holds a beat before turning to Alice.

EMMA (CONT'D)

My luggage is here.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Alice and Meg stand in front of the tower of Louis Vuitton trunks and cases while Emma idly thumbs the combination lock of a steel briefcase in her lap.

ALICE

Okay. But, just for tonight. And,
that's it.

CLICK! Alice and Meg look to Emma, holding the now open briefcase, eyes wide.

EMMA

Lucky guess?

A necklace of diamonds and enormous yellow stones sparkles like a constellation from within the case's velvet lining.

ALICE

(closing it)

No jewelry.

Emma nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Then it all goes back.

MEG

Dry-cleaned.

INT. LES CASINO DES MONTE CARLO - NIGHT

The gaming hall's towering ornate doors are opened by TWO DOORMEN for Alice, Emma and Meg to make their big entrance in Cordelia's couture chiffon, silk and organza.

Heads held high, backs straight, they strike a remarkable tableaux as they pause in unison at the top of the room's raised landing to survey the swirl of roulette wheels and the tony European jet set.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

At first glance they look spectacular, but under closer scrutiny one can read Meg's composed discomfort in wearing a dress that is too tight, nearly spilling her breasts, and the self-consciousness Alice endures in a dress made daringly short by her height.

But, this is because we know them; to all other eyes they not only belong here, they own the room.

They glance at one another, eyebrows up: "We're here!"

EMMA

Don't you feel like we've won
something already?

Jean-Pierre comes to greet them with PRINCE DOMENICO DA SILVANO (30's, movie-star handsome), both in tuxedos, offering a hand to escort Emma down the few steps.

JEAN-PIERRE

Mademoiselle Scott, you made it!

Emma withholds her natural smile, placing just the tips of her fingers in Jean-Pierre's palm with exaggerated hauteur.

EMMA

Enchante.

Jean-Pierre assists Meg and Alice, Meg clutching the top of her dress, Alice anxiously keeping the skirt of hers in place with a hand as she steps down.

JEAN-PIERRE

And Mademoiselle Margaret Kelly and
Mademoiselle Alice Perry--
(for Alice)
*I am very glad you were able to
come this evening.*

Alice nods, blushes and tries to cover.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)

May I present His Highness, Prince
Domenico Da Silvano?

Prince Da Silvano bows from the waist.

DOMENICO

Mademoiselle Scott--

EMMA

Please, call me "Cordelia."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DOMENICO

If you will call me "Domenico."

EMMA

I shall *certainly* try.

Domenico escorts Emma out onto the casino floor as Jean-Pierre touches Alice's elbow.

JEAN-PIERRE

Shall we?

Alice and Meg allow Jean-Pierre to lead them, following Emma as GAMBLERS break from their games to track these three elegant women gliding smoothly through the room.

MEG

(aside to Alice)

I may as well be topless.

ALICE

Please. I'm mooning everyone behind us.

INT. LES CASINO - PRIVATE GAME ROOM - NIGHT

A DEALER unseals a new deck of cards as Domenico pulls out a chair for Emma at the room's enormous game table.

EMMA

Oh, but, I really wasn't planning on playing this evening. I so much prefer to watch--

Emma looks to Alice and Meg for help as Jean-Pierre leads them to the far side of a low railing to view the game.

DOMENICO

(a wink)

This I do not believe about you.

He turns to the eight other PLAYERS (of various ages and genders, but all rich) clustered at the room's small bar.

DOMENICO (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen? Shall we begin?

The other players make obligatory introductions and take up positions at the table as Jean-Pierre offers Alice and Meg tall upholstered stools to sit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice moves to sit, but then remembers her skirt, looks to Meg who is unable to even raise a leg in her tight dress.

ALICE
(to Jean-Pierre)
Easier to see if we stand.

Jean-Pierre hands them both a glass of Champagne.

ALICE (CONT'D)
And why aren't you playing?

JEAN-PIERRE
*Ah. I play behind the scenes.
Like Robin Hood, I take from those
who have more than enough, for
those who have nothing but need.
(laughs)
Also, I do not play because I have
no money of my own.*

Alice smiles, charmed by his candor, but then stops.

ALICE
*They're playing for money?
(turns to Meg, flat)
They're playing for money.*

Together they turn to see Emma happily arranging the cards she is dealt in her hands.

DOMENICO
*Cordelia, why don't you do us the
honor of setting this evening's
stakes?*

Emma glances over to Alice and Meg who look back at her, ashen, and turns to the players who smile expectantly.

EMMA
Oh. Um. Okay...

She takes her handbag into her lap, opens it, looks.

EMMA (CONT'D)
(a guess)
*Alright. Why don't... Why don't
we start at ten?*

A shocked player sputters into his drink.

Emma places a twenty Euro note on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA (CONT'D)

That is if anyone is able to make change.

A beat.

Jean-Pierre, Domenico and all the other players burst out laughing and Emma smiles, laughing too, but shoots a desperate look to Alice and Meg.

DOMENICO

Marvelous!

He signals an ATTENDANT over as Emma's shoulders relax.

DOMENICO (CONT'D)

Please bring Mademoiselle Scott a rack of chips.

(to Emma)

Two hundred?

EMMA

(big gulp)

Um. Sure.

JEAN-PIERRE

You would not know it, but she is very funny.

MEG

A riot.

Domenico casts a glossy chip into the pot.

DOMENICO

Mademoiselle Scott starts us at ten thousand a hand.

Alice and Meg freeze, their Champagne glasses sliding from their hands, while Emma's eyes grow as large as all the zeroes on Domenico's chip.

DOMENICO (CONT'D)

You must be feeling very lucky.

INT. LES CASINO - PRIVATE GAME ROOM - NIGHT

DEALER

Mademoiselle Scott? It is your call.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emma sits locked in a cool stare-down over the top of her cards with Domenico across from her at the tensed table.

Meg downs a glass of Champagne in one gulp, snagging the back of the WAITER's jacket, hauling him back for a refill.

The waiter turns to Alice, who pats at her face with a damp napkin, struggling to breathe.

MEG
(takes bottle from waiter)
I should probably keep this.

DEALER
(prodding)
Mademoiselle?

Emma places her cards face down before her, appears to fold.

EMMA
Well...

She moves her hands to the stacks and stacks of chips beside her, and pushes them to the center of the table.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I'm all in.

The other players gasp and Alice fails to suppress a whimper as she grasps Meg's pouring hand, spilling Champagne, drawing Jean-Pierre's attention.

JEAN-PIERRE
Are you alright?

ALICE
Great. I'm just--. Excuse me.

Alice slips around the railing and heads for Emma as two players fold in near tears, leaving just Emma, Domenico and a DOWAGER (60's) in the game.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm terribly sorry to interrupt.
But, Cordelia, you look a little
overheated... Why don't we--?
(whispers low)
Have you completely lost your mind?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA

(whisper back)

Hey. Don't distract me. I'm in
the middle of a hand--

ALICE

Emma! That isn't Monopoly money!

EMMA

Relax. I've got it under control--

ALICE

And this isn't the mathletes finals
in Kenosha!

EMMA

Jean-Pierre, would you be a dear
and get Alice some water?

(to Alice)

You're the one that got us into
this--!

ALICE

What?!

DOMENICO

I will see you, Cordelia.

Domenico pushes his own mountain of chips to the pot in the
center of the table and Alice buries her face in her hands
when the dowager folds her cards.

EMMA

(whisper to Alice)

Now, go *sit down* and try to be
cool, would you? Jeeze! Let me
handle this.

Alice moves back to her stool, tries to smile as she takes
the water Jean-Pierre offers.

MEG

What'd she say? What'd she say?

ALICE

(sick)

We're going down, Meg. Going down
hard.

DEALER

Mademoiselle. Your Highness. Your
cards, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Alice and Meg turn helplessly to the game table.

DOMENICO
Ladies first.

EMMA
After you. Please.

Domenico can hardly contain his gloating as he reveals his three aces.

DOMENICO
I am very sorry, Cordelia.

A beat, then Emma shrugs.

EMMA
Well. It is just a game after all.

She turns her cards over and fans them on the table felt: A royal flush in the suit of hearts, ace high.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I do hope there are no hard feelings.

The other players cheer as Domenico's smile crashes.

Emma shrieks with delight, turning to Alice and Meg who grab each other, barely keeping themselves from pitching over, glasses spilling, as the other players applaud.

Emma rakes in the Everest of multi-colored chips with both arms, laughing as she's congratulated.

DOWAGER
You must play often, Miss Scott.

EMMA
Oh, a little, online. But, this is so much more fun!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - NIGHT

Domenico and Jean-Pierre, each toting buckets of chips, escort Alice, Emma and Meg to the elevator, all giddy.

DOMENICO
Not even a last drink in the bar?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA

It's been such a splendid evening,
I am reluctant to press my luck any
further.

MEG

Yeah. Good call, Cordelia.

DING! The elevator arrives and the doors open as Domenico
leans in towards Emma.

DOMENICO

Then you must promise to dance with
me at my party tomorrow.

Emma evades Domenico by stepping onto the elevator.

EMMA

Oh, Delmonico--

DOMENICO

"Domenico."

EMMA

I would not miss it for the world.

Meg collects the buckets from Domenico and steps on.

MEG

Great meeting you, your Highness.
Good times. Really.

Jean-Pierre places his buckets in Alice's hands, a certain
frisson to the simple exchange.

JEAN-PIERRE

Tomorrow night?

EMMA

Wait!

Before Alice can respond to Jean-Pierre, Emma takes one of
the buckets from Alice and hands it back to him.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You must keep this one. For your
foundation.

JEAN-PIERRE

But, your family has already been
so generous--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

She really believes in education.

The doors start to close.

JEAN-PIERRE

Good night, then.

DOMENICO

And, welcome to Monte Carlo.

The doors close, leaving Jean-Pierre and Domenico to gaze fondly where the three women had just been.

They both sigh and turn for the bar, when they hear shrieking from the elevator as it rises above them.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Alice, Meg and Emma jump up and down, screaming like girls at a slumber party, chips flying everywhere.

MONTAGE:

EXT. BEAUTY SALON - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma burst through the salon doors into the street, their hair color richer, eyes brighter, a new lightness to their step; vivid, brilliantly polished versions of their essential selves.

Heads turn as they set out together.

INT. BOUTIQUE - DAY

The wings of a brass-framed three-way mirror spin and spread in a swirling kaleidoscope of shifting reflections:

Alice, Meg and Emma work their way through an increasingly spectacular and audacious series of combinations, dresses and gowns, modeling for each other as they are tended to by SHOPGIRLS and SEAMSTRESSES...

--Alice twirls in a navy dress with white polka dots.

--Meg slaps her own ass with a laugh, admiring herself from the back in a pair of pencil thin sexy black jeans.

--Emma glows in a pale lavender strapless satin gown.

END MONTAGE:

INT. BOUTIQUE - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma watch as a number of their dresses are boxed and a CASHIER writes them up.

SHOP GIRL

Would you like these put on your account, Mademoiselle Scott?

ALICE

No. Thank you, we'll be paying cash--

EMMA

But, it would be darling if you could have them sent round our hotel.

MEG

Wait. You know what, on second thought, I'm not getting these--

She pulls the pair of jeans from her pile of clothes.

EMMA

But, they looked amazing on you!

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

MEG

Where was I ever going to wear them? Seriously?

EMMA

You wear them here! Anywhere! Alice, you tell her--

Alice opens her mouth, but stops herself as the three wander the crowded market stalls heaped with fountains of flowers in every color, breads, fresh produce, trinkets and souvenirs.

ALICE

No. I'm not going to tell you what to do.

MEG

Thank you. It's silly, anyway. They're just jeans. I want to find something for the kids--

EMMA

Oh, Meg! Look! For Finn!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emma leaps to one of the stalls, seizing a profusion of plastic jeweled tiaras displayed alongside photographs of Princess Grace. She places a tiara on her head, modeling.

EMMA (CONT'D)

How perfect is this?!

ALICE

Even better!

Alice holds up a pair of pink satin toe shoes, swinging them from their ribbon laces.

INT. SHOE REPAIR SHOP - DAY

A SHOP OWNER (60's) slips a pair of freshly polished men's shoes into a paper bag, placing them on the counter in front of Richard, who pulls out his wallet.

RICHARD

(remembering)

Oh. And the suitcase.

The shop owner retrieves Alice's mended suitcase from a nearby shelf, a tag on the zipper.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

How much do I owe you for that?

EXT. STRIP MALL - DAY

Richard exits the shoe repair carrying Alice's repaired suitcase, headed for his car.

GLENN

Hey, Richard!

Richard glances up to see Glenn crossing the parking lot with Seamus and Finn, pushing a cart piled high with groceries.

CUT TO:

Richard finishes helping Glenn and the kids transfer grocery bags to the open trunk of Glenn's squad car.

GLENN (CONT'D)

(closing trunk)

So, we'll see you at seven then--

RICHARD

And that's two with sausage, extra sauce, no onions--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SEAMUS

Thin crust.

RICHARD

Got it.

Richard picks up Alice's suitcase.

FINN

Are you going to France, too?

RICHARD

No. I just--

Glenn turns, noticing the suitcase for the first time.

GLENN

Whoa! Hold on! You're going to surprise Alice--?

FINN

I love surprises!

RICHARD

What? No, I--

GLENN

Oh, man, I win!

Richard blinks as Glenn claps him on the shoulder.

GLENN (CONT'D)

Meg and I've had this bet going: She thought it would be on Alice's next birthday, but I *knew* it was going to be this trip to France!

RICHARD

Glenn, listen--

GLENN

Don't worry! I won't blow it for you! I won't call anyone, ruin the surprise--

(playful punch)

You sly dog! You've probably booked the best suite in Paris. Am I right? Got the ring, the whole show--. This is so you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RICHARD
(confused, but flattered)
So...me?

GLENN
Sure! That's why Alice loves you.
You get how much this trip's meant
to her; now, you're just putting
the icing on the cake. The big
gesture, you know? Not too
dominating: *Supportive. Loving!*
(shakes his head)
You're the man, Richard. Big
props.

Glenn pulls Richard into a big happy bear hug.

GLENN (CONT'D)
Congratulations.

RICHARD
Glenn. She said, no.

EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

BERNARD ROCHAND (late 30's), an appealing Frenchman in a worn sportscoat, pauses in collecting leeks when he spots Meg on the other side of the open stall.

He watches as she surveys the rich array of fresh produce, lifting a tomato to her nose, inhaling with a private smile.

Meg bites into the tomato, spurting juice onto her cheek and down her front.

She looks up as she attempts to wipe the juice away, stopping when she catches Bernard smiling with amusement.

Meg rolls her eyes with self-deprecation and moves on along the line of stalls.

Bernard pays for his purchase and follows, finding Meg at another stall where a FRENCHWOMAN tries to communicate how to prepare the fish they both admire.

Meg nods, not entirely understanding, but getting enough of it to gesture responses.

The woman grabs some newspaper, wrapping the fish, and thrusts it towards Meg with a smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG

Oh, no. No. I'm sorry. I'd like to. But...

The woman is confused, vaguely insulted.

MEG (CONT'D)

I don't have a kitchen. No place to cook.

BERNARD

She is only a visitor. Without a kitchen. But, it is a beautiful fish. Maybe next time.

Meg turns to find Bernard beside her.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

I have explained.

Meg hesitates uncertainly before this friendly stranger.

MEG

Well, thank you...

She smiles at the woman and starts to walk away, only to find Bernard falling into step with her.

BERNARD

You are American.

Meg glances at Bernard and away, uncomfortable, but curious, drawn by his warmth and the familiar greetings he exchanges with various vendors as they walk.

MEG

From Wisconsin. Yes.

Bernard reaches a handkerchief from his jacket for Meg.

BERNARD

You cook in Wisconsin?

Meg uses the handkerchief to blot the remaining tomato juice.

MEG

I try. But... We don't have even half of this at home.

She points to a tray of miniature lobsters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEG (CONT'D)

Like those. I've only seen them in magazines.

BERNARD

Ah, langoustines. Many ways to prepare these--

MEG

I'd go for a saute, being a Midwestern gal.

BERNARD

Court-bouillon.

MEG

(impressed)
Poaching.

BERNARD

With sea water. Amazing.

MEG

So, you cook.

Bernard dips his head modestly.

BERNARD

As you say, "I try."
(offers his hand)
Bernard. Rochand.

Meg shakes his hand and returns the handkerchief.

MEG

Meg. Kelly. Thank you again for your help--

BERNARD

And, how long are you in Monte Carlo, Meg?

Meg's brow furrows slightly and she turns to head back.

MEG

I need to find my--. My friends are around here somewhere...

BERNARD

I will help you find them. We can walk together--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEG

(laughs)

Look. It was nice to meet you--

BERNARD

"Bernard."

MEG

Yeah. But, I'm gonna walk myself.

Thanks, though.

She slips into the moving crowd, leaving Bernard to watch as she meets Alice and Emma further up the street.

He holds a beat, then turns when called to by a vendor.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Glenn paces as Richard holds the phone at his desk, the Esprit de Corps Tours website on his computer's screen.

RICHARD

It's been two days and it didn't occur to you to call anyone?

EXT. PALAIS DE CHAILLOT - DAY

Madame Valery, cellphone to her ear, leads the few remaining members of her flock down the wide steps, across the Seine from the Eiffel tower.

MADAME VALERY

She refused to follow my instructions. She sabotaged my tour. Ruined it for everyone!

RICHARD

Wait. Alice did? Alice Perry?

MADAME VALERY

She took my flag!

CUTTING BETWEEN:

RICHARD

But, if their luggage is still there, then they're missing--

GLENN

Missing? What the--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

How do I get in touch with the police?

GLENN

Hey, I'm the police!

RICHARD

Are you the police in France?

MADAME VALERY

The police? Monsieur. Nothing could keep her from seeing Paris her way. Believe me. She was very determined.

RICHARD

But--

GLENN

What's she saying?

MADAME VALERY

You are the husband, yes?

Richard hesitates, looks to Glenn.

RICHARD

(firmly)

Yes. I am the husband.

Glenn nods emphatically.

INT. VILLA DA SILVANO - NIGHT

A cascade of yellow and gold balloons washes over Alice as she dances with Meg and Emma to a Euro-trance-pop beat at the center of the crowded dance floor.

Emma screams with delight in a new dress and plastic tiara, batting balloons as Domenico who spins her away.

Alice watches with heightened vigilance as Emma dances with her prince and blows a kiss to Alice and Meg.

MEG

Alice, she's fine...

(marveling)

Look where we are! Can you even remember the last time we danced like this? It's gotta be Martha Lapland's wedding--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Actually, sometimes Richard and I
go to Madison's on Saturdays--

MEG

(stops dancing, laughs)
The gay bar?

ALICE

(shrugs, matter of fact)
They've got the best music.

MEG

I am so butting in on that.

Alice laughs and spins, crashing directly into Jean-Pierre.

JEAN-PIERRE

And I was looking for you!

From the edge of the dance floor, NIKOLAI LUDOVIC (late 30s),
squat, bald, completely nondescript but for his white tie and
tails, watches Emma ardently.

He stops a waiter, taking his tray of Champagne flutes.

Emma spins to find Nikolai at her elbow, grinning, holding up
this offering, and she takes him for a waiter.

EMMA

Ooh! Thank you! I'm so thirsty!

Nikolai remains planted, holding his tray with a smile,
watching with bright eyes as Emma drinks.

She lowers her glass and her full attention snags on Nikolai,
really registering his presence now as she searches his warm,
gentle eyes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's a wonderful party, isn't it?

Nikolai nods and offers her another glass of Champagne.

Alice, dancing with Jean-Pierre, subtly repositions herself
in order to keep an eye on Emma.

JEAN-PIERRE

*Cordelia, she can take care of
herself, yes?*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE

What? Oh, yeah, of course...

Meg dances by herself, having a great time, taking in the room, the music and the people, when a handsome MAN begins to match her moves, insinuates himself.

She smiles but shakes her head as she moves away, turning her back to evade him.

Another gorgeous MAN sidles up to Meg, joining her solo dance, wiggling his eyebrows invitingly.

MEG

No, thanks.

She moves off only to be met by GIORGIO (40's, sexy, Euro-suave) who smoothly steps in.

MEG (CONT'D)

No--

GIORGIO

(grinning wide)

Yes! Giorgio!

Emma slips away from dancing with Domenico, moving to Nikolai who remains with his tray at the ready, brightening at her approach, lifting a glass.

EMMA

Don't you need to, like, circulate?

NIKOLAI

Ya znal, chto naydu tebya.

Emma blushes as though showered in compliments.

EMMA

Really?

PENELOPE

(flat)

Cordelia Winthrop Scott.

Emma turns, still smiling, to find PENELOPE PENROSE (late 20s, British), frail and bird-like, but attempting to hold a warrior's stance with her shoulders thrown back.

EMMA

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PENELOPE

Do you not know who I am?

Emma's smile falters as she glances furtively about.

EMMA

Um. 'Course I do... Hi.

PENELOPE

Penelope. Penelope *Penrose*.

Penelope's chin quivers as she reads Emma's blank look.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

I spent a year in hospital--

EMMA

Hospital? What *happened*?!

PENELOPE

You did! You happened!

Alice swivels around at the raised voices, spots Penelope facing Emma.

ALICE

Excuse me!

She dodges away from Jean-Pierre, hooking Meg's arm in passing, yanking her away from Giorgio as she heads for Emma.

PENELOPE

Don't pretend you don't remember!
Third year at Le Rosey! You threw
my luggage in the pool. Set fire
to my mattress. You cut off all my
hair--

MEG

What? That's awful!

PENELOPE

While I was sleeping.

EMMA

She did that to you?

ALICE

(correcting)
Cordelia! How could you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PENELOPE

That was just the first night.

ALICE

Say you're sorry, Cordelia.

(whispers)

And let's get out of here!

EMMA

Alice, no--. Wait a minute--

PENELOPE

(to Alice and Meg)

She turned all my friends against
me... They had to send me away...
To live with the nuns--

Emma grabs Penelope by the shoulders.

EMMA

Now, you listen to me, Penelope
Penrose. You have no idea how long
I've waited for this moment.

Penelope flinches, preparing for a beating.

EMMA (CONT'D)

But, I had no way of finding you
after you left us, and...Oh, Penny.
Don't you see? Don't you know that
I was just jealous?

Alice and Meg exchange looks.

PENELOPE

(small)

Jealous?

EMMA

You were so smart. So clever and
beautiful--

PENELOPE

I was ugly--

EMMA

No, Penny. I was ugly. I was a
monster.

PENELOPE

Penny Pignose. That's what you
called me--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

EMMA

Because, I knew I could never
compete! Not with anyone as
special as you.

PENELOPE

You thought I was special?

Emma looks at Penelope, nods emphatically.

EMMA

You want to know what I've waited
for all these years, Penelope
Penrose?

Penelope shakes her head almost imperceptibly.

EMMA (CONT'D)

To do this.

Emma opens her arms wide and pulls Penelope into a hug.

She looks at Alice and Meg over Penelope's shoulder, and then
closes her eyes with genuine emotion for a beat, pulling back
to smile into Penelope's grateful, tear-streaked face.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Now... Friends?

INT. BISTRO - LATE NIGHT

DOMENICO

(raising a glass)

To friends! Old and new!

Emma seizes Penelope's hand from across the table, placing it
in Domenico's as she drunkenly sings the old Girl Scout song.

EMMA

"Make new friends and keep the old,
one is silver and the other's
gold!"

Alice and Jean-Pierre lean toward each other intimately
across the packed, lively table of PARTY-GOERS.

JEAN-PIERRE

But, no one really lives here.
Monte Carlo. It's like Hong Kong.
People merely come and go. People
like me. Well, and then, people
like yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice nods to a WAITER who arrives to refill her Champagne glass, pouring as Jean-Pierre speaks.

ALICE
People like me?

JEAN-PIERRE
People with money. This is why I come. I help assuage their guilt when I remind them that there are children in this world who do not have clean water to drink, while they drink Champagne.

ALICE
And that works?

Jean-Pierre blinks, then bursts out laughing.

JEAN-PIERRE
I take myself far too seriously.

ALICE
*No. I'm sorry, I didn't mean--.
I've seen the pictures of the schools. The work you do is admirable--*

JEAN-PIERRE
*And I'm afraid I talk about it because I myself am not that interesting...
(a hand on her arm)
I'd rather know about you.*

ALICE
*(trapped)
Oh. Well. You know. I...do what I can, here and there. A little volunteer work...*

She turns to her Champagne, rolling her eyes at herself.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Oh, brother.

Meg sits further down the length of all the tables laid end to end, beside Giorgio, who has pulled his chair close, draping an arm casually across the back of hers.

MEG
Okay, wait. You're a man, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Giorgio laughs.

MEG (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know: I'm funny. But, see if you can answer something for me. Ten years you're married, to the girl you dated in high school. I'm talking the girl you lost your virginity to, the one who gave you two great kids that you're just crazy about. Then one morning, what? You wake up, and out of the blue, it's like, "Oh, hey, honey, I think I'm in love with this other woman..."

(pauses)

His patrol partner.

A beat as Giorgio shakes his head sadly.

MEG (CONT'D)

I thought I was his partner.

Giorgio takes Meg hand, more in comfort than come on.

GIORGIO

Your heart feels betrayed.

MEG

(telling a secret)

I feel like I failed.

GIORGIO

I tell you this: A man...he will always love the mother of his children.

Meg blinks, taking this in.

GIORGIO (CONT'D)

Now you must kiss someone else.

MEG

(laughs)

Oh, I see--

GIORGIO

To break the spell. You must!
Then you will be free.

A plate of beautifully arranged langoustine is placed on the table in front of Meg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEG

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't order--

She looks up to find Bernard standing in chef's whites.

BERNARD

(smiles, nods)

Madame Kelly.

He heads toward for the kitchen before she can say anything.

Emma pours sloppy glasses of Champagne for her companions as though playing a game of tag, spilling wine.

EMMA

And you're my friend...and you're
my friend...and you're my--

She turns with the bottle to find Nikolai who has materialized beside her on the long banquette.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Oh, hey! You were at the party!
Do you work here, too?

Nikolai cheerfully shakes his head, holds up her purse.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Oh! Did I forget that? Wow, what
a lifesaver! Thanks!

NIKOLAI

Ti takaya vaskhititel'naya.

Emma sets the bottle down to concentrate on Nikolai.

EMMA

You're not from here, are you?
(over-enunciating)
I'm Emm--. My name is Cordelia.

NIKOLAI

(points to himself)
Nikolai.

EXT. STREET - PRE-DAWN

Alice and Jean-Pierre walk along, side by side, their hands nearly touching, among the rest of the restaurant party.

Alice looks up, taking in the bowl of pre-dawn sky, and glances over at Jean-Pierre who watches her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

The stars are still out.

Ahead, Emma breaks away from Penelope and Domenico, leaving the two to walk on together as she comes back toward Alice.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Where's Meg?

Alice looks around and sees Giorgio walking alone among the strolling party guests.

ALICE

I thought she was right behind us--

INT. BISTRO KITCHEN - PRE-DAWN

Bernard takes a tray of dishes from his FATHER (70's, striking resemblance) who enters from the dining room.

BERNARD

Papa, sit down. Rest.

INT. BISTRO - PRE-DAWN

Bernard enters with the tray, stopping when he sees Meg examining a menu by the front door of the empty bistro.

MEG

(sly smile)

You do cook.

Bernard shrugs, smiling as he comes forward.

BERNARD

You enjoyed your meal?

MEG

Adding the fresh orange; nice.

Bernard nods, accepting the compliment.

MEG (CONT'D)

But, a little fennel would've been "wow."

BERNARD

Next time, you cook.

EMMA

Meg! What are you doing? Come on!
We're going to watch--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emma and Alice stop short just outside in the street, pausing as they sense they've interrupted.

ALICE
We were--. We're going to watch
the sunrise.

Meg hesitates, turning between her friends and Bernard.

BERNARD
(smiles)
You should not miss it.

EXT. STREET - PRE-DAWN

Alice and Emma walk with Meg down the narrow street at the end of which the party guests stroll and Jean-Pierre waits for Alice, with Penelope, Domenico and Nikolai.

ALICE
The guy from the market?

EMMA
He is so cute! And a cook--!

MEG
Chef.

EMMA
And you're single now!

Meg slows to a stop, stands a beat.

MEG
(quietly)
I'm single. I'm single, now.

ALICE
You know, Julia Child didn't take
her first cooking class until she
was thirty seven.

MEG
(smiles)
I told you that.

PENELOPE
It's coming, Cordelia! The sun!

EXT. PLACE DE CASINO - DAWN

Alice, Emma and Meg, arms linked, round the corner into the square with the rest of the party guests, just as the very edge of the sun crests the horizon of the open sea.

Alice turns to Meg and Emma, sharing this moment so far beyond anything they could have dreamed.

MEG

We'd be getting up now.

ALICE

If we were home.

EMMA

But, we're not.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Cordelia!

The spell is broken by a TRIO OF PAPARAZZI who spring to life by the hotel's entrance.

PAPARAZZI

Cordelia! Cordelia!

EMMA

Oh, good! I want a picture! Of the three of us! All of us!

The paparazzi swarm from the steps towards Emma.

EMMA (CONT'D)

By the fountain!

She runs for the sprays of water, pulling Alice and Meg, and the paparazzi meet them, flashing away.

Leaning against the fountain's balustrade, Emma gestures for everyone to join them.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Penelope! Come on. I want one with everybody!

Penelope, Domenico and Jean-Pierre join with other members of the group and Emma lines them all up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Okay! Ready? One, two--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She spots Nikolai observing at a short distance.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Wait! Wait! Niki!

He shakes his head, bashful, but Emma gestures him over, swinging her arms wildly.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Nikolai, you, too! I need *all* my friends--*Whoops!*

Her feet zip out from beneath her and she sails backwards over the balustrade, reaching for Alice and Meg, pulling them with her as the camera's flash.

SPLASH!

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

A 747 airliner touches down on the tarmac.

INT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Alice's repaired suitcase tumbles off the conveyer belt.

RICHARD

Excuse me. Pardon me.

Richard skirts around a man with a newspaper to retrieve the bag and heads for customs.

As Richard exits, the man folds his newspaper to its bold headline: SCOTT MAKES A SPLASH!, and a huge photograph of Emma, Alice and Meg laughing together in the fountain.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Emma enters from the bedroom in a swimsuit and wrap, to find Alice hanging up the desk phone.

EMMA

Alice, have you seen my sandals?

ALICE

Okay, there's a two o'clock and a four o'clock train to--

EMMA

Train? Where are you going?

Alice looks up and takes in Emma's costume.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Where are you going?

EMMA

I'm going to the beach. With Penelope.

Meg enters through the suite's door carrying a bakery bag.

MEG

Breakfast is here! There's this fantastic bakery around the corner. I've already had three brioche. And I saw the greatest little shop for the kids, but they weren't open yet--

(off Alice's look)

What's going on?

(to Emma)

What happened?

EMMA

I don't know. She's talking about train schedules...

Emma trails off as she and Meg and Alice look between each other in confusion, each processing for a beat.

ALICE

We need to start packing, right? If we're going back to Paris--

EMMA

Back to Paris?

ALICE

That was the plan--

MEG

What plan?

EMMA

We're not staying for the auction?

ALICE

We were just going to come down, take a look around and--

MEG

That was before we knew it was for a charity. Remember the kids?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EMMA

In Africa.

ALICE

The ones we stole a trip from? The kids who are paying for this room?

MEG

Alice, what's with you? We'll pay for the room--

EMMA

We're rich!

ALICE

So, I'm the only one worried about the fact that we're lying to everyone we've met?

MEG

Lying? To who? Jean-Pierre?

EMMA

You're the one who said we had to go to the casino--

ALICE

And now I'm apparently the only who's worried we might get caught.

MEG

She's in Iceland.

ALICE

One of her friends is bound to find out, or her family--

MEG

What friends?

EMMA

I've got friends.

The doorbell rings and they turn their heads in unison, then look to each other with sudden alarm.

A beat.

Emma goes to the door, finding Penelope, also dressed for the beach, who holds up the newspaper with it's fountain photo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PENELOPE

Have you seen?

EMMA

Oh, my god! We look great!

(ushers Penelope in)

Alice, look!

Alice takes the paper, Meg reading over her shoulder.

MEG

(laughs)

We have got to get that in the yearbook.

PENELOPE

Yearbook?

ALICE

Penelope, could you excuse us?

PENELOPE

Oh. Of course. Where--?

Alice shows Penelope to the bedroom, closes the door and spins to face Emma and Meg.

ALICE

(hushed panic)

This is what I'm talking about!

This is why we have to go--

EMMA

Doesn't it mean we have to stay?

MEG

Oh, this is so typical. Just because it's not on your map, 'cause you didn't plan it--. We all agree to take this adventure and then you won't jump.

ALICE

I won't--? Jump?

Meg drops into a chair, mumbling an aside to herself.

MEG

Now I know how Richard must feel.

Alice comes to a full stop and gapes at Meg, stung.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ALICE

Richard...?

MEG

(feeble apology)

I'm just saying...

ALICE

Well, you're sure one to talk.

Meg's eyes flick up to Alice.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You can't even bring yourself to
buy a pair of jeans anymore--

EMMA

Okay, you know what? Let's just
pack. It's not fun anymore.
Alice, if you think we should go,
then that's what we're gonna do.
You're in charge.

Meg scoffs, an exasperated exhale.

ALICE

No way. Not anymore I'm not. You
want to go to the beach? Go to the
beach. You want to go the market?
Go! "*Liberte, egalite,*
fraternite!"

EMMA

What does that mean?

Alice snatches up her purse and heads for the door.

ALICE

It means everyone should do exactly
what they want.

MEG

Exactly.

EMMA

Alice, wait! Where are you--?
You're not going back to Paris--?

ALICE

(righteous)

Me? No. I'm going to have an
adventure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

She exits, slamming the door behind her.

A beat.

MEG

(off Emma's look)

Don't look at me like that.

The door opens, and Alice re-enters, striding across the room for the desk, not looking at either Emma or Meg.

ALICE

I just--. My guide book.

She picks up her book and crosses back to the door.

EXT. LE PETIT SOMMEIL HOTEL - DAY

Richard steps from the hotel with a MANAGER (50's) who pantomimes that he recognizes Alice from the snapshot Richard shows him, but has no idea where she could be.

Richard pulls out a map to point at a random spot and the manager gestures up the street, down the street, shrugging: She could be anywhere.

EXT. GRIMALDI PALACE - DAY

Alice, amid a crowd of tourists, only half watches the changing of the guards outside the palace gates.

She snaps herself out of her distraction with a shake of her head and turns to the marked pages in her guide book.

CARL

Alice?

She glances up to find Carl and Deedee from the tour.

DEEDEE

We thought that was you!

ALICE

Oh! Carl! Deedee!

Alice is surprisingly overcome and impulsively throws her arms around both of them.

DEEDEE

Well, we're sure surprised to see you, too!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

But, what are you doing here? How did you--?

CARL

Well, when we saw how you stood up to that Madame Valery--! If Alice can do that, we thought, what the heck's holdin' us back? This is our honeymoon!

DEEDEE

I was scared, but then, well, you only live once! And as long as we've got each other--

CARL

We've got everything, right?

Alice blinks, unaccountably teary eyed.

ALICE

Yes. That's right.

CARL

Sometimes you've just gotta follow your heart. Be bold: Let the rest take care of itself.

EXT. PARIS - ARC DE TRIOMPHE - DAY

Richard stands with his map beneath the arch where all roads come together in a spinning roundabout of bleating car horns.

He looks down the length of the Champs Elysees, overwhelmed.

The Japanese couple from Notre Dame approach Richard to ask directions and he shrugs helplessly, pressing the map on them, and steps out as a crosswalk signal turns to green.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - STREET - DAY

Alice embraces Deedee and Carl beside a waiting taxi.

CARL

Tell the girls we would have loved to see them, but--

DEEDEE

Italy calls! And Greece! We're even thinking of hitting Turkey! Imagine! We'll send you postcards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice puts her friends in the taxi, closing the door as Deedee scrolls the window down.

ALICE
Enjoy every second of it!

DEEDEE
You, too, honey!

CARL
Bon voyage!

The car pulls away, Carl and Deedee turning in their seats to wave at Alice through the rear window.

Alice waves until they are out of sight and slowly lowers her hand, standing alone in the street.

A beat.

Alice sighs and pulls out her guide book, unfolding a map as she looks up to gather her bearings.

She takes in the quiet street, the view of the ocean, then looks back at the map in her hands.

She straightens up, a new look of purpose on her face, and crosses the street to toss her guide book and map in the trash can on the corner, striking out unaided down a narrow twisting street hung with vines and flowers.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - STREET - EVENING

Alice rounds the corner of one street into the tight intersection of two narrow alleys in the fading twilight.

She looks around, cheeks flushed, hair pasted to her forehead, lost in a maze of dilapidated walled courtyards and apartment blocks; home to the city's service workers.

She hesitates, then forges ahead down one street until she sees that it dead ends, and she doubles back.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - STREET - EVENING

Alice suppresses panic as she walks briskly up a steep alley, high in the hills, trailed now by a small stray DOG.

She stops, turns to the dog that also stops then sits.

ALICE
Go. Go home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns and starts forward, the dog following.

Alice stops again, turns, and the dog sits.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Don't follow me. I have no idea
where I'm going...

The dog cocks its head in comment.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Okay?

Alice turns to climb the street's incline.

The dog follows.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - LATE AFTERNOON

Penelope, dressed for the evening, gets up from reclining on the bed to join Emma who models a gown before a mirror.

The two regard Emma's reflection, cocking their heads in an identical manner at precisely the same time.

Penelope draws a necklace in gesture, indicating Emma's bare collar bone.

Emma turns, lit by an idea, and pulls the steel briefcase from its hiding place beneath the bed.

INT. BISTRO - EVENING

Meg opens the door from the street, stepping inside, wearing the sexy jeans she hadn't bought the day before.

Bernards's father makes his way to meet her with menus.

EMILE

Madame?

MEG

Just one.

He leads her to a table along the wall and holds out a chair.

Seated, Meg follows him with her eyes to the kitchen where Bernard works furiously at the stove, tossing the contents of a sauce pan with an expert flick of his wrist.

Bernard glances out to the dining room, seeming to sense Meg before knowing he'll find her there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Meg matches the broad smile that sweeps Bernard's face.

EXT. CAFE - PARIS - EVENING

A pair of strolling LOVERS draw Richard's attention as he massages his stockinged foot at a sidewalk table.

He watches them stop, kiss, then continue on their way.

A WAITER returns with Richard's change on a plate and Richard fits his shoe back on his foot, gathers his things to stand.

He stops when he notices the front page of a newspaper folded on a chair at the next table.

He quickly unfolds it to the photograph of Alice and Meg with Emma in the fountain, scans down to the caption: Cordelia Scott and friends in Monte Carlo. Hotel de Paris, etc...

EXT. MONTE CARLO - STREET - EVENING

Alice feeds the little dog a scrap of meat as she eats a kabob, seated on the curb by a street vendor's food cart around which ALGERIAN MEN lounge in plastic lawn chairs.

The dog looks at her avidly, hungry for more.

Alice holds her kabob stick out for the dog to eat, surrendering her dinner with pleasure.

As Alice sips from a bottle of beer, a soccer ball bounces off the curb and rolls to a stop beside her.

She looks up as a ragtag BAND OF KIDS call from the dusty lot across the street, asking for their ball.

A beat as Alice regards the ball.

INT./EXT. YACHT PARTY - EVENING

Emma wears Cordelia's elaborate necklace, standing alone, within a throng of PARTY GOERS, all conversing in French.

She nods and smiles absently, though she's clearly lost, out of her element, when Giorgio approaches.

GIORGIO

Where is Meg? I do not see her.

EMMA

No. I... I don't think she's coming. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emma drifts away to the ship's rail where she turns to survey the party, smiling wistfully at Penelope and Domenico locked in intimate conversation.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Cordelia! There she is! Cordelia!

The trio of paparazzi putter alongside in a small boat, peppering the yacht with their camera flashes.

Emma looks out at them, without her usual animation.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Smile, Cordelia! Please, smile!

Emma waves, but can't seem to manage that smile.

NIKOLAI

Ty v poryadke?

Emma turns to find Nikolai standing beside her in white tie, a piece of cake extended in one hand, a fork in the other.

Emma's eyes light up as if a switch has been thrown and the flash of a camera records her huge, dazzling smile.

EMMA

Niki.

He bows slightly, offering the cake.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You work here too? You never get a night off...

He smiles, shaking his head, hands her the cake.

NIKOLAI

Ya sa-meey shas-li-veey che-lo-vek
na zem-le, pa-ta-mu chto u me-nya
yest' tee.

Emma hangs on every incomprehensible word.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Vy menya panimayete?

EMMA

Oh, Niki... I'm so glad you found me.

INT. BISTRO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

MEG

Seamus. He's ten. Built a website
for his fourth grade class. Now
he's got actual clients. And
that's Finn, the prima ballerina.
She'll be six in June--

Emile examines photographs of Seamus and Charlotte from Meg's
wallet while she refills their glasses at the kitchen table
and Bernard works at the stove.

EMILE

Elle est coquin, oui?

MEG

Oh, she's no chicken. She's not
scared of anything--

BERNARD

(laughs)

Not a chicken. He says, she looks
like a rascal.

MEG

No idea where she gets that...

Meg lifts her glass with a sly smile as Bernard brings plates
of food to the table.

MEG (CONT'D)

But, that's a nice word for it.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - DIRT LOT - NIGHT

ALICE

I'm open! I'm open!

Alice sails down the makeshift soccer field as one of the
kids passes the ball to her, chased by the others.

She dodges and kicks the ball through the goal to score.

Her "team" jumps and cheers, as do a collection of spectators
who have gathered to watch this tall red headed woman in a
summer dress racing around the dusty lot with a band of kids.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Go! Go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice races back down the field with her team, the little dog running along and barking from the sidelines.

EXT. BISTRO - ALLEY - NIGHT

BERNARD

But, she is perfectly safe.

MEG

Yeah. No. No way.

Bernard straddles a beat up moped, motor running, as Meg shakes her head emphatically.

BERNARD

I can not take you, if you will not get on.

MEG

What do you want me to tell you?
I'm not getting on that thing.

Bernard fixes her with a level look, which Meg mimics.

BERNARD

(amiably)

C'est bon. Au revoir.

He swings a leg over the moped, revs the engine.

MEG

Hold on.

EXT. MOPED - NIGHT - MOVING

Meg hangs on to Bernard as they zip along the beachfront drive and turns her face to the wind with a smile.

She surrenders to the ride, the sheer fun of it, laughing.

MEG

How do you say "faster?"

INT. BLUE RIBBON RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Bernard and Meg, flush from their ride, enter the kitchen through a back door, to be hailed by a half-dozen CHEFS crowded around a table littered with dishes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNARD

The best chefs of Monte Carlo.
They come here to drink and show
off. The end of every night.

HENRI (60's, a bear in chef's whites) lumbers towards them.

HENRI

*No! No! No! We are only cooks
allowed here!*

BERNARD

*Ah, but, this is why we've come! I
have finally found someone who can
teach you how to cook!*

(introducing)

This is Meg, from America.

(to Meg)

*And this is Henri, the worst
egotist, my mentor.*

The two men embrace, merrily kissing each other on both cheeks, then Henri pulls Meg under his arm.

HENRI

(turns to the table)

*A chef from America! Come to flip
hamburgers!*

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT - MOVING

Jean-Pierre drives an open silver sports car full of PARTY GOERS down the twisting streets, when he sees the commotion and crowd around the dirt lot.

Then he spots Alice running around.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - DIRT LOT - NIGHT

Alice sticks like glue to a kid with the ball, maneuvers in, steals the ball, and doubles back in the opposite direction, racing up the field as the crowd laughs and claps.

She passes the ball to kid who drives it to the goal, scores.

Alice looks up from the game at the tapping of a car horn to see Jean-Pierre honking in celebration as he leans against the car with his GUESTS, enjoying the game.

Alice stops to wave, and takes the ball full in the face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jean-Pierre's smile winks out as Alice drops and he races from the car as worried kids and spectators form a circle around Alice's prone body.

The little dog licks Alice's face and she opens her eyes.

She leaps up as Jean-Pierre crosses the lot.

ALICE

I'm up! I'm up! Let's go!

She sets off down the field with the kids.

EXT. YACHT - PRE-DAWN

Empty and half-filled glasses, bottles litter every surface along with plates, ashtrays, crumpled napkins.

Emma sits on the lower landing deck, legs in the water, shoes in her hand, looking out at the lights.

Nikolai moves his legs in the gentle current beside her, tuxedo trousers rolled, while he concentrates on working a napkin into intricate folds.

Emma turns to look back at the silent boat.

EMMA

It doesn't seem fair. Leaving you
to clean up all alone.

(thinks)

I'll help. But, you've really got
to talk to your boss.

Nikolai laughs, shaking his head.

NIKOLAI

Ya ryadom.

EMMA

It must get kind of lonely
sometimes... Not being understood.

(pauses)

I know how that can feel.

Nikolai holds up the napkin he's transformed into a crown adorned with flowers and the wire cages from Champagne corks.

Emma looks at him, her face soft and vulnerable, open, as Nikolai places the makeshift crown on her head with care.

CONTINUED:

NIKOLAI
(heavily accented)
My princess.

They look at one another for a beat, then simultaneously turn to the sea and the frail sky, awaiting the sun.

EMMA
(softly)
You get me.

Nikolai looks down at his hand on the edge of the deck next to Emma's, and turns it palm up in invitation.

Emma places her hand in his.

EMMA (CONT'D)
You get me.

INT. BLUE RIBBON - PRE-DAWN

Meg tries to follow the discussions and familiar teasing of the chefs as they pass plates, goading her to taste.

She looks over at Bernard, who smiles as he holds his hands up at the scene, his boisterous friends, the food; as though to say "this is good, enjoy."

Meg relaxes her shoulders and gives in to the spirit of the table, spears a bite of food and lifts her glass to Bernard.

CUT TO:

Meg and another chef, locked in a chopping duel, plow through onions at a blinding pace, their knives flashing, creating an escalating staccato on their cutting boards.

Meg sweeps her onion from her board to a pan, and slams her knife down in victory as all the chefs erupt with applause.

Henri seizes Meg's hand, raising her arm in the air, and presents her with a bottle of wine.

Meg turns to Bernard, beaming, thrilled, utterly happy, as the other chefs clap her on the back, shake her hand.

INT./EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - ROOF - PRE-DAWN

Jean-Pierre opens the door at the top of the fire stairs, revealing the open sky, turning back to take Alice's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE (V.O.)
*What's the most amazing place
you've ever been?*

JEAN-PIERRE (V.O.)
Hard to say. There are many.

Alice steps out onto the hotel's roof with Jean-Pierre's jacket over her shoulders.

ALICE (V.O.)
*Well, Africa, then. How often do
you get to go?*

He leads her around the maze of skylights to the front of the building that faces the sea and the lightening sky.

JEAN-PIERRE (V.O.)
*Not enough. Mostly I am on planes.
To the places where sunlight and
parties make people generous.*

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Alice's smile flickers with a vague disappointment as she leans against the hotel's crown beside Jean-Pierre.

ALICE
That seems a shame...

JEAN-PIERRE
*But, I can think of one place I
have never been. It is in my
imagination only, so it is very
special.*

He places an arm around Alice as they take in the view.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)
*It is just a small town, in a vast,
open space. Maybe in the middle of
America. There are people there
like yourself, who are kind. And
children who have everything they
need.*

Alice turns to Jean-Pierre as he takes a strand of her hair in his fingers, and they hold a beat, looking at one another.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)
*In my mind, it is bordered by
fields that are green.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alice breaks the moment by turning her head to search the far horizon just as the rising sun crests the open sea.

EXT. YACHT - DAWN

Nikolai shrugs himself out of his formal shirt to stand before Emma in nothing but starfish printed boxer shorts.

He lifts his hands: This is me. Here I am.

Emma hesitates, then lets her gown fall around her, bare except for her panties, the necklace, and her napkin crown.

Nikolai pushes himself off the side of the boat at a run, hiking up his legs into a cannonball. SPLASH!

He surfaces and turns back to the boat just as Emma dives in with a SPLASH!

She swims to Nikolai, pushing him under in a child's game, and he pops up, spitting water like a fountain.

They laughs and Emma loops her arms around him.

A beat as they sober.

Emma pulls Nikolai close to her, and they kiss.

On the landing deck, Emma's gown shimmers in the morning sun with Nikolai's crown and Cordelia's yellow gem and diamond necklace nestled among its satin folds.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAWN

Alice, still wearing Jean-Pierre's jacket, walks down the hall with Jean-Pierre close beside her, neither speaking.

She turns to him when they reach the door of her suite.

A long beat stretches, full of every possibility.

JEAN-PIERRE

Come with me.

ALICE

What?

JEAN-PIERRE

*To Dubai. I leave the day after--.
What is today? Friday? I leave
tomorrow. You could come too. You
wouldn't need to bring anything.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

But--. *Jean-Pierre...*
(a near confession)
You don't know me.

JEAN-PIERRE

*This is why I ask. I would like to
know you, Alice. Very much.*

Alice regards him a beat, then slowly pulls his jacket from her shoulders.

ALICE

Before this, I'd never even been to France.

Jean-Pierre blinks and Alice laughs, as much at herself.

ALICE (CONT'D)

It's true. Just kept putting it off. Always managed to find an excuse. But, really, it was that I was afraid. That it couldn't ever live up to the France I'd imagined. And if it did... Then I'd never be able to go home.

JEAN-PIERRE

And, now?

Alice gently places Jean-Pierre's jacket in his hands and steps near to kiss him on the lips.

ALICE

But, thank you.

She turns and opens the door with her key as Jean-Pierre smiles ruefully.

ALICE (CONT'D)

For everything.

Alice steps into her room and closes the door.

EXT. NICE AIRPORT - DAY

Richard exits the plane, walking down a mobile stairway onto the tarmac, carrying Alice's repaired suitcase.

INT. NICE AIRPORT - DAY

Richard stands at the information counter, conferring with an ATTENDANT in his broken French.

RICHARD
Excusez-moi...I'm looking for the
train. To Monte Carlo.

Behind him, Cordelia strides through a set of doors to stop directly at Richard's back as she searches the terminal and hisses into her cellphone.

CORDELIA
Yes, Daddy, I'm here. No, I do not
see a driver. Yes, I am looking!

The attendant points over Richard's shoulder to an exit.

Richard begins to turn in Cordelia's direction, but the attendant corrects him, pointing the other way.

RICHARD
Merci.

He picks up Alice's suitcase and heads off just as a UNIFORMED DRIVER approaches Cordelia.

DRIVER
Mademoiselle Scott?

CORDELIA
Where have you been?

The driver leads her away, neither she nor Richard having taken note of the nearby newsstand and its display of today's front page: Emma on the yacht wearing Cordelia's necklace.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Meg zooms the moped around the fountain a last loop, Bernard on the back, before jerking to a stop in front of the hotel.

Bernard steadies the moped as Meg climbs off.

MEG
Well, this is me. Back to the old
Grimaldi suite.

BERNARD
(with regret)
I have to open the restaurant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat as they face each other, neither knowing how to end the evening, how to say goodbye.

MEG

Thank your father for me?

BERNARD

I will, Meg.

MEG

Thank you.

Meg hugs him briefly, awkwardly, then turns for the steps.

BERNARD

Goodbye, Meg.

Meg stops, holds a beat with her back to Bernard.

Then she turns and marches to him with purpose, seizing his face in both her hands and kisses him passionately.

She releases Bernard, who staggers against the moped, catching himself just before going over, as she turns again for the steps, an enormous smile on her face.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Alice sits on the edge of the bed with the hotel phone, idly looking out at the sparkling bay and anchored boats.

ALICE

(leaving a message)

Well, I wish you were there. Or here. I wish you were here, Richard. I do... Because I keep thinking, no matter what I see, I'm only seeing half of it. Because we're not seeing it together...

Meg lets herself in the front door and heads for the bedroom, stopping when she overhears Alice on the phone.

ALICE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Richard. I hope you'll be there when I get home... Because that's all I want.

Alice hangs up the phone, so lost in thought she doesn't see Meg standing at the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG
(softly)
Hey.

Alice looks up, smiles to see her friend.

ALICE
Oh. Hey--
(taking Meg in)
Hey! You bought the jeans! They
look great--!

MEG
(tearful, comic)
Alice, I am so sorry! For what I
said. About you. And Richard. I
didn't mean any of it! I love you.
I don't know how I would've gotten
through the past six months if it
weren't for you--

ALICE
No. It's okay. You were right--
(bursts into tears)
Oh, Meg! I made a huge mistake!

MEG
Wha--?

ALICE
Richard asked me to marry him--

MEG
Wait. What? When?

ALICE
I told him we should wait a week!

MEG
No. You didn't--

ALICE
I did! He surprised me!

MEG
Alice...

ALICE
I'd imagined him asking me a
million times, but then when he
did, I just panicked. Suddenly all
I could think about was the trip.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALICE (CONT'D)

That I hadn't already been to France. It was like this wave, all the years, and chances I'd had but didn't take, they just crashed down on me: And I hadn't seen anything but the end of Lake Avenue. The only clear thought in my head was, "this guy is so wonderful, how can he marry half a person?"

MEG

But, Alice. You were going. We were on our way.

ALICE

I thought he was asking me to make a choice. But, he wasn't. He wasn't doing that at all. It was me. Because I couldn't believe he loved me just for who I was. France or no.

(pauses)

All I had to do was say, "yes."

MEG

Honey, Richard knows you... It might feel like it's over. But, it's not.

ALICE

(crying)

I really ruined it this time...

The suite's doorbell rings and they both look up.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - MOMENTS LATER

Alice opens the door for Emma who stands up from retrieving the morning paper just outside the door.

EMMA

(hands off paper)

Thanks. I couldn't find--. I musta left my key someplace...

(on a cloud)

But, what does it matter, really? When I already have everything I'll ever need...

Alice exchanges a look with Meg as Emma swans across the suite to tear open on the fruit basket, pluck out an apple, and drape herself across a chaise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA (CONT'D)

Mooooorning, Meg...

(back on track)

For the first time in my life,
everything makes perfect sense, you
know?

MEG

I'm trying to follow you--

EMMA

I'm in love! I am! Oh, you guys,
I'm in love with Niki...
Nikolai... Nikolai. And, I don't
care if he is just a busboy. Or
waiter. Whatever he is...

Alice unfolds the paper, taking in the image of Emma wearing
Cordelia's necklace.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's funny if you think about it.
I could have had a prince. A real
one. But, I wanted my Niki--
(a big bite of apple)
Hey. Why are you guys crying?
This is good news!

ALICE

I thought we said no jewelry--

EMMA

No--? What jewelry?

MEG

What?

Alice holds up the newspaper.

EMMA

Ooh, that's a good one!

ALICE

The necklace, Emma!

Emma's face clouds as she distractedly reaches a hand to her
bare collar bone, then flicks her eyes up to Alice.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Emma, where's the necklace--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Emma leaps up and races to the window, throwing the doors wide as Alice and Meg dash after her onto the balcony.

EMMA

The yacht! There! I left it on--!

MEG

Are you kidding me?!

PHOTOGRAPHERS (O.S.)

Cordelia! Cordelia!

They look directly down to the base of the hotel where the trio of paparazzi call as Cordelia emerges from a limousine.

Alice and Meg look at each other, stricken.

EMMA

Oh, hey. What's she doing here?

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - DAY

Cordelia strides across the lobby, passing WORKERS who set up for the auction, and arrives at the front desk.

A busy DESK CLERK glances up, brightening happily.

DESK CLERK

Mademoiselle Scott!

Cordelia looks at him with typical, withering disdain.

CORDELIA

The driver was late.

The clerk's smile falters, fades.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Hello? I'm checking in.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Alice, Emma and Meg race around, frantically grabbing clothes, stuffing them into shopping bags.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

DING! The elevator doors open and Cordelia steps off with a BELLHOP toting her bags, as her cell phone rings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELIA
(answering)
Hello?!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

The three women scramble though the suite, collecting, straightening, smoothing in a blind panic.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

The bellhop stops outside the door with Cordelia.

CORDELIA
Beijing? Oh, I want to come! Will
you wait for me?

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS SUITE - DAY

CLICK! Alice, Meg and Emma freeze in their tracks at the very center of the suite, their heads swinging toward the door when they hear the key inserted from the other side.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

The bellhop opens the door, holding it wide for Cordelia who marches in to the room...

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

...where everything, impossibly, appears to be in place.

CORDELIA
I can be there in, say, a day--
(to bellhop)
I was meant to have a suite.
(into phone)
Of course, they've screwed this up
as well--. Who else is going?

The bellhop opens the bedroom doors, revealing the tower of Cordelia's luggage, crowned by the reassembled fruit basket.

Cordelia, unimpressed, indicates the bags the bellhop holds.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
Put those with the others--
(into phone)
Wait, wait!

She spins away for the French doors, twisting their handles, and throwing them wide.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Cordelia steps to the railing, completely unaware of Alice, precariously perched atop the adjacent balcony's railing, back pressed against the face of the hotel.

CORDELIA
(into phone)
Stavros is supposed to be here,
isn't he? I don't see his boat!

Alice carefully turns to Meg and Emma who look back her with desperate faces from the balcony on the far side of Cordelia, where they balance with their shopping bags.

BELLBOY (O.S.)
Mademoiselle?

CORDELIA
(into phone)
Majorca?! Hold on.

She does a quick turn, marches inside.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

The bellboy stands expectantly by the front door.

CORDELIA
Yes?

He nods, not quite with his hand out, but waiting.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
If you're done, you may go.

The bellboy turns but hesitates in catching a quick glimpse of Alice, fleet as a gazelle, as she passes the open doors on the balcony behind Cordelia.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
I said, you can go.

He bows a retreat, backing out the door.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Alice climbs across to the next balcony where Meg tries the handles of another set of French doors.

MEG
They're locked!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They each look about for a route of escape.

Emma looks down, on the heads of the unsuspecting paparazzi while Alice scrutinizes the facade above.

Alice looks at Meg.

MEG (CONT'D)

No. Forget it.

Alice laces her fingers together, turning to Emma.

ALICE

Emma, help.

MEG

Alice--

ALICE

You're first. There's a door on the roof--

EMMA

The roof?!

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - ROOF - DAY

Shopping bags swing up over the edge of the roof, landing in profusion, followed by three sets of gripping hands.

Alice, Meg and Emma haul each other over the hotel's crown, the view of the ocean and the yachts in the bay behind them.

EXT. MOTOR BOAT - AT SEA - DAY

A BOAT DRIVER in uniform passes a captain's hat to Nikolai, who places it on his head as they speed towards the marina.

EXT. DINGHY - AT SEA - DAY

Meg turns to get a gauge on the distant yacht as she and Alice labor with the oars of a fisherman's dinghy.

MEG

Why'd they have to park so far out, anyway?!

ALICE

One point five million Euros, Emma!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA

I said I was sorry! You think I
would have worn it if I knew how
much it cost?

Busy fighting, none of them notice as Nikolai's boat passes
fifty feet off their side.

MEG

What am I going to tell my kids?!
How am I'm going to explain to
Glenn that we're in a French jail?

ALICE

For the auction, Emma!

MEG

My kids'll be in college when we
get out! They won't even know me.

EMMA

None of us knew that, Alice--

MEG

Trespassing. Burglary. Oh, god.
Grand larceny, by trick and
deception--

ALICE

For the children--!

EMMA

In Africa. *I know!*

MEG

I'm standing in a stolen boat!

EMMA

Well, sit down then!

Nikolai's wake hits the dinghy, rocking them hard.

EXT. MONTE CARLO TRAIN STATION - TRACKS - DAY

Richard steps off the train, with today's paper wedged under
the arm that carries Alice's suitcase.

EXT. YACHT - DAY

The dinghy strikes the side of the yacht and the three women
scramble to their feet, grasping the side of the boat.

EXT. YACHT - DAY

EMMA
It was right here!

MEG
Oh, I can't believe this...

Meg doubles over, hands on her knees as Emma stands over the empty spot on the landing.

ALICE
Are you even sure you took it off?

EMMA
Definite "yes."

ALICE
Well... Were you this close to the edge? I mean, it could've fallen--

MEG
Do not even say it!

EMMA
You know, I'm getting a little tired of this. Just because I sometimes forget--

ALICE
Emma, we're not talking about a pair of sunglasses!

MEG
We don't have time for this! Let's just split up! Alice you go fore, Emma take the aft, and I'll check the cabin.

Emma glares at Alice with steely, narrowed eyes.

EMMA
Alright. Fine.
(pauses)
Which way is aft?

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - DAY

The clerk looks up as Nikolai arrives at the front desk.

CLERK
Yes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NIKOLAI

Ya khotel by perepisyvat'sya s
vami.

CLERK

Excusez moi, monsieur?

INT. YACHT - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma reconvene in the cabin's salon, each coming from a different direction.

MEG

Nice boat. No necklace.

ALICE

Where is he, anyway?

EMMA

He just works here. I don't--
(an idea forming)
You don't think he could have taken
it, do you?

MEG

Who knows?! I mean, is there
anyone who understands a word he
says?!

EMMA

(stricken)
Oh, this could all be my fault! He
probably thought he needed it, to
finance our new life together. The
temptation was just too much for
him--

ALICE

Emma, it's your fault because you
wore it in the first place!

EMMA

He works like fifteen jobs already!
You don't know what it's like being
around rich people all the time--

MEG

Actually, we do.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - DAY

Nikolai picks up the hotel phone as he removes Emma's room key from his pocket.

NIKOLAI
(to operator)
Pozhalujsta.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

CORDELIA
(into cell)
Gratitude, Mummy. That's what I'm talking about. It's just so unfair the way Daddy assumes I've nothing better to do than--

The hotel phone rings, interrupting her complaint.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
Hold on.

She picks up the ringing telephone at the desk.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
What is it? What?
(listens)
I cannot understand you.

She hangs up, heads for the fruit basket with her cell.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
Mummy, Mummy, I'm just saying I wish someone, anyone, would consider my feelings. Just once.

She snatches up an apple from the basket without looking.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)
You go ask him how much he thinks a simple "thank you" might cost.

She hangs up her cell with a sniff and raises the apple, stopping when she sees where Emma has eaten.

She recoils, dropping the apple, which rolls across the carpet and hits one of Emma's sandals beneath the desk.

Cordelia approaches, looking down to discover the other sandal in the wastebasket, along with Emma's broken plastic tiara, room service dishes, and the newspaper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cordelia pulls the newspaper from the trash, curiosity turning to shock as she takes in the huge torn photograph of Emma wearing her necklace.

EXT. DINGHY - AT SEA - DAY

The women paddle back towards the Marina.

ALICE

Well, we're just going to have to talk to her.

MEG

Oh, yeah, that was the first thing that struck me about her. How reasonable she seemed--

EMMA

(seizing on the idea)
Yeah, we'll just explain.

MEG

We should have sailed that yacht right back to Wisconsin--

EMMA

(selling herself)
It was an accident. This whole thing--

MEG

You think she'd fit in one of those trunks of hers--?

ALICE

Meg?

MEG

Just thinking out loud.

EMMA

You never know. She might understand.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Cordelia slams the steel briefcase onto the bed, scrabbling at the combination lock.

CLICK! She rips the lid open to reveal the empty velvet lining and she SCREAMS!

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Richard pays a taxi driver, taking Alice's repaired suitcase, and mounts the steps directly behind Domenico escorting Penelope through the revolving door.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - DAY

Domenico and Penelope head for the ballroom entrance and Richard arrives at the front desk, just as the clerk's phone begins to ring.

Richard holds up the newspaper with Emma's photo.

RICHARD

I need to find this woman--

The clerk puts up a finger as he lifts the receiver.

CLERK

Une moment, Monsieur. Pardon.

Behind Richard, Nikolai crosses from the bank of house phones for the elevator, stopping to pluck a flower from the lobby's arrangement.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

CORDELIA

(on hotel phone)

Send security! Immediately! This is Cordelia Winthrop Scott. I've been robbed!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY

Nikolai steps into the elevator, the doors closing, just as Alice, Emma and Meg throw themselves through the lobby's revolving door.

At the desk, the clerk hangs up one phone to pick up another, stalling Richard again with his finger.

CLERK

Pardon.

(into phone)

Securite--

The clerk stops, spotting Emma as she, Alice and Meg, sprint past the front desk and Alice wipes out, tripping over her own suitcase on the floor beside Richard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE

Oh!

Richard whips around to see Alice spread-eagled on the marble floor as Meg and Emma slide to a stop.

RICHARD

Alice?

MEG

Richard!

ALICE

Richard--?

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Alice!

EMMA

Wow! Richard!

Richard drops down to help Alice as she struggles up, dizzily finding her feet to stand.

RICHARD

Honey, are you alright--?

ALICE

You got my message.

She hugs Richard tightly.

RICHARD

I had no idea where you were. I
looked all over Paris, but, I
couldn't find--
(now hearing)
What message?

ALICE

You went all the way to Paris?

RICHARD

A week's an awfully long time.

MEG

Longer in France.

CLERK

Excusez moi, Mademoiselle Scott?

EMMA

Hey, Francois! How are you--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLERK

(utterly confused)

You--? You still need security?

Alice and Meg's heads swing in the clerk's direction.

CLERK (CONT'D)

You are still robbed?

ALICE

No!

(dials it down)

A misunderstanding. We're fine.

She's fine.

(to Emma)

You're fine, right?

EMMA

Super fine.

ALICE

Richard, we've got to--

(sighs, in love)

I can't believe you're here--!

MEG

But, we've got a little situation--

EMMA

(grabbing Alice's arm)

It'll just take a minute! We'll

have her right back!

MEG

Don't worry about a thing!

RICHARD

(holds up newspaper)

Like this?

ALICE

(kisses Richard)

I'll explain everything! I

promise!

They take off for the elevator.

EMMA

Boy! Does he love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALICE
(gleeful)
Did you see he fixed my suitcase?

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

Nikolai rings the doorbell.

CORDELIA (O.S.)
Oh, thank god!

Cordelia opens the door to Nikolai, who holds out the room key and flower with a smile as her brows come together.

NIKOLAI
Lechu k tebe na krylyah lyubvi.

CORDELIA
Security?

They look at each other in confusion, Nikolai's smile fading, Cordelia with mounting alarm.

She slams the door in his face.

At the end of the hall, the elevator doors open for Alice, Emma and Meg, as Nikolai removes the necklace from his pocket and reaches to ring the suite's bell again.

EMMA
Niki!

ALICE
The necklace!

MEG
Don't touch that bell!

They race down the hall towards Nikolai, who gapes, perplexed by the sight of Emma.

EMMA
Oh, Niki! I knew it! I knew it!
I believed in you the whole time!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Cordelia hides behind the drapes with the hotel phone.

CORDELIA
Yes! Police! This is Cordelia
Winthrop Scott.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

In the Grimaldi Suite at the Hotel de Paris. You must come straight away. I've been robbed! And now some *horrible*, foreign man--! I believe someone is trying to kill me!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

Emma kisses Nikolai as she pushes him onto the elevator.

EMMA

Wait for me in the lobby, sweetie.
Down in half a second--

NIKOLAI

Ya tebya lyublyu.

EMMA

I know. Me, too.

The doors close and Emma sprints back down the hall to Alice and Meg at the door.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Okay! Do it!

Alice rings the bell.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Cordelia approaches the door cautiously and spies through the peep hole at the back of Meg's head.

CORDELIA

Yes? Who is it?

MEG

(voice dropped low)
Security, Madame.

CORDELIA

Finally--!

She opens the door.

A beat where Cordelia focuses on Alice and Meg first, possibly remembering them, then she registers Emma.

She blinks, completely nonplussed.

ALICE

We can explain.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - DAY

The elevator doors open and Nikolai steps off just as the revolving door begins to spin, spitting uniformed POLICE OFFICERS and their CAPTAIN into the lobby.

The clerk looks up and hustles around the desk to meet them.

CLERK

Pardon? Is there a problem--?

POLICE CAPTAIN

*We received a report of an
attempted murder in the Grimaldi
Suite. Cordelia Scott--*

Richard, sitting nearby, looks up at the mention of Cordelia's name, at the same time that Nikolai takes a seat at the far end of the same sofa.

CLERK

*No. No. It is robbery. But,
Mademoiselle Scott said it wasn't.*

Jean-Pierre, checking lists at the ballroom's entrance, notes the commotion and Cordelia's name, joins the group.

JEAN-PIERRE

*Excuse me. What's--? Mademoiselle
Scott has been robbed?*

CLERK

No. She said, not.

POLICE CAPTAIN

*She said someone was trying to kill
her! We are going up!*

Richard seems to debate getting involved as the police, the clerk and Jean-Pierre head for the elevators.

Looking over, he notices Nikolai, who smiles and nods.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

CORDELIA

*You can save your "sorrys" for the
police--*

EMMA

The police--?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELIA

You robbed me!

ALICE

But, the necklace is *right here*--!

CORDELIA

You stole from me--!

EMMA

Only borrowed--

MEG

We haven't taken anything--

EMMA

And, we dry-cleaned the dresses--

Meg and Alice wince, look daggers at Emma.

CORDELIA

(icy disgust)

You wore my clothes?

EMMA

Well... For the children.

CORDELIA

Wha--? What children?

MEG

In Africa.

ALICE

(impatient)

This whole thing is for charity.
Your necklace is for the auction.

CORDELIA

Well, there will certainly be no
auction now--

EMMA

But, that's not fair! It's not the
children's fault--

ALICE

Look, you weren't here. Everyone
thought she was you--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CORDELIA
(incredulous laugh)
Thought *she* was me? Who could
possibly believe--?

ALICE
They all did.

Cordelia looks at Alice a beat as this lands with her.

MEG
(drives it home)
Every one of them.

CORDELIA
But, look at you!

Emma takes a step towards her doppelganger, facing off.

EMMA
Well, look at you!

ALICE
Emma--

CORDELIA
(dripping contempt)
Common country cows playing dress
up. Pretending to be something
you're not. Trying to be something
that not one of you could ever hope
to be--

EMMA
You mean miserable?

Cordelia blinks.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Or a petty, *spoiled, selfish*--

CORDELIA
(reels back)
You--!

EMMA
Bitch!

Cordelia slaps Emma across the face.

Alice and Meg gasp and they all stand a beat in shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Emma raises a hand to cup her cheek as Alice and Meg turn slowly to Cordelia, their faces set like warrior masks.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY

DING! The elevator doors open and the police spill out, followed by the clerk and Jean-Pierre.

They hear a SCREAM! and break into a run.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Alice shoves Cordelia roughly into a chair, thrusting her back down as she tries to struggle up, points at Emma.

ALICE

You apologize to her right now!

CORDELIA

Apologize--?!

ALICE

You know, I feel sorry for you--

MEG

I don't.

Cordelia scoffs and Alice leans over her, menacing.

ALICE

Because no matter where you go, no matter where you jet to in this world, you are still going to be you.

(points to Emma)

And, let me tell you; *she* is who you want to be!

The all freeze when a BANGING erupts at the door.

POLICE CAPTAIN (O.S.)

Mademoiselle Scott? It is the police! Open up!

Alice claps a hand over Cordelia's mouth, looks to Meg.

EMMA

(mouths the words)

The police?

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

The police captain pounds on the door again, motioning for the clerk to use his pass key.

POLICE CAPTAIN
Mademoiselle? Open this door!

ALICE (O.S.)
Coming! Just a moment, please!

The captain grabs the key from the clerk and turns the handle, just as Alice coolly opens the door from within.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Bon jour.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

The police enter, followed by Jean-Pierre and the clerk.

ALICE
(feigned surprise)
Cordelia, it's the police.

Emma turns her head from the mirror she faces.

EMMA
Oh, no! This is going to be so embarrassing. Please tell me you didn't run all the way over here just for me.

POLICE CAPTAIN
You said there was someone trying to kill you--

CLERK
It was a robbery, but, no.

JEAN-PIERRE
Alice, what's going on?

ALICE
A terrible misunderstanding. You see, she couldn't find her necklace.

JEAN-PIERRE
(panicked)
But, you have it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Emma turns, holding the necklace up to her throat.

EMMA

Yes, but, Jean-Pierre, would you be
a dear and help me? I can't seem
to manage the clasp.

Jean-Pierre senses something amiss, but steps to assist Emma.

POLICE CAPTAIN

We heard a scream--

ALICE

When she found it--

EMMA

Just now--

ALICE

She was *so happy*--

EMMA

Relieved! I screamed with delight.

POLICE CAPTAIN

And there is no one that wants to
kill you?

EMMA

(lightly joking)
Well, I can't speak to that.

POLICE CAPTAIN

You said on the phone--

ALICE

She said she would *die*. If she
didn't find it--

EMMA

The necklace!

ALICE

Yes!

Alice turns her brightest smile to the captain.

POLICE CAPTAIN

And this is the necklace? For the
auction?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JEAN-PIERRE
(checking)
It is.

He looks back and forth between Alice and Emma.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)
Very lucky.

EMMA
Extremely! Think of all the
schools we'll build!
(to charm captain)
Do you like it?

POLICE CAPTAIN
(falling for it)
Allow me to escort you,
Mademoiselle. As a precaution.

Emma, spots one officer poking his way toward the bedroom.

EMMA
(seizes captain's arm)
Oh, but, yes! Would you? What an
entrance I'll make! So dramatic!
Alice, are you coming, dear?

Jean-Pierre takes Alice's elbow as Emma leads the captain and
the rest of the group from the suite.

ALICE
Let me just grab my purse.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY

Alice opens the door as narrowly as possible.

ALICE
You okay in here?

Meg sits on top of Cordelia who is tied to a chair with a
scarf, the fruit-basket apple jammed in her mouth.

MEG
We're great. But, now you can add
kidnapping--

ALICE
(re: Cordelia)
Well, don't tell her that. Throw
me a purse.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - LOBBY - DAY

DING! Richard and Nikolai both look up as the elevator doors open and Emma emerges led by the police captain.

Nikolai leaps up.

NIKOLAI

Moy angelohek?

Richard jumps up when he sees Jean-Pierre escorting an anxious Alice from the rear of the battalion.

RICHARD

Alice?

Alice winces as she sees Richard approaching, at the same time Nikolai rushes to Emma.

EMMA

Niki, I'm sorry. It's just going to another minute.

NIKOLAI

Ya sdelayu vsyo, chto smogoo--

EMMA

Perfect! That sounds good.

Emma is led to the ballroom by the captain as Richard meets Alice and Jean-Pierre in the center of the lobby.

ALICE

(quick, preemptive)

Richard, this is Jean-Pierre, Jean-Pierre this is Richard, my fiance--

RICHARD

(blinks)
Fiance?

JEAN-PIERRE

(blinks)
Fiance?

Jean-Pierre offers his hand to shake, smiling knowingly.

JEAN-PIERRE

Ahh... A pleasure to meet you.
You've come for the auction--?

ALICE

Yes! He came all this way!

Richard tightens his grip on Jean-Pierre's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

Alice? Who is this guy--?

Alice breaks Richard's vice grip with a bright smile.

ALICE

I told you, that's Jean-Pierre!

(to Jean-Pierre)

He's exhausted! It's such a long trip!

Richard flicks his eyes narrowly at Jean-Pierre.

JEAN-PIERRE

(deflecting)

I believe we are ready to start.

Shall we go in?

Alice loops an arm through Richard's to follow Jean-Pierre, but jerks to a stop when Richard doesn't budge.

RICHARD

Is there something I need to know?

Alice looks at Richard, reading his face, and smiles.

ALICE

No. There's isn't.

She leads Richard through the ballroom entrance only to be stopped by an ATTENDANT.

ATTENDANT

Pardon, Monsieur, invitation--?

ALICE

He's with me!

As Alice pulls Richard through to the ballroom, Nikolai steps to the reception table behind them, producing an elaborate invitation from inside his jacket.

ATTENDANT

Oh! Monsieur Ludovic! Welcome!

As Nikolai is ushered into the auction with great fanfare, the lobby's revolving doors turn and Bernard enters, carrying Meg's bottle of wine.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY

Meg, holding the apple, sits facing Cordelia, still tied to a chair, the two glaring at each other.

CORDELIA

You will never get away with this.
My father--

MEG

Believe me, nothing would make me
happier than having a little talk
with your father--

Both their heads swing toward the door when the bell RINGS!
Meg jumps to Cordelia, stuffing the apple in her mouth just
as she opens it to scream.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

Bernard looks up when Meg opens the door a crack.

MEG

Bernard...?

He holds out the bottle of wine.

BERNARD

We forgot your prize.

MEG

Oh, I...

She glances back into the room behind her, carefully
obscuring Bernard's view through the half open door.

BERNARD

I have come at a bad time?

MEG

No. No, Bernard, that's not it.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY

Cordelia kicks her legs against the floor, straining against
the scarf as she tries to overturn the chair.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

MEG

I'd invite you in, but--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THUMP! They both hear Cordelia's chair hit the floor inside and Bernard darkens.

BERNARD

I think--. You are busy. I think
now I go--

Meg reaches out to stay him with a hand on his arm.

MEG

No. Bernard, wait--

CLICK! Meg and Bernard both turn their heads to look down the corridor when Cordelia sticks her head out the bedroom door into the hall.

A beat as Cordelia and Meg lock eyes.

DING! The elevator doors open at the end of the hall, closer to Cordelia.

She looks back at Meg for an instant then bolts as Meg leaps past Bernard into the hall.

MEG (CONT'D)

Hey! Stop!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - BALLROOM - DAY

Emma models Cordelia's necklace on a stage for over a hundred GUESTS with Domenico fielding bids beside her.

DOMENICO

The bid is three hundred thousand!

Alice stands just off to the side on the floor below, between Richard and Jean-Pierre, with Penelope.

RICHARD

So, they all think she's this
Cordelia Scott because...

ALICE

It's for a school, Richard--

RICHARD

In Africa.

NIKOLAI

(heavily accented)
Five hundred!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All the heads in the room turn with an excited murmur as Nikolai steps to the front of the assembly.

DOMENICO

Five hundred thousand!

ALICE

Oh, no...

JEAN-PIERRE

Yes!

EMMA

(to herself)

No.

Nikolai smiles up at Emma as ANOTHER GUEST raises a Champagne glass in bidding.

DOMENICO

Five hundred, five hundred fifty thousand!

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SERVICE STAIRS - DAY

Bernard races to catch up as Meg flies down the stairs.

BERNARD

But, Meg! Why do we run?

Meg stops on a landing, turns.

MEG

Bernard, you should stop. You really don't need this. I may be going away for a long time--

BERNARD

To America?

MEG

Something like that. Look, this is where we should say "au revoir."

Bernard smiles and pulls Meg to him, kisses her.

BERNARD

But, I must see how this ends!

He grabs her hand and they plunge down the stairs together.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - BALLROOM - DAY

NIKOLAI
Eight hundred!

The crowd applauds happily.

EMMA
Niki. What are you doing?

NIKOLAI
Vsyo, chto ya de-la-yu, lish dlya.

EMMA
Well, don't. Just stop, okay?

JEAN-PIERRE
(alarmed)
Why is she stopping him?

ALICE
(miserable)
*He doesn't have any money. He's
just a busboy, but they're in love-*

JEAN-PIERRE
That's Nikolai Ludovic--

ALICE
He means no harm--

JEAN-PIERRE
Alice. Lithuania?

ALICE
Yes?

JEAN-PIERRE
He owns it.

Alice blinks.

DOMENICO
The bid stands at eight hundred
thousand Euros--

EMMA
No! No. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm
terribly sorry, but, there's..
(to Nikolai)
Honey, you can't bid on this, okay?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EMMA (CONT'D)

Put your hand down, and I'll be
done in a second. Then we can go.

JEAN-PIERRE

Mon dieu!

ALICE

Emma!

Jean-Pierre reacts to Alice's "Emma!" as she breaks away.

RICHARD

Alice--!

She climbs the stage to Emma before the baffled audience.

EMMA

Alice, he doesn't understand. It's
like a foreign language to him--

ALICE

Actually, it's not. Let him bid.

EMMA

But, he'll get in trouble--

ALICE

He's fine. Let's just get this
thing done--

NIKOLAI

One million!

EMMA

Nikolai! You cannot bid against
yourself!

DOMENICO

One million Euros!

EMMA

No! Stop! Stop! I'm sorry. I
can't... I cannot allow this
sweet, wonderful man to buy this
necklace, because...

(finds the courage)

It is not mine to sell.

CORDELIA

No. It is mine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The crowd gasps, stepping back to reveal Cordelia in the center of the ballroom, backed by all the police, just as Meg and Bernard enter, skidding short when they see the crowd.

MEG

Oh, shhhh--

EMMA

Merde.

Richard, Jean-Pierre, Penelope, and Domenico all swing between the two "Cordelias," as Meg makes her way forward with Bernard.

CORDELIA

Arrest those women! They are imposters!

A wave of comment sweeps the confused crowd.

PENELOPE

Wait!

Penelope steps up onto the platform, shielding Emma and Alice as the police come forward and Meg climbs up.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

These are not imposters! These are my friends!

CORDELIA

Penelope Pignose?!

PENELOPE

And, you were never *anyone's* friend.

Alice takes in the escalating situation, steps bravely forward to the front of the stage.

ALICE

It's true!

A ripple of exclamation sweeps the dumbfounded crowd.

ALICE (CONT'D)

We're not who we said we were.
We're... We're only high school teachers. From Racine, Wisconsin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CORDELIA

(turns to captain)

There! You see?

ALICE

We'd never been anywhere. And we took a trip, that didn't belong to us... Because, well, because you thought we were...important. And that she was Cordelia...

Richard smiles at Alice, supporting her with his gaze.

ALICE (CONT'D)

We wanted to help.

MEG

(to Bernard)

We never meant to mislead anyone--

EMMA

(to Nikolai)

Or hurt anyone--

ALICE

We're very sorry. And, we're willing to face the consequences, whatever they are... But...

She turns to Meg and Emma as a smile blossoms.

ALICE (CONT'D)

But, this was our adventure.

MEG

And it was an excellent one.

ALICE

We wouldn't change a minute of it.

EMMA

Not for anything in the world.

Richard takes the pulse of the frighteningly still crowd, the hesitating police, the charged air in the room.

RICHARD

One million five hundred thousand!

The crowd gasps and Alice gapes at Richard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Why not go big?

PENELOPE

One million six hundred thousand!

EMMA

Penny, you don't have to...

PENELOPE

Friends. Right?

DOMENICO

Excellent! We have a bid for one million six hundred thousand!

Cordelia whirls to the police captain amidst applause.

CORDELIA

Why are you just standing there?!
Arrest them!

POLICE CAPTAIN

Arrest them? For what? They seem very nice.

DOMENICO

One million six hundred thousand!
Do I have another bid?

CORDELIA

They confessed! They're imposters!
They stole my necklace!

POLICE CAPTAIN

That necklace? But, it is here,
no?

CORDELIA

They kidnapped me!

POLICE CAPTAIN

And yet you are here. I see no
problem. Everyone is very happy--

CORDELIA

Excuse me, but, I'm not happy!

POLICE CAPTAIN

Ah, but, this...

(Gallic shrug)

I can do nothing about.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

NIKOLAI

Three million!

The crowd erupts, giddy, their applause escalating.

DOMENICO

Three million Euros!

EMMA

Nikolai! No...

ALICE

Emma. It's okay.

EMMA

How? How can it be okay?

ALICE

He's rich.

JEAN-PIERRE

(leaping in)

SOLD! To Monsieur Nikolai Ludovic!
For three million Euros!

The crowd cheers, overwhelming a forgotten Cordelia as it rushes forward to hoist Nikolai up on the stage.

At the same time, Alice breaks through the throng to jump down and wrap her arms around Richard.

ALICE

Richard...

RICHARD

Alice--

ALICE

Take me home?

RICHARD

Anywhere you want, Alice. We'll go
anywhere you want.

They kiss as Meg finds Bernard who shakes his head with a broad smile, holding out the bottle of wine.

MEG

Oh, good. I could use a drink.

BERNARD

First prize. To the champion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Nikolai takes Emma's hands in his up on stage.

EMMA

(scared, shaky)

Niki? What's going on?

NIKOLAI

Ya das-ta-nu te-be zvyoz-dee.

Emma nods, without any real understanding, as he indicates the necklace.

NIKOLAI (CONT'D)

Is my gift. For you.

Emma's eyes slowly come into focus as it all becomes clear...and she FAINTS.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Together, Alice, Meg and Emma offer an envelope fat with Euros to Jean-Pierre.

They stand, with Richard, Bernard, Nikolai, Penelope and Domenico, beside a waiting sedan at the base of the hotel's steps where the trio of paparazzi shoot away.

ALICE

This is for our room. And the trip down.

MEG

The rest is for the schools.

Jean-Pierre hesitates in accepting the envelope, but Alice presses it on him.

ALICE

Please.

JEAN-PIERRE

You are all extraordinary women.

(to Richard)

I wish you much happiness.

RICHARD

(shaking hands)

Thank you.

Meg turns to Bernard, holding up the bottle of wine, as Richard places Alice's suitcase in the trunk with their shopping bags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEG

You come to Wisconsin, we'll drink
this in my kitchen.

BERNARD

Yes.

They embrace and Meg turns with Alice to Emma who stands arm
in arm with Nikolai.

ALICE

Now, Emma, you're sure about this?

EMMA

I'll call you both as soon as I
know. They may have to get a sub
at school for a couple of weeks,
but, oh, you guys, I swear it
sounded like a proposal!

Alice and Meg turn to Nikolai who grins and nods away.

NIKOLAI

Yes! Yes!

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - FRONT DRIVE - MOMENTS LATER

Jean-Pierre closes the car's door with Alice, Meg and Richard
inside, stepping back to join Emma, Nikolai, Bernard,
Penelope and Domenico, who watch as the car pulls out.

Together, they wave their friends away.

Jean-Pierre shakes hands with Nikolai and kisses Emma, tips
his head in farewell to Bernard, then enters the hotel with
Penelope and Domenico.

Emma and Nikolai shake hands with Bernard, then turn and head
for the marina, trailed by one of the paparazzi while the
other two pause to reload their cameras.

As Bernard hops on his moped to zip away, the revolving doors
turn and Cordelia steps out, talking on her cellphone,
followed by a train of bellhops and luggage.

CORDELIA

Yes, Daddy! It was a huge success--

She stops suddenly, as if struck, and her expression of
perpetual anger melts away as she listens, blinks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

(deeply moved)

Thank you? You're, you're welcome.

One of the paparazzi raises his camera to take her picture, but another places his hand over the lens.

PAPARAZZI

That's not her. That's the other one.

INT. NICE AIRPORT - TERMINAL GATE - DAY

Alice sits between Richard and Meg at the departure gate, each lost in their own thoughts as TRAVELERS pass to and fro.

A long beat.

A small smile finds its way onto Alice's face and she gently lowers her head to rest it on Richard's shoulder.

Richard finds Alice's hand and squeezes it in his own.

INT. NICE AIRPORT - JETWAY - DAY

Meg walks down the jetway in her skinny jeans, a bounce in her step, shopping bags in one hand, the bottle of wine gripped in the other, as though headed for a party.

Behind her, Alice carries her shopping bags and Richard totes Alice's suitcase.

ALICE (V.O.)

*"I used to wander aimlessly,
Wanton my goal, grievous my
plight./Your dear hands led me,
guided me."*

Alice encircles Richard's waist as they walk, and he slings an arm around her shoulder, kisses her hair.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. ZAMBIA, AFRICA - DAY

Under a beating sun, Emma, dressed in immaculate white linen, holds hands with Nikolai as a MOB OF LAUGHING CHILDREN and their TEACHERS greet them outside a new Marchand Foundation schoolhouse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICE (V.O.)
*"Over the far horizon, night/
Glowed with the pallid hope of
dawn./Your eyes' glance was my
morning light."*

A YOUNG GIRL presents a length of brightly woven fabric, draping it over Emma's shoulders as Emma picks the girl up and the other children lead Emma and Nikolai inside.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

A bulletin board in Meg's classroom is covered in African fabric, photographs and letters, all under a banner that reads: Food Drive for Our Sister School - Zambia.

The two students who had cooked their pot holders sort canned goods beneath the board, while Meg cooks, surrounded by the rest of her CLASS.

ALICE (V.O.)
*"No sound - save his own tread
upon/The ground - to ease the
wanderer's heart./Your voice
encouraged me: 'go on!'"*

A STUDENT carefully scoops spices with a measuring spoon, holding it out for Meg to add to her pan.

She ignores the spoon, instead reaching to pinch some spice with her fingers and encourages the student who follows her example.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Alice moves freely around the center of the circle of desks her STUDENTS have formed, reciting by memory.

ALICE
*"Yes, my heart - dark, cowed, set
apart,/Alone - bewailed its dire
distress./Sweet love, with its all-
conquering art."*

The entire classroom hangs on her every word.

ALICE (CONT'D)
"Joined us as one in joyousness."

A beat as she and her class float on the last phrase of Paul Verlaine's poem.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AMBER
(halting French)
Mademoiselle Perry, what was it
really like?

Alice refocuses to smile at Amber and survey all the faces of her students for a beat.

ALICE
Everyone should go. At least once
in their life.
(pauses)
There's a whole world for you to
see.

FADE OUT.

FINIS