

Monte Carlo Story
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Second Draft
September 24, 2007

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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 vague self-consciousness about her hair (afraid perhaps that she hasn't lived up to the promise of its red color), chalks "Futur Anterieur" in practiced, precise cursive at the blackboard.

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

She turns to face her TENTH GRADE FRENCH CLASS.

Her make up, earrings and wardrobe are simple, as though to set an example, finished by practical flats. Yet an inherent elegance in their combination 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..?*

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

EMMA (CONT'D)
(turning brightly)
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 CLASSROOM - DAY

TWO GIRLS (both 17) laugh conspiratorially as they dredge woven pot holders through an egg mixture and drop them into a sputtering pan while the rest of the CLASS makes French toast at their stoves in the Home Arts Lab.

The girls sneak looks at MEG NORRIS (30's) who leafs through *Gourmet* magazine at her desk at the front.

Her dark hair pulled to the back in an indifferent pony tail, Meg's natural warmth is shadowed by an air of weary resignation. Unadorned by makeup, her face seems unable to remember it's own vivid smile.

The girls shriek and leap back when the smoldering pot holders and pan erupt in flames.

Meg glances up, taking in the screaming girls, the boys laughing at them, the flames, and another girl running in to snuf the fire with a pot lid.

Meg shakes her head like a cop who's seen it all before, and returns to her magazine, tearing out a recipe, as the class bell RINGS!

EXT. SUBURBAN HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Alice, Meg and Emma exit one wing of the school together, talking, laughing animatedly as they join a RIVER OF STUDENTS to cross the open walkway for the main building.

EMMA

Oh, shoot! I forgot my purse.
You guys go on!

Meg turns to Alice as they look after Emma running back.

MEG

You made her a list for the trip,
right?

Alice fixes Meg with a look as she traps a rolling basketball beneath her foot and scoops it up to toss to the STUDENTS who call for it as she and Meg walk on.

MEG (CONT'D)

(laughs, teasing)
Oh, you made binders. Didn't you?

ALICE

(affectionate)
I don't know what you'd do without
me.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

ALICE

"Day Three: Montmartre. Your
private tour of Sacre Coeur is
followed by a stop at an authentic
artist's cafe..."

Alice reads aloud from a brochure, seated next to RICHARD (30's), her handsomely scruffy English teacher boyfriend, at the room's large table.

Meg dishes out a pasta salad across from them while Emma leafs through a European tabloid, trying to ignore JERRY (40's, in a vivid read track suit) who sips a shake directly from a blender's glass jug.

ALICE (CONT'D)

"...the perfect departure point
for exploring this historic
district and all its romantic
nooks and crannies."

JERRY

Let me see that a minute--

Jerry plucks the brochure from Alice's hand as she sneaks a carrot stick from Richard's lunch.

RICHARD

Hey, come on, Jerry--

JERRY

I just wanna see. You might show a little interest, too, Richard.

RICHARD

Interest?

(re: brochure)

I could recite that for you.

He clocks Alice's stung look, squeezes her hand.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I just wish I were going.

ALICE

No, you don't. You hate to travel.

Jerry smirks in examining the brochure emblazoned with a logo: Esprit de Corps Tours.

JERRY

Maybe you *should* go. I mean, what we got here is three beauties, flying solo. One of them *newly unattached*.

Alice and Emma's eyes flick to Meg and away, but she tracks the movement.

JERRY (CONT'D)

"Exploring the district and all its romantic...

(lewd wink)

...nooks and crannies."

ALICE

(snatches brochure)

Do you mind?

JERRY

Yeah, well. Something about it sounds a little cheap anyway.

MEG

You ever been to France, Jerry?

JERRY

No.

He takes a sip of shake, indicates Alice.

JERRY (CONT'D)

But, neither has she.

EMMA

Alice knows exactly what she's doing--

ALICE

Thank you.

EMMA

(holding one up)

Look! She made binders.

JERRY

Maybe. But, Caribbean's got my vote. Or Cancun! Now, that's my idea of a spring break. Emma, you ever been there?

EMMA

(ignoring Jerry)

I can't wait! Alice, we've got to go to the Chanel outlet--. And I want to find a place to get my hair done *just like this!*

She stabs a finger at a photograph in the tabloid: CORDELIA WINTHROP SCOTT (30's), a blonde heiress deflecting paparazzi in couture.

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

INT. ALICE'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice's passport and an Esprit de Corps Tours itinerary 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--

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

INT. MEG'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

FAYE (60'), Meg's flinty mother, pulls underwear from a bureau drawer to help Meg pack a suitcase on the bed.

FAYE

Oh, Meg! These underwear are awful. The elastic--

Meg snatches them away with a face, packs them.

MEG

Mom. No one is going to see.

FAYE

(brightening)

Well, maybe you can buy something nice in Paris.

Meg smiles skeptically at her mother, laughs.

MEG

With the eating I'm going to be doing?

Faye brings a sweater over, sits beside the suitcase.

FAYE

Did you know that Julia Child didn't take her first cooking class until she was thirty seven years old?

MEG

I did know that, Mom.
(packs the sweater)
I told you that.

FAYE

You may not believe it, sweetie, but you've got a whole life ahead of you.

Meg softens, looking at her mother.

MEG

And a little lipstick wouldn't kill me.

INT. MEG'S HOME - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Faye comes down the stairs followed by Meg who carries her suitcase, while SEAMUS (12) sits on the couch playing a video game, and CHARLOTTE (6) twirls and leaps about the kitchen in a spangled tutu and cowboy boots.

FAYE

(heading for kitchen)
Charlotte, monkey, you're going to make yourself sick again.

Charlotte falls on her ass as Meg drops her bag by the door and leans over the back of the sofa, dangling a set of keys in front of Seamus, who looks up, curious.

MEG
I've been thinking... I think you
should probably have your own keys
to the house now.

Seamus pauses his game.

MEG (CONT'D)
No using the stove. No knives.
And no going out on the roof.
'Kay?

SEAMUS
I guess I'll just eat Jell-O in
the basement then.

Meg drops the keys into his hand, kisses his head.

MEG
Set the table?

Seamus nods and Meg begins to raise herself.

SEAMUS
Mom?

MEG
Yeah?

He lifts his arms to twine them around her neck, inhales.

SEAMUS
You smell good.

Meg hugs her son tightly.

SEAMUS (CONT'D)
You deserve to 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.

The shouts of paparazzi draw Emma from a game of solitaire at her coffee table to the celebrity gossip show droning on the television.

She takes a bite from a Lean Cuisine entree and picks up the remote to flip through channels.

EMMA

Ooh!

She brightens all at once at the image of Princes Diana touring an African encampment with children, and sets down the remote to gather up the cards and shuffle.

Eyes glued to the TV, she suddenly shoots her hands three feet wide, rifling the cards in perfect vertical formation between, 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

There! All fits!

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

RICHARD

Good to go?

ALICE

(a firm nod, excited)

I am!

Richard brings a glass to Alice, nuzzles her ear.

RICHARD

I'm proud of you.

Alice smiles and they recline together on the bed.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Seriously. You've been planning this how long? Wanted to go for...

ALICE

(small, private)

For forever. My whole life.

RICHARD

And now you are. You did it. You made it happen. And that...

(kisses her)

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Is just one of the reasons I love you.

Alice looks at Richard, her face suffused with warmth and gratitude as he clinks their glasses.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

It's just the beginning.

He watches Alice with a smile as she tips her glass back to drink, stopping mid-sip to peer down at the delicate diamond ring sitting at the bottom of her glass.

ALICE

(stunned)

Richard...

RICHARD

I'm sure they've got a fancier way of doing this in France...

ALICE

Oh, Richard...

RICHARD

Gram always wanted you to have this...

ALICE

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

RICHARD

Maybe I just want to make sure you come back to me.

Alice looks at Richard, doesn't speak as she thinks.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Is that so bad?

ALICE

No. It's--. It's not. I mean... But, we can't even celebrate--

RICHARD

We're celebrating.

ALICE

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

RICHARD

(laughs)
You need a week to figure out how
to say "no?"

ALICE

(shakes her head)
Richard. It's just the timing. I
wasn't planning on this tonight--

RICHARD

(realizes)
Wait... You're serious.

He pulls away from Alice.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I planned tonight Alice. This was
my plan. To have it be special--

ALICE

But, it is special--!

RICHARD

Yeah, I don't think I'll ever
forget it. Alice, this is about
us. About us being together.

She reaches for him, rubs him arm comforting.

ALICE

I know. I know it is.
(pauses, smiling)
But, it's just a week.

Richard looks at the ring in his hand, bounces it
thoughtfully in his palm, then closes it in a fist.

RICHARD

You have a great trip.

He pockets the ring, and heads for the door.

ALICE

No. Wait, Richard--. Don't leave--

RICHARD

Maybe I'll see you in a week.

He exits and Alice holds a beat, hearing 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)
All you had to do was say "yes."

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, wide awake, 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?!

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY

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

MEG
Okay! Which way now?

Alice looks around, searching the crowd, marveling at the sea of endlessly varied nationalities and skin colors.

ALICE
Look at everyone. They're all...
Everyone's different.

EMMA
There it is! Esprit de Corps,
right?

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

ALICE

Excuse me, are you Madame Valery?

Madame Valery glances up from her clipboard beside their not-so-new coach 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
Norris 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.

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 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 crowded bus, whips her head around, desperately flipping pages in her guidebook.

MADAME VALERY (CONT'D)

Was the Arc de Triomphe.

ALICE

(to Meg)

This is crazy...

EMMA

Hey, Alice!

Alice turns 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! But, we finally made it!

EMMA

Alice, that's like you!

(back to couple)

We're celebrating Meg's divorce!

Meg turns with a look to Emma.

EXT. THE LOUVRE - DAY

The bus hurtles around the drive, screeching to a halt, bouncing 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.

She turns Meg and Emma around to come back down.

DEEDEE
Well, that saved us a climb.

INT. LOUVRE - DAY

Alice stands beside Meg at the very rear of a crush of raised cameras and cellphones that obscure all but the gold frame of a painting twenty feet in front of them.

ALICE
Can you see?

MEG
(laughs)
See what?

Emma elbows her way back out of the group in front of them, waving her little digital camera.

EMMA
I got it! I got it!

INT. BISTRO - NIGHT

Meg and Emma sit hunched over Meg'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

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!

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 a bottle of catsup and Meg offers Alice
 her napkin, 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)

But, this isn't what I planned.

INT. LE PETIT SOMMEIL HOTEL - NIGHT

The women stand just inside their impossibly small room, crowded by an armoire that nearly meets the low sloping ceiling, two spindly twin beds, and a military-style cot.

ALICE

This was supposed to be special.

MEG

Look. It's only for five nights--

EMMA

Five nights? Here?!

MEG

And, you said yourself, we'll hardly ever be in our room.

(selling it)

(MORE)

MEG (CONT'D)
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.

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 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--

MEG
Woof!

EMMA
And options--

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

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.

MADAME VALERY

(shouting, rote)

The Pont des Arts has its 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

We must keep together, people!

EXT. NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL - DAY

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

DEEDEE

(reading inscription)

Point zero. Dez roots dee France.

ALICE

Tres bon, Deedee! Think of it as
a sort of compass. It is this
precise point from which 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 Emma's camera.

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 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--

MADAME VALERY

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

MEG

Okay, hold on--

EMMA

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

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

ALICE

I might not have ever been here
before, but...

(emotional)

I've been dreaming about this my
whole life.

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 folds her arms,
planting herself with steely resolve between Madame
Valery and the bus.

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 crowd anticipating fireworks.

A beat.

CLICK! The Japanese wife snaps a picture of the standoff, the shutter springing Alice into action.

She seizes Madame Valery's flag with lightning speed.

CROWD

Whoa!

Madame Valery, nonplussed, reaches out to reclaim her flag, but Alice jerks it further away, while the Japanese woman snaps away, taking 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 the camera to Emma with a bow, Meg, and Alice, who holds Madame Valery's staff.

EMMA

That was *fantastic*!

MEG

I can't believe you did that.

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

MEG (CONT'D)

Alice, are you okay?

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

ALICE

Now, the real tour can begin!

MEG

It's about frickin' time.

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 in a desperate search for cover and duck beneath the shelter of the hotel's canopy.

MEG

Man!

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 on the other side of 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.

A beat.

EMMA

Do you think they'd let me use the bathroom? I've really got to pee.

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

A DOORMAN opens the heavy glass and gilt doors allowing Alice, Meg and Emma to step through into a palatial world of marble, gold and flowers.

EMMA

Wow...

ALICE

*Pardon. Ou est le toilette
Monsieur?*

The doorman points with instructions.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Merci.

(to Emma)

Down the hall to the left. Meg
and I'll go and get us a table--

EMMA

Great! Meet you in there!

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

EMMA (CONT'D)

Wow...

MEG

Get us a table? We can't afford
to eat here--

ALICE

My treat.

MEG

Alice, listen to me. You do not
owe anybody anything--

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 (in a very similar outfit to Emma's, though ten times more expensive) 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--

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 and heads into one of the stalls,
closing the door behind her just as Cordelia strides in.

CORDELIA

(acid disgust)
France.

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

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,
closing the door just as Alice and Meg enter.

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

And they wonder why none of us do
Paris anymore!

(MORE)

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

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*!

ALICE

Emma?

EMMA (O.S.)

Yeah. I'm here.

CORDELIA (O.S.)

Oh, 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, who's
there with you--? Where are you?
(listens)

Reykjavik? Would I need a coat?

A toilet flushes and Cordelia opens her stall door, going
straight for her bag on 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 comes to join 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

I'm right there with you! 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, sarcastic)
Oh, that I'd love to see. Us in Monte Carlo.

MEG

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

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?

Emma looks up at the manager in surprise.

EMMA

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

MANAGER

No, no, we are all very happy to see you 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--?

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

The lock CLICKS! and the door swings open into the dark room, framing Alice, Meg and Emma, laughing, drunk.

MEG

...You sure told that Madame Valery where to get off--!

ALICE

Oh, I did! I still can't believe--

Alice fumbles for a switch and hits the lights, their laughter cutting abruptly as their eyes grow huge 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 stumbles across the room to push back the window sheers, revealing a staggering panorama of the city, the Seine, and the Eiffel tower in the pouring rain.

Her eyes fill at the full majesty of the city of light.

ALICE (CONT'D)
(softly, to herself)
A view of Paris.

EMMA
There's a whole other room!

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice enters, steering around a tower of Louis Vuitton luggage, as Emma drops onto the enormous bed and Meg pulls a fresh bottle of Champagne from a bucket of ice.

ALICE
Wait. What are you guys doing?

Emma falls back on the bed, drunk, exhausted.

EMMA
We must have walked like fifty miles today...eighty-point-four-six-seven-two kilometers...

Meg pops the cork on the Champagne.

ALICE
Meg! We were just going to take a look!

MEG
And, it ain't bad...

Meg drinks right from the bottle, sits by Emma's feet.

ALICE
Meg! You guys, get up!

EMMA
(fuzzy, asleep)
What? I'm up. I'm up.

MEG
(falling back)
Let's just rest a minute...

Alice spots the Eiffel tower again, through another set of French doors and moves, as though drawn by a powerful magnet, toward the view.

ALICE
It's so... It's just how I imagined it...

She looks back at her friends passed out in the depths of the bed, and glances around, taking note of their ornate surroundings for the first time.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Okay. As soon as it stops raining. We'll leave.

EXT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - SUITE - NIGHT TO DAY

The light atop the Eiffel tower breaks through dissipating clouds to swing through the night sky, tracing a dramatic, searching arc...

MATCH DISSOLVE

The Eiffel tower lit gold and orange by the morning sun.

INT. LE MEURICE HOTEL - BEDROOM - SUITE - MORNING

A telephone rings, stirring Alice in the chair she's pulled to face the window.

The phone rings again and she reaches for it in her sleep, as Emma sits up groggily, Meg curled around the empty Champagne bottle in bed next to her.

ALICE

(answering)

Hello?

EMMA

What time is it?

Alice's eyes fly fully open.

ALICE

(into phone)

Oui.

EMMA

(shaking Meg)

Meg, wake up. We're in trouble--

Alice tries to shush her while holding the phone.

ALICE

Oh. Yes. Yes... Okay. Thank you.

Meg pulls herself up, sees Alice on the phone.

MEG

Oh, shit.

ALICE
We'll be right down. Merci.

She hangs up.

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

MEG
We'll tell them it was a mistake!

EMMA
Alice?

ALICE
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.

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 Towncar 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?

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

INT. TOWNCAR - MOVING - DAY

ALICE

(thinking fast)
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 shooting photographers.

MEG

Man, they *really* do think she's
her...

RIP! Alice and Meg spin to Emma as she extracts the contents of the envelope.

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?

ALICE

No, Meg, doesn't.

Meg looks up from the itinerary.

MEG

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

ALICE

Oh! And that makes it right?

EMMA

What's the worst that could
happen?

MEG

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

A beat while Alice looks between Meg and Emma.

ALICE

That is so unfair.

MEG

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 Towncar 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...

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.

MEG

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.

Meg looks to Alice and they laugh in disbelief.

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.

ALICE

Okay! What's 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 all turn as JEAN-PIERRE MICHAND (late 30's), darkly handsome, sophisticated in jeans and a sportscoat, but with a warm bohemian air, comes down the steps to meet them, a thick oversized envelope under his arm.

EMMA

Well, bon jour *me*.

JEAN-PIERRE

You made it! I was getting a little frantic--. I had concern when I did not hear from you--. So I took the liberty of sending you travel--

(laughs at himself)

But, here you are.

(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 Norris. Two of my
dearest friends. Visiting from
America!

ALICE
(shaking hands)
Hello.

Jean-Pierre has trouble pulling his eyes from Alice in
order to focus on shaking Meg's hand.

JEAN-PIERRE
It is a pleasure to meet friends--

EMMA
I'll say.

JEAN-PIERRE
(checking his watch)
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 the prince
waiting.

EMMA
The prince?

JEAN-PIERRE

But, we will see each other at the casino later--

Emma shoots Alice a look for help.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)

(off the look)

At 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.

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. He 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 to be called on in their 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 the gold, crystal and satin furnishings, 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.

ALICE

(miserable)
Fifteen. 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! The nerve of her! 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.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

(a beat)
I don't have anything to wear.

Alice and Meg both shoot Emma a look.

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

EMMA (CONT'D)

(perfect British)
Hello?

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

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)

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, an entire constellation of light, sparkles from within the case's black velvet lining.

ALICE

(closing it)
No jewelry.

Emma nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Then it all goes back.

MEG

(a beat)
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, as though on stage, to survey the swirl of roulette wheels and the tony European jet set.

At first glance they look spectacular, all their hair and make up executed with flair, undoubtedly by Emma.

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 finding herself in a dress made almost too 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 MATCHABELLI (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 great hauteur as she steps down to the gaming floor.

EMMA

Enchante.

Jean-Pierre assists Meg and Alice in their descent, Meg clutching the top of her dress, Alice anxiously keeping the skirt of her dress in place with a hand.

JEAN-PIERRE

And Mademoiselle Margaret Norris
and Mademoiselle Alice Perry--
(for Alice)

(MORE)

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)
*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 Prince Domenico
Matchabelli?

Prince Matchabelli bows from the waist.

DOMENICO
Mademoiselle Scott--

EMMA
Please, call me "Cordelia."

DOMENICO
If you will call me "Domenico."

EMMA
I shall *certainly* try.

Domenico places Emma's hand in the crook of his arm,
escorting her 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 know they're all staring at my
ass.

ALICE
At least yours is covered.

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 shoots a desperate glance to Alice and Meg 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 their obligatory introductions to Emma and take up positions at the table as Jean-Pierre offers Alice and Meg tall upholstered stools to sit.

Alice moves to sit, but then remembers her skirt, looks to Meg who is unable to 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

(laughs)
Ah. That is 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

(covering)
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.

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

(gulps)
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 slipping
from their hands to shatter on the floor, 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.

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

Meg downs a glass of Champagne in one gulp, snagging the back of the jacket of the waiter who has just poured, 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 the bottle from the waiter.

MEG

I should probably keep this.

DEALER

(prodding)

Mademoiselle?

Emma places her cards face down on the table, appearing to fold.

EMMA

Well...

She turns to throw a wink at Alice and Meg on the sly, then 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 of the 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 step
outside--?

EMMA

Alice, we're in the middle of a
hand--

ALICE

(whispering)

Emma! What are you doing?

EMMA

Relax. I've got it covered--

ALICE

This isn't the mathletes finals in
Madison. Emma--!

EMMA

(impatient)

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

(to Alice)

You're the one that got us into
this!

ALICE

Me--?

EMMA

Now, go *sit down!* And try to be
cool, would you? *Jeeze!*

DOMENICO

I will see you, Cordelia.

Alice hobbles a retreat as Domenico pushes his own
mountain of chips to the pot on the table and the dowager
folds her hand.

Alice joins Meg, tries to smile as she takes the water
Jean-Pierre offers.

MEG

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

ALICE

(sick)

Meg. I can't run in this skirt.

DEALER

Mademoiselle. Monsieur. Your
cards, please.

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, just 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?

EMMA

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

ALICE
Well said, 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. 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
Oh, Cordelia. I could't--. Your
family has already been so
generous--

ALICE
She really believes in education.

The doors start to close.

JEAN-PIERRE
(rushed)
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.

A beat.

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, sparkling, 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 to put these 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 to object, but stops herself as the
three wander the crowded market stalls heaped with
fountains of flowers in every color, breads, fresh
produce, trinkets and junk.

ALICE

I'm not going to tell you what to
do.

MEG

(surveying stalls)
Thank you. It's silly, anyway.
They're just jeans. I've got to
find something for my mom--

EMMA

Oh, Meg! Look! Perfect!

Emma leaps to one of the stalls, seizing a profusion of
plastic jeweled tiaras displayed alongside photographs of
Princess Grace, putting one on.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Charlotte would love this!

ALICE

How about these?!

She 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.

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

RICHARD (CONT'D)

How much do I owe you for that?

EXT. SHOE REPAIR SHOP - DAY

Richard exits the store front in a strip mall carrying Alice's repaired suitcase, headed for his car.

JERRY

Yo! Vance! Out of the road!

Richard turns to find Jerry grinning from behind the wheel of a sports car.

JERRY (CONT'D)

How's it hangin'?

(notes suitcase)

Hey! You headin' off to France, too? Gonna surprise Alice?

RICHARD

(beleaguered)

Hey, Jerry...

JERRY

Take my word for it, that is what the ladies like. They love the big gesture. Works every time.

RICHARD

I'm not going anywhere, Jerry.
But, thanks for the advice.

JERRY

What'd'ya hear from the girls?

RICHARD

(lying)

Having a great time.

JERRY

Yeah? That's what they're telling you, anyway. What happens in Paris, is gonna stay in Paris, right?

RICHARD

Well, see ya, Jerry--

JERRY

(insinuating, vulgar)

Of course, Alice, she already *knows French*.

RICHARD

(taking the bait)

Yes, she does. She taught herself.

JERRY

(laughs)

Yeah? Something told me she didn't learn it from you.

Richard takes a menacing step towards the car and Jerry punches the gas, laughing as he pulls away.

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 her for a moment as she surveys the rich array of fresh produce, lifting a tomato to her nose.

She closes her eyes as she inhales, smiling privately, then replaces the tomato and moves on to the next stall.

A beat as Bernard watches Meg drift away, then he quickly pays for his purchase and follows.

At another stall, Meg listens as a FRENCHWOMAN tries to communicate how to best prepare the fish they both admire.

Meg nods her head, 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.

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, she is grateful for your help.

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 her thanks to 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. He exchanges friendly, familiar greetings with various vendors as they walk.

MEG

From Wisconsin. Yes.

BERNARD

You cook in Wisconsin?

MEG

(laughs)

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

She points at a tray of miniature lobsters.

MEG (CONT'D)

Like those. I've never seen--

BERNARD

Ah, baby langoustine. You want to broil those. A little butter. Fresh herbs...

MEG

So, you cook.

Bernard dips his head modestly as they reach the end of the market stalls.

BERNARD

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

MEG

(shaking hands)
Meg. Norris. Thank you again for your help--

BERNARD

And, how long do you stay in Monte Carlo, Meg?

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

MEG

I need to find my friends--

Bernard places a hand on her arm, stopping her.

BERNARD

I will walk with you--

MEG

(laughs)
Look. I've got two kids. Shop's closed. But, thanks.

She slips her arm free and joins the moving crowd of the marketplace, leaving Bernard to look after her, 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

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

Cell phone to her ear, Madame Valery 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--. How do I get in touch with the police?

MADAME VALERY

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

RICHARD

But--

MADAME VALERY

You are the husband, yes?

RICHARD

No. No, I am not.

MADAME VALERY

Well, then you have nothing to worry about.

She hangs up, leaving Richard to blink as a dial tone fills his ear.

INT. VILLA MATCHABELLI - 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 at Domenico as he appears beside her and spins her away.

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

Meg grabs Alice's hands, shaking Alice's arms in dancing.

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--

ALICE

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

Meg stops dancing to gape at Alice, this secret revealed.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(laughs, sly)

Richard is... A very good dancer.

She bats her eyes at Meg for emphasis and laughing, spins a turn directly into Jean-Pierre.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Oh! *Bon soir.*

JEAN-PIERRE

*But, I've been looking for you!
Everywhere! At the bar--*

Meg comes in behind Alice's shoulder.

MEG

(playful)

Just remember... That thing about Richard.

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 passing waiter, commandeering 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 attention snags on Nikolai now, really registering his presence as she searches his warm, gentle eyes for a beat.

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 peeled on Emma.

JEAN-PIERRE

Cordelia, she can take care of herself, yes?

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), standing directly before her; frail and bird-like, but attempting to hold a warrior's stance with her shoulders thrown back.

EMMA

Yes?

PENELOPE

Do you not know who I am?

Emma's smile falters as she glances furtively about.

EMMA

(stalling)

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 two years in hospital--

EMMA

Hospital? What *happened*?

PENELOPE

You did! You *happened*!

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

ALICE

Excuse me!

She dodges away from Jean-Pierre, hooking Meg's arm in passing, yanking her away from Giorgio who spins to find the empty spot she'd occupied just a second before, moving quickly to Emma's side.

PENELOPE

Don't pretend you don't remember!
Third year at Le Rosey! You threw
my luggage in the pool.

(MORE)

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Set fire to my mattress. You cut off all my hair--

MEG

What? That's terrible!

PENELOPE

While I was sleeping.

EMMA

She did that to you?

ALICE

(correcting)

Cordelia! How could you?

PENELOPE

That was just the first night.

ALICE

That's awful! Say you're sorry, Cordelia.

(whispers)

And let's get out of here!

EMMA

Alice, no--. Wait a minute--

PENELOPE

(to Alice)

She turned all my friends against me... They had to take me away... I spent two years with the nuns--

Emma grabs Penelope by the shoulders, forcing this trembling woman meet her gaze.

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--

EMMA

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

PENELOPE

(blinks uncertainly)
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 standard.

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 here.
(an obvious example)
People like yourself.*

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.
For an extremely good cause. And
the sunlight makes them generous.*

Alice holds a beat, blushing, then sets her glass down
and guiltily and reaches for her water instead.

Jean-Pierre places a hand on her arm.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)

*I'm sorry. I forgot myself. That
was rude, and I've offended you--
(repentant)
I don't even know you.*

WAITER

Finis?

Alice looks up from Jean-Pierre's hand on her arm to the
waiter who offers to remove her half-full plate.

ALICE

*Is it possible--? Is there any
way to wrap this up? To go?*

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

GIORGIO

*...But, the woman who has the
children is the most beautiful.
(MORE)*

GIORGIO (CONT'D)
Because she has, how do you say?
Made the miracle of life.

MEG
Right.

GIORGIO
Look at you! You glow still.

MEG
You mean, from when I gave birth?

He takes her hand, caresses the skin.

GIORGIO
See? You have the skin; gorgeous!
The shining hairs! The *bella*
figura...

Meg laughs out loud at his audaciousness.

GIORGIO (CONT'D)
Ah, but the men, they tell you
this all the time.

Meg catches the eye of the WOMAN sitting across from her.

MEG
I'm not going to be able to shake
this guy, am I?

Before the woman can respond, a plate of beautifully
arranged langoustine is placed before Meg.

MEG (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't order--

She looks up to find Bernard standing in chef's whites
and immediately pulls her hand free from Giorgio.

BERNARD
(smiles, nods)
Madame Norris.

He heads back toward the narrow kitchen in the back
before she can say anything, even thank him.

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!
(looks around)
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.

INT. BISTRO KITCHEN - PRE-DAWN

Bernard transfers eggs with offhand flair from a large skillet onto plates held by a WAITER who carries them over to a small table at the back of the kitchen where the rest of the STAFF enjoys breakfast.

Bernard sets the pan aside to take the tray of dishes his FATHER (70's, striking resemblance) carries in.

BERNARD

Papa, sit down and eat.

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

(smiling)
You do cook.

Bernard shrugs, smiling warmly as he comes forward.

BERNARD

You enjoyed the food?

MEG

Very much. This is a wonderful place--

EMMA

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

Emma stops short in the street just outside with Alice.

A beat while they both see they've interrupted something.

ALICE

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

Meg hesitates, turning between her friends and Bernard.

BERNARD

You should not miss it.

MEG

Thank you. For the langostines, and--. They were beautiful.

She steps into the street as Bernard comes to the door.

BERNARD

I am glad you were here, Meg.

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 stops abruptly, stands a beat.

ALICE

Meg?

MEG

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

Alice takes Meg's hand in her own, without a word.

MEG (CONT'D)

I'm single.

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.

ALICE

We'd be getting up now.

MEG

If we were home.

EMMA

The stars are still out.

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 them with other
members of the group and Emma lines them all up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Okay! Ready? One, two--

She spots Nikolai observing at a short distance.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Wait! Wait! Niki!

He shakes his head, bashful, but Emma swings her arms
wildly, gesturing him over.

EMMA (CONT'D)

You, too! I need you! 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 over the lip 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,
falling into the carousel's trough with other luggage.

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 the
front page, with its bold headline: SCOTT MAKES A
SPLASH!, and a huge photograph of Emma, Alice and Meg,
sopping, laughing together in the fountain.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

Emma enters from the bedroom in a swimsuit and wrap, to
find Alice, back turned, 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 turns now and takes in Emma's costume.

ALICE

Where are you going?

EMMA

I'm going to the beach. With Penelope.

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

MEG

You wouldn't believe this fantastic bakery--. I got us breakfast! 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--

EMMA

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

MEG

In Africa.

ALICE

The children we stole a trip from?
The same ones that are paying for
this room--?

MEG

We'll pay for the room--

EMMA

We're rich!

ALICE

So, I'm the only the only one
worried about the fact that we're
lying to all these people?

EMMA

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

ALICE

That thinks we might get caught--?

EMMA

She's in Iceland.

ALICE

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

MEG

What friends?

EMMA

Hey, 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, opening it to find Penelope, also
dressed for the beach, who holds up the newspaper with
it's front page photo of all of them in the fountain.

PENELOPE

Have you seen?

EMMA

Oh, my god! We look great!

Emma squeals at the newspaper, ushering Penelope in.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Alice, look!

Alice takes the paper from Emma, the color draining from her face as Meg reads over her shoulder.

MEG

(laughs)
We've 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, closing the door, spinning to face Emma and Meg.

ALICE

(hushed panic)
This is what I'm talking about!
We've got to get out of here--

EMMA

Doesn't it mean we have to stay?

MEG

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

ALICE

I won't take--?

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

MEG

Now I know how Richard must feel.

Alice comes to a full stop.

A beat as she gapes at Meg, stung, cheeks coloring.

ALICE

Richard...?

MEG

(feeble apology)
I'm just saying...

ALICE

Well, you're sure one to talk.

Meg glances up at Alice, Emma looking between them.

ALICE (CONT'D)

When you can't even bring yourself
to buy a pair of jeans--

EMMA

(leaping in)
Okay, you know what? Let's pack.
It's not fun anymore. I was just
excited to get out and see
something new. I wouldn't've
cared if we went to Kenosha.
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

Good.

EMMA

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

ALICE
(righteous)
Me? No. I am going to go have an
adventure.

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, gesticulating: She could be anywhere.

EXT. GRIMALDI PALACE - DAY

Alice only half watches the changing of the guards at the front of a crowd outside the palace gates.

She snaps herself out of her train of thought with a shake of her head and an indignant exhale, turning to the marked pages in her guide book.

CARL
Alice? Alice?

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

DEEDEE
We thought that was you!

ALICE
Oh! Carl! Deedee! What--?

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

DEEDEE

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

ALICE

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

CARL

Well, when we saw how you stood up to that Madame Valery--! I said to myself, "au revoir!" If that little Alice can do that, what's holdin' us back? This is our honeymoon, dang it!

DEEDEE

I was scared, but then, well, you only live once!

CARL

Sometimes you just gotta follow your heart, right?

ALICE

That's right. That's right.

EXT. PARIS - ARC DE TRIOMPHE - DAY

Richard stands with his map beneath the arch where all roads come together in a spinning roundabout of tooting horns and scurrying pedestrians.

He looks up from his map, down the long length of the Champs Elyse, overwhelmed.

The Japanese couple from Notre Dame approach Richard to ask directions of his map and he shrugs helplessly, pressing the map on them in his distraction as he steps out into a crosswalk.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - STREET - DAY

Alice embraces Deedee and Carl, saying their goodbyes beside a waiting taxi outside a cafe.

CARL

Tell the girls we would have loved to see them, but, Italy calls!

DEEDEE

And then Greece! And Turkey!
We'll send you a postcard. From every stop!

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!

The car pulls away, Carl and Deedee turning in their seats to wave at Alice through the back 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 holds a beat, taking 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 deserted intersection of two more narrow alleys high up in the hills 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, trailed now by a small stray DOG.

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

ALICE
(shooing him)
Go. Go home.

She turns and starts forward again, 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
along the edge of 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 in
the pair of 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 small table along the wall and holds
out a chair.

Seated, Meg follows him with her eyes as he ducks into
the kitchen at the back where Bernard works furiously at
the stove, tossing the contents of a sauce pan up with an
offhand but expert flick of his wrist.

Bernard glances out to Meg in the dining room as he
reaches for a bottle of olive oil, sensing her before
knowing he'll find her there.

A beat.

Meg matches Bernard's friendly smile.

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 briefly, to kiss on the busy street and then continue on their way.

A beat as Richard looks after them.

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 top of the front page of a newspaper folded on a chair at the next table.

He takes the paper, quickly unfolding it to the full photograph of Alice and Meg with Emma in the fountain, and 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 a laugh.

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 to her from the dusty lot across the street, asking for their ball.

A beat as Alice regards the ball and the kids come to the lip of their dirt field, calling.

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 as comments are directed to her, but she's clearly a little lost, out of her element, when Giorgio approaches.

YOUNG MAN

Your friend. Meg. I do not see her.

EMMA

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

Emma drifts away to the ship's rail where she turns to survey the party, smiling wistfully in seeing 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 with a piece of cake extended in one hand, a fork and napkin 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

Charlotte. She'll be six in June.
And Seamus, he's--

Emile comments in examining the photographs of Seamus and Charlotte in Meg's wallet as Bernard pours her glass full at the table in the back of the kitchen.

BERNARD

He says, she looks like a rascal.

MEG

No idea where she gets that.

Emile pats Meg's arm warmly as he returns her wallet, directing another comment to Bernard.

MEG (CONT'D)

What'd he say?

Bernard, reluctant to translate, argues with Emile who playfully cuffs him on the head.

MEG (CONT'D)

(laughing)

What?

BERNARD

Your husband. My father says he was...

(chooses his words)

He says he was a fool.

EXT. MONTE CARLO - DIRT LOT - NIGHT

ALICE

I'm open! I'm open!

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

Alice dodges a kid on defense, and kicks the ball through the goal.

Her "team" jumps and cheers, along with a collection of spectators who have gathered in curiosity of this tall red headed woman in a summer dress racing around the dusty lot with a band of children.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Go! Go!

Alice races back down the field with her team, the little dog following, barking on the sidelines.

EXT. BISTRO - ALLEY - NIGHT

BERNARD

But, she is perfectly safe.

MEG

No. Way.

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

BERNARD

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

MEG

That's a shame. 'Cause it's not gonna happen.

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

BERNARD

I dare you.

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 leans back, arms wrapped around him, surrendering to the ride, the sheer fun of it, and he turns to laugh.

MEG

Can you make it go any faster?

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 running the ball down the field, maneuvers in and steals the ball, doubling back in the opposite direction as the crowd laughs and claps.

She passes the ball to another kid who races it down the field to score.

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 smiles hugely, waves, then takes the ball full in the face.

Jean-Pierre's smile winks out as Alice goes down and he races from the car to where the kids and spectators form a circle around Alice's prone body in worry.

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.

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.

BERNARD

(to Meg)

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

HENRI (60's, a big bear in chef's whites) rises from the table to lumber 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)

(MORE)

BERNARD (CONT'D)

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 hand
me my ass!*

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

Everyone's gone. Huh?

(pauses)

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

(thinks)

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

Nikolai laughs, shaking his head and holds up the napkin which he's transformed into an elaborate 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.

NIKOLAI

(tenderly)

Ya ryadam.

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 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 Bernard and the other chefs erupt with applause.

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

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

MEG

I've never won anything.

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

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

ALICE (V.O.)

Tell me the most amazing place
you've ever been.

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

JEAN-PIERRE (V.O.)

I do not know. There are many.

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

ALICE (V.O.)

Out of anywhere.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

JEAN-PIERRE

Okay. I will tell you of a place
I have never been.

(pauses)

It is in my imagination only, so
it is very special.

Alice turns from the view, smiling expectantly.

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.

They hold a beat, looking at one another.

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)

In my mind, it is bordered by fields that are green.

A beat.

Alice turns to view again, to break the intimacy.

ALICE

Actually, it's on a lake.
(pauses)
My home.

EXT. YACHT - DAWN

The sun crests the far horizon line as Nikolai shrugs himself out of his formal shirt to stand before Emma in nothing but a pair of boxer shorts printed with starfish.

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

Emma hesitates, then lets her gown fall in a pool around her, bare except for her panties, Cordelia's necklace, and Nikolai's 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 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 kisses Nikolai and pulls him close.

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 and Jean-Pierre walk down the hall without speaking, side by side, their hands almost touching.

Alice stops when they reach the door of her suite and turns, Jean-Pierre standing expectantly.

JEAN-PIERRE

Well...

Alice gracefully pulls his jacket from her shoulders.

A beat as Alice looks at Jean-Pierre, then she hands his jacket over.

ALICE

I've never been to France before.

She laughs at herself and Jean-Pierre's confused reaction to this sudden admission.

ALICE (CONT'D)

(simply)

I was afraid. That it couldn't
ever live up to my expectations.
And that if it did, I would never
be able to go home.

JEAN-PIERRE

And now?

Alice shrugs, finds her key, stops.

She smiles softly, then steps forward to place a gentle kiss on Jean-Pierre's lips.

ALICE

Thank you.

She opens the door and steps inside as Jean-Pierre smiles ruefully, nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)

For everything.

Alice 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 get to Monte Carlo.

Behind him, Cordelia Scott strides through a set of doors, stopping just behind Richard, searching the terminal as she 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 stops him, correcting, pointing the other way.

RICHARD

Merci.

He stoops to pick 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 wearing Cordelia's necklace.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

Bernard zooms the moped around the fountain one last loop with Meg, before bringing it to a stop in front of the hotel.

She climbs off as he cuts the engine, begins to dismount.

MEG

You can stay on. I'm fine.

Bernard hesitates, then sits, straddling the bike as Meg stands uncertainly, neither knowing how to say goodbye.

A beat, then Meg steps forward and hugs Bernard, awkwardly grazing his cheek with a kiss, and pulls back.

MEG (CONT'D)
Say goodbye to your father for me?

BERNARD
I will, Meg.

Meg nods and turns, mounting the steps.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
He will say that I am a fool as well.

Meg hears Bernard, but doesn't dare turn back, closing her eyes for a moment, then climbing the steps.

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)
Okay. Well, I really wish you were there. Or here. I wish you were here, Richard...
(pauses)
I keep thinking... No matter what I see, it's like I'm only seeing half of it. Because you're not with me.

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

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Richard. And I love you. And I hope you'll be there. When I get home.
(pauses)
Okay. Bye.

Alice hangs up the phone and runs her fingers through her hair, so lost in thought she doesn't immediately see Meg standing at the open bedroom door.

MEG
(softly)
Hey.

Alice looks up, smiles to see her friend.

ALICE
Oh. Hey--
(taking Meg in)
(MORE)

ALICE (CONT'D)

Hey! You bought the jeans! They look great--!

MEG

(bursts into tears)

Alice, I am so sorry! For what I said. I didn't mean it. Any of it! About Richard and all that--

ALICE

No. It's okay. Meg, you were right--

MEG

(in a comic tumble)

I love you. And all your stupid plans and binders. And I don't know where I'd be if it weren't for you, Alice--

ALICE

(bursts into tears)

Oh, Meg! I made a terrible mistake!

MEG

Wha--?

ALICE

Richard asked me to marry him!

MEG

That's fantastic--!

ALICE

(crying)

And all I had to do was say "yes!"

MEG

What--? What did you say?

ALICE

I told him to wait a week!

MEG

Alice--

ALICE

He surprised me! I panicked! I didn't know what to do...

(falls apart)

Because I hadn't planned it.

MEG

Oh, Alice... Planned it?

ALICE

And he knew it! He practically
said it!

MEG

It's going to be okay, honey.
Richard knows you. He understands--

ALICE

No. I think I really ruined it--

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 turns to exchange a look with Meg who enters from
the bedroom as Emma swans across the room to tear apart
the cellophane on the fruit basket, pluck out an apple,
and drape herself across a chaise.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Mooooorning, Meg...

(back on track)

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

MEG

Um. No. We don't know, Emma--

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 absently unfolds the paper as Emma rattles on,
taking in the image of Emma, and Cordelia's necklace.

EMMA (CONT'D)

It's funny if you think about it.
I could have had a prince.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

A real life one. But, we'll make it work. I'll support him--

(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 brandishes the front page of the newspaper.

EMMA

(delighted)

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--?

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!

The three look directly down to the base of the hotel where the trio of paparazzi call from the steps as Cordelia herself 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 the ballroom entrance where WORKERS set up the admittance table 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.

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

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, holds it wide for Cordelia who marches in...

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - DAY

...turning back to the bellboy from the center of the room, where everything appears to be impossibly 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 a set of double doors, revealing the bedroom and the tower of Cordelia's luggage, crowned by the reassembled fruit basket.

Cordelia sniffs at the bedroom, 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, throwing them wide.

EXT. HOTEL DE PARIS - DAY

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

CORDELIA

(into phone)

Stavros supposed to be here, isn't here? I don't see his boat--

Alice carefully turns nothing but her head to the balcony on the far side of Cordelia, where Emma and Meg are in the same tight spot, holding their shopping bags.

They look back at her with desperate faces.

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)
(as if to a child)
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 out 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
(whispers)
They're locked!

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 at anchor out in the bay behind them.

EXT. MOTOR BOAT - AT SEA - DAY

A BOAT DRIVER in uniform passes a captain's hat to his client, 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!

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 mother
when we go to jail? My kids?!

ALICE
For the auction, Emma!

EMMA
None of us knew that, Alice--!

ALICE
For the children--!

EMMA
In Africa. *I know!*

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

MEG
Seamus, Charlotte; my poor kids!

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's bow strikes the side of the yacht with a thump and the three women scramble to their feet, grasping the side of the ship.

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 boat's landing.

ALICE
Are you even sure you took it off?

EMMA
Definite "yes."

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

MEG
Don't! Don't even say it!

EMMA

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

ALICE

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

MEG

We don't have time for this! Let's just split up! Alice you go fore. Emma take the aft. 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?

NIKOLAI

Ya khotel by perepisyvat'sya s vami.

CLERK

(cocks his head)
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 that understands a word he
 says?!

EMMA

Now, that's just mean. He tries.
 (stricken)
 Oh, this is all my fault!

ALICE

Well, that doesn't exactly help--

EMMA

I mean, the temptation. He works
 like fifteen jobs! 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 receiver at a bank of hotel phones,
 as he removes Emma's numbered room key from his pocket.

NIKOLAI

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 he assumes I've
 nothing better to do than--. He
 never makes--. *Stephanie* never has
 to do these things--

The hotel phone rings, interrupting her complaint.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

Well, I'm *terrifically* sorry I'm
 not a neurosurgeon, if that's the
 difference then. 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 already 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.

Cordelia pulls the newspaper from the trash, curiosity turning to shock, her eyes growing wide 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
 go 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 pulled up anchor on
 that tub when we had a chance.
 Sailed right out of here--*

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
while Richard strides directly for 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.

Oh!

ALICE

Richard whips around to see Alice spread-eagled on the marble floor as Meg and Emma slide to a stop.

Alice?

RICHARD

Richard! MEG ALICE
Richard--?

Alice!

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Wow! Richard! EMMA

Richard drops down to help Alice as she struggles up, dizzily finding her feet to stand.

RICHARD
Honey, are you alright--?

ALICE
Richard...

Alice hugs Richard tightly.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You got my message.

RICHARD

I had no idea where you were. I
looked all over Paris, but, I
couldn't find--

(now hearing)

What message?

ALICE

But, Richard, you hate to travel.

RICHARD

(smiles almost sadly)
A week's an awfully long time.

MEG

Longer in France.

CLERK

Excusez moi, Mademoiselle Scott?

EMMA

Hey, Francois! How are you--?

CLERK

(utterly confused)
You--? You still need security?

Alice and Meg's heads swing in the clerk's direction.

EMMA

Security--?

CLERK

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
(hooking Alice's arm)
It'll just take a minute! We'll
have her right back!

MEG
(hustling)
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.

ALICE
(gushing)
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.

Cordelia's brows come together.

NIKOLAI
(sweetly)
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. Suite 622 at the
Hotel de Paris. You must come
straight away. I've been robbed!
And now some horrible, foreign man-
-! I believe someone's 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, Ma'am.

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 as they cluster.

CLERK

Pardon? Is there a problem--?

POLICE CAPTAIN

*We received a report of an
attempted murder in suite 622.
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 "sorrrys" for the
police--*

EMMA

The police--?

CORDELIA

You robbed me!

ALICE

*(exasperated)
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,
put everything back just the way--*

Meg and Alice look daggers at Emma.

CORDELIA

*(icy disgust)
You wore my clothes?*

EMMA

Well... For the children.

CORDELIA
Wha--? What children?

MEG
In Africa.

ALICE
Look, you weren't here. Everyone
thought she was you--

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
(dripping contempt)
But, look at you!

Emma takes a step towards her doppelganger, facing off.

EMMA
Look at *you*!

ALICE
Emma--

CORDELIA
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.

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 break into a run when they hear a SCREAM!

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.

Cordelia scoffs and Alice leans over her, menacing.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Because no matter where you go, no matter where you jet to in this world, you are still going to be you.

MEG

Amen, sister.

ALICE

(re: 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?

Emma turns from the mirror, holding the necklace up at 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 seems to sense something amiss, but steps in 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?

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 for the children.

(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 and seizes the captain's arm.

EMMA

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 police and the clerk out of 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.

ALICE

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 angelochek?

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

JEAN-PIERRE

(blinks)
Fiance?

(blinks)
Fiance?

Jean-Pierre offers his hand to shake, smiling wryly.

JEAN-PIERRE

A pleasure to meet you. This explains a great deal.

ALICE

RICHARD

It does?

It does?

JEAN-PIERRE (CONT'D)

You've come for the auction--?

ALICE

Yes! He came all this way!

Richard tightens his grip on Jean-Pierre's hand.

RICHARD

Alice? Tell me quick why I'm
going to take a poke at this guy--

Alice breaks Richard's vice grip with a bright smile.

ALICE

That's because you're exhausted,
honey!
(to Jean-Pierre)
He just got in! 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

(simply)
No. There's not.

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 velum 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! and Meg jumps to Cordelia, stuffing the apple in her mouth just as she opens it to scream.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

Bernard smooths his hair as he waits, bottle of wine in hand, and looks up when Meg opens the door a crack.

MEG

Bernard...?

She opens the door just enough to step around and out into the hall, keeping a hand on the handle behind her.

He holds out the bottle of wine with the ribbon.

BERNARD

We forgot your prize.

Meg looks from the wine to Bernard's earnest face and his sheepish smile.

Suddenly, impulsively, she lunges, grabbing him, and the two fall against the wall in a passionate kiss.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY

Cordelia kicks her legs against the floor, throwing herself backwards in the chair, flipping it over.

INT. HOTEL DE PARIS - HALLWAY - DAY

CLICK! Meg and Bernard break from their kiss, turning their heads to look down the corridor when Cordelia sticks just 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, and bolts.

MEG

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

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!

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!

NIKOLAI

Eight hundred!

The crowd reacts with light applause.

EMMA

Niki. What are you doing?

NIKOLAI

Vsyo, chto ya de-la-yu, lish dlya.

EMMA

Well, don't.

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

(laughs)

Alice. Lithuania?

(off her look)

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? So, put your hand down, and I'll be done in a second.

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.

The crowd gasps, stepping back in a hush to reveal
Cordelia in the center of the ballroom, backed by all the
police, just as Meg and Bernard enter at a run.

EMMA

Oh, *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.

CORDELIA

(turns to captain)
There! You see?

ALICE

We've never been anywhere. And we
took a trip, that didn't belong to
us...because, well, because you
thought we were--. That she was
Cordelia...

Alice finds Richard's face in the crowd and she slows as her eyes fill and her throat tightens.

ALICE (CONT'D)

And you thought we were
important...

Richard smiles at Alice, supporting her with his gaze.

MEG

We're very sorry--

EMMA

We didn't mean to hurt anyone--

ALICE

And, we're willing to face the
consequences, whatever they are...
But...

She turns to Meg and Emma, a smile blossoming.

ALICE (CONT'D)

But, this was our adventure.

MEG

And we wouldn't change a thing.

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 spins around.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

(laughs, shrugs)
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

But, I'm not happy!

POLICE CAPTAIN

Ah, but, this...
(Gallic shrug)
I can do nothing about.

NIKOLAI

Three million!

The crowd erupts, giddy, their applause escalating.

DOMENICO

Three million Euros!

EMMA

Nikolai!

ALICE

Emma. It's okay.

EMMA

Because it's my boyfriend and not
yours--?

ALICE

Because 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.

MEG
Bernard, I'm sorry. That I lied--

BERNARD
Your husband. I would have to fight him if he were here. He would never give you up.

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 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.

ALICE

(repentant)

You've been very gracious.

JEAN-PIERRE

(laughs)

But, this has been the best event we've ever had. I will call you the next time--

(tracks Richard)

Or maybe I will write.

Alice kisses Jean-Pierre on both cheeks.

ALICE

Write. Please, write.

Meg turns to Bernard, holding up the bottle of wine, as Richard places Alice's suitcase in the trunk with their shopping bags.

MEG

I'm going to save this. Someday we will drink it in my kitchen.

BERNARD

Yes.

They embrace and Meg turns with Alice to Emma who stands arm in arm with Nikolai.

EMMA

(hugging them)
I'll call you both as soon as I
know.

ALICE

Emma, you're sure about this?

EMMA

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 already inside, stepping back to join Emma,
Nikolai, Bernard, Penelope and Domenico.

The car pulls out and they wave their friends away,
watching as their car turns out of the drive.

A beat.

Jean-Pierre shakes hands with Nikolai and kisses Emma,
tipping his head in farewell to Bernard as he mounts the
steps with Penelope and Domenico to enter the hotel.

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.

CORDELIA (CONT'D)

(deeply moved)
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 in a row of seats 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.

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.

ALICE (V.O.)

*"Over the far horizon, night/
Glowed with the pallid hope of
dawn./Your eyes' glance was my
morning light."*

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 between cartons beneath the board, while Meg cooks, surrounded by the rest of her class.

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.

ALICE (V.O.)

*"No sound - save his own tread
upon/The ground - to ease the
wanderer's heart./Your voice
encouraged me: 'go on!'"*

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.

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 is a whole world out there
to see.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CUNCUN, MEXICO - POOL BAR - DAY

JERRY

Gotta single them out. That's all
they want. Is to feel special.
Like you chose 'em.

Jerry, with a "farmer's tan;" lobster red arms and pale
white belly, holds court on a chaise, surrounded by a
motley CREW OF COMB-OVERS on vacation.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Now, watch this...

They all turn their attention to a WAITER who carries a
margarita on a tray to a WOMAN sunbathing on the far side
of the pool.

The woman sits up, her face obscured by a large sunhat,
to accept the drink as the waiter indicates Jerry and his
pals by gesture.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Jackpot! Now, here it comes...

Jerry lifts his own glass to toast as Madam Valery turns
and lowers her sunglasses provocatively, raising her
margarita in thanks.

She lights up with a smile as Jerry winks.