

PILOT

SISTERS

“Pilot”

Written
by
Annie Weisman

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ACT ONE

1 EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAY 1

The George Washington Bridge at morning rush hour on a clear, crisp day. Trucks and cars locked in a dense, angry standstill. And then, within it, a small figure on a bicycle riding through...

CLOSER. We see her. This is JULIA. Unruly curls spring out from under a sensible helmet. Weaving her singular way through that dense thicket of humanity...

CLOSER STILL. On her softly expressive face. Her big, gentle eyes. A look of quiet determination.

At the end of the bridge she lingers for a beat and looks out at the river, losing her momentum for a moment...

DRIVER (O.S.)

What the fuck is wrong with you? Move!

Snapping back, Julia gives an apologetic wave and keeps riding, a sensitive soul in an indifferent world...

2 EXT. BECHLEY FERTILITY INSTITUTE - DAY 2

An imposing brownstone office building. As Julia pulls up and locks her bike, she gives herself a pep talk:

JULIA

You will tell him. You will tell him
today.

As she heads inside, she starts something she does when she's nervous: *tapping a front tooth with a fingernail...*

3 INT. BECHLEY FERTILITY INSTITUTE - DAY 3

We enter the clinic with Julia, past an elegant waiting room where various ANXIOUS PATIENTS wait. And wait. The receptionist JEN greets her with a sigh of relief.

JEN

Oh, good! The doctor is waiting for you.
(then, pointed)
Impatiently.

JULIA

Yes, I'm here! Thank you, Jen.

3 CONTINUED:

3

The patients look at each other as if to say, who the hell is she to walk right through? And off Julia...

4 INT. LEON'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

4

Julia enters to find her father, LEON BECHLEY-- handsome, distinguished, and right now: restless as a PHOTOGRAPHER waits to take his picture.

LEON

There's my girl. At last.

JULIA

I'm so sorry. The traffic...

LEON

More people are fatally injured every year by bicycles than by terrorists!

JULIA

I know, I know. Okay, here we go, Dad let's put this on.

Julia takes out a dry cleaning bag and removes from it a crisp white lab coat. She helps him into it.

LEON

You're the one making me do this thing.

JULIA

It's important. You're getting a major award, there's going to be lots of press. We need a professional photo of you!

As he slides the coat on, he feels a twinge in his arm. Julia, hypersensitive to him, spots this.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

LEON

It's fine. Just tennis elbow acting up. So, does your old man look all right?

He stands there, heroic in his lab coat. Leonine.

JULIA

You look great.

And in that moment we see how he needs her reassurance. She's his mirror. Then, Leon smiles for the camera.

JULIA (CONT'D)

So, Dad? There's something I need to talk to you about--

DR. ISAAC HADDAD, Leon's protégé, pops his head in.

ISAAC

Dr. Bechley? Mrs. Weston is prepped for you in three. And I have a question, about the Kleiner case?

LEON

Good, be right there. Are we good here?

But he doesn't stop to find out. He crosses out the door to find a giddy FEMALE CLIENT with a double stroller, leaving Julia to chase after him.

FEMALE CLIENT

Dr. Bechley! So sorry to bother you, I just had to... I made you for this. As a thank you. For giving me my miracles.

She hands him a large, chunky hand-knit sweater which he accepts with convincing delight.

LEON

Wonderful!

(to Julia, in code:)

Put this somewhere special for me?

JULIA

Of course. But Dad--

LEON

And you got my tux cleaned? For the ceremony?

JULIA

It was delivered to your house. Dad, I really need to talk. It's important.

LEON

And you got the menu sorted out, for the party tomorrow night?

JULIA

I did, but--

LEON

Great. You're the best.

4

CONTINUED:

4

ISAAC

Dr. Bechley? Ready when you are.

As Leon turns away from her, Julia loses patience:

JULIA

Dad! I need to talk to you!

LEON

Julia. I have patients waiting.

As she watches him walks away, Julia takes a beat, feeling defeated, before she does what she always does to feel better: she takes out her phone, seeking comfort in the familiar act of swiping left and right...

JULIA (PRE-LAP)

I got into medical school!

5

INT. BAR - THAT NIGHT

5

We CATCH UP with Julia in a bar, halfway through a tequila and soda, wildly over-sharing with a date.

JULIA

...And I was finally going to tell him that I was leaving, going to pursue my own career in medicine and not just, getting his lab coats pressed the way he likes, but... he has this way of making me feel like... both essential and worthless at the same time? And it's not like it's all awful. Working for him. He's kind of the best in the world... Have you heard of the Lasker prize? The ceremony's tonight, it's kind of like the Golden Globes of Medicine, only with way less attractive people there... I'm sorry. What did you ask me again?

REVERSE to reveal, her date: SAM. On a scale of 1 to 10 he's about a 14. And right now, he looks a little bored.

SAM

I asked what you do. But I didn't expect such a whole... story.

JULIA

Sorry. I talk a lot when I'm nervous and I'm very nervous 'cause you're insanely good looking! You're the hottest guy I've matched with and I do this a LOT.

(MORE)

5 CONTINUED:

5

JULIA (CONT'D)

I mean, not a lot a lot? Just, normal a lot? Ever since my mom died, I'm with my dad all the time, and that just doesn't leave a lot of room in my life for love...

(off Sam, wincing)

I just said the word "Love." On a Tinder date. I really suck at small talk. Can I be honest with you, Sam? I have about an hour before I have to be at this thing, and I just really need to feel something other than... bad about myself. So, I'd really like to have sex. Preferably, with you. How does that sound?

And off Sam, taken aback by the boldness of this, we...

SMASH TO:

6 INT. MIDTOWN BAR - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

6

Julia and Sam furiously go at it. It's hungry, passionate and very alive, and on Julia's face, we read: the release she was seeking. A total surrender to pleasure...

CUT TO:

7 INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

7

EDIE, eyes closed, as tense and uncomfortable in her body as can be. We hear the gentle voice of a THERAPIST:

THERAPIST

... bring your awareness to the tips of your fingers, so full of erotic charge...

We WIDEN to reveal her husband TIM cross-legged opposite her in a room full of EARNEST COUPLES in an intimacy workshop. A therapist weaves through, encouraging:

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

And now I invite all the women to take that erotic energy and vocalize it.

Women in the class make SOUNDS: ooh's, ahhhh's. Intimate. Intense. And for Edie, hugely embarrassing. We watch her open one eye to peek around the room. Is everyone else doing this? Then, caught by the therapist, she closes her eyes and lightly hums...

THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Surrender, release...

7

CONTINUED:

7

As the howling and moaning build, so does Edie's discomfort. There is just no way. Eager to escape, she begins to cough. Tim opens his eyes, concerned.

EDIE

I need water. Excuse me!

As Edie rushes out, Tim follows...

8

INT. YOGA STUDIO - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

8

We catch up with Edie and Tim in the hallway.

TIM

You're miserable, aren't you? This was a terrible idea.

EDIE

No! I love that you signed us up for this. It's just a little... outside my comfort zone.

TIM

I know. Mine too! But I thought it might help us. Relight the... you know.

EDIE

The... what?

TIM

The spark. Between us. I feel like, you never want to have sex anymore.

EDIE

You want to have sex? I will have sex right now. I'll call us an Uber. We can go straight home and do it.

She lifts her phone, he stops her.

TIM

I don't want you to prove it to me. I want you to... want to. Lately, it feels like every time we do... it's a chore.

He's careful. But this lands with the thud of truth. Edie reaches up and does something she does when she's nervous: she *taps her teeth with her fingernail*.

EDIE

Work's just been really stressful... and it's hard for me sometimes. To just, get out of my head.

TIM

I know, that's why I thought this might... help. It was dumb. Let's just get brunch. We still have fifteen minutes before they stop serving that grain bowl you like at Frankie's--

EDIE

I do love that grain bowl. But believe it or not, I love you more. We're going back in there.

TIM

It's okay. You don't have to--

EDIE

I want to! And guess what, I am going to moan louder than any of those bitches.

TIM

You do like to win.

EDIE

You know I do.

He gives a grateful smile. There's so much love here, so much desire to get over this bump in the road...

OFF a sign reading "Sports Legends of Yesteryear" we REVEAL a room filled with faded sports figures: an ELDERLY FORMER BASEBALL PLAYER slumped in a wheelchair, an OVERWEIGHT FORMER FOOTBALL PLAYER, belly bulging under a jersey, and: ROXY, 30, a compact spark plug of a woman. A permanent chip on her shoulder. Currently flanked by two young female FANS, posing for a photo. SNAP. Then:

ROXY

Remember, train hard, but have fun, too!

YOUNG FANS

Thank you! We will!

Roxy watches her parent/managers, DIANE and RON, accept a cash payment from the two fans. Diane approaches Roxy.

DIANE

Remember not to block the Beast energy drink logo. It has to be in every shot.

Diane gestures to a poster with a *hideous* logo on it.

ROXY

Can't believe you have me pushing this off brand crap. I was on a WHEATIES box!

DIANE

That was a long time ago, dear.

RON

(gently)

It's just another hour. Then we can get ice cream.

ROXY

Ice cream? I'm 30, dad.

RON

(embarrassed)

I still like ice cream. And I'm 60.

DIANE

Honey. We'd love to get our reputation back to a place where premium brands want to do business with us. But right now, we have to take what we can get.

Roxy wants to protest, but she knows she can't. Instead, she heads back to her spot as a CREEPY GUY walks up.

CREEPY GUY

Can I get a pic?

Roxy stands with him in front of the Beast poster, a comfortable distance away. But he creeps closer, and closer, and as he holds up his selfie stick, he slides his hands from her waist, down to her butt...

CREEPY GUY (CONT'D)

Smile!

But Roxy isn't smiling. She's furious. She reaches behind her, grabs his hand, and twists it behind him.

CREEPY GUY (CONT'D)

Ow, let go, you psycho!

ROXY

Oh, I'm the psycho? I'm the psycho?

Ron and Diane cross over, trying to de-escalate.

DIANE

What's going on?

ROXY

That perv just grabbed my ass, that's what's going on.

RON

Sir, you should go.

CREEPY GUY

Fine. Not worth fifty bucks anyway.
You're way past your expiration date.

And with that, Roxy FLIES at the creepy guy with surprising strength, taking him to the ground. This creep, twice her size, is getting pummeled. Ron tries to pull her off as Diane looks around with horror to see: A dozen cellphones recording Roxy's outburst in HD video, the Beast logo in every shot, another gig lost...

Julia, energized by her casual encounter, bikes up to the elegant greek columns of Gotham Hall and hops off to lock her bike. Looking into the grimy little bike mirror, she's... a mess. She does what she can with lipstick, but when she digs into her saddle bag, she's frantic:

JULIA

Pleasepleasepleaseplease... NO!

She pulls out only ONE HIGH HEEL. Disaster. She looks down at her cycling cleats with a weary sigh...

Julia strains to hold her head up as she goes LOUDLY CLICKING down a marble hallway. Elegantly dressed people turn and stare-- a different walk of shame than she's used to! Julia approaches a check-in table.

JULIA

Julia Bechley?

ATTENDANT

Not finding you. Would it be under something else? A married name perhaps?

JULIA

Not married! I still should be on there.

ATTENDANT

Ah yes. Here we go. "Dr. Bechley Guest."

He hands her a place card reading "Dr. Bechley Guest."
Julia takes this in, humiliated, as Isaac approaches.

ISAAC

Julia! You look nice. New shoes? This is exciting. I think I saw Dr. Sanjay Gupta!

Julia rolls her eyes. She has no time for Isaac.

JULIA

Where is my dad?

ISAAC

Some reporter is all over him. What table are you at? I'm at 47. Is that a bad one?

JULIA

Most likely.

Julia crosses over to where a reporter is ambushing Leon.

REPORTER

It will only take a minute of your time--

LEON

Not now. Please. Julia? A little help?

Julia steps between Leon and the reporter, protective.

JULIA

I'm Julia Bechley, communications director of the Institute. We'd be happy to set up an interview at another time--

But the reporter goes in for the kill.

REPORTER

Sir, there are allegations that you used your own sperm to impregnate women patients in your practice without their knowledge or consent. Is that true?

JULIA

I'm sorry, you can't just walk in here and say crazy things to my dad. You'll have to go.

REPORTER

We're running a story tonight. We'd love to give you a chance to comment.

JULIA

My father is an esteemed physician about to receive the highest honor in his field, so if you think you can just--

LEON

Jules. Stop.

Julia looks at her father, a feeling of dread rising. His hand starts to tremble, his drink beginning to spill...

LEON (CONT'D)

I need a chance, to explain. If I just have a chance to tell you what happened, it will all... make sense.

Short of breath, Leon clutches his chest.

JULIA

What are you talking about? What will make sense? Dad? Are you okay? Dad!

Leon's knees buckle, and his body slumps to floor, his glass shattering after him. The crowd around him gasps.

REPORTER

Is there a doctor here?

Everyone is a doctor here. As they stampede to help...

CLOSE on Julia at her father's hospital bedside, where he lies intubated and unconscious. We are in her jumbled POV after a stressful and sleepless night of keeping watch... the doctor's words going in and out...

DOCTOR

We were able to repair... in a major artery... placement of a stent... a long road... significant therapy... full recovery... any other family?

A pre-occupied Julia turns to address the doctor.

JULIA

Excuse me?

DOCTOR

Is there any other family who can relieve you? Do you have any siblings?

JULIA

No. It's just Dad and me.

Julia looks up at the TV and sees JIM HORNER, the reporter, over a chyron reading: "Esteemed doctor charged with using clinic to father own children."

JULIA (CONT'D)

That's what I've thought my whole life.

She picks up her phone to see: 27 calls. 75 texts. A wave of dread as she contemplates this massive shitstorm heading straight toward her. She turns to Leon, peacefully sleeping, blissfully unaware, and lashes out:

JULIA (CONT'D)

What the hell did you do?

And as she turns up the TV, her dread mounting...

HORNER

Anonymous sources who were patients of the Bechley clinic were independently tested, and had astonishing results...

WE STAY WITH THE TELEVISION and MATCH TO:

THAT SAME REPORT now on a TV in a courtroom hallway as Edie and Tim cross in to find AMANDA, the DA, waiting. She's young, gender-fluid and self-assured, (think Cara Delevingne.) She throws Edie a provocative look.

AMANDA

Morning, counselors. Good luck in there.

As she crosses inside, Edie turns to Tim.

EDIE

Who does she think she is? With her hipster glasses. And her, "I'm too cool for a briefcase!" You're a prosecutor, not a DJ at a nightclub.

TIM

Amanda McAvoy really gets under your skin, doesn't she?

EDIE

I just don't like her attitude. I mean, "good luck?" What does she mean by that? I don't need "luck." I have hard work, and preparation--

TIM

Babe. Have you seen this?

Tim interrupts her and points to the TV screen, where Edie sees: a picture of Leon Bechley, and the damning chyron: "Celebrated fertility doctor accused." Off a wide-eyed Edie, taking this in...

A grim suburban tableau: Roxy drinks coffee and scrolls through Instagram, assessing the damage from her outburst. Diane cooks eggs and Ron watches the news:

REPORTER

Imagine finding out that the whole story of how you came to be is a lie? For patients of the Bechley clinic, that's exactly what's happened...

ROXY

The Bechley clinic? Isn't that where--

SMASH! Diane drops a plate of eggs. A huge mess.

REPORTER

This is only the beginning. If you or anyone you know may be affected, please reach out using the hashtag Bechleybaby. We want to hear your story.

Roxy looks at the TV, a light shining in her eyes...

Julia cycles up to the institute horrified to see... a SCRUM of REPORTERS pouncing on a helpless-looking Isaac.

REPORTER

Were you aware of Dr. Bechley's misconduct? Were you a part of it? How many Bechley babies are there?

As one of the reporters turns and spots her, a spooked Julia cycles around to the alley to escape...

16

INT. BECHLEY INSTITUTE - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 16

The anxious staff is gathered around the table airing their concerns as a worse-for-the-wear Julia paces.

OLDER NURSE

And the comments, on our website? It's scary. People are making death threats...

YOUNGER NURSE

Patients are calling... frightened... hysterical, what are we supposed to say?

Heads are turning to Julia, wanting answers. But she can only pace, shaking her head in disbelief. MICHAEL YOO, the in-house attorney, weighs in.

MICHAEL

You tell them you can't comment on these allegations, but you can give them a referral--

ISAAC

These are my patients too. People I've treated for years. I owe them more than that.

MICHAEL

Do you want to further implicate the institute? And yourself?

ISAAC

That's a bunch of lawyer crap.

MICHAEL

Well, "lawyer crap" happens to be my job! That Dr. Bechley hired me to do.

ISAAC

Well Dr. Bechley isn't here, is he?

ANGLE on the empty chair at the head of the table. Michael turns to Julia who is scrolling on her phone...

MICHAEL

Are we... boring you?

JULIA

I'm looking at social media. Did you know there's a Bechleybabies hashtag trending? People are comparing stories, sharing information. They're talking. And what they're saying is not pretty.

MICHAEL

That doesn't mean we participate. And expose ourselves to liability...

JULIA

We're already exposed! Thanks to Dad, our pants are around our ankles! We can either hide out, or we can get ahead of it. Try to take control of the story.

MICHAEL

How do you suggest we do that?

JULIA

Jen? Did we already cancel the venue for Dad's party tomorrow night?

JEN

Yes. I figured we weren't... celebrating.

JULIA

Let's uncancel it. And invite all our patients instead. Past and present. Anyone who thinks they might be affected. We'll have a Bechley Babies party.

ISAAC

We're not seriously throwing a party...

MICHAEL

That's.... insane. How little sleep did you get last night?

JULIA

We'll call it... an informational gathering. A chance to answer questions, address concerns. But we will have gift bags... with DNA tests!

ISAAC

Julia, I'm concerned. Are you... barefoot?

JULIA

Yes, Isaac. I am.

And off Julia, plopping into her father's chair at the head of the table, opening her laptop, and taking charge of the situation, in her own way, it's the...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

17 INT. ICU - DAY

17

Julia steadies herself to head into the room, and finds her dad's bed is... empty. What the hell?

JULIA

Oh my God. Where is he? Where is my dad?

Sure that her father is dead, she panics, shouting:

JULIA (CONT'D)

Will somebody please tell me where the hell my father is?

A nurse approaches.

NURSE

He's not here anymore.

JULIA

Oh my God.

NURSE

Honey, relax. He didn't die. He woke up and got transferred out of ICU.

A huge sigh of relief from Julia.

JULIA

Oh thank God.

NURSE

He's fine. Your sister's with him.

JULIA

I don't have a sister.
(then, realizing)
Oh God...

And now her relief is replaced by concern...

18 INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

18

Julia rushes in to see her father sitting up in bed.

JULIA

Dad! You're okay. I didn't know they moved you...

ROXY

Oh my God, you must be Julia.

Roxy, sitting next to Leon, crosses over to give Julia a big hug, but Julia's arms stay glued to her sides.

JULIA

So many questions. Beginning with, who are you?

LEON

That's Roxy Karibas.

JULIA

Wait. That... gymnast? Who got caught with pot at the airport?

ROXY

That was a big misunderstanding.

(beat)

It turns out my parents were Bechley patients. Which makes you and me...

(tearing up)

Sisters.

JULIA

We're not there quite yet--

ROXY

Mind if I get a selfie? For social meeds?

JULIA

Yes. I mean, no. I mean, I mind. Very much. You can't be here right now.

ROXY

They said it was all right. Since I was... family.

JULIA

We don't actually know that yet. Until we get some proof.

ROXY

I don't need proof. As soon as I looked into his eyes, I knew he was my dad. All my life, it felt like something was off. Like I didn't really fit. And now...

She looks into Leon's eyes, getting emotional.

LEON

You should get to know Roxy, Jules. She's been sitting with me for a bit. She's a remarkable young woman.

Julia winces at this, her patience tested...

JULIA

Dad, I don't think now is the time to be making friends. You're on a lot of medications, you're in a fragile state.

ROXY

(with sincerity)

Oh, are you a doctor as well?

LEON

Don't get Julia started on that. It's a touchy subject for her.

ROXY

Is it? I'm sorry. If you want to talk...

And, that's it. Julia's done. She snaps, harsh:

JULIA

No, I don't.

ROXY

(wounded)

Okay. Guess I jumped the gun. I will give you two some privacy. We have plenty of time for catching up. Forever, actually. Sure we can't just get a quick selfie?

(off Julia's stern look)

No. Okay. Got it. I'll go.

As Roxy crosses out, Julia turns to her dad.

LEON

She's an Olympian. You know, I qualified for the Olympics. In rowing. Have I ever told you about that?

JULIA

Yes. Many times. I thought I knew everything about you. But now I'm thinking... I have no idea who you are. These things they're saying, Dad. They can't be true. Can they? Please.

She looks him in the eyes for the first time since this happened, accusing. But he looks away, avoiding:

LEON

Can you get me some water? I'm a little thirsty. And they've got me all...

(indicating lines and tubes)

One of these nurses must have stuck me ten times before she found a vein.

Amateur hour, I'm telling you--

Julia gets back in his face, not letting up:

JULIA

Dad. Can you please listen to me, for once? I need some answers. I need you to--

And with that, the lion awakens, and he cuts her off--

LEON

I had my chest sawed open this morning! I almost died. And now you want to give me the third degree? I just want some water. Is that too much to ask?

And off Julia, unable to stop herself from complying, the questions will have to wait...

A slice of another era, with very few patrons. Swanning through it, grooving to an old jazz record, is GENEVIEVE, a woman with the same throw-back vibe of this place. She's as surprised as we are to see Edie walk in.

GENEVIEVE

To what do I owe the pleasure of seeing my beautiful daughter today?

EDIE

I've been calling you. And texting you.

GENEVIEVE

So sorry, honey. I'm bad about that. Can I get you anything? Tea?

EDIE

I don't want tea, mom. I need some answers. Can you... that smoke is so thick. It's giving me a headache.

GENEVIEVE

It's sage. My landlord was here earlier. I don't know how long I can hold on to this place. Can you write him a letter?

EDIE

I can't get involved in your landlord disputes anymore. I'm sorry. Mom, I was calling because there's an allegation of misconduct against the Bechley Institute.

Genevieve stops. Her expression changes.

GENEVIEVE

About Leon? What are they saying?

EDIE

That he may have used his sperm with some of his patients, without their consent. It's all over the news, and--
(off her mom's expression)
You don't seem, surprised.

GENEVIEVE

I'm not.

EDIE

I don't understand.

Genevieve takes a deep breath. Where to begin?

GENEVIEVE

I wanted a baby. On my own. I couldn't afford much, so my old friend Sarah... she said her husband would help.

EDIE

Mom, I know that part. But, you told me my dad was a number in a book. A stranger you picked for his creative answers to the questionnaire...

GENEVIEVE

That's what I thought. But over the years... these qualities emerged in you that looked so, familiar. That cloak of ambition you throw over yourself, hiding who you really are. Classic Leon.

EDIE

You are unbelievable. If you knew this--

GENEVIEVE

I only suspected.

EDIE

Why didn't you share it with me? I've been chasing this, absence all my life.
(MORE)

19

CONTINUED:

EDIE (CONT'D)

So many things in me that had no answers... why are you LIKE THIS?

She's yelling at her mother now, livid.

GENEVIEVE

That too. The anger. He has that.

EDIE

I have every right to be angry! You suspected this, and you kept this from me! Julia's father? Leon Bechley? We had... I grew up with them! You dragged me to their house all the time. We celebrated holidays with them!

GENEVIEVE

They had a nice house! I could never get it together for holidays--

EDIE

And now, he could be... I can't stand him! Pompous, acting like the smartest guy in the world. Total egomaniac.

(off her mother's look)

Oh don't even, if you're suggesting...

GENEVIEVE

I didn't say anything.

EDIE

You don't have to. That is NOT me.

GENEVIEVE

Darling. Sweetheart. Look at me. I'm your mother. I carried you, I cared for you, I gave you everything. That's what matters. Not whatever ended up in some test tube.

EDIE

It's so like you to dismiss this.

GENEVIEVE

I am trying to tell you how much I love you. But you don't hear it. It's always been so hard for you... to take in love. You're broken in that way.

On Edie, deeply hurt by this.

EDIE

Broken? So now I'm... broken?

19 CONTINUED:

GENEVIEVE

And what's wrong with that? I wish you'd understand that our brokenness is what makes us human. You're so eager to seem perfect. The way you stay in that marriage, even though it's such a strain, because you're so afraid to fail...

EDIE

My marriage is none of your business! I should have known... this was a mistake.

Edie leaves her mother, furious...

20 INT. EVENT SPACE - DAY

20

A party room decorated tastefully: flowers, appetizers, and a well-stocked bar. Julia is looking around to put the finishing touches on it, when she sees: a "CONGRATULATIONS DR. BECHLEY" banner she missed.

JULIA

We're gonna need that removed, please?

A BUSBOY complies, reaching up to tear it down as Julia turns to the Institute staff for a pre-party pep talk:

JULIA (CONT'D)

When former clients arrive, we need to do our best to reassure them, we're doing everything we can to get to the bottom of this. We want them to feel heard--

ISAAC

But most of all, we want their DNA. So, make sure everyone gets a kit, and fills out a waiver. We're also requiring people to valet their cell phones. No social media, no press. Very important.

JULIA

But not as important as listening--

ISAAC

It is as important. Much more, actually.

JULIA

Can you let me have the last word for once?

(then, deep breath)

Fine. Okay. Time to open those doors.

ISAAC

You sure you're ready for this?

JULIA

Not at all. I feel like a contestant on some sadistic game show... but what the hell choice do I have?

She grabs a glass of white wine and takes a big gulp of it, as she watches people enter in a MONTAGE:

--A COUPLE, in their late twenties. STRESSED.

--A SINGLE WOMAN in a short dress, high heels. ANXIOUS.

--A GUY IN A MAGA HAT. ANGRY.

IN JULIA'S POV, WE GO CLOSE on their features: Wringing hands. Narrowed eyes. She's searching these angry, perplexed faces for signs of familiarity. Can this collection of total strangers really be... her family?

WE PICK UP with Julia receiving an earful from a DISTRAUGHT WOMAN, when she spots: EDIE entering. Armored in a sharp grey blazer. Looking around. Purposeful. Julia excuses herself and crosses to Isaac.

JULIA (CONT'D)

What is SHE doing here?

(indicating)

Edie Flanagan. Only one of the worst people ever. The most arrogant, competitive... I bet she's here to sue us! She's some high-powered lawyer now.

ISAAC

That's the last thing we need.

Julia takes a heavy pour of wine.

JULIA

Or maybe she just came here to gloat.

Julia's POV: Tim enters. Julia's heart jumps. She takes a sip of wine and adjusts her hair, self-conscious.

ISAAC

Gloat. About what?

JULIA

About winning.

Julia's eyes stay on Tim as he spots Edie and crosses over to her, taking her hand, claiming her as his. Isaac looks at Julia, aware that something is going on here...

ISAAC

Maybe I should handle this?

JULIA

No, I got it.

Julia crosses over to Edie and Tim at the check-in table.

EDIE

Julia.

JULIA

Edie. Look, if you came here to sue us--

EDIE

I don't sue people. I'm a criminal defense attorney. It's a completely different field actually.

JULIA

I get it. You're smarter than me.

Tim tries to diffuse the tension.

TIM

Julia, it's nice to see you again. How are you doing?

Tim's concern is genuine, and Julia responds in kind.

JULIA

Been a little bit of a rough week. You may have heard. Dad almost died, and now I might have a couple dozen siblings I never knew about...

EDIE

Yeah, me too.

(off Julia's shock)

Remember my mom wasn't just a friend... she was a client. So now, I'm here.

As Julia processes this, Edie looks around, critical.

EDIE (CONT'D)

I have to say, Julia... why all this? You couldn't just have private meetings? You have to throw a party? With gift bags?

JULIA

I didn't choose any of this. I'm doing the best I can, in a terrible situation.

TIM

I think you're doing just fine. And I'm sorry about... all this.

Julia smiles, grateful for Tim's support. Edie clocks this connection between them, displeased, when there's a commotion at the door as Roxy enters, recording herself with a selfie stick:

ROXY

...so, I'm now entering the space, and I'm having ALL the feels. Nervous. Excited. Who will these people I share DNA with turn out to be? What secret special bonds will we share?

EDIE

Who is that?

JULIA

You know. She's that washed-up former gymnast always getting in trouble...

TIM

The one in the video, punching the TSA guy who confiscates her marijuana?

JULIA

That's the one.

EDIE

I'll handle it.

(crossing to Roxy)

You need to turn that off. Now.

ROXY

I have a right to express myself? It's called freedom of speech? It's in the constitution. Google it.

EDIE

I don't need to "Google it." I studied it in law school. The first amendment has no bearing in this context, where attendees have a reasonable expectation of privacy.

ROXY

Well, you have a reasonable expectation of having this stick shoved up your ass!

Heads are turning. This is getting good. Tim intervenes.

TIM

Let's take a beat, cool down...

ROXY

Tell this bitch to cool down! She's the one who can't mind her own business.

EDIE

You're one of those people who thinks the rules don't apply to them, aren't you?

ROXY

Don't talk to me like I'm a child!

EDIE

Then don't act like one.

ROXY

You want to go? Cause I will go now.

JULIA

(stepping in)

Stop it! No one is gonna "go."

ROXY

She started it.

EDIE

This was initiated by her.

The three women face off. A nervous Roxy lifts her hand and starts TAPPING AT HER TEETH. Isaac spots it, excited.

ISAAC

See that... tooth tapping? Julia does that. All the time.

JULIA

I don't do that.

ISAAC

Whenever you're nervous. You do.

TIM

So does Edie. All the time.

EDIE

No, I don't.

TIM

You're probably not aware of it, but trust me--

ISAAC

Could be a shared genetic trait.

The three sisters look at each other, a feeling of uncanniness circling among them, uniting them. Roxy's hostility suddenly fades, replaced by a smile.

ROXY

Well, I don't know about you guys... but I think that's pretty cool. What do you say we get a sister selfie? Huh?

JULIA

Oh for the love of--

EDIE

Put the phone away!

As Roxy finally surrenders her cell phone, Julia turns to see: SAM. Her Tinder date. (With an attractive WOMAN.)

SAM

Uh, hello.

JULIA

Sam? What are you doing here?

Sam quickly introduces the woman he's with.

SAM

I'm here with my wife, Kim.

Julia takes this in. He has a wife?

JULIA

Your wife. Of course. I'm Julia.

KIM

Hi. How do you two know each other?

SAM

We have mutual friends.

JULIA

Right. Mutual friends. So, back to the, what are you doing here question...

(to Kim, optimistic:)

Were your parents patients at the clinic?

KIM

No, Sam's. It's a crazy story. He didn't know he was an IVF baby. His mom never told him. Shame or stigma, I guess?

20

CONTINUED:

SAM

She saw the reports on TV, and she told me, so I figured, I might as well find out if I'm one of these Bechley Babies.

JULIA

So, here you are.

As Julia begins to take this in, her eyes widening...

KIM

So, Julia. You work at the Bechley clinic? Are you a doctor?

JULIA

No, I'm an administrator. And I'm also a Bechley. Leon Bechley. Is my dad.

SAM

So you're a--

JULIA

Bechley baby, too. The original.

As Sam and Julia simultaneously process the implications of this, Julia's spirit begins to crumble as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

21

INT. EVENT SPACE - LATER

21

The room has filled with significantly more people. And Julia has filled with significantly more wine. As she heads to the mic, shakily pulling out her speech, Isaac tries to intercept her.

ISAAC

Are you sure you don't want me to...

JULIA

Back off, dude. I got this.

(then,)

"Hello. I'm Julia Bechley. I'm here in my dual capacity as the communications director of the Institute and as Dr. Bechley's daughter... and I want to welcome you all to this unusual gathering. I can't yet say much about the specifics of what brought us together, but I can say this: I hope the outcome can be positive.

(MORE)

JULIA (CONT'D)

That we can become, however
unconventional, a new kind of family."

(then, drunkenly)

Thanks you. I mean, thanks. You. All.

She's about to hand the microphone to Isaac, who is eager
to contain the damage, when she stops, reconsiders...

JULIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I wrote that speech last
night. And now, it sounds like complete
and utter bullshit!

ANGLE on a worried Isaac, where is she going with this?

JULIA (CONT'D)

"In my dual capacity?" Who am I kidding?
The truth is, I've been a glorified
secretary to my dad most of my adult
life. And just when I was about to crawl
out of his big old shadow... to finally
pursue my own dream... he drops this
genetic bomb. And guess who has to stick
around and clean it up?

Isaac tries to take the mic, but she resists him.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Nope. Not done here.

(then)

So I don't blame any of you for being
angry. I'm angry too. I was doing a
halfway decent job holding it together
until I found out that the bitch who
stole my boyfriend might be my sister...

We ANGLE on Edie, mortified.

JULIA (CONT'D)

And then, get this... I find out I may
have accidentally slept with my brother!

We ANGLE ON: an even more mortified Sam and Kim. And off
the crowd absorbing Julia's bombshell, it's the...

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

22

INT. TIM AND EDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

22

We are with TIM, asleep, when a loud NOISE wakes him. Worried, he looks over to see... an empty space where Edie sleeps. He heads into the living room where he finds a manic EDIE removing books from the shelves.

TIM

Jesus. I thought we had a break in.

EDIE

I couldn't sleep. It's a mess in here. You know, this used to be organized. I had a whole alphabetical system. And now it's like, chaos. I can't live like this!

Tim crosses over. He's seen her in this state before.

TIM

Okay, do you think maybe this isn't about the books? Maybe it's about... tonight?

Edie shrugs. They both know he's right. But she's not ready to acknowledge it.

EDIE

Mom used wake me up in the middle of the night when I was a kid and take me on these walks. She wanted me to experience the "shadow city." We'd walk through Washington Square Park at three in the morning, in my pajamas, stepping over needles... did I ever tell you this?

TIM

No. You never talk about your childhood. I love it. Tell me more.

EDIE

Then the next day at school I'd fall asleep in class and everyone would make fun of me. It was hard enough being the half black girl who got avocado sandwiches for lunch. I used to fantasize... never mind. It's so stupid.

But Tim is eating up this rare confessional from Edie...

TIM

Keep going.

EDIE

About my father. Who he'd turn out to be. In my head, he was a classical musician. Who lived in Europe. And one day, he would come back and take me there to live with him. Anyway, now I don't get to fantasize anymore. My dad is this ego driven jerk who I've known my whole life! And to top it off, I've got a bunch of loser sisters and brothers... Julia and that Roxy are probably the least psycho of the bunch! You know they're all gonna have DUIs they want me to clear--

TIM

Hey. What if... and I know you might not want to hear this... but what if this is a good thing. A chance to let your childhood father fantasy go?

EDIE

(getting emotional)
I don't want to let it go.

He reaches out to comfort her, but she flinches.

EDIE (CONT'D)

Don't.

Tim pulls away, frustrated.

TIM

I feel like whatever I say... whatever I do... it's wrong.

(beat)

I love you. But I'm going back to bed.

As Tim crosses out...

EDIE

I love you, too.

But he's already gone. She's alone.

OFF a living room shrine to Roxy's Olympic career: medals, trophies, pictures, we TILT DOWN to find Roxy on the couch, getting lectured by her parents.

DIANE

We begged you not to stir this up. There is nothing to be gained--

RON

It's nonsense! There is no way you're--

ROXY

Then where does it all come from? Huh? You guys aren't athletes. You guys can't do anything. I mean, look at you!

RON

(hurt)

My brother was a national champion.

ROXY

In bowling! A sport you can do holding a beer.

RON

You don't have to be nasty.

ROXY

Dr. Bechley was a champion rower at Harvard. He's a world class physician. Don't you see? It just makes sense.

Ron retreats, stung by this.

DIANE

Dear. You sound... like you've been overusing your meds again. And we know how dangerous that can be--

ROXY

Everything I take is prescribed by doctors. Doctors you took me to for my injuries! And my... everything.

DIANE

Honey, we already lost the Beast energy drink contract. We don't need anymore trouble. If you don't listen to us, let us protect you...

ROXY

You don't protect me. You shelter me. There's a difference! You're just trying to change the subject, so you don't have to admit that I might be someone else's daughter and not yours.

(then)

(MORE)

ROXY (CONT'D)

My video from the Bechley party already has thirty thousand likes. People are getting it. They're supporting me.

Diane just shakes her head. It's so hard to get through.

DIANE

No matter how many Instagram followers you get, there's never going to be anyone who... really cares about you.

(beat)

Except your father and me. We're your family. No matter what.

This lands for Roxy. Ron and Diane look at each other, seeing an opening, and treading carefully--

RON

We want to get you some help. There's a clinic we looked at. Real nice place--

DIANE

If you can do thirty days there, the Beast folks will reconsider our contract--

ROXY

I AM NOT A DRUG ADDICT! Just because I get angry when people mess with me-- AGH!

(shouting, standing)

You guys are proving my point! You don't understand me. You never will.

Roxy tries to dramatically storm off, but as we FOLLOW HER into her bedroom, we see how trapped she is. A grown woman, in her childhood bedroom, feeling so alone...

Julia walks into the clinic to discover GLOVED INVESTIGATORS carrying computers and boxes of files out of her father's office.

JULIA

What's going on here? You can't just take things out of here! Hey. Stop.

Julia bars the door. An INVESTIGATOR holds up a card.

INVESTIGATOR

Here's who I am. And here's our warrant to confiscate items related to the investigation of the Bechley case.

(MORE)

24

CONTINUED:

24

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

You want to get out of my way? Or do I need to have you arrested?

JULIA

(stepping aside)

Can you not, break things, at least?

She grabs the chunky sweater from the other day and hugs it to her chest for comfort as she crosses into the waiting room to find Michael and Isaac huddled.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Michael, do something!

MICHAEL

This is outside my purview. You need a defense attorney. Somebody confident, aggressive... you need a real asshole. I can give you a referral.

JULIA

I don't think that's necessary.

Off Julia, knowing what she has to do...

25

INT. MULEIN AND SUGGS LAW FIRM - DAY

25

Julia pushes her bicycle into the sleek foyer of Edie and Tim's law firm. With her dirty bike and unruly hair, looks distinctly out of place.

RECEPTIONIST

You can leave packages with security on the main floor.

Julia laughs, realizing:

JULIA

I'm not a bike messenger. I'm here to see Edie Flanagan?

RECEPTIONIST

And you are?

JULIA

A potential client. Also, a potential sister.

And OFF a confused receptionist, lifting the phone...

26 INT. MULEIN AND SUGGS LAW FIRM - EDIE'S OFFICE - LATER 26

Julia sits in Edie's office with Edie and Tim. Edie is not pleased.

EDIE

Julia, you can't just stop by here. We have very busy schedules.

TIM

We're actually pretty light today.

Edie shoots him a look. Really?

JULIA

I'm sorry to barge in, but... I need a lawyer. For my dad.

(to Edie)

Our dad, possibly.

EDIE

That remains to be seen.

TIM

What's going on?

JULIA

Well, these investigators just came to the clinic and started grabbing files and yanking computers out of walls...

TIM

(concerned)

You didn't say anything to them, did you? You don't have to answer any questions without an attorney present--

JULIA

I didn't. But God, it was so... shocking. Having them barge in and rip Dad's office apart. Like he's a... criminal.

EDIE

(can't help herself)

He is one.

Tim looks at Edie sharply as Julia gets emotional, starting to break down. Tim hands Julia a box of Kleenex, brushing his hands against hers as he does. Edie clocks this bit of intimacy, annoyed.

TIM

I'm sorry. The process is terribly violating.

JULIA

That's exactly what it felt like. Just, so violating...

TIM

But there's no guarantee that what they find will result in criminal charges. It's important to take a deep breath. One step at a time--

JULIA

Okay, that's really comforting. See? I knew you'd make me feel better--

Unable to take it anymore, Edie steps in.

EDIE

Julia, I'm sorry, but taking your case... is going to be a no for us. There's ethical issues involved, and it's just too complicated. So, if you don't mind. I have a lunch to get to.

Edie stands, and Tim reluctantly joins her. After an awkward beat, Julia gets to her feet.

JULIA

Okay. Got it. Well, I'm sorry.

(then)

Edie, if this is about what I said, at the party, I feel really bad about--

EDIE

It isn't.

JULIA

I was pretty out of it, and I don't remember exactly what I said, but I'm pretty sure it was horrible, and I owe you--

EDIE

It's fine. Please, don't mention it. Again.

Tim senses trouble here and intervenes.

TIM

Julia, why don't I see you out?

26

CONTINUED:

26

And as Tim walks Julia to the door, we stay with Edie...

27

INT. ODEON RESTAURANT - DAY

27

At a downtown restaurant full of power lunchers, Edie sits across from Amanda.

AMANDA

Not that I'm keeping score or anything, but I asked you to lunch when I started this gig about... six months ago. Took you a minute to respond.

EDIE

Yeah, I've just been crazed. Sorry about that. You'll have to let me buy the salads.

AMANDA

Okay. But, uh, I don't really do salads.

The waiter crosses over with Edie's salad, and Amanda's burger and fries.

EDIE

So I see.

AMANDA

Actually, I was a vegetarian for a few years. Ethical reasons.

EDIE

And then, what happened? Decided ethics were overrated?

Amanda smiles. Finally, Edie lets her guard down. She likes it.

AMANDA

No. I just got hungry. And salads weren't doing it for me.

Amanda takes a lusty bite of her hamburger as Edie watches, impressed. Then, switching gears...

EDIE

Are you, uh, involved in this Bechley case at all?

AMANDA

Ah. So this isn't just a friendly lunch. Why? Are you fishing for something?

EDIE

No. Just curious.

AMANDA

I can't comment on anything ongoing.
(then, facetious)
That costs a lot more than a hamburger.

EDIE

So you are pursuing something?

AMANDA

We're getting pressured to. There's a lot of attention on this guy. Looks like he perpetrated a pretty large scale fraud over the years. Can't say more than that.

EDIE

I get it. Not trying to get you to betray your team.

AMANDA

You sure we're not on the same team?

Edie is taken aback by the implication of this.

EDIE

Sorry? What's that supposed to mean?

AMANDA

Careful. You're gonna spill your iced tea.

EDIE

You know I'm married to Tim, right?

AMANDA

I didn't know that. You two don't act much like a couple.

EDIE

Well, we act like professionals. At work.

AMANDA

Okay. My bad. I read it wrong.

As Edie flushes with embarrassment...

Julia is at a more alert Leon's bedside, filling him in.

LEON

You let them in my office. They were taking my things?

JULIA

You think I had a choice?

LEON

You could have told them to wait. I can explain myself. When I get the chance.

JULIA

They had a search warrant. Do you understand how serious that is?

LEON

Listen to me, Julia. In the house. There is a laptop computer. I need you to get to it, before they do. And destroy it.

JULIA

No, Dad. Don't do this. Don't ask me--

LEON

They're just some records I kept. Data. I'm afraid if they see it, they'll have the wrong perception of me, that's all.

JULIA

It's illegal. I could go to jail.

LEON

So could I. Is that what you want?

JULIA

Of course not.

LEON

Then do this one thing for your old man.

JULIA

First, you have to tell me what you did. And why. I'm not going anywhere until you do.

Leon sits up in bed, gathers himself, then:

LEON

When I started out, infertility was a dead end street. I changed all that. I became the miracle worker. The last resort for desperate patients. So when there were insurmountable challenges.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

LEON (CONT'D)

When people who put all their hopes and dreams on me, had to be told it might not happen... I stacked the deck. Used material I knew to be successful--

JULIA

Your material? Just so you wouldn't fail.

LEON

So I wouldn't disappoint people. There's a difference. I meant no harm. Ever.

JULIA

But you did harm. You did terrible harm.

LEON

They left with their miracles--

JULIA

I'm talking about me! I hooked up with my own brother! Yeah, a guy I went out with, might be one of your... babies. Did you ever think of that? As a possibility?

LEON

Interbreeding did occur to me... But I counted on low statistical probability--

JULIA

I just told you something awful... and all you can talk about is probability? Maybe you're just... broken. You can't care about anyone but yourself.

Leon takes this in, inscrutable for a beat, then:

LEON

I think you're right. There's something missing in me. When your mother was alive, she was my conscience, my center. And now that's she's gone, I need you. You're the one who cares. Who makes everything okay. Without you, I'm nothing. Nobody. Don't you see that?

(then)

It's in my study. On my desk. I'm not a good person, but you are. I know you won't let me down.

And off Julia, caught in her father's orbit, it's the...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

29 INT. RON AND DIANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM 29

An emotional Ron and Diane share their story.

RON

We did everything. Spent every dollar we had, and some we didn't. Nothing worked.

DIANE

Years of tests and procedures. An awful roller coaster of hormones and heartbreak... and finally, finally...

CUT TO:

30 EXT. RON AND DIANE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY 30

Roxy pulls up in her seen-better-days white Porsche, playfully singing along to a song on the radio, as WE CONTINUE TO HEAR THE VOICES OF HER PARENTS, OVER:

RON (V.O.)

We got our girl. And she was perfect.

DIANE (V.O.)

Everything we dreamed about for so long.

RON (V.O.)

So to suddenly hear, she somehow might not really be ours, after everything--

Roxy spots an unfamiliar vehicle in her parents driveway, and suddenly all the playful energy drains from her...

31 INT. RON AND DIANE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 31

Roxy enters the house quietly. From the kitchen, she peers in to see her parents are speaking to an ATTORNEY.

ATTORNEY

The key to a successful lawsuit is establishing damages. Demonstrating how you've suffered as a result of Bechley's actions.

DIANE

We've definitely suffered.

RON

We're continuing to. Roxy's just... she's off the rails.

ATTORNEY

Your daughter does have a documented history of... unpredictable behaviors...

On Roxy, taking this in... the audacity of this guy!

RON

True, but... well, this time. We're worried she might go... further. Over the edge.

DIANE

Unfortunately, she's our only source of income. We gave up our careers to manage hers, and... if she can't work...

ATTORNEY

So, in addition to emotional damage, you're suffering financially? I'm sorry to hear that. But it's good for the case.

Roxy, unable to take this insincerity, enters.

ROXY

Why don't you finish that sentence, mom. If I can't work, what? I'm of no use to you? You might as well toss me out?

DIANE

Roxy--

ROXY

You aren't worried about losing me, you're worried about losing the money I bring you. Isn't that right?

RON

Roxy, please don't get upset. Not now--

ROXY

You can sit here and bad mouth me. Talk about how I'm some fragile soul on the verge of collapse, but I can't say anything? I'm not allowed a voice?

RON

You need to calm down.

ROXY

When are you gonna learn that telling me to calm down only makes me angrier?

ATTORNEY

Maybe I should come back another time.

ROXY

Maybe you should stuff your suit with rocks and jump in a lake.

DIANE

That's enough, Roxy.

ROXY

Finding a new family is the best thing that's happened to me in years. It's liberated me. From you.

As Roxy turns to go, her parents are visibly crushed by this. Diane calls after her.

DIANE

Roxy? Come back here. Where do you think you're going? You don't have anywhere else to go!

But a determined Roxy crosses out. As soon as she's clear of her parents, a look of fear flashes across her face: What if they're right, and she does have nowhere to go?

CUT TO:

Julia on a bench near the George Washington Bridge (the spot we remember from the opening image of the show). She has a letter on her lap.

JULIA

This is it. An old fashioned letter. "You have been accepted!"

(beat)

I kept meaning to tell him, but you know how he is. Using up all the oxygen in the room, so there's nothing left...

An OLDER WOMAN walks by, turning to her...

OLDER WOMAN

What was that, dear?

JULIA

I'm not talking to you. I'm talking to my dead mom about... You know what? Just keep walking.

The perplexed Woman crosses away, as we ANGLE ON a plaque on the bench: IN LOVING MEMORY OF SARAH BECHLEY.

JULIA (CONT'D)

I know it kind of goes without saying, but it still really sucks that you're gone. I could so use your help with... all of this.

Julia tucks the letter away, revealing underneath it: her father's laptop (in a distinctive leather case.)

JULIA (CONT'D)

You'd probably tell me to just get rid of it. Like he asked me too. You'd probably tell me not to chase trouble by looking inside... But you're not here anymore, and I need to know what else he's hiding.

Julia opens up the laptop, deep breath, and starts looking inside...

CUT TO:

Tim and Edie sit in bed together. Edie is busy on her laptop, Tim reads a book. He reaches over to get Edie's attention and she SHUDDERS at his touch.

EDIE

Sorry, you just... surprised me.

TIM

Didn't mean to. Just wanted to talk. You've been on your computer all--

EDIE

I have a lot of work to catch up on. I had a lunch, and then--

TIM

I know, with who?

EDIE

Just, an old client. Is there a point here?

TIM

Yeah. I was hoping we could talk more about... the Bechley case. I think it might be a good idea for us. To take it.

EDIE

A good idea? Are you... insane?

He shifts into lawyer mode, making an argument:

TIM

Hear me out. We've been busting our asses to get on the partner track, and a case this high profile would get us there.

EDIE

This is about her, isn't it? Julia. You still have feelings for her. This is your chance to be her hero?

TIM

Okay... that's nuts.

EDIE

Is it? You loved her. Don't sit there and pretend like you didn't--

TIM

We were kids. That was... she was my college sweetheart, you are my WHOLE LIFE. How can you say that? I am crazy in love with you, okay? Can you just--

He reaches out to touch her --

EDIE

Don't.

Tim can't take it anymore. He's not even angry, just--

TIM

How many times are you gonna say that?

EDIE

I just don't feel like being touched right now... am I supposed to pretend like I do?

TIM

No. No you're not. Of course not. But... You make me feel like the enemy sometimes. And I'm on your team, okay? We're on the same team.

This word triggers her. She shouts at him.

EDIE

What are you talking about? What team do you think I'm on?

TIM

Jesus, Edie. I can't keep doing this! I'm walking on eggshells. I'm worrying about every god damn thing I say to you. I don't know what's in your head until you just... lash out. It shouldn't be this hard all the time!

EDIE

I'm sorry. I'm sorry you picked such a broken person to be married to...

TIM

I never said you were... Jesus, babe! I'm trying here. What do you want from me?

He looks at her with such anger and frustration, she feels cornered. Unable to answer. Then:

EDIE

Nothing. I don't want anything from you.

TIM

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

Tim is surprised to see Edie throwing on her coat and heading for the door.

TIM (CONT'D)

Don't do that. We're in the middle of something here. Don't walk away. Edie!

But it's too late. She's off...

... a series of images fill the screen:

--EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD ROXY, smiling radiantly at the end of a tumbling run.

--SIXTEEN YEAR OLD EDIE, receiving a national debate society award.

AND THEN, in more rapid succession, a series of exceptional young people: a YOUNG CELLIST, a girl on a Humanitarian mission, a chess champion...

We REVEAL these images are on Leon's laptop, which Julia (now wearing the chunky sweater she took from her Dad's office earlier) is pouring over when there's a knock at the door. She looks out the peephole and panics. Wanting to get herself and her house together, but...

TIM (O.S.)

Julia? I hear you in there.

Julia is so close to him, there's only one thing to do. Take a deep breath and open the door.

JULIA

Tim. Hello. Wish I'd known you were coming I'd have... done something. It's a mess in here. I'm a mess.

Julia lets Tim in, and he looks around-- stacks of papers and mail, discarded clothes...

TIM

It's not a mess, it's... lived in.

(beat)

By a crazy person.

She punches him playfully as he crosses inside.

JULIA

Glass of wine?

TIM

No thanks. I have a big day tomorrow.

JULIA

...is the kind of thing you say before having one. Let's just cut to the chase.

Tim smiles as she pours him a glass. She has his number.

TIM

I um, just came to tell you we can't take your father's case. I'd like to help, but it's just difficult right now.

JULIA

Okay. Well, Edie already kind of told me that, so...

TIM

Yeah. I guess I just wanted you to know that I... tried. I didn't just give up.

Julia takes this in. What exactly is he talking about?

JULIA

I understand... but, even if you're not my lawyer, can you still keep one of those lawyer secrets for me? Because... I could use your advice.

TIM

Attorney client privilege still applies. What's up?

She turns the laptop to face him.

JULIA

It looks like my dad kept a kind of... record. Of some of the... Bechley babies.

TIM

This is your father's laptop?

Tim looks at the photos. He starts clicking through.

JULIA

And they're all a bunch of hoop jumpers! Winning awards, and medals... inventing water filters for hurricane victims... He tracked them. All these years... Meanwhile, he never showed up at a single one of my flute concerts. He'd be like, "call me when you're less terrible."

TIM

Were you terrible?

JULIA

Of course I was terrible! But I was his kid! I always thought my dad was just incapable of showing pride, but it turns out, he was just incapable of showing pride in me.

(beat)

What's gonna happen? If the authorities see all this...

TIM

It won't look good for him. It shows... intent. I can't imagine them letting him practice anymore at least...

JULIA

At least? So it could be worse than that?

TIM

It's hard to say. But if you were caught, disposing of it, to protect him, you could be implicated too. And that I'd hate to see.

JULIA

You think I'm crazy, supporting my dad like this? After everything?

TIM

No, I think you're... wonderful. And that your dad's lucky to have you in his life. I miss having you... in mine.

Julia takes this in, moved, touched, a little confused...

JULIA

Well that's the nicest thing I've heard in... I'm gonna say, forever?

Tim takes her hands in his. A dangerous charge between them. Equally unsure where this is headed, until...

TIM

I should probably...

JULIA

Yeah. I think you should...

As Tim crosses out, Julia can only watch him go, feeling powerless, until her eyes settle back on the laptop. An impulse wells up in her, an anger at her father she can no longer contain. She rips the chunky sweater off her head and tosses it aside as she grabs the laptop...

CUT TO:

In a pool of light from a street lamp, we find Roxy inside her car, quickly dry popping a pill with the ease of habit. A sense of hopelessness overtakes her, as she reaches for her phone and hits record, singing to whoever might hear her. (*Hoping for an original song here... but for now, let's imagine a poignant, legato take on this Dusty Springfield classic:*)

35 CONTINUED:

35

ROXY

(singing)

*I don't know what it is that makes me
love you so / I only know I never want to
let you go...*

As the drug begins to hit her brain, her head tilts back, and behind her, a distinctive neon sign blinks in rhythm with the song, *which continues over..*

36 EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

36

Julia pulls up to the deserted looking station and leans her bike against the wall. Pulling her hood over her head to avoid detection, she grabs something out of her backpack and, *CLOSE ON IT WE SEE: her father's laptop, with the investigator's business card, attached to it...*

ROXY (V.O.)

*Cause you started something, a fool could
see...*

THROUGH THE WINDOWS we see her *drop her father's laptop* on the reception desk and then hustle back outside, heart pounding in her ears in the wake of this brash act...

WE CUT TO:

37 EXT. BAR - NIGHT

37

Eddie sits at a bar with a glass of bourbon, her eyes darting anxiously back and forth to the door...

ROXY (V.O.)

*That ever since we met you've had a hold
on me, no matter what I do...*

Amanda enters. Eddie squares her shoulders and takes a deep breath as Amanda crosses over to her.

AMANDA

So, what's the big rush? Something you forgot to tell me at lunch?

EDIE

Yeah. There is.

Eddie stands, now or never, and puts her lips close to Amanda's. An invitation. Amanda answers by kissing her, deep and passionate. Eddie's knees buckle, surrendering...

38 EXT. BENCH - NIGHT 38

Julia is back on her mother's bench, her knees pulled up close to her chest, childlike, when she feels a PING on her phone, and pulls it out to see... ROXY'S VIDEO.

ROXY

... I only want to be with you.

Roxy's song weaves its way into Julia, a magnetic pull that she doesn't fully comprehend but can't ignore...

39 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT 39

Julia bikes into the parking lot, that distinctive neon sign casting a pink hue on her as she approaches Roxy's dented white Porsche.

ROXY

*I just want to be beside you everywhere,
As long as we're together I don't care...*

Roxy opens her eyes and from her DISORIENTED POV we see: a hazy woman in a bike helmet, tapping on the window and waving at her. She opens the window, and sees Julia.

ROXY (CONT'D)

How did you... find me? Also... don't you kind of hate me?

JULIA

Pretty much. But, uh, I saw your video, and it looked like you needed help, so... I'm here. Get out and hop on.

Roxy opens her car door to see... Julia's bike.

ROXY

Are you serious? You want me to get on the back of your bike?

JULIA

You got any better options right now? Because you're in no shape to drive and I never learned stick shift.

Unable to argue, Roxy climbs on the back of Julia's bike and wraps her arms around her tightly. And off this unlikely embrace, it's the...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

40 INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

40

Julia clears space in her heavily cluttered guest room, as she makes up the bed for Roxy.

ROXY

You don't have to do this.

JULIA

Do you have anywhere else to go?

ROXY

(defiant)

Yeah!

(then, honest)

No. I'm kind of in a fight with my parents. They're being completely unreasonable. And I've just had it with them. They're my parents and my managers, and they're terrible at both jobs.

JULIA

Well, you're welcome to stay here. As long as you need to.

ROXY

No one's ever been this nice to me. I'm really grateful. I guess this is what it's like, having a sister.

She gives Julia a huge hug, then:

ROXY (CONT'D)

I am gonna need my own bathroom. With a tub. If I don't get my soak on once a day I am *no bueno*.

And suddenly, Julia starts to regret the open-ended offer.

JULIA

Right down the hall. Knock yourself out.
(then calling after her)
Use the rubber thingy for a stopper! And jiggle the handle! Old pipes!

Julia crosses over to Roxy's purse and, making sure the coast is clear, digs inside it, finding: multiple pill bottles. CLOSE ON THE BOTTLES: prescriptions from different doctors: Klonopin, Valium, Adderall...

40 CONTINUED:

40

Julia takes a beat, genuinely concerned about Roxy, when she hears the doorbell ring. She stashes the pills and crosses to the front door...

41 INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 41

Julia opens the door, surprised to see a distressed-looking Edie.

EDIE

Can I come in?

JULIA

I, I guess.

(opening the door)

Do you, need something? Some tea? A telephone?

Edie is tense, pacing, unable to express herself.

EDIE

No, I just. I, um... gosh, this is really, just not me. This is NOT WHO I AM. And yet, here I am! I didn't know where to go, or who to talk to, and--

JULIA

You're scaring me. Maybe you should sit down. Let's start with that.

EDIE

You know, I was always jealous of you.

JULIA

Ha. Right. You, jealous of me?

EDIE

I know! Who would have thought. I mean, I was a better student, I was more popular, I had way more boyfriends--

JULIA

Okay, easy...

EDIE

But you had this... family. A dad who came home from work and sat down with you at the dinner table... with dinner on it. The only thing my mom ever had on the dinner table was... unpaid bills. And vegan takeout.

(MORE)

EDIE (CONT'D)

And I spent my whole life chasing that... that... thing. That thing you got to take for granted. Stability.

JULIA

And you got it. You have it.

EDIE

I had it... And then, tonight, I blew it all up. I did the stupidest thing I've ever done in my life! I ruined everything. So maybe, you and I, we're not so different after all. We're both just... total messes.

JULIA

Again, more hurtful than necessary, but...

(then, concerned)

What did you do?

EDIE

I acted on this... feeling. I've been having for a while. With someone.

JULIA

Okay...

EDIE

It was like, an itch that wouldn't leave me alone, and it had to be scratched...

ROXY (O.S.)

Oo, I want to hear this. So, who did you scratch?

Edie turns, surprised to see Roxy standing there.

EDIE

What are you doing here?

(to Julia)

What is she doing here? You didn't tell me someone else was here!

JULIA

You didn't tell me you were coming over! And she's doing the same thing you are! Running away.

Edie hangs her head and sighs. Unable to have the moral high ground here.

ROXY

Right. So, back to the itch. Are you gonna tell us who she is?

EDIE

How do you know it's a she?

ROXY

I got a vibe. Am I wrong?

Julia looks at Edie, who shakes her head, and then, emotional:

EDIE

She's... you don't know her. Someone I work with, that's been... on my mind. And then after everything felt so mixed up, I just, couldn't contain myself anymore and... I'm such an idiot. I hurt the best person I know. I can't go home and face him. I can't tell him, and I can't hide it from him. He knows me better than anyone. I don't know what to do!

Edie starts to weep. Julia goes to her. Puts a hand on her back.

JULIA

You want to stay here tonight?

EDIE

Are you sure?

JULIA

Of course. Just, FYI... I am not that much of a mess anymore. I was actually accepted into medical school. Of course, I can't go anymore. But still--

EDIE

Was that before or after you slept with your brother?

ROXY

Who's also married.

JULIA

Are you guys seriously ganging up on me right now?

And off this trio...

42 INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - JULIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING 42

We're with Julia as she wakes up to the sound of coffee grinding and gives a groan...

43 INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 43

A disheveled Julia, followed by an even more disheveled Roxy, comes downstairs to find Edie making coffee, an annoying spring in her step.

EDIE

I found your coffee. Although, I could not find a clean mug.

JULIA

(indicating the cupboard)
They're up there.

EDIE

Oh. You call these clean?

Edie holds up a stained mug and Julia shrugs.

EDIE (CONT'D)

What do you take in yours?

ROXY

Nothing. Black.

JULIA

Me too. Can't do lactose.

EDIE

Me either. Huh.

ROXY

Check us out. Sharing lactose intolerance. What are the odds of that?

EDIE

Fairly high, actually.
(googling it, then)
Roughly a quarter of the adult population...
(then)

Hang on. Have you checked your email? There's a message from the DNA testing company. My results.

Roxy picks up her phone.

ROXY

Mine too.

(then)

It says I am a 99.3 Percent match for paternity with Leon Bechley.

EDIE

And I'm a 99.6 percent match with him.

JULIA

Always have to be just a little higher don't you, Edie?

The three of them plop down at the kitchen table and look at each other.

JULIA (CONT'D)

So, that's it. We're...

EDIE

Genetically connected.

ROXY

Family.

JULIA

Wow. I can't believe it. I mean, I guess I knew in a way, but still... it's official. So, I guess this means...

ROXY

I can finally tell you that you have a chin hair. Right there. It's been really bugging me.

JULIA

(hand to her face)

What?

EDIE

(looking closely)

I see it. It's a big one. You need to pluck that. Here.

She digs tweezers out of her purse.

JULIA

You guys... that's so embarrassing.

EDIE

It happens. If you don't have anyone to tell you.

43

CONTINUED:

43

Julia's phone rings, she looks at it.

JULIA
(answering)
Hello?

Roxy and Edie watch Julia's expression darken.

JULIA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I'll be right over.

44

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

44

Julia crosses into the hospital room to find Isaac standing next to Leon's bed, where two POLICE OFFICERS flank a distraught Leon.

JULIA
Excuse me, what's going on here? What are you doing to my father?

POLICE
We have a warrant for the arrest of Mr. Leon Bechley. Who are you?

JULIA
I'm his daughter.

ROXY
So am I.

EDIE
Coming to the hospital to arrest a patient is a pretty aggressive move for a misdemeanor charge. Is this necessary?

OFFICER
Are you Mr. Bechley's attorney?

Julia looks at Edie, pleading. Edie is stuck. No choice.

EDIE
I'll... be acting as his counsel. For the time being.

Julia nods at Edie. A moment of gratitude.

OFFICER
Then you should know this isn't a misdemeanor charge. It's a felony.

44 CONTINUED:

44

Edie stays cool, but a look of concern shades her brow,
as we INTERCUT WITH:

45 EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

45

A PRESS CONFERENCE. Before a crowd of reporters, we see:
Amanda. Grandstanding.

AMANDA

Due to a recent break in the case, our
office is opting to charge Dr. Bechley
with multiple felony crimes, including
sexual assault. We intend to demonstrate
that Dr. Bechley orchestrated a
deliberate, persistent violation of his
patients' rights...

As a bewildered Leon is read his rights, we ANGLE ON:

EDIE, taking in what this means with Amanda...

ROXY, taking in what this means with her parents ...

JULIA, taking in the awful possibility that she may have
caused her father much greater harm than she intended as
she looks over at him, and meets his accusing gaze, it's
the...

END OF PILOT