

until you

Written by

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EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Everyday life in New York City over a score we'll come to know quite well over the next hour and a half...

When I say "New York City," I should be more specific.

Greenwich Village. Cause the Village is the world's best microcosm. Maybe the Latin Quarter in Paris. Those two. But I don't know Paris that well so we'll stick with the Village.

You can find anything here. From any country. Any food. Drink. Little trinket for your apartment. It's got it all.

And all types of people too. Tall, thin, ugly, attractive. Health nuts and cheeseburger fanatics.

We're seeing shots of it all...

LOVERS strolling after dinner...

COLLEGE KIDS filing out of a show at the Comedy Cellar...

CHESS SAVANTS in Washington Square Park taking people to school...

MOTHERS, FATHERS, SONS, DAUGHTERS... eating ice cream while the weather still tolerates it...

A POET writing while sipping some wine at Caffè Reggìo...

We're focused on these moments, the little ones that quickly dissipate from our brains despite being the most important to hold onto.

The classic and simple score serenades and builds as we move down 10th STREET, stopping at--

WEST TEN WEST, an adorable Village bistro.

MALLORY WOODSON, 33, shuffles out of the place with her DATE, PAUL, shorter, balding, "George from Seinfeld" vibe going on.

Mallory's put together in a way that's confident and calculated. Make-up subtly accentuating her natural features. Hair done up for a big date. Dressed in fashions that feel modern yet borrowed from ANNIE HALL.

All that said, in this moment, she seems nervous. Fidgeting a bit, lingering with Paul, debating next moves.

Which is odd considering how I just described each of them. I'm not judging, just stating the obvious laws of attraction. You'd think he'd be the nervous one here, but, alas...

MALLORY
(trying to find the words)
... Maybe I shouldn't have said--

PAUL
-- No no, it's cool. I always have
fun with you. Even with, you know...
the stuff we talked about.

It's silent. She's wanting him to say more. But he's not.

MALLORY
I totally understand if you don't
want--

PAUL
I'm just processing. Five dates. Five
really fun dates...

More silence. He's trying to find the words... Finally:

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'll call you.

MALLORY
It's okay, I don't need--

PAUL
I'm gonna call. I just-- I'm tired.
Crazy day. But I really appreciate
you.

MALLORY
You appreciate me?

PAUL
Yeah. You know what I mean. Honesty
is always the best policy.

MALLORY
Thanks... I *appreciate* you too...

She decides to throw caution to the wind. Gets in close for a
kiss. He takes it. But it's lacking a spark.

Her heart sinks. But she bucks up, not one to waste time.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Well good. Good good. Have a great
night.

She gives him a FIST BUMP. He awkwardly bumps it back. And
with that, she heads away.

PAUL
(as she goes)
Mallory! I just need time to--

MALLORY
(yelling back)
-- Process! I get it! Process away!

She sends him the least convincing thumbs up on the planet and turns the corner, out of sight.

We follow her as she strides down the block, puffing deep in the crisp fall New York City air.

She pushes the pain of what she just experienced way down, opting to plaster a smile across her face instead, pulling out her phone and dialing. It rings.

On the other line is her best friend CHLOE, same age. Chloe's in her tiny LIVING ROOM-- in sweats, watching Netflix's murder-themed programming du jour with a BOTTLE OF JACK wedged between her legs. INTERCUT.

CHLOE
(into phone)
Yo! How was it?

MALLORY
Wanna get hammerfaced?

CHLOE
That good, huh?

MALLORY
He said "I'll call you."

CHLOE
No. Fucker.

MALLORY
Also said he "needs time to process."

CHLOE
I'm gonna murder him.

MALLORY
You'd get away with it too.

CHLOE
Bleach washes away all sins.
(beat)
Where you wanna hit up?

MALLORY
Somewhere cheap and easy. I have to
be back by midnight latest.

CHLOE
I got you, kid.

INT. BAR 13 - NIGHT

Dance music blasts and the place is packed.

Mallory and Chloe shake their asses, dancing with each other.

An occasional RANDO tries to dance up on them, but they
rebuff the dudes by pretending to be gay. Works every time.

CHLOE
That Costanza-looking fuck is a tool!

MALLORY
You don't have to cheer me up.

CHLOE
I'm not. He's just objectively a
tool. He'd be a LUCKY DUCKLING to be
with you.

MALLORY
Maybe I need to move to Wisconsin.

CHLOE
What's in Wisconsin?

MALLORY
People who want to settle down. New
York is full of perpetually single
people. The ones who get married move
outside the city. To Connecticut.
Wisconsin. Iowa. Shit like that.

They keep dancing. Chloe can tell Mallory's in her head.

CHLOE
Hey I got an idea, maybe have the
talk with these guys on the first
date. Just get it out of the way.

MALLORY
They'll all run if I tell them that
early.

CHLOE
Okay, in that case, maybe don't tell
them til you're married?? Huh??

MALLORY

Really don't want to risk them
bailing AFTER we get married.

CHLOE

No yeah, you're right. Can't do that.

MALLORY

Telling them somewhere between dates
three through six feels right. It's
enough runway to connect with a
person, but not too much time wasted
if they bail after I tell them.

They keep dancing, but Mallory's still elsewhere.

CHLOE

Hey, come on! Be with me now.

MALLORY

I'm scared I'm running out of time,
Chlo.

Chloe grabs her friend, bringing Mallory in close. Forehead
to forehead.

CHLOE

Fuck everyone.

MALLORY

Fuck everyone?

CHLOE

Fuck everyone!

MALLORY

Fuck everyone!

CHLOE

Except us.

MALLORY

Of course.

CHLOE

Fuck everyone else!

MALLORY

Everyone else be fucked!

They scream and keep dancing, without abandon.

As Mallory dances, she spins and slips, KNOCKING OVER a rando
guy who was on his way out the door.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Oh my God I'm so sorry.

GUY SHE KNOCKED OVER
(face-to-face with the
floor)
All good. I was actually curious what
kind of flooring this place had.
(looking closer)
Linoleum. Nice. Makes sense.

As he stands up and brushes himself off, he really takes her
in for the first time... and he's entranced.

She does the same... He's tall enough, handsome in a
naturally charming Jimmy Stewart/young Tom Hanks kind of way,
wearing a simple outfit-- not trying too hard-- Jeans, casual
monotone sweater. This is FOSTER KEATING, 32.

They're just staring at each other, as if tethered by an
invisible string.

FOSTER
Sorry, I'm having trouble moving my
feet at the moment--

MALLORY
(snapping out of it)
Sorry again-- you okay?

FOSTER
Yeah, great. Hi, I'm--

CHLOE
(jumping in)
We're GAY, bro! Move on.

FOSTER
Oh, uh, sorry, I didn't mean to--

MALLORY
We're not gay. I don't know why she
just said that.

CHLOE
Oh, apparently we're not gay anymore.
Guess I just got dumped. I'll fuck
off now.

Chloe bounces for the BAR, leaving the two of them to take
each other in, a clear and obvious spark between them...

FOSTER

Is that your go-to move? Tackle people you wanna start talking to?

MALLORY

Maybe it should be. Actually seems more effective.

FOSTER

What's your name?

MALLORY

Mallory. What about you? No wait, let me guess. I'm good at this... Bryant.

FOSTER

What?

MALLORY

Bryce?

FOSTER

Dear God, do I look like a "Bryant" or "Bryce?"

MALLORY

Am I close?

FOSTER

Foster.

MALLORY

I feel like Bryant, Bryce and Foster are all brothers in the same Instagram family where the mom posts videos about how she wakes up at 4am to take a cold shower and plan her day homeschooling her five blonde children and please stop me if I'm--

FOSTER

-- No no, I'm enjoying this too much.

MALLORY

Also, Fosters is Australian for beer.

FOSTER

(sarcastic/flirtatious)
Never heard that.

MALLORY

(flirting back)
Really?

FOSTER
Literally never.

They're smiling at each other. It's silent for a few beats...

MALLORY
Oh no, has this conversation already
run its course? Got anything else?

FOSTER
I hate this place. Too loud.

MALLORY
Then why are you here?

FOSTER
I was heading home and then someone
tackled me.

MALLORY
That doesn't answer my question.

FOSTER
You want the truth?

MALLORY
I can handle the truth.

FOSTER
I usually have good luck with women
at this place.

MALLORY
Then why were you leaving alone?

FOSTER
Losing my touch?

MALLORY
(playful)
Judging from this conversation, I'd
say that's a strong possibility.

FOSTER
Burn. I got a couple numbers. Figured
I'd get home and see who'd be the
most open to a night cap.

MALLORY
A "night cap?" Well, that sounds
exciting. I'm really rooting for you.
Enjoy your night.

She turns back to Chloe at the bar. And he heads away. But before getting to the door, he turns, taking her in again...

Strides back over to her as if compelled by a higher power.

FOSTER

Why'd you want to stop talking to me just now? Were you judging me for wanting to hook up with people?

MALLORY

I don't know you well enough to judge-

FOSTER

Cause relationships are hard.

MALLORY

Hold up, for real? Does CNN know about this???

FOSTER

Freedom is the most powerful thing we have and we give it up the second we settle down. No ma'am, not for me.

MALLORY

What in my body language is telling you I want to continue this conversation? Just so I can be aware of what I'm doing in the future.

FOSTER

Our future?

MALLORY

No ma'am.

FOSTER

Let me guess, you want a farmhouse in Connecticut, with kids running through the yard, and dogs and cats and birds and pigs and--

MALLORY

That's an ungodly amount of animals.

FOSTER

And you think it'll fill the void in your life. But it won't. If you don't take care of yourself first, none of that other stuff will make you happy.

MALLORY

What's happening? Why are you talking to me like you're Tony Robbins?

FOSTER

I feel drawn toward you.

MALLORY

You should re-examine that feeling.

FOSTER

Maybe we should re-examine it over dinner?

MALLORY

You're asking me out?? After everything you just said??

FOSTER

I'm not against relationships. Just not wanting to be locked into long-term, never-ending ones.

He smiles at her. And it's... goofy. Endearing? Infectious. He's being refreshingly honest. So she softens a hair...

MALLORY

Look, I tripped and fell on you by accident. Sorry. No greater meaning. And I shouldn't have judged you. I gotta be better about that. Sadly, we just want very different things. I'm looking for someone to share my life with. And you want to fuck your way through the Village and die alone.

FOSTER

I mean, it'd be nice if there was a nurse nearby to hold my hand or something.

That makes Mallory chuckle despite herself. She takes him in one last time...

MALLORY

Nice to meet you, Australian for beer.

And she turns back to Chloe, grabbing a shot, taking it down.

Foster nods and heads away, glancing back at her once more before heading out the door.

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mallory and Chloe enter, tipsy. Fine, drunk.

Mallory's neighbor, DAMON, 20s, a sweet gay teddy bear, lounges on the couch, also watching another one of Netflix's robust selection of murder docs.

DAMON

Finally.

Chloe shuffles Mallory towards Damon.

CHLOE

Tag, you're it.

DAMON

No no I'm not it, I'm leaving.

Damon gets up, hugging them as he moves for the front door.

MALLORY

How's my boy?

DAMON

Good. Little gassy, but that's what I get for having dairy at dinner.

MALLORY

Gotta quit the cheese, man.

DAMON

I'd rather quit life.

MALLORY

How's my actual boy?

DAMON

Went to bed an hour ago.

MALLORY

At eleven???

DAMON

Is that early or late?

MALLORY

Dear God. What did you guys do?

DAMON

He forced me to explore the vast and never-ending universe of Pokémon with him. I blacked out at least three times, but he didn't seem to notice.

MALLORY
Fuckin Pokémon.

Chloe is raiding Mallory's freezer, spooning directly from a tub of ICE CREAM.

DAMON
(heading for the door)
How was the date with Paul?

MALLORY
Who? Oh, fuckface?

CHLOE
(mouth full of ice cream)
Costanza ass bitch!

DAMON
Crash and burn again? Which date was it this time?

MALLORY
Fifth.

DAMON
Wow, you waited that long?

MALLORY
I liked him. He seemed sweet. But I told him and he said he'd "call me."

DAMON
Motherfucker.

CHLOE
She tripped and tackled a hot guy at the bar though.

DAMON
Reeeeealllllyyy? Me likey.

MALLORY
It'll never work.

DAMON
Why?

MALLORY
He comes across as fuckboy adjacent.

DAMON
And?

MALLORY

Good night, my friend. Thanks for watching Zack.

DAMON

Any time. Well, not any time. Not most times. But any time you're desperate and I have absolutely zero going on, I'll be there.

That makes Mallory smile. Damon hugs her tight. Gives her a peck on the cheek.

Chloe heads out the door with Damon, still spooning from the tub of ice cream.

CHLOE

(re: the ice cream)
I'm keeping this.

MALLORY

I can tell.

CHLOE

See you at work tomorrow.

MALLORY

It's Saturday.

Chloe blows her a drunken kiss and they're both gone.

Mallory turns to her tiny/way-too-expensive East Village pad.

Collects a few things and heads to her son's bedroom door.

Opens it gently to peak inside... to find him staring right at her, wide awake.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

Oh.

ZACK

Hi.

ZACKARY WOODSON is 9 years old. Small for his age. Kinda looks like "Janet" from "Three's Company." Beyond that, there's not much to go on cause he's tucked into his bed, under a Pokémon comforter.

MALLORY

It's past midnight.

ZACK

I missed you.

She softens. Snuggles up next to him in bed.

MALLORY

I missed you too. Did you have fun with Damon?

ZACK

No. He's horrible at pretending to listen to me about Pokémon. He blacked out like three times.

She holds him tight, pushing the hair out of his eyes.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Can you lay here til I fall asleep?

MALLORY

... No.

She gets up to leave, but then jumps back into bed, messing with him, smothering her boy as only a mother can.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY - MORNING

Mallory and Zack sit on a BENCH, their bench, looking out on the majestic Hudson River. After a beat of taking it in.

MALLORY

Okay, break's over, let's go.

ZACK

One more minute.

MALLORY

You'll be late. Come on, let's roll.

She means that literally, as they stand up on ROLLERBLADES and start skating along the trail next to the Westside Highway, heading north past Chelsea Piers.

She's in professional WORK CLOTHES. He's got a BACKPACK on.

ZACK

(out of breath)

Have I told you how much I hate rollerblading to school?

MALLORY

Where's your sense of adventure??

ZACK

On my iPad.

MALLORY
Come on, keep up!

ZACK
My legs hurt!

MALLORY
Good! That means it's working.

ZACK
What's working??

MALLORY
The fact that you don't know it's
working PROVES that it's working.

EXT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Mallory kneels with Zack while he switches out of rollerblades and into sneakers.

MALLORY
Gimme a kiss.

ZACK
You know I can't do that.

MALLORY
Hug?

ZACK
Are you making jokes now?

Mallory then points to her eye, her heart and then at him, as if to say "**I love you.**"

He exhales, then pretends to SNEEZE and sends her a quick "eye heart you" back to her.

MALLORY
Did you sign up for the Spelling Bee?

Zack shrugs, not answering. Clearly "no."

ZACK
I'm scared to go on stage.

MALLORY
Why? It's just the ground but slightly higher.

ZACK
Will you take off work and come if I make it to the finals?

MALLORY

You know it.

Zack smiles, turns to head away, but as he does, she grabs him, gets in close.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

Who's that kid again? Bernardo?

ZACK

Mike Bernardi.

MALLORY

Is he the reason you're scared to get on stage?

ZACK

Mom--

MALLORY

If he messes with you today, you can't back down. Can't show fear. Kids like him will do it endlessly the more afraid you seem.

ZACK

That's easy for you to say, he's like twice my size. He could literally eat me and no one would notice.

MALLORY

I'd notice.

ZACK

You don't count.

MALLORY

Ouch.

ZACK

You know what I mean.

MALLORY

Trust me, kid. If he messes with you, you gotta at least ACT like it doesn't faze you. You got me?

ZACK

I'll try.

MALLORY

Zackary Woodson, I believe in you. And I love you.

ZACK
Please mom, stop acting insane.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER GREENWAY - MORNING

Mallory rollerblades down the Hudson River Greenway towards her office in Tribeca while holding Zack's rollerblades. Quite the sight.

She's huffing and puffing, more tired and out of shape than she'd like to be...

INT. FOSTER'S LOFT APARTMENT - MORNING

Foster's in bed also out of breath, but for a very different reason.

Next to him is an actress/model named NATASHA. Post-coital, if it wasn't obvious.

He stares at the ceiling, seemingly dead inside.

He then glances at her for a beat, knowing nothing about her. Looks around his immaculate yet sterile apartment, devoid of any charm or life.

He exhales. Forces himself up, slips on some boxers.

Presses a button on the wall and his blinds start to raise, exhibiting a view of the Hudson in all its glory.

The place is completely open concept, so he can still see Natasha in bed as he makes coffee from the KITCHEN.

FOSTER
You want some coffee? Or wanna grab some breakfast?

NATASHA
That's okay. I try to only consume calories between 2-6pm.

FOSTER
Makes... sense.

She starts getting dressed.

NATASHA
We probably shouldn't do this again. Wouldn't be fair to the guy I just started dating.

FOSTER
Oh okay.

NATASHA

I mean, it's not serious yet, but I feel gross, you know?

FOSTER

I think you and I have different definitions of the word "gross."

NATASHA

I don't want to hurt you--

FOSTER

Thanks. Appreciate that. Want me to grab you an Uber?

NATASHA

I feel like getting me an Uber is more of a boyfriend thing.

FOSTER

Right. Can't argue with that.

She's a bit thrown by how detached he is about all this.

NATASHA

I mean, if you want to text me again, you can. I just don't know if I'll be able to meet up if things progress with this other guy, you know?

Foster nods. Gives her a hug and opens the door for her. Leaving her even more confused as she heads out.

He closes the door and exhales again, feeling empty...

EXT. BUBBY'S CAFE - MORNING

Foster feeds his soul with a sausage, egg and cheese sandwich while sitting outside this fine institution.

He's got a coffee in front of him, which he casually pours WHISKEY into. As he does, a YOUNG DISENCHANTED SERVER walks up to him, catching him, staring at him, befuddled.

FOSTER

(re: the whiskey)
It's for heart health.

SERVER

Oh.

FOSTER

Relieves anxiety.

SERVER

You don't have to explain. I just came by to see how you were doing.

The server heads away. Foster keeps sipping, gorging.

As he does, Mallory comes skating by, work bag slung over her shoulder, child's rollerblades in hand.

As she turns the corner, she slips and falls. HARD. Like an ugly fall. As if her leg just completely stopped doing what legs were made to do.

Foster hurries over, helping her up. And when he does, he realizes who it is.

FOSTER

Hey! It's you!

She doesn't recognize him, her brain having not yet caught up with what's just transpired.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Bar 13. Foster? Australian for beer?

MALLORY

Oh right, sure.

FOSTER

Does ice follow you around?

MALLORY

Ice?

FOSTER

You seem to fall a lot. You just biffed really hard.

MALLORY

I *biffed*?

FOSTER

Big time biff. One minute you were upright and then, bam. Biff city. Your leg just gave out.

MALLORY

I get it. Thanks for helping me up.

FOSTER

You wanna join me for breakfast?

MALLORY

I have to get to work.

FOSTER
Where do you work?

MALLORY
Why? So you can come murder me?

FOSTER
Why would I come to your work to murder you?

MALLORY
I don't know you, so everything's on the table.

FOSTER
How bout dinner after work?

MALLORY
Yes, I suggest you do that.

She starts skating away. He power walks to keep up with her.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Why are you following me?

FOSTER
I'm spotting you.

MALLORY
"Stalking" feels like a more accurate word.

FOSTER
What business do you work in?

MALLORY
If I told you "marketing" would you go away?

FOSTER
Is it marketing?

MALLORY
No.

FOSTER
Advertising?

MALLORY
I thought we decided we wanted different things in life?

FOSTER

While you may have decided that, I left our conversation deciding I wanted to have more of them with you. You're so much more real and honest than anyone I've met in a while.

As she skates up to the front door of her office building:

FOSTER (CONT'D)

So, what do you say? Meet here for dinner? 6pm?

She takes him in and can't help but smile, charmed by his persistence. He looks back at her with that goofy, confident, boyish grin.

In another life, she'd go for it with him, but here...

MALLORY

I appreciate the effort, buddy. You're charming. Got a lot going for you. And I'm sure the 24 year olds at the bar really eat it up. But you know what I was doing when I was 24? Giving birth to my kid. He's 9 now.

Foster's absorbing what she's laying out there.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

So, although it's flattering-- really it is-- I'm not remotely what you're looking for.

With that, she turns and heads inside, leaving him there...

INT. MALLORY'S OFFICE - DAY

Mallory's at her DESK in her cubicle. She's rubbing her leg, sore from the fall. She picks up her cell and dials...

MALLORY

(into phone)

Hi, yes, this is Mallory Woodson. I took a bit of a spill this morning and I was wondering if Dr. Alemzadeh could fit me in today?... 2pm? Yeah that's perfect, thanks.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. SHEERINE ALEMZADEH, 40s, Persian, stands with Mallory, checking out her leg.

MALLORY

Thanks for seeing me on such short notice. I fell pretty hard.

DR. ALEMZADEH

That's going to continue to happen with your disease. You're going to experience weakening muscle groups. Numbness in your extremities. Balance issues.

MALLORY

Shouldn't the trial drug be helping with all that?

DR. ALEMZADEH

If it works. We've seen a stalling in the degeneration, which is amazing, but we don't know how long it'll last. Friedreich's Ataxia is a tricky disease. Being as rare as it is, this trial is a first, so we don't have enough to go off of yet.

Mallory nods, in her head. As Alemzadeh throws away her rubber gloves:

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)

I know this is a scary time for you. Many people with this disease don't make it past their 30s. But you've been responding well to the trial, so let's take that win and keep riding it.

She forces a smile, wiping some tears away.

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)

Exercise is good, but you need to be careful. Focus more on simple movements. The stress on your heart is a big concern for me. Ditch the rollerblading. Try yoga.

MALLORY

Never.

DR. ALEMZADEH

Okay. Then I'll be seeing you again very very soon.

EXT. CHELSEA PIERS GOLF CLUB - DAY

Driving range overlooking the Hudson.

Foster's lining up a shot in the tee box. All by himself.

He blasts a drive a good 280. After a few more swings, we get the sense that he's taking out his pain on the ball. Breathing heavy.

As he catches his breath, his phone pings a couple times.

He looks at his phone and sees he's got some new matches on HINGE. Ellie, Kellie, Veronica, Isabel...

He pockets his phone, ignoring them, lining up another shot.

EXT. MALLORY'S OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Mallory comes out of the office building to find **Foster** waiting for her, holding some FLOWERS. She's got her rollerblades on again.

FOSTER
(re: the rollerblades)
Did you wear those all day?

MALLORY
What are you doing here?

FOSTER
One dinner and then if you don't like me, you'll never see me, hear me, smell me ever again.

MALLORY
Smell you?

FOSTER
I'll vanish. Poof.

MALLORY
Did you not hear what I said earlier?

FOSTER
I did. Loud and clear. You have a kid. That's cool. I bet he's rad.

MALLORY
You bet he's rad? Look, as much as I'd love to say yes, I'm very selective with who I date.

FOSTER
I think that's partly what's drawing me towards you.

MALLORY

My life is too complicated to be
messing with manbabies.

FOSTER

I see no manbaby before us.

MALLORY

This will end in heartbreak for you.

FOSTER

Sounds exciting.

She exhales, debating. Intrigued by him, despite herself.

MALLORY

I have to be back by 7:30pm. Deal?

FOSTER

Deal. That's very early. But deal.

EXT. CARMINE STREET - NIGHT

Mallory and Foster stroll Carmine Street each with a greasy
slice in hand.

MALLORY

(sarcastic)

Pizza. So far, VERY impressive.

FOSTER

This is just the appetizer. Imagine
if I took you to a 5-star restaurant
on our first date?

MALLORY

You're considering this a real date?

FOSTER

What else would it be? I don't want
to be your friend.

MALLORY

Thanks.

FOSTER

I've got friends. And they're all
named Claudio and Mikey and Dante.
You get it. I'm the only one of my
childhood friends that still lives in
the city. They all moved out to
Westchester. Jersey. Irvington--

MALLORY

What do you see in me?

FOSTER

Not interested in me continuing to blab about my childhood friends?

MALLORY

Not really, no.

FOSTER

I love how honest we can be with each other.

MALLORY

I don't have time for anything else.

FOSTER

You have your whole life ahead of you.

MALLORY

You're avoiding the question. Why me?

FOSTER

... You're real. Everything in my life is so empty. Hollow. But you're the opposite.

MALLORY

Okay, but--

FOSTER

-- And I'm attracted to you. Sorry, it's just a fact. Female peacocks-- peahens-- go for males with the biggest feathers.

MALLORY

I-- huh??

EXT. UNIVERSITY PLACE - NIGHT

They're walking up University Place now, each with a KEBAB in hand, passing all the NYU punks.

MALLORY

What was it like growing up in the Village?

FOSTER

I didn't know anything else, but now, looking back, it was amazing.

He points across the street.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

That's where my favorite burrito place was. Now it's a Bank of America. The bar I'd sneak into as a teenager was on 14th and 7th. Now it's a Bank of America. We lived above a deli and they knew what I was gonna order before I opened my mouth. Now it's a--

MALLORY

Bank of America?

FOSTER

Chipotle.

MALLORY

So close.

FOSTER

Basically the same.

She catches herself smiling as they continue on.

EXT. UNION SQUARE PARK - NIGHT

They're sitting on a bench in Union Square, each with a cone from the BIG GAY ICE CREAM TRUCK in hand.

MALLORY

So you'll never get married?

FOSTER

Nope.

MALLORY

You don't think people can spend a happy life with someone?

FOSTER

I mean, I'm sure it happens. But even the people I know who are "happily married" are completely miserable. For example, what happened between you and your kid's dad?

MALLORY

Oh I don't think we're going to get into that right now.

FOSTER

I'm just saying, why not have as much fun as you can and not worry about the whole "til death do us part" stuff?

She smiles, appreciating his honesty. As she finishes her cone, she checks the time.

MALLORY

That's the buzzer.

FOSTER

Do I still have time to shoot my shot?

MALLORY

Sadly, we're not going into overtime here. But I actually, shockingly, had fun with you tonight. You defied the odds and took a boring date of walking around eating different foods and somehow made it enjoyable.

FOSTER

Lots more where that came from.

MALLORY

And five years ago, I would've gone back to your place and fucked your brains out.

FOSTER

Oh--

She stands to go.

MALLORY

-- But that's not where I'm at anymore. I don't know about the whole growing old together thing. Maybe it's a fairytale. But I want to find a good person to spend my time with. Ups and downs. Good and bad. And although I can tell you're a solid guy, I can also tell that spending any more time with you would be a waste for both of us. I hope you don't take that the wrong way.

FOSTER

I'm taking it like a dagger to the heart. Is that the wrong way?

She leans down, kisses his cheek.

MALLORY
Thanks for not murdering me.

And with that, she heads away, leaving him sitting there, frozen with confusion.

INT. SUBWAY - NIGHT

Mallory rides the subway home, deep in thought.

Across from her sits a FATHER, MOTHER and SON. They're all wearing METS HATS as if they just came from a game.

She takes in this trio. Talking about the game, laughing, connecting...

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mallory enters the apartment to find Chloe trying to put out a FIRE ON THE STOVE.

Zack's at the sink, filling a BUCKET.

MALLORY
Oh my God!

CHLOE
I got it! We're good!

MALLORY
The kitchen is on fire!

CHLOE
Barely. You got an extinguisher by the way?

Mallory struggles to reach up above the kitchen cabinets, grabbing a small FIRE EXTINGUISHER, putting out the flames, which were starting to spread to the other cabinetry.

The SMOKE ALARM blares.

Mallory grabs a small step stool and stands on it, ripping the batteries out of the smoke alarm.

They all stand there in silence for a beat. Then:

CHLOE (CONT'D)
So... how was your night?

INT. JOSIE WOODS PUB - NIGHT

Foster sits at the bar with his best friend, CLAUDIO, 30s, finance bro who's dressed in a slightly oversized suit, and is just a tiny bit dead inside.

CLAUDIO

(New York accent)

A date that starts at six and ends at seven-thirty is not a date.

FOSTER

Yeah, but--

CLAUDIO

-- And the fact that she said, "spending more time with you would be a waste"--

FOSTER

-- She said that with a glimmer in her eye though.

CLAUDIO

Glimmer??

FOSTER

Yeah. Little glimmer. I saw it.

CLAUDIO

Okay, but she ended with "thank you for not murdering me," which implies that you came across as a murderer.

FOSTER

No no, that was a call back.

CLAUDIO

A call back?

FOSTER

Yeah, to earlier when she asked me not to murder her at her office.

CLAUDIO

I rest my case, your honor.

Foster takes down his drink, motions for another from the BARTENDER.

CLAUDIO (CONT'D)

Don't change, Fost. This is who you are. This is what you're good at.

FOSTER

What if I'm sick of what I'm good at?
What if this girl is making me feel
something again?

CLAUDIO

"Feel something again??" What is
this, a fuckin' Hallmark movie? You
have what I long for everyday.
FREEDOM. Don't screw it up.

FOSTER

Terribly sorry for not considering
you.

CLAUDIO

You're forgiven. Okay, I should get
home before Shannon gets angry and
makes me go drape shopping with her
as revenge. See what I'm talking
about? That's the kind of sick shit I
gotta consider everyday. Don't become
me. Stay you.

EXT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Mallory says bye to Zack again, as he slips on his shoes and
hands her his rollerblades.

MALLORY

And if Bernardi messes with you
today? What's the plan?

ZACK

Punch him in the throat.

MALLORY

Well-- no-- okay-- first try to talk
to him. Stern. Not scared. If that
doesn't work, talk to a teacher. If
that doesn't work--

ZACK

Throat.

MALLORY

Sure. Stick up for yourself, but--

ZACK

-- I have dreams about murdering him.

MALLORY

Keep that between us. Have a good
day. Hug?

ZACK

You know that's not possible.

Mallory settles for the "eye heart you" pointing thing they do. Zack fake sneezes and does it back to her.

She watches him as he heads through the gate and becomes engulfed by the sea of STUDENTS.

INT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Zack is slammed up against the wall by MIKE BERNARDI, 10, but twice the size of Zack. Literally twice.

Bernardi gets in close, accompanied by a few LACKEYS.

BERNARDI

I told you the next time I saw you--

Bernardi doesn't even get to finish his sentence before Zack punches him in the throat.

Well, not exactly the throat. You see, Zack has no idea how to punch. In fact, it's very likely this is the first punch he's ever thrown. It more so connects with Bernardi's collarbone and causes his own fist to crumple.

ZACK

Ow.

BERNARDI

What the fuck? Was that a punch?

ZACK

I don't know--

BERNARDI

-- I'm going to beat you so bad
you're going to wish your mom had an
abortion.

ZACK

I'm pro-choice so that's fine.

Bernardi grabs his collar, ready to beat him.

ZACK (CONT'D)

I would appreciate it if you would
please enfranchise me.

BERNARDI

En- what?

ZACK
 E-n-f-r-a-n-c-h-i-s-e. Enfranchise.
 From the Old French *enfranchir*.
 Meaning "to set free."

With that, Bernardi reaches back to beat the shit out of him,
 but as he does, a TEACHER calls from down the hall.

TEACHER
 (fucking oblivious)
 Michael! Zackary! Come on, guys. That
 was the final bell.

Bernardi lets up. Smiles at Zack. Crazy look in his eye.

BERNARDI
 (whisper to Zack)
 A-b-o-r-t-something-something.
 Abortion. Meaning: I'm gonna fuck you
 up.

INT. PENN MUTUAL INSURANCE - MORNING

Mallory's at her desk taking off her rollerblades, switching
 to shoes.

As Chloe drops off some files on her desk, Mallory notices
 FOSTER casually stroll off the elevator.

MALLORY
 Oh my God, he found my office. He's
 actually come to murder me.

Chloe turns to see Foster.

CHLOE
 I don't know, Mal. He's pretty cute.
 He could murder me any time.

MALLORY
 You gotta hide me.

CHLOE
 I have a meeting.

MALLORY
 Screw your meeting.

CHLOE
 Maybe just give him a shot?

MALLORY
 What?? Why would I--

CHLOE

(whisper, in close)

Every time you tell a guy about your disease, they bail anyway. So why not just have fun with someone, and see where it goes?...

Chloe finishes this thought as Foster walks up. She politely nods and bails on Mallory, leaving the two of them.

FOSTER

So you sell insurance?

MALLORY

I do. I have to get back to work, so--

FOSTER

I actually need insurance.

MALLORY

Bullshit.

FOSTER

No for real. I don't have any, which is probably not smart.

Mallory debates what to say...

MALLORY

... What type of insurance would you want to procure?

FOSTER

What do you have?

MALLORY

All of them. Life, auto, home, umbrella. You name it.

FOSTER

I don't have a car. I rent my place. Don't know what "umbrella" is. So let's go with life.

MALLORY

Do you have heirs?

FOSTER

What?

MALLORY

Most people don't obtain life insurance when they don't have a spouse or heirs to pass the money on to. Who would you be passing this to if you were to die?

FOSTER

My... cousin.

MALLORY

Your cousin?

FOSTER

Yes. I want to make sure my cousin is taken care of.

She can see right through him, but two can play this game.

MALLORY

Fine. Might I recommend our Platinum policy? The premiums are insanely high, but your cousin will be handsomely rewarded in the event of your untimely demise.

FOSTER

That sounds lovely.

MALLORY

Estimated premium is \$1432.48 per month.

FOSTER

Oh wow. That's... super expensive.

MALLORY

Perfect, I'll start putting this together. I'll just need your ID.

He hands it to her.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

While we're here, you'll also probably want a robust umbrella policy. And renters insurance too. You save if you bundle.

FOSTER

Let's just start with the life insurance.

MALLORY

Your choice.

FOSTER
And one more date.

MALLORY
Aaannnd there it is.

FOSTER
I can't get you out of my head. There is a gravitational force yanking me towards you. And I mean that in the least creepy way possible.

MALLORY
There's no way to say what you just said in a non-creepy way.

FOSTER
You pick the place. I'll take you anywhere. Do anything you want.

MALLORY
Anything I want?...

FOSTER
Anything.

INT. CESSNA AIRPLANE, MID-AIR - DUSK

Mallory and Foster are about to jump out of a fucking PLANE.

Outfitted with proper jumpsuits, an INSTRUCTOR attached to each of their backs. She's ready to go. He's freaking out.

FOSTER
(yelling over the wind due
to the open door)
I just meant, like, a fancy
restaurant or something!

MALLORY
I like seeing how people react to
crazy situations! You can take me to
a fancy restaurant after we jump out
of this plane!

FOSTER
How bout you jump and I land with the
pilot and the rest of the plane?

She takes him in for a beat, studying him.

MALLORY
You're actually a cautious guy, huh?

FOSTER

I tend to be prudent and lean towards things that won't kill me, yeah.

MALLORY

Statistically there's a very low chance of dying in a skydiving accident.

FOSTER

Somehow that open door is rendering those statistics useless.

MALLORY'S INSTRUCTOR

Ready to go?

She gives her INSTRUCTOR a thumbs up. They shuffle to the edge. Foster's eyes are wide with panic.

MALLORY

See ya down there, ace!

And just like that, *poof!* She's gone.

Foster cautiously leans forward to see her becoming a tiny dot against the sky, hurdling towards the ground below.

FOSTER

Oh no--

Foster THROWS UP. And it's promptly sucked out the door.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SKYDIVING CENTER - DUSK

Mallory lands with her instructor. They detach from each other and she SCREAMS with joy, adrenaline coursing through her veins.

She then looks over to see a VAN pulling up. Foster gets out, clearly having not jumped.

She rushes over to him, heart racing.

MALLORY

Dude, that was amazing! I'm thinking so clearly right now!

FOSTER

I've heard near-death experiences can do that.

MALLORY

I feel like my blood is trying to jump out of my skin. In a good way.

FOSTER

Of course. How could blood jumping
out of your skin be bad?

She's so charged, she doesn't know what to do with herself.
So she GRABS HIM AND KISSES HIM PASSIONATELY. He takes it, no
idea what's going on.

Finally, after a looooong while, they come out of it.

MALLORY

Fuck, that's good. Sorry. Don't take
that the wrong way. I just felt like
I had to kiss someone and you're
standing here, so--

FOSTER

I get it. Happy to oblige.

MALLORY

Okay let's eat. I'm ready to fuck up
a steak.

INT. PETER LUGER'S, BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Mallory is moaning while going to town on a big bloody steak.

Foster's just taking her in, amused. Enamored.

FOSTER

You really don't care what anyone
thinks of you, huh?

MALLORY

You saying I look like a pig?

FOSTER

No-- it's just-- most women I take to
nice restaurants barely eat. Or they
eat very slowly and properly and--

MALLORY

So I'm not ladylike? I'm a monster--

FOSTER

-- Oh no, it's just, they're usually
on their phones or--

MALLORY

(laughing)

Look at you squirming. I'm not
offended. To be offended would mean I
cared what you thought of me.

FOSTER

That's what I find so refreshing
about you.

MALLORY

Okay, let's play-- What do you do for
work?

FOSTER

I created and sold a knock-off app.

MALLORY

... I have no idea what that means.

FOSTER

I have family in the Czech Republic
and I developed an app there.
Basically a knock-off Czech version
of Amazon.

MALLORY

When was this?

FOSTER

Like 12 years ago.

MALLORY

Wow. How old are you?

FOSTER

57. Why? Do I look younger? I knew
the botox was working.

They're both laughing, enjoying this.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

I skipped a year of college and did
this when I was about 20. It kinda
took off and then the real Amazon
bought me out.

MALLORY

For how much?

FOSTER

Oh, I don't really like to--

MALLORY

HOW MUCH BRO.

FOSTER

\$14.5 Million.

MALLORY

Holy shit.

FOSTER

It was a totally soul-sucking endeavor, but I made some money.

MALLORY

So what now? What do you do with your days?

FOSTER

I... golf. Sing--

MALLORY

You sing?

FOSTER

Not publicly or anything.

MALLORY

Why not?

FOSTER

I try to minimize my embarrassments.

MALLORY

And I assume you spend your nights doing the single guy thing, trying to plow through as many women as possible?

FOSTER

I wouldn't put it that way-- but, kinda.

MALLORY

Why kinda?

He collects his words carefully...

FOSTER

I was married once before. Didn't work out. Clearly. She ended it.

MALLORY

Shit. I'm sorry.

FOSTER

I loved her. Destiny.

MALLORY

Are you saying she was your destiny
or are you saying that her name was
Destiny and that she was a stripper?

FOSTER

Her name was Destiny. And yeah, I
felt like she was my destiny. She was
this earthy, heavenly, real in-the-
moment hippie type of person. I
thought we were gonna be together
forever, but... she had other ideas.

(beat, collecting)

I'll never let that happen again.

She nods, absorbs that. Sees him reliving the pain.

MALLORY

I think I should just tell you
something too. I usually wait a
little longer to tell guys this, but
I don't want to string you on.

FOSTER

Oh shit, you're married, aren't you?
You're still with your kid's dad.
This is an affair. I'm mid-affair,
aren't I?

MALLORY

Uh, no. Not at all. I, um-- have
this...

She's staring into his eyes. Enjoying her time with him. Not
wanting this to end because of her next words. So...

MALLORY (CONT'D)

I just... I don't like to get
physical til later into a
relationship.

FOSTER

Oh sure. That's cool. We can wait as
long as you want. No presh-- that
means pressure. I don't know why I
said it like that.

She smiles, appreciating his response, really connecting with
him and how goofy he is in this moment.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MALLORY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mallory rummages for her keys outside her apartment door,
while Foster stands there, hoping for an invite inside.

MALLORY
Oh, that's the end of the date.
You're free to go.

FOSTER
Right. Sure--

Just then, ZACK opens the door. Stares at his mom. And then at Foster.

ZACK
I can already tell this guy sucks.

MALLORY
Foster, this is my son, Zack.

FOSTER
What's up, man?

Foster puts out his hand to shake. Which Zack ignores. So Foster turns it into a high-five, which eventually morphs into a fist bump. None of which Zack reciprocates.

ZACK
You seeing this guy, mom? What's he doing with his hand? Like, obviously, you can see that he sucks, right?

MALLORY
Easy Zack. He doesn't suck.

FOSTER
Thank you.

ZACK
You sure? Cause I feel like you could do better. We could all do better.

Foster notices some Pokémon cards in Zack's hand...

FOSTER
Charizard vs. Blastoise. Who you got?

Zack studies Foster, debating how to respond.

ZACK
Depends on battle strategy. If I'm looking for a powerful offensive with a diverse movepool, Charizard all day. On the other hand, if I'm valuing defensive capabilities and a strong counter to Fire-type opponents, Blastoise is the play.

FOSTER
Go on, young king. I see you.

MALLORY
(to Foster)
You understand what he just said?

FOSTER
Of course.

ZACK
Yeah mom, only a moron wouldn't
understand what I said.

MALLORY
On that note, have a good night,
Foster.

She heads inside with Zack, closing the door behind her.

ZACK
I actually like that guy. He's got
that rizz.

MALLORY
Rizz? Is rizz good?

ZACK
It's very good, mom.

MALLORY
What does it mean?

ZACK
I don't know. But it's very good.

She smiles at the thought of Zack connecting with Foster...

INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

Mallory and Chloe are in locust pose, sweating, looking miserable, surrounded by a class of yoga practitioners. They "yoga whisper" to each other.

CHLOE
So you had an amazing time with him
and you're also not sure if you
should ever see him again?

MALLORY
He's so much fun. And charming. And
goofy. And I'm scared we'll get all
the way down the line and he'll bail.

CHLOE

I'm not calling you stupid. That's not what I'm doing right now. But what you just said is the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

YOGA INSTRUCTOR

Let's bring our feet down, arch our backs and go into Cobra.

MALLORY

(re: yoga)

I hate this. This is torture. Boring torture. Why do people do this?

CHLOE

It's good for you.

MALLORY

It smells like vag in here.

Chloe opens her mouth to rebut, but can't--

CHLOE

Look Mal, I get that you're trying to find this person for you and Zack as times get-- might get-- tougher. But if you're not having fun along the way, what's the point?

Mallory takes that in, absorbing what she's saying...

YOGA INSTRUCTOR

Release all that negative energy as we move into our side plank...

Mallory falls while going into her side plank.

MALLORY

Okay I'm done. Meet you outside.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Mallory and Foster are at the Knick game. Their seats aren't court side, but just a few rows back. So still fancy.

He's got two MASSIVE BEERS in hand.

FOSTER

You sure you don't want one of these \$24 beers?

MALLORY

Tempting, but I usually try to avoid
troughs of Bud Light.

FOSTER

I can't believe you called.

MALLORY

Well, I didn't have the worst time
with you and my friend thinks I
should be giving you a "real chance,"
whatever that means.

FOSTER

Sounds like an amazing friend.

MALLORY

She has horrible taste in men.

FOSTER

Thank God for that.

MALLORY

This is your idea of an "adventurous,
once in a lifetime date?"

FOSTER

I know that's what you requested, and
I feel like I took the spirit of the
note and ran with it.

MALLORY

Should we run onto the court? Make it
more memorable?

FOSTER

Be my guest.

MALLORY

You wouldn't follow me?

FOSTER

No.

MALLORY

Really? If I said, "in order to get
another date, you gotta run on the
court right now," you wouldn't do it?

FOSTER

Nope.

MALLORY

That's pathetic.

FOSTER

I never claimed to be not pathetic.

MALLORY

You wouldn't really leave me hanging.

FOSTER

You're right. I wouldn't. I'd stop you. And kiss you. And hope the kiss was so life-changing that you'd completely forget about the whole running on the court thing.

Just as she takes off her jacket to put him to the test, music starts blasting throughout the arena.

The JUMBOTRON cameras are highlighting fans DANCING in their seats to something cheesy like "BE MY LOVER" by La Bouche.

Mallory gets up and starts dancing like a TRUE MANIAC, trying to get the cameras' attention.

She notices everyone on the Jumbotron is either a little kid or a couple.

MALLORY

You gotta dance or they won't pick us.

FOSTER

You're doing great for both of us.

MALLORY

Get your ass up!

He chugs a large amount of one of his beers and reluctantly stands up, awkwardly dancing to the music.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

Ohhh, you're a horrible dancer. Now I get why you didn't want to stand up.

FOSTER

It's one of the reasons, yeah.

MALLORY

You're thinking too much. Let go.

They're both dancing. She's wild and carefree. He's... not. But at least he's kind of trying now.

And as they're getting into it, THEY LAND ON THE JUMBOTRON.

She screams with joy! He does too!

While still dancing, she loses her balance, as if her leg just stopped working again, and trips forward into the row in front of them.

As she's about to biff it hard, Foster GRABS HER WRIST and spins her around back up into his body, as if it was somehow all planned...

... and then, while in that position, he KISSES HER with a passion that she's honestly never felt before.

This is such a perfect kiss that the jumbotron camera doesn't cut away to someone else.

It just holds on them. And the WHOLE ARENA is CHEERING for the two of them as they kiss.

Finally, after a loooooong time, they come out of the kiss.

They raise their hands, thanking their fans. Bowing. Nodding with appreciation before sitting down.

FOSTER

You okay? You really lost your balance there.

MALLORY

I'm as graceful as a baby giraffe.

He smiles at that, leans in and kisses her again. And she takes it, smitten...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CONEY ISLAND, BUMPER CARS - DAY

They're kissing while sitting in the same bumper car. They don't even care that they keep getting rammed...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE TAIL SKI RESORT - DAY

... Now they're kissing on the slopes. She's snowboarding, he's skiing.

Pulling out further, we see they're at the top of the BUNNY SLOPES.

They come out of the kiss and she starts snowboarding down the hill, staying with Foster, who's barely moving, not a good skier, skis crossed in front of him.

Within a few seconds, he face-plants.

She glides over, helping him up. In the process, he ends up pulling her down as well.

And they lay in the snow, KISSING again...

EXT. WEST VILLAGE - NIGHT

Mallory and Foster stroll the streets of the West Village after dinner, loose and tipsy.

MALLORY

What about that guy?

She points to an obvious MAFIA-LOOKING GUY in a leather jacket, smoking a cigarette outside an Italian restaurant.

FOSTER

He's a licensed family therapist.
Writing a book on the fall of the
nuclear family.

MALLORY

Totally.

FOSTER

What about him?

Foster points to a HIPSTER GUY wearing a little beanie, airpods in his ears, bobbing his head to music.

MALLORY

Jets fan. Season ticket holder. He
knows all the players and their
stats.

FOSTER

I can't unsee it now.

MALLORY

Her?

Mallory points at a SOCIALITE LOOKING WOMAN with an ASSISTANT hurrying behind her, carrying a bunch of BAGS from high-end clothing stores.

FOSTER

Manager of a local Starbucks and that
woman following her is her long lost
daughter. They just reconnected and
it's going super well so far.

They're laughing at this little game they've made up as they turn the corner and walk up to Foster's apartment building.

They linger outside, trying to figure out next moves.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
I don't want to pressure you into--

MALLORY
-- Let's go upstairs.

FOSTER
Oh okay cool.

INT. FOSTER'S LOFT APARTMENT - NIGHT

They enter the open loft, charged energy between them.
Sharing glances.

FOSTER
I'd give you the tour but you're
basically seeing it all.

She doesn't care about the tour. She's not even looking
around. She's just zeroed in on him.

She gets closer, pressing her body against his.

And they start kissing... as they move to the bed,
frantically throwing clothes off.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
You want some music?

MALLORY
I don't fucking care.

He grabs his phone from his pocket, tapping around, playing
something on his wall speakers...

Vance Joy's "Red Eye" starts playing...

More clothes are coming off as they crash onto the bed,
making out like teenagers...

He takes off his pants... and then she rips off his boxers,
immediately going down on him...

His eyes roll back... but after a few beats, she comes up,
slipping out of her underwear...

He kisses her passionately... moving down her neck, breasts,
stomach... all the way down...

... Her neck arches back... not having felt this good in a
long time...

MALLORY (CONT'D)
(heavy breath)
Do you have--

FOSTER
-- yeah--

He comes up and reaches into his bedside table, grabbing a condom, putting it on.

She wastes no time, pulling him into her... rocking... perfectly in sync...

... All the tension in her life... all the pressure she feels, melting away, if only for just this moment...

... he sits up and kisses her as she rides... building momentum...

And we're jumping into cuts of them making love... passionate, animalistic, but never losing that connection... as if puzzle pieces born to fit together...

The song builds as they do, climaxing in a way that honestly most of us only dream about...

And then we find them laying there, drenched in sweat, catching their breath.

He opens his mouth to say something, but nothing comes out. There's nothing to say that wasn't said by what they just experienced...

She feels her heart. It's racing. Takes some deep breaths, trying to catch it.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
I need to get in better shape. Take some spin classes or something.

She smiles, laughs. Still catching her breath.

MALLORY
Be right back.

She gives him a kiss. Stands up, heading for the **BATHROOM**.

Drinking some water from the sink.

Taking deep breaths. Or at least trying to.

She's having a hard time. Feeling light-headed--

-- Her eyes start to get heavy and she PASSES OUT-- hitting her head on the floor.

From the bed, Foster hears a THUD in the bathroom.

FOSTER

Mal?...

Nothing. He heads over to the bathroom. Opens the door to find Mallory passed out on the floor.

He darts down, cradling her head.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Mallory??? MALLORY????

He pops up and sprints to grab his phone off the bedside table, dialing 911 frantically--

PRE-LAP -- *Sirens wail...*

EXT. FOSTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mallory is being loaded into the back of an AMBULANCE.

PARAMEDIC

Are you family, sir?

FOSTER

What?

PARAMEDIC

Family only in here.

FOSTER

Yes. Yeah, I'm family. Sorry.

They shut the doors and we crane up and out as the ambulance enters the chaos of New York City Friday night traffic...

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Foster holds her hand while she rests in a hospital bed, head bandaged. She looks at him and smiles.

MALLORY

Zack?

FOSTER

Damon's watching him.

MALLORY

What'd you tell him?

FOSTER

That you're totally fine. You had a little spill and you'll be home soon.

MALLORY

I clearly didn't want you to find out this way.

He looks confused. She can tell he still doesn't know.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

When I was a junior in college, I started having some hand weakness. Tried to ignore it. It got worse over the years and eventually I was diagnosed with something called Friedreich's Ataxia. I assume you haven't heard of it.

He shakes his head, "no."

MALLORY (CONT'D)

It's a rare, degenerative disease.

FOSTER

This is what you were going to tell me before?

She nods.

MALLORY

I'm enrolled in a clinical trial. It's been working so far. If it continues to, I could have a relatively normal life. But they're not sure if it'll work yet. I could live decades. Or a few years. Or there's even a small chance that the trial hurts me more than helps and I have even less time. But it seems worth the risk if it gives me more time with my boy.

She's welling up thinking about her son. Shakes it off.

FOSTER

So all the falls--

MALLORY

That's part of it. It effects the muscles, including the heart. But I'm also a naturally awkward human being.

FOSTER

No argument.

MALLORY

I'm looking for a partner, Foster. Someone that'll be there for me for the good times and the bad. I've taken care of all the financials. Been planning that part for a while. But I need to know that my son will be okay. That he'll have someone good in his life to be there for him. The thought of dying without knowing he'll be taken care of is unbearable.

FOSTER

Where's his dad?

MALLORY

Not remotely interested in a life with us. He's a horrible person. He conned me. In more ways than one. Bailed on me while I was pregnant. If I don't find a custodian and something happens to me, Zack would go to him. I can't let that happen.

Foster opens his mouth to ask another question--

MALLORY (CONT'D)

(ahead of him)

My father died in a car accident when I was a kid. Mom died of... this. Zack doesn't have the gene mutation, thank God. Only good thing his father gave him.

(beat)

I've thought about Damon and Chloe. But Damon has zero interest in raising a kid. He's up for the occasional babysitting when I'm out of options, but that's about it. And Chloe... I love her, but she's a mess. She's broke. Horrible with money. Also doesn't want kids. I came home recently and the kitchen was on fire. And that wasn't the first time. I've come home to multiple fires while Chloe was in charge.

(beat)

I've never truly been in love. So if I can fall in love and find someone who also loves my son, I'd be the happiest sick person on the planet.

Foster nods, taking it all in. Holding her hand tight.

FOSTER
Maybe you'll beat it. Maybe the trial-

MALLORY
I'll let you think what you want.
I'll also hold no ill feelings if you
want to bolt out that door...

Foster carefully weighs how to respond.

FOSTER
It's gonna take a lot more than
Fredrick's Attachia to scare me away
from you.

MALLORY
Friedreich's Ataxia. And it could get
ugly.

FOSTER
Ugly's my middle name.

MALLORY
What is your middle name for real?

FOSTER
Jonathan. I hate it.

MALLORY
Foster Jonathan Keating. Yeah that
doesn't roll at all.

FOSTER
See what I'm saying? Horrible name.

They both laugh. She takes him in, thankful he's still here.

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT - SUNRISE

Mallory comes through the door, with a CANE now, helped by
Foster, who's spotting her.

Zack's eating cereal at the table. When he sees his mom, he
bolts up and runs over to her, hugging her tightly.

MALLORY
My boy. I don't remember the last
time we had a good hug. I like this.

Damon comes in from the kitchen, looking like complete shit.

DAMON

He couldn't sleep. Neither of us
slept. Because he couldn't sleep.

ZACK

Why'd you fall? Were you
rollerblading?

MALLORY

Ha. No. I just... tripped.

ZACK

You're so c-l-u-m-s-y.

MALLORY

I know.

Zack's still hugging her, not letting go.

ZACK

I don't want to go to school today. I
just wanna stay with you.

MALLORY

You gotta go, kid. I'm gonna rest a
bit and maybe I can pick you up.

ZACK

You're not taking me?

MALLORY

I was thinking Foster could...

FOSTER

Yeah man, we could talk Pokémon and
shit-- stuff.

Zack weighs his options.

ZACK

Fine, I guess.

DAMON

Oh thank God. I'm going to bed for a
month.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - MORNING

Foster walks Zack to school. It's cold. Wet. But neither
seems to mind.

ZACK

I like not having to rollerblade to school. But I also kinda miss it. Is that b-i-z-a-r-r-e? Bizarre.

FOSTER

Why'd you just spell that word?

ZACK

It's something I do.

FOSTER

You do that at school?

ZACK

Yes.

FOSTER

Yeah don't do that.

ZACK

You think it bothers people?

FOSTER

Just a hunch, but 100% yes.

ZACK

Probably why Bernardi wants beat me up all the time.

FOSTER

That's very likely.

Foster notices Zack is in his head about that.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

To answer your question, no man, it's not bizarre to not like rollerblading but also miss doing it with your mom. Some things in life are not one or the other. They can be both.

ZACK

Okay pop quiz: who has the opposite Pokédex number as Pikachu?

FOSTER

Oh, there was like no segue there whatsoever. Are you testing me?

ZACK

Yeah, that's why I said "pop quiz." You clearly want to freak up my mom-

FOSTER

-- Freak up?

ZACK

I can imagine a guy learning a few things about Pokémon to get in good with a lady's Pokémon-obsessed kid, so I gotta be sure.

FOSTER

You think I'd do that?

ZACK

Don't know. I'm not saying you're sus, but I have to be sure. It's my mom and all.

Foster smiles.

FOSTER

You're a good kid.

ZACK

You're stalling.

FOSTER

"Meowth" is what you're looking for.

Zack studies him.

ZACK

Very good. You passed. For now.

FOSTER

Oh, will there be more?

ZACK

Maybe. We'll see.

They walk up to the school. Unsure how to say goodbye.

FOSTER

Well... bye. Go learn stuff.

Foster puts his hand out to shake. Zack rolls his eyes, heads through the gate for the school building.

Foster watches him go. And while he does, he notices a group of kids, led by MIKE BERNARDI, siding up to Zack, bumping into him. Clearly messing with him.

Foster continues to watch. Then decides to casually slip through the gate, following from a safe distance.

INT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Packed halls. Bernardi and his lackeys surround Zack.

BERNARDI

You gonna spell at me today, you
little b-a-b-y?

ZACK

No, I think my days of spelling at
people are over.

BERNARDI

You gonna tell on me for messing with
you? Call your little rollerblader
mommy? You guys too p-o-o-r to afford
a cab?

ZACK

DON'T TALK ABOUT MY MOM!

Zack lunges at Bernardi's throat. But Bernardi's big and his
friends are too. So they hold Zack back, giving Bernardi a
moment to quickly punch him in the NUTS. Yes, the nuts.

Zack yelps, goes down hard. This is when FOSTER runs up on
the scene, stepping between them.

FOSTER

What the hell are you doing??

BERNARDI

Who the fuck are you, old man??

FOSTER

I'm not old. I'm in my 30s-- early
30s. It's irrelevant. What makes you
think you can treat Zack like this??

BERNARDI

Charles Darwin.

FOSTER

Charles Darwin?? Do you even know who
that is?

BERNARDI

Yeah, we just learned about him. He
said whoever's stronger gets to fuck
up whoever's weaker. Here, I'll show
you.

Bernardi tries to push Foster. But Foster shoves him back. And Bernardi falls, flopping onto the hallway floor, immediately CRYING.

FOSTER
Oh God. Oh shit. I'm sorry, kid.

PRINCIPAL (O.S.)
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU???

They all turn to find PRINCIPAL YOST standing there...

INT. PRINCIPAL YOST'S OFFICE - DAY

Foster sits across from Principal Yost, former military, current hard ass.

PRINCIPAL YOST
Just so I understand, you're not at all related to Zackary?

FOSTER
Uh, not technically, no sir.

PRINCIPAL YOST
Safe to say, you can never step foot on school property again.

FOSTER
I was just trying to--

PRINCIPAL YOST
Mr. Keating, you pushed a child--

FOSTER
-- He tripped after I barely *nudged* him in order to protect--

PRINCIPAL YOST
-- That's something I could call the authorities about. But you got on school property with ease somehow, which reflects poorly on me. So I'm willing to give you a warning if you promise to never set foot on campus again.

FOSTER
Sure, no problem. I don't even really like kids.

PRINCIPAL YOST
That is abundantly clear.

INT. JOSIE WOODS PUB - DAY

Not many people here considering it's 10am on a weekday.

Foster's at the bar alone, taking down a Jack on the rocks. Agitated. On edge.

Suddenly, his cell rings. Checks the number, sees it's MALLORY. Hesitates... before finally answering.

Mallory's in her BEDROOM, getting dressed. INTERCUT.

FOSTER
(into phone)
Hey.

MALLORY
(into phone)
Where are you?

FOSTER
I stopped in at Josie Woods for--

MALLORY
-- Stay there.

She hangs up. Foster takes down his drink. Motions to the bartender for another.

INT. JOSIE WOODS PUB - DAY

Mallory uses her cane and holds the railing as she comes down the stairs of this basement pub. She then beelines it over to Foster at the bar.

MALLORY
Why am I getting a call from Zack's school telling me a man I'm associated with named Foster BEAT UP A CHILD.

FOSTER
I wouldn't say I "beat him up."

MALLORY
You can't fight for Zack! We need to give him the tools and let him succeed or fail on his own.

FOSTER
I have no clue how to raise a kid. I don't know what the fuck I'm doing. I didn't sign up for this.

MALLORY

... And there's the response I was waiting for. Honestly came faster than I expected from you.

FOSTER

It's a lot, Mal.

MALLORY

You knew I had a kid!

FOSTER

Yeah but I didn't know I was in the running to raise him!

Foster immediately regrets saying that but knows he can't take it back. Instead, he takes his drink down, motions for another.

Mallory takes him in, debating her next words...

MALLORY

I don't think I ever realized how much you drink until I saw it at 10:30 in the morning.

FOSTER

I drink when I'm stressed.

MALLORY

Thankfully life isn't stressful.

FOSTER

You dropped a bomb on me. This is how I cope.

MALLORY

I'll pick him up from school today. And take him from now on. Sorry for dropping a "bomb" on you.

FOSTER

Mallory--

She turns and leaves him there at the bar.

EXT. EL DORADO BUMPER CARS, CONEY ISLAND - DAY

Mallory watches Zack crash into people while driving a bumper car. She makes eye contact with Zack. He waves her over, telling her to join him.

JUMP TO:

Now Mallory's driving a bumper car as well. They're both laughing, crashing into each other and other drivers.

Wild and carefree. Getting out all their anger at the world.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER PARK - DUSK

Mallory and Zack sit on their bench overlooking the Hudson. Sun hanging low...

ZACK

Maybe we should just play the lotto until we hit the jackpot.

MALLORY

And what would we do if we won?

ZACK

You'd quit your job. I'd quit school. Do whatever we want all the time.

MALLORY

You don't think you'd need to continue your education?

ZACK

No, I feel like I've learned everything I need to know.

She can't help but smile at that.

ZACK (CONT'D)

You could get rid of that cane and get a fancy motorized wheelchair like Professor X and just ball out. At least until you're better.

She looks down at him, collects her words carefully.

MALLORY

I might need the cane for a while.

ZACK

Did you break your leg or something?

MALLORY

No, I just need it for support.

ZACK

Why?

She hesitates again, so scared to tell him the truth.

MALLORY
... Just until I fully heal up.

He nods. Accepting that for now.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Did you compete in your class
spelling bee?

ZACK
Yeah. I won. Easily. Now I have to
compete in the city-wide competition.

MALLORY
You'll win that too.

ZACK
I'm not going. I don't want to go on
stage. The class one was hard enough.
But I could do it cause it was just
my class. I can't do it with a crowd.
I'll get sick.

MALLORY
Zack, my boy. You only live half a
life if you live it scared.

He absorbs that. As they both watch the sun dip just below
the horizon line...

INT. KETTLE OF FISH - NIGHT

West Village watering hole. Foster's at the bar by himself,
taking down the hard stuff, motioning for another.

As he gets a fresh pour, he notices a young woman down the
bar with some FRIENDS staring in his direction.

He looks away, thanking his bartender with a nod. Then
glances back over to find her still zoning in on him.

JUMP TO:

This girl, KAYLA, 20s, has now come over to sit next to him.
They're mid-conversation and she's bubbly and confident and
everything you look for when randomly meeting someone at a
bar.

She's laughing at something he said. A bit too hard. He's
smiling through it, not really wanting to talk to her but not
knowing how to tell her to go away.

KAYLA
Have you always been so funny?

FOSTER

Yeah I've always been very hilarious.

She laughs again, takes him in, really studying him.

KAYLA

What's your sign?

FOSTER

My *sign*? Is that a real question?

KAYLA

Yeah.

FOSTER

Um. I think I'm a Gemini--

KAYLA

That's what I was gonna say. Total Gemini vibes.

FOSTER

Is that good?

KAYLA

It's not not good.

FOSTER

(desperately wanting to
change the subject)

You said you're an "influencer?" Who do you influence?

KAYLA

So I was posting my workouts and the numbers were mid. But then I started doing this thing where I just put the camera behind me while on the stairmaster and it took off.

FOSTER

So you get people to exercise?

KAYLA

No, I just think people like looking at my dumpy while climbing steps.

FOSTER

And you make a living doing this?

KAYLA
I've got like four-hundred thousand
followers on insta and my friend
Kylie was like, "you should start an
OF"--

FOSTER
-- OF?

KAYLA
OnlyFans.

FOSTER
Right.

KAYLA
So I tried it and now I've got about
ten thousand subs. \$15 a month each.

FOSTER
You make \$150,000 a month?

KAYLA
Yeah.

FOSTER
What kind of videos do you do on
OnlyFans?

KAYLA
Most guys like my anal stuff.

He literally chokes on his drink when she says that.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
But that's not all I do.

FOSTER
Oh, I--

KAYLA
-- I do oral stuff too. Feet stuff.
Star Wars stuff.

FOSTER
Star Wars stuff?

KAYLA
Light sabers.

FOSTER
Right, of course.

KAYLA

If you're down, we could swing by my place. Set up some lights, bust out the camera...

FOSTER

Oh, hmm. I'm going to say... no.

KAYLA

All good. I'm gonna be honest, I came over here cause I thought you were kinda cute and would be good to do something on OnlyFans with but now I'm bored.

FOSTER

Understandable.

She gets up, heads back to her friends, but then stops, turns back to him, as if to impart a final piece of wisdom--

KAYLA

Don't forget to subscribe.

EXT. BLACKTOP - DAY

A street hockey rink on the corner of Houston and 6th Ave. Foster and Claudio are on the same team in the midst of a intense pick-up game.

FOSTER

I think about her all the time... but maybe it just got too complicated. I mean, I can't take care of a kid. I AM a kid.

CLAUDIO

This is very true.

ANOTHER HOCKEY PLAYER

Would you two shut the fuck up and focus?!

FOSTER

(ignoring him)

And her disease. What if it gets really bad?...

CLAUDIO

What if *this*. What if *that*. There's a million fuckin what ifs. You love this girl? That trumps all. Be with her. Be there *for her*. Fight for it.

(MORE)

CLAUDIO (CONT'D)
The fact that you didn't hook up with
that light saber girl is a big sign.

ANOTHER HOCKEY PLAYER
Seriously, we're getting killed
because of you two!

FOSTER
I thought you said you were
miserable?

CLAUDIO
I am miserable. But I wouldn't trade
it for anything in the world...

Claudio steals the puck, dekes the goalie and scores.

CLAUDIO (CONT'D)
(to the complaining
player)
There. You happy now??

EXT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Mallory drops Zack off at school, cane in hand. They do the quick pretend sneeze/"eye heart you" pointing thing to each other. As Zack is about to head away:

MALLORY
Don't let Bernardi mess with you.

Zack puts a fist. She sends one back.

INT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

As Zack enters the school, Principal Yost sides up to him.

PRINCIPAL YOST
I had a talk with Mr. Bernardi and
his parents. He's not going to mess
with you anymore.

ZACK
Yeah I'm sure that talk will work
wonders for me.

They get to Zack's classroom.

PRINCIPAL YOST
Study hard. I'll follow you around
for the next week or so. Just to be
sure Michael keeps his word.

ZACK
Looking forward to that.

Yost can't sense the sarcasm so he moves on.

We follow Zack as he enters his CLASSROOM and takes a seat.

A beat later, Bernardi enters the room with his friends. As he passes Zack, he leans down and whispers with a smile.

BERNARDI
This Friday. After school. I'm gonna
m-u-r-d-e-r you.

Zack stares into his eyes, terrified.

EXT. MALLORY'S OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Mallory makes her way up to the front of her office building to find FOSTER standing there, FLOWERS in hand.

MALLORY
Are you serious?

FOSTER
I've decided to quit drinking.

MALLORY
(incredulous)
Oh yeah? Just like that?

FOSTER
I'm tapering. Gonna quit.

MALLORY
Spoken like a true alcoholic.

FOSTER
I started the steps.

MALLORY
Glad those have a 100% success rate.

FOSTER
I'm trying, Mal. I'm willing to do
whatever I can to show you I care
about you and that I'm a good,
reliable person.

She softens. Grabs the flowers. Smells them.

MALLORY
You get these at the grocery store?

FOSTER

I did.

MALLORY

You really want to be there for me
and my kid?

FOSTER

I do.

MALLORY

Cause I'd understand if you wanted to
bail. I didn't tell you about this
when we first met. Hell, I'd probably
jump ship too. I just ask that if you
bail, do it now, not after we've
grown even closer. I can't do that to
my heart. Or my son's.

FOSTER

I won't bail. I might not always know
what to say or do, but I'll be there
no matter what. I care about you. I
love you.

He gets in close and kisses her. She absorbs it.

MALLORY

This all scares me so much.

FOSTER

You're not alone. The thing with
Destiny-- the reason we split-- we
wanted kids, but we couldn't get
pregnant. And it was so frustrating.

(beat)

Then one day, I found birth control
pills hidden under a loose floorboard
in our place. I confronted her and
she admitted it. She didn't want kids
but didn't know how to tell me.

MALLORY

Holy shit. I get why you're scared.
But you don't have to worry...
there's no chance I'll ever have kids
with you.

That makes him laugh. They kiss, so happy to be in each
other's airspace.

FOSTER

What do you want going forward? How
do you want to spend your time?

She takes a beat to really think about that.

MALLORY

I just want to live. Be with Zack and my friends... and you. And LIVE.

FOSTER

That, we can do. Shall we?

He puts his arm out to escort her away.

MALLORY

Oh no, I have to go to work.

FOSTER

Right.

MALLORY

Big meeting today.

FOSTER

Of course.

MALLORY

But maybe tonight?

FOSTER

Yes. Perfect. After this important meeting, WE WILL LIVE.

INT. PLANET ROSE, ALPHABET CITY - NIGHT

Lower east side dive karaoke bar. Year-round Christmas lights strewn about the place. Small. Cramped. Heavenly.

Mallory and Foster occupy a booth with Damon, Chloe and Zack. Yes, Zack.

Damon and Chloe sip cocktails while Zack motions for the BARTENDER.

ZACK

Another Coke please!

The bartender can't hear him.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Unbelievable.

FOSTER

How'd you get him in here??

MALLORY

I told the bouncer I was dying.

FOSTER

Nice.

THE WOMAN RUNNING THE KARAOKE steps on stage as someone finishes an excruciating rendition of SHALLOW from A STAR IS BORN.

WOMAN RUNNING KARAOKE NIGHT

Wow... that was... a thing that happened... to all of us. Okay, next up, FOSTERRRR!

MALLORY

You're going to sing?

FOSTER

You wanted to live? Well, you haven't lived until you've seen me embarrass myself on a stage.

She smiles, loving this fearless version of him.

He steps on stage and the first chords of **The Calling's "Wherever You Will Go"** start to play.

MALLORY

Oh no.

DAMON

Oh yes.

CHLOE

He's not really gonna...

ZACK

What the hell is this?

After the initial chords, Foster comes in emulating the soothing, deep vocals of lead singer Alex Band.

And holy shit, he's good? He's perfect? No question mark. He's fantastic. He sounds *exactly* like the real song.

Mallory's eyes widen in shock. Same with the rest of them.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Seriously, what is this shit?

Everyone ignores the boy. This is from their childhood. And they fucking love it.

Foster then motions for Mallory to join him on stage. She shakes her head, "No. This is *your* moment."

But he insists, hopping down from the stage, still singing, and grabs her hand, helping her up ON STAGE.

They're now on stage together, and although this song is most certainly not a duet, they're both singing their hearts out.

Foster, again, pitch perfect. And Mallory, not remotely. But she doesn't care. And neither does he.

They build to a crescendo, looking into each other's eyes. Fully connecting.

Chloe and Damon are filming it all on their phones.

And Zack is watching his mom, smiling. Happy for her to have this moment. Happy that Foster is giving it to her.

Watching what it looks like to be BRAVE and get on stage.

And as they come into the end of the song, Mallory stops singing, allowing Foster to finish the song in a solo, taking him in. So thankful to have him in her life in this moment.

When the song ends, the crowd erupts in applause. Zack's hollering for his mom. They all are.

The Woman Who Runs the Karaoke jumps back on stage.

WOMAN RUNNING KARAOKE NIGHT

Holy shit! That was fire! That
deserves shots, amiright?

She's got three shot glasses. Hands one to Foster and Mallory.

Mallory declines. Foster hesitates, but also declines, handing it back.

WOMAN RUNNING KARAOKE NIGHT (CONT'D)

Fuck it, more for me! Let's gooooo!

As Foster and Mallory head back to their seats:

MALLORY

That was amazing. Thank you.

FOSTER

You don't have to thank me. I'm doing
it for me too. There's a lot of
selfishness going on over here.

She smiles, takes her seat next to Zack.

ZACK

Foster, that was amazing. And mom,
your voice is dog water.

MALLORY

Awww, I have no idea what that means
so I'll take it as a compliment.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Mallory's sitting on the exam table, swinging her legs
nervously.

Foster's with her, sitting on the little round chair with
wheels that doctors usually sit on.

MALLORY

You didn't have to come. I'm just
getting a shot for the trial. Few
questions and I'm gone.

FOSTER

I don't mind. Plus, you asked me, so
I felt obligated...

MALLORY

That's true, it was a test. You
passed. Good job.

Just then, Dr. Alemzadeh enters. She's followed by a NURSE
(DENISE) who's preparing a SHOT.

DR. ALEMZADEH

(to Foster)
You're in my chair.

FOSTER

(getting up)
Oh sorry.

DR. ALEMZADEH

I'm kidding, buddy.

FOSTER

(sitting back down)
Oh, ha, got me.

DR. ALEMZADEH

No but seriously, I need to sit
there.

Foster waits to see if she's joking. She's not. Foster gets
up again and Alemzadeh takes the seat.

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)
(to Mallory about Foster)
Who's this guy?

MALLORY
(looking at Foster)
My... Foster-- boyfriend

DR. ALEMZADEH
Your foster boyfriend?

MALLORY
My boyfriend. Named Foster.

FOSTER
Hi.

DR. ALEMZADEH
(moving on)
So your labs came back. Everything
looks good.

MALLORY
Yeah? Good?

DR. ALEMZADEH
Nothing concerning yet. So we can
continue the trial.

MALLORY
So it's still working?

DR. ALEMZADEH
We think so. It's early. Some
patients have had to stop the trial
due to adverse reactions, but I'm not
seeing that in you yet.

MALLORY
You keep saying "yet."

DR. ALEMZADEH
I just mean it hasn't happened, but
it could. But it also might not. I
hesitate to get your hopes up, but
we're continuing to see signs of
stalling degeneration. Again, very
early. And trial results can be
fluid. But this is positive.

MALLORY
I'll take it.

DR. ALEMZADEH
You should.

Mallory and Dr. Alemzadeh high five.

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)
Denise is going to give you your shot
now. We'll see you in two weeks. Nice
to meet you, Foster boyfriend.

Foster smiles. Gives Mallory a deep kiss as soon as Alemzadeh
is out of the room.

Denise stands there watching them kiss, awkwardly waiting to
give Mallory the shot.

INT. MALATESTA TRATTORIA - DAY

It's the holidays. So it's bright and cheery in this fine
West Village establishment.

Mallory and Chloe sit across from each other, each with some
exquisite pasta in front of them.

CHLOE
He's coming to doctor's visits now??
You need to drop everything and marry
this guy.

MALLORY
I figured he'd make up an excuse to
not come. I'm trying to figure out
what his game is.

CHLOE
His *game*?? Mal, not everyone is a
piece of shit. Foster's handsome and
rich and probably has a very healthy
cock-- does he have a healthy cock?

Mallory just takes an extra long sip of her drink, pleading
the fifth.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna take that as a yes. Point
is, he's not scared off by your
disease. He loves your son--

MALLORY
He is really great with Zack.

CHLOE
Marry this fool. Now.

MALLORY

He's been married. He said he'd never do it again.

CHLOE

At least try. If you don't, I will.

They both laugh at that.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

(while laughing)

I'm not kidding.

EXT. CHELSEA PREP - DAY

Foster and Zack walk home from school.

ZACK

Where's my mom?

FOSTER

She was feeling a little tired so she asked me to pick you up.

ZACK

Is she okay?

FOSTER

Oh yeah, totally.

ZACK

... Do you know how to fight?

FOSTER

What?

ZACK

Like, if you were in a fight, could you hold your own or would you get your ass kicked?

FOSTER

Depends on who I was fighting. I boxed a little when I was younger, but that was like 15 years ago.

ZACK

Can you teach me? I have to learn by Friday otherwise I'm gonna get murdered.

FOSTER

Friday is tomorrow.

ZACK

Yeah...

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DUSK

Zack sets his bag down. Foster starts bouncing on his toes.

FOSTER

Do this like me. Gotta be light on your feet.

Zack is having a hard time doing this simple thing.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Okay, we don't have much time and I need to get you home for dinner so I'm gonna teach you one combo. One good combo can do a lot. This always worked when I was boxing.

ZACK

Did you fight a lot?

FOSTER

No time for questions. It's very simple... start with a jab with your left like this--

He shows Zack as he talks through it.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Then body shot with the right. That brings your opponent's arms down to protect their body. Then you come up with a left hook, right cross-- bam bam. Got it? You try.

Zack tries and doesn't remotely do what Foster just did.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Okay... Let's go again.

Foster bends down a bit to be closer to Bernardi's height.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Jab with the left. Then body shot with the right. That's when you bolt upward with the left hook and a right cross.

Zack does it again. Slow, but more effective.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Good. Again. Jab, then boom boom
boom. Speed up as you go through it.

Zack does it again. And again. And again. Getting it. Slowly but surely, getting it...

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mallory pops some pain meds. Drinks them down with water.

She has a bit of trouble fully swallowing the pills. Uses her fingers to kind of massage her throat and help get them down.

As she does this, Foster and Zack fly through the door.

She comes out of the bathroom to find them playfully jabbing each other.

MALLORY
Where were you guys?

ZACK
Foster was teaching me how to fight.

MALLORY
What??

FOSTER
He wanted to learn a little...
boxing... and--

MALLORY
Why?

ZACK
Bernardi is planning to murder me
tomorrow. But now that I know this
combo, bitch don't stand a chance.

MALLORY
Can you give us a minute, honey?

Zack nods, heads for his room.

FOSTER
I just taught him one thing to help
him defend himself. I didn't mean to--

She pulls him in and hugs him.

MALLORY
Thank you.

She comes out of the hug, straightening up, wiping away some forming tears.

FOSTER
You okay?

MALLORY
Don't be flattered, everything makes
me emotional these days.

That makes him laugh.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
You want to stay for dinner?

FOSTER
Sure. What are you having?

MALLORY
Haven't figured that part out yet.

FOSTER
I can pick up some Chinese food.

MALLORY
Zack hates Chinese food.

FOSTER
That'll have to change. I'm on it.

INT. NOM WAH TEA PARLOR, CHINATOWN - NIGHT

An NYC institution. The place is bustling. Foster's scrolling on his phone, waiting for his order.

He glances up and double takes upon spotting SOMEONE paying for her to-go order. She sees him too, so she heads over on her way out. This is--

FOSTER
-- Destiny.

DESTINY
Foster Jonathan Keating. No matter
how many times I say it--

FOSTER
-- It sounds weird.

DESTINY
So weird.

FOSTER

I don't know what my parents were thinking.

DESTINY

Diane and Bill should've workshopped it.

FOSTER

If only.

They smile, taking each other in. She doesn't come across as the "hippie" he described. Her wardrobe is casual but designer. And her haircut is likely in the \$400 range.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You're back in the city?

DESTINY

Been back for about a year now.

(beat)

You look good. Been working out?

FOSTER

Not remotely.

They smile, undeniable energy between them.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

(re: her food)

You taking that back to your...

DESTINY

This is literally all for me.

FOSTER

Oh wow.

DESTINY

Yeah this is one of my go-to's now that I'm back in the city.

More debating what to say next...

DESTINY (CONT'D)

We should catch up.

FOSTER

Yeah, for sure.

DESTINY

I still have the same number.

FOSTER

Me too.

They awkwardly hug each other goodbye before she heads out.

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT

Mallory, Foster and Zack sit around the table, Chinese food on their plates.

Zack laughs at his mom as she takes a bite of a soup dumpling and the juice shoots out across the table.

We're not hearing it, just seeing the moments-- of laughter and joy.

Mallory's taking it all in, smiling, enjoying this moment with a semblance of a family.

And then we zero in on Foster. Who's smiling too. But we can see he's in his head. A bit distant. Half here, half back at the Chinese restaurant with Destiny...

Mallory notices it and Foster snaps out of it, joining in on the fun again, showing Zack how to properly hold his chopsticks...

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Mallory's sitting up in bed, but she's in a bit of pain.

ZACK (O.S.)

Mom?? Where are you?

He turns the corner, dressed for school. Goes to help her up.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Why are you still in bed?

MALLORY

Just a little slow-going this morning.

She takes in her son, becoming a man before her eyes.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

You know the way to our bench, right?

ZACK

I don't usually pay attention to the way cause you know it.

MALLORY

I bet you could find it. You should take Foster there. Show it to him.

ZACK

Why don't we just show him together when you're better?

She weighs her words carefully, brushing the hair out of his eyes...

MALLORY

... there's a chance I don't get better.

He tries to understand. Partly not wanting to.

ZACK

What does that mean?? That doesn't make sense. You have to get better. You're too young to not get better.

MALLORY

I know. We'll see. I'm sure I will. But just in case, show him the bench. Doesn't have to be today or tomorrow. But someday...

She points to her eye, her heart, and then at him. "I love you."

He absorbs it. Breathing heavy, so many emotions running through his body. And does the "eye heart you" back to her.

INT. TOY STORE - DAY

Christmas shoppers everywhere. Holiday music playing.

Mallory peruses the aisles. She stops in a section full of Pokémon stuff, looking for toys that Zack might like.

She sees a PIKACHU DOLL that you can RECORD into...

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

A large circle of 4th graders has formed on a street corner.

All these kids have their phones out, pointed to the center of the circle, which is inhabited by Zack and Bernardi.

They're kind of circling each other. Zack's got his fists up, Bernardi doesn't, more relaxed.

ZACK
Why do you pick on me?

BERNARDI
Cause you're annoying. And I don't like that weird spelling thing that you do.

ZACK
I stopped doing that.

BERNARDI
Too late. I already hate you.

Bernardi gets in his face and pushes him down to the ground and laughs. Everyone does...

INT. JOSIE WOODS PUB - SAME TIME

Foster sits at the bar, DRINK in front of him, head heavy with deep thoughts.

BARTENDER
You sure you don't want any rum or whiskey in that Coke?

Foster nods.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
You know you could go anywhere for a Coke? Don't get me wrong, I don't mind you sitting here. But if you're trying to quit drinking, this ain't the place.

FOSTER
I just feel comfortable here. I like the smells.

BARTENDER
Smells like piss and puke.

FOSTER
Exactly.

After a beat, mulling it over...

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Maybe a little Jack wouldn't hurt. Just a touch.

BARTENDER
You sure? I ain't trying to contribute to a life of alcoholism.

FOSTER
That's literally all you do.

The bartender shoots him a look.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
I'm sure I'll be fine.

BARTENDER
Never heard that before. But you're
the boss.

The bartender grabs some Jack, goes to top off his Coke, but at the last second, Foster covers his drink with his hand, causing the bartender to pour Jack all over Foster's hand.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

FOSTER
Sorry, I changed my mind. I'm gonna
skip the Jack actually.

BARTENDER
I'm still charging you for that pour.

FOSTER
That's fine. You got a napkin?

The bartender tosses him a few napkins.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Thanks. You know my dad used to
drink?

BARTENDER
I am somehow not remotely surprised.

As Foster wipes his hand, he glances at his phone which is face up on the bar, noticing the time: 3:31pm.

FOSTER
(suddenly realizing)
Shit.

Foster bolts up--

EXT. STREET CORNER - SAME TIME

Bernardi's circling Zack, toying with him.

But this time, when Bernardi gets in close, Zack slips him a jab with his left, then body shot, left hook, right cross.

The fucking combo Foster taught him.

Bernardi takes the hit, dazed. The crowd goes nuts!

CUT TO:

Foster's sprinting across town...

JUMP BACK TO:

THE FIGHT... Bernardi's smiling, a little blood on his lip.

He goes after Zack, but Zack hits him again with the same combo, this time even faster.

The kids go wild again! Bernardi is dazed. He might fall.

But he regains his bearings and is now seeing RED...

JUMP TO:

Foster trying to hail a cab while sprinting, but it's no use at this time of day, so he keeps running...

BACK TO:

Bernardi's on top of Zack, bigger and stronger. Beating the shit out of him, having a bloody nose himself.

Zack looks over and spots that FOSTER has joined the crowd.

But he's not jumping in for him. He's rooting him on, telling him to get up, fight back!

This gives Zack a burst of adrenaline, shooting upward, fists back up, ready to fight.

Bernardi lunges at him, but Zack slips a jab again. And again-

FOSTER
Fuck him up, kid!

The music swells as Foster gets in close, left hook, right cross-- BERNARDI GOES DOWN!

FOSTER (CONT'D)
YAH BOY!!!!

Most of the children are cheering Zack on now too.

Zack moves in to finish Bernardi off. But instead of pummeling him, Zack puts his hand out to help him up.

The crowd's silent. Bernardi looks confused... After a beat, he takes Zack's hand, getting up.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - DUSK

Foster and Zack walk home together after the fight. The sun gives them a backlit glow, about to set in the west.

FOSTER
That was big of you to help him up.

ZACK
Yeah, I was also just way too scared
to keep fighting.

Foster smiles, puts his arm around the kid, proud of him.

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Foster and Zack lounge on the couch next to each other, watching Pokémon, feeling like badasses.

Zack has a FROZEN VEGETABLE MEDLEY PACK on his face.

Mallory comes home from Christmas shopping to spot them on the couch.

MALLORY
Oh my God, what happened???

ZACK
I beat up Bernardi.

MALLORY
What?!??!

INT. MALLORY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Foster is helping Mallory wrap presents now that Zack's in bed.

MALLORY
(slight SLUR to her words)
Thanks for helping him. I know I
shouldn't be condoning violence, but
that Bernardi kid sucks.

FOSTER
He sucks so hard.

Foster notices she's SLURRING her words at times.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Is your voice okay?

MALLORY

It's something new. I'm not sure what's going on.

FOSTER

Side effect from the trial meds?

MALLORY

Maybe. I gotta ask Dr. Alemzadeh about it.

Foster holds her tight. Looks deep in her eyes.

FOSTER

You're going to beat this.

She nods, smiles. But there's pain behind the smile. Not sure she believes that herself.

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Christmas morning. Mallory and Foster sit on the couch while Zack's on the floor tearing into his presents. He's still got some bruising on his face around his eye, but is looking a lot better.

It's all happening in cuts and there's a festive energy to it, Christmas music underneath it all.

Zack then opens his present from Foster. New Pokémon cards! He hugs Foster, thanking him.

Zack then opens a present from his mom. He looks confused.

ZACK

Boxing classes?

MALLORY

Yeah, so you can keep it up. You seemed to enjoy it.

ZACK

But Foster can just teach me.

MALLORY

In case he's busy, you've got these classes. And either way, I'm sure Foster would take you--

FOSTER

I'd be happy to.

Zack smiles, hugs his mom, thanking her.

ZACK
Or you could just take me, mom.

MALLORY
Right. Yeah. Of course...

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN TABLE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Big Christmas dinner. Chloe and Damon have joined with Damon's new BOYFRIEND (ELLIOT).

The six of them are passing around the food, laughing, having a good time.

Mallory makes eyes with Foster, loving having him here. She can really feel the love in this moment. The love of this little Village she's surrounded by...

INT. MALLORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The apartment is quiet. Zack's likely asleep. But Mallory lays in bed, wide awake.

She closes her eyes and starts HUMMING. It's strained.

She massages her throat. Clears it. Stretches her neck.

Tries again, doing a vocal exercise. It's getting tougher to speak clearly.

She looks over at her CLOSET and sees that PIKACHU DOLL she bought for Zack.

She gets up and grabs it. Turns it over and finds a RED RECORD BUTTON on the back.

Debates what to do. Finally, she takes a long, deep breath and presses RECORD...

INT. FOSTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Foster also lies in bed, awake. Suddenly, his phone rings. He reaches for it.

FOSTER
(into phone)
... Hey. What's wrong??... Okay, calm down, I'll be right there.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Foster is let into Destiny's apartment. It's very Upper West Side spacious. High end furnishings.

DESTINY
I didn't know who to call with the
holiday-- It's this way.

Destiny leads him into her BATHROOM. She points under the
sink. Where there is a SLIGHT LEAK.

FOSTER
That's it?

DESTINY
Yeah. It's getting pretty wet.

CUT TO:

Foster finishes tightening her pipe. He gets out from under
the sink, wiping off his hands. Handing her wrench back.

FOSTER
Your place is really nice. You must
be doing well.

DESTINY
I started a headhunting firm.

FOSTER
Wow. That's so... mature of you.

DESTINY
A lots changed in the past five
years.

He nods, absorbing that charged energy she's sending his way.

Foster then notices a FRAMED PHOTO next to the sofa of her
with a YOUNG BOY. He zeroes in on it. And she notices...

FOSTER
Is that your--?

DESTINY
My son Thomas. He's two. Only good
thing that came out of that horrible
relationship.

FOSTER
(in shock)
I can't believe you had a kid...

DESTINY
He's the best thing I have in my
life. I hate that he's at his dad's
this Christmas.

Foster's world is spinning. Overload.

DESTINY (CONT'D)
You're probably sensing that I didn't
need to call you here for a pipe.

He kind of nods, still unable to speak.

DESTINY (CONT'D)
I wanted to say... sorry. For what I
did to you. I blew something special.
I wish I could take it back and we
could start again...

FOSTER
I can't believe this. After
everything you--

DESTINY
I wasn't ready to have a kid with
you. But once Thomas came, I realized
how dumb I was to do what I did to
you. I made the worst mistake of my
life.
(beat, collecting...)
Please. Stay for a drink...

Foster stands there, debating how to answer...

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

Mallory is getting her SHOT from the nurse, Denise.

Foster's in his head, thinking about his meet up with
Destiny...

Just as he opens her mouth, Dr. Alemzadeh sweeps in.

DR. ALEMZADEH
Wow, this guy's still around? That's
great. Brent, right?

FOSTER
Foster.

DR. ALEMZADEH
Right. Foster boyfriend.

She turns her attention to Mallory.

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)
So, my dear, how are we feeling?

MALLORY

Okay. Little weak at times. My back hurts. My heart feels like it's racing sometimes. Been having a little trouble swallowing and talking. Can you hear it?

DR. ALEMZADEH

It's subtle, but yeah.

MALLORY

Is it from the meds?

DR. ALEMZADEH

Probably not. Your markers... didn't come back quite as strong this round.

MALLORY

Okay-- what does that mean?

DR. ALEMZADEH

It doesn't mean anything yet. It's a trial, so we're kind of learning as we go.

Mallory nods. Biting her lip nervously.

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)

Your heart is our big concern. As muscle weakness intensifies, the heart becomes effected. Too much strain, even in doing normal activities, could put stress on it.

Mallory doesn't know how to respond. Feeling overwhelmed. Alemzadeh reads it.

DR. ALEMZADEH (CONT'D)

I don't want you to feel like I'm pulling the rug out from under you. But I should've tempered your expectations. Let's just take it one day at a time, okay?

Mallory forces a nod. All she can muster.

And like that, Alemzadeh exits, Denise following.

Leaving Mallory and Foster, staring at each other, deep in thought...

EXT. WINTER VILLAGE, BRYANT PARK - DAY

It's a cloudy, cold day. Mallory and Foster stroll through the shops.

They're holding hands, both have their wheels spinning, too much to say to say anything at all yet.

EXT. BRYANT PARK ICE RINK - DAY

Mallory and Foster sit on a bench. She snuggles into his jacket for warmth, watching people skate, completely carefree...

Finally, she turns to him:

MALLORY

If something were to happen to me, I got Zack this thing. This Pikachu doll. It has some recordings in it--

FOSTER

Mal, you're gonna be oka--

MALLORY

-- Just listen. If something were to happen. Or it's not looking good. I want to make sure you give it to him. It's in my closet. Promise me?

Foster nods. Of course. Then, after a long bit of silence, he can't take it anymore...

FOSTER

I... ran into Destiny. Twice.

MALLORY

Oh?... And?...

FOSTER

She's changed. Owns a business. Has a nice place--

MALLORY

You saw her place?

FOSTER

She needed help with her pipes-- that sounds weird--

MALLORY

-- yes it does.

Mallory's sitting up now, no longer curled into him, staring at him, defensive.

FOSTER
Her bathroom sink pipe.

MALLORY
So she owns a business but hasn't heard of a plumber before?

FOSTER
She's divorced. Has a kid. Which shook me. She invited me to stay for a drink...

Mallory's on the verge of tears.

MALLORY
I should've known. I gave you the out. I told you if you're going to leave, leave now. Don't let my heart get more invested. And you promised--

FOSTER
-- I didn't stay. I didn't have the drink.

She takes that in. Still on edge and raw with emotions.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
But there was a temptation. As if... maybe I could rewrite the past with her.

Tears are now streaking down her face. She starts breathing quick. Angry. Hurt. Entering fight or flight--

FOSTER (CONT'D)
And I realized, I don't want to--

MALLORY
Stop. What the hell are we doing here, Foster??

FOSTER
I'm trying to tell you--

MALLORY
-- After the news I got today, I can't believe I wasted so much time--

FOSTER
-- Would you let me finish?

MALLORY

What's the point?? None of this matters! Nothing we do in this life matters!

She's sobbing now. Fearing her mortality. Losing control.

He holds her tight as she sobs into his chest.

FOSTER

If you just let me talk-- what I've been trying to muster up the courage to say is... I want to marry you. I don't know what tomorrow will bring, but I know I want it to be with you.

Now the tears really gush forth.

MALLORY

Damn it Foster! You can't do that to me! I was all sad and pissed. And now I can't stop smiling. You fucker!

They both can't help but laugh through the tears. He holds her tight, kissing her. And she kisses him back, so happy in this moment...

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Mallory's in a WEDDING DRESS, final touches, surrounded by Chloe and Damon. Zack's on an iPad in the background.

She stares at herself in the mirror. Deep breaths...

INT. DIFFERENT HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Foster stares at himself in the mirror as well. Anxiety starting to get the better of him.

We're close on Foster, looking like he's about to break down.

He loosens his tie. Hanging his head. Trying to breathe through the fear. Unsure if he's able to go forward...

EXT. GRAMERCY SQUARE PARK - DAY

The park is gorgeous and in full bloom. It's SPRING.

Mallory comes down the aisle in her wedding dress, Chloe and Zack on each side, assisting her.

It's a small wedding, just some close friends in attendance.

And then we 180 to see FOSTER standing there, in his tux, tie still loosened, more casual, more himself.

He heads down the aisle towards her, meeting them halfway, relieving Zack and Chloe of their duties, walking Mallory up to the altar.

Zack stands nearby, the best man. Chloe's the maid of honor.

Mallory and Foster look into each other's eyes, the only two people in the world in this moment...

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

... We're still close on Mallory and Foster... Only now they're all alone on a secluded beach, laying in each other's embrace. Forgetting the world, at least for this moment.

MALLORY

(contemplative)

You know we're all made of stardust?
I wonder if that's where we go when
we die. Back amongst the stars...

FOSTER

We have a long time til we find out.

MALLORY

I'm sorry I roped you into this. I
shouldn't have--

FOSTER

-- Stop. I won't let you or stardust
ruin our honeymoon.

(beat)

You're gonna have a lot more time.
We're gonna have a lot more time...

She nods, nuzzling into him, thankful for his optimism...

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Birds chirping. Early summer, last days of school.

Mallory's seated at the table, her cane nearby.

She watches Foster and Zack, who both have headphones on, engrossed in some Pokémon on the iPad, two peas in a pod...

She takes in this view, then motions to Foster that "it's getting late."

Foster turns off the show, pops up, helping pack Zack's backpack while Zack crams a few bites of toast in his mouth.

She watches her son with wonder.

MALLORY
(voice more strained)
You ready for the spelling bee today?

FOSTER
Nah, I should've studied harder.

Mallory rolls her eyes.

ZACK
I don't like that it's on a stage,
but to answer your question...
Incontrovertibly. I-n-c-o-n-t-r-o-v-e-
r-t-i-b-l-y. Incontrovertibly.

MALLORY
I have no idea what that means, but
I'll take it as a yes. See you there.

EXT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Foster and Zack FIST BUMP, point to each other, before going
their separate ways...

INT. MALLORY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mallory slowly makes her way to her bed, using her cane. When
she gets there, she plops down onto the mattress, out of
breath.

She swings her legs up and lays down to rest. Trying to take
deep breaths. Closing her eyes...

INT. CHELSEA PREP - MORNING

Zack heads to class. Bernardi steps in his path.

BERNARDI
You gonna choke in the spelling
championship today?

ZACK
City-wide Spelling Bee finals.

BERNARDI
That's what I said.

ZACK
I doubt I'll choke. But if I do, it
won't be as bad as you choked in the
lacrosse finals last week.

BERNARDI
Regional lacrosse championships.

ZACK
That's what I said.

After a tense beat, they smile at each other. Do a little handshake thing. *Are they friends now???*

BERNARDI
Good luck, you little b-i-t-c-h.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Zack sits on stage with 39 other STUDENTS.

He taps his foot nervously. Looking out in the crowd. Not seeing his mom or Foster yet.

SPELLING BEE JUDGE
(on mic)
Okay everyone, please take your
seats. We're in for a long evening,
so we'd like to get going...

Zack's anxiety is spiking. He's scanning the audience.

He suddenly sees FOSTER enter from the back. Foster waves, heading for a seat.

Zack waves back. Then shoots him a look, *"where's my mom?"*
Foster shakes his head, unsure.

He checks his phone. No messages from her.

As the first SPELLER steps up to the mic, Foster gets up and sneaks out.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Foster calls Mallory, but no answer. So he hails a cab...

INT. CAB - DAY

Foster's in the cab, trying her again...

EXT./INT. MALLORY'S BUILDING - DAY

Foster gets out of the cab and strides into the building, rushing up the stairs...

INT. MALLORY'S APARTMENT - DAY

He uses his key to unlock the door, heading inside...

FOSTER
Hey Mal? Mal? You home??

He doesn't see her. Checks the kitchen. The bathroom.

He walks into her bedroom... finding her in bed.

FOSTER (CONT'D)
Hey Mal, Zack's spelling bee started.
We gotta go, come on, wake up...

He walks over to her. Gets in close. Puts his hand on her forehead...

... and she slowly opens her eyes. Groggy.

MALLORY
It started?

FOSTER
Yeah he's on stage.

She smiles, proud of the kid for even getting that far.

She struggles to sit up. Foster helps her, as she slowly makes her way to the closet to change...

INT. MALLORY'S BUILDING, STAIRWAY - DAY

Mallory and Foster make their way down the stairs.

She loses her footing, but he catches her. Holds her tight.

When he looks down at her, he notices her eyes are wide, but she's looking past him, gasping for air, not breathing.

FOSTER
Mal? MAL??? MALLORY?!?!?

She's unresponsive. He reaches into his pocket while still holding her, slumping down onto the staircase with her, pulling out his phone, frantically dialing 911...

FOSTER (CONT'D)
(into phone, panicked)
Hi yes, my my my my wife, she's--
she's not breathing. Please send an
ambulance. 53 East 7th street...

He puts the phone down, jumps into CPR, pumping her chest, giving her mouth-to-mouth.

And she comes to, eyes darting open, looking directly at him.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

There you are, stay with me. They're coming. Just stay with me.

She looks up at him and smiles. Mustering just enough strength to get these words out...

MALLORY

... Give him... a life...

Foster nods, tears streaming down his face.

FOSTER

We both will. Just stay here. Stay with me here. Mallory...

She connects with him, thankful for every moment they've had together.

Including this one.

But the moment is short-lived, as she suddenly goes back into cardiac arrest.

FOSTER (CONT'D)

No Mal. Stay with me! Hear my voice.

He keeps pumping her chest, giving her mouth-to-mouth again.

But it's not working and he knows it.

He cradles her, feeling so helpless in this moment, all he can do is hold her and sob...

INT. AUDITORIUM - DUSK

Time has passed. The amount of contestants on stage has completely thinned out. It's now just ZACK and one other KID.

Foster enters the auditorium from the back, a shell of a human. He stands there, unable to move any further, almost hoping Zack doesn't see him.

He's holding the PIKACHU DOLL that Mallory bought for Zack.

Zack's seated, waiting his turn. He looks out in the crowd and sees Foster. He lights up, waving at him.

He then scans for his mom. But he's not finding her.

And that's when he notices Foster's eyes are red from crying.

Looking closer, he can tell Foster's on the verge of bawling again.

Zack's breathing becomes short and quick. Sensing something's seriously wrong.

OTHER KID CONTESTANT

Acquiesce. A-c-q-u-i-e-s-e.

Acquiesce.

A BELL RINGS, signifying that this kid got his word wrong.

SPELLING BEE JUDGE

Zackary Woodson. Your word.

"Denouement."

Zack's unable to move. He just sits there. Frozen.

Foster can't hold back the tears as this young boy eventually forces himself to stand up and make his way over to the microphone.

He's still unable to talk though. Everyone's waiting.

SPELLING BEE JUDGE (CONT'D)

Would you like the definition?

Zack closes his eyes and takes the deepest breath he can.

And in this moment, he can FEEL his mom.

So he conjures as much courage as he can. Courage he knows his mom would want him to have in a moment like this. And...

ZACK

(on the verge of tears)

Denouement. D... e... n... o... u...

He pauses, trying to connect with his mom, the only person he's ever known to love him.

ZACK (CONT'D)

... e... m... e... n... t.

Denouement.

When he finishes the word, tears just pour down the boy's face. Same with Foster.

SPELLING BEE JUDGE

That is correct. We have a winner.

The crowd cheers.

But this little boy just crumples down onto the stage.

Everyone thinks it's because he's proud that he won.

But Foster rushes the stage, pushing his way through the crowd.

Scooping up the boy. Looking into his eyes.

When Zack looks back at him. He knows.

He knows his mom is gone.

And he bawls. This poor boy just bawls...

EXT. THE WEST VILLAGE - DUSK

Foster and Zack shuffle through the West Village. They walk like zombies, barely there, passing the crowds.

Foster holds the Pikachu doll. Zack holds his TROPHY.

The sun hangs low over the Hudson.

FOSTER

We don't have to do this right now.

ZACK

(barely audible)

I want to. I told her I would...

They continue heading west, towards the river...

EXT. HUDSON RIVER PARK - DUSK

Zack and Foster sit on Zack and his mom's BENCH. Looking out at the setting sun.

FOSTER

She wanted me to give you this...

Foster hands Zack the Pikachu doll.

Zack doesn't reach for it at first. Just stares it at.

But eventually, he grabs it. Holds it tight. His new most prized possession.

Zack closes his eyes, not wanting to press the PLAY button. Just wanting to scream. Cry. Jump in the river.

But he takes a deep breath. And another. And finally presses it... After a few beats of silence, he hears his mom's voice:

MALLORY (V.O.)

*My dear boy... This is the hardest
thing I've ever had to say to you...*

(MORE)

MALLORY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Maybe that's why I'm recording it into this doll instead of telling you directly. I also want you to remember it. So I'm backing it up on the Cloud. If the Cloud evaporates one day, then hell, I don't know. I'm sure you'll figure it out. That's one thing I'm truly confident about when it comes to your future. You'll figure it out.

(beat)

Also, I should mention, I can now visualize my voice coming out of a Pikachu doll and it's inherently hilarious. That was not my intent. Or maybe it was... Okay, it wasn't. Sorry, son. You'll have to hold onto this Pikachu for the rest of your life, even after you've outgrown your love for Pokémon.

That makes Zack and Foster chuckle through the forming tears.

MALLORY (V.O.)

This first brief bit is for Foster... I know you've been searching for something more. And you've felt lost, probably for a long time. You have all these skills but you're missing a purpose. Well, your purpose is right in front of you. You are going to be a wonderful father. You were born for this role. So take it on with all that you've got. Don't hold back. Help mold this boy into the wonderful human being we know he can be...

Foster smiles at that, tears running down his cheeks...

MALLORY (V.O.)

Zack, my son, there's too much advice to give you in this recording... It would take a thousand recordings to give it all to you.

While Zack listens, we flash to:

... Zack at 3 years old being picked up by his mom at preschool, so happy to see her, LEAPING into her arms...

... and Mallory with Zack at the public pool, teaching her boy how to swim...

... and Mallory helping a 6 year old Zack do homework at the kitchen table...

MALLORY (V.O.)
So I'll play you the hits...

... and dancing in the living room with her...

... and rollerblading through central park with her...

... sharing an ice cream together...

MALLORY (V.O.)
*... And hope Foster and Chloe and
 Damon and our little Village fill in
 the rest...*

... And Mallory reading a book to Zack before bed...

... Riding in the bumper cars at Coney Island together...

... swaying side to side on the subway...

And back to Zack, listening to his mother's voice...

MALLORY (V.O.)
*... My boy, my time as your mother
 has been the greatest honor of my
 life. We had a lot of big times
 together, but the little joys, the
 moments where nothing major happened,
 the ones we let slip by too easily...
 those were my favorite. And those are
 the ones I want you to really hold
 onto. Stop once in a while. Take a
 deep breath in. Absorb this world
 with all your senses...*

... We JUMP TO Mallory and Zack laying on the grass in Sheep's meadow, looking up at the sky, watching the leaves fall around them...

... and playing a board game together in the kitchen...

... holding hands while walking to school on a rainy day...

MALLORY (V.O.)
*... Never forget, this life is best
 lived fearlessly. Do not back down
 from the Bernardis or the limelights
 of life. You must go forth despite
 knowing there will be times where
 you'll fail. You will cry.*

(MORE)

MALLORY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And unfortunately you won't have your mom there to hold you. I know that's so unfair. But you will always have these words. So listen to them now... The days you cry. The days you hurt. Those are the ones to be most proud of. Because those are the days you tried to do something bold. And yes, although you failed on that day, remember, the next day is a new one. Keep at it. Follow your passions. Cry when you want to. Scream when you want to. But remember, you will be okay. Take a deep breath. Close your eyes. See my face. Hear my voice. And know that it will all work out. This life is yours. Live it for you. With your full heart. And in the end... remember, my boy, my son, you will always have a mom. Even if you can't see her. Even if you can't hold her hand. I will always be your mom. And my love for you will permeate throughout the universe e-n-d-l-e-s-s-l-y... endlessly.

She takes a few deep breaths before the recording cuts out.

Zack and Foster sob as they sit there in silence, watching the sun about to dip below the horizon.

And then... Zack points at his eye.

And at his heart.

And at the sky.

"Eye heart you, mom"

Foster wraps his arm around the boy. And Zack lets him do it. Curling into him a bit.

They share a look, pain in their eyes.

But, oddly, in this moment, with this look that they share...

There is also a glimmer of hope.

As Tom Petty's "**It'll All Work Out**" fades up... they look out at the water.

Both not okay.

But not okay together.