THE SEND-OFF

Written by

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INT. DOLLY'S LAVISH BEVERLY HILLS ESTATE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The place is immense. But it's nearly empty. A phone rings.

DOLLY (O.C.)
I'll buzz you in.

INT. DOLLY'S OFFICE - CONT.

The walls are covered in movie posters, most featuring the actress DOLLY DICKSON. There's an Oscar on the shelf. A People's Choice Award. A Golden Globe. We find DOLLY, 40's, older, tired, topknot askew, berating a printer.

DOLLY
Work, you cocksucker.

Dolly snatches the pages up one at a time, proofing, as...

EVELYN (O.C.)
Doll?

INT. BEVERLY HILLS ESTATE - KITCHN

Again, no sign of life. LOTS of pills. EVELYN, 65, Brooklyn accent, appraises them, says nothing. Dolly enters.

EVELYN
There was no guard at the gate...

DOLLY
He quit, went to Whole Foods. For the stock options. I guess you're supposed to save for your future?

EVELYN
Ah. I'm sorry about your friend.

DOLLY
Just didn't wake up. No warning. No goodbye. I wonder if that's better.

EVELYN
Yeah.

DOLLY
You think so?

EVELYN
I meant I wonder that too.
(a beat)
So, our boy's asleep?

DOLLY
Yeah. I printed out a schedule and some phone numbers in case...

EVELYN
I brought the list you sent me. NASA launches are less detailed.
(then)
Hey. You okay? You look worried.

DOLLY
Beyond terrified. I guess the botox hasn't *completely* worn off! Yay!

EVELYN
Everybody has this day. First time leaving. Everybody is this scared.

DOLLY
But, my scared looks skinny, right?

EVELYN
Get the hell out of here.

Dolly kisses Evie, grabs her beat-up Louis Vuitton carry-on.

DOLLY
I'll just pop my head in and...

EVELYN
Rip the band-aid off, dummy.

Dolly, fighting tears, nods, blows Evelyn a kiss. Goes.

CUT TO:

INT. MODEST BROOKLYN TOWNHOUSE - BEDROOM

MO AKHTAR, Lebanese/Egyptian, 40's, is fucking RAE THIBODEAUX, 30's, Creole, female, long, lithe dancer body, in a tiny red slip, perfect ass exposed. Mo collapses onto Rae, who grins and rolls over. Tight on her face.

RAE
I just love goodbye anal.

MO
Doesn't have to mean goodbye. It can mean hello, or I love you...

RAE
Like Aloha!

MO
Yes, Rae. Anal is just like Aloha.

RAE
Boy you better up your cardio. I thought I was gonna have to call somebody to come help you.

MO
I wanted it to last you three days.

RAE
Well bless your confidence.
(a beat, takes Mo's hand)
So... this time seemed... good.

MO
Can't fake a hard-on like that.

RAE
Does that mean you're getting more comfortable? Like finding your way?

MO
It still feels weird. But I mean, damn, weird can be great. You know?

Rae kisses Mo on the mouth, then the forehead.

RAE
Thank you baby.

MO
Fuck, this is a trip.

RAE
Speaking of trips...

Moment over. Rae crosses to the chest of drawers, yanks out tights and a leotard, pulls them on, her back to Mo. Mo finishes packing a suitcase, attempts to avoid a fight.

MO
I didn't say you couldn't come...

RAE
You didn't say you wanted me to.

MO
This weekend is not about you...
(off Rae's death stare)
Or me. Or us. It's about Marcus.

RAE
Whom I loved. Who loved me.

MO
I'm not denying that....

RAE
You're denying me.

MO
I don't want to muddy things...

RAE
A black woman, *muddies* things. Now I'm not the ACLU lawyer in the room? But that seems awfully close to a micro-aggression, Counselor.

MO
Don't you fucking dare...

RAE
This is my life!

MO
That you get to live! Marcus is dead! That trumps you and me and the state of this marriage! It's two days. Can't you give him that?

RAE
Give *him* that? Or give *you* that?

Mo grabs his suitcase.

MO
Wow. I'm not doing this again.

RAE
Then get on out, coward!

Mo leaves. Rae slams the door behind him so hard it vibrates.

CUT TO:

EXT. LUXURIOUS CONDO COMPLEX - CHICAGO

Cecile WANG-COHEN, CHINESE-AMERICAN, 40's, and ALMA REYES, 20's, LATINX, exit an elevator, each holding a carry-on, cross a swanky condo lobby, and land outside as they talk.

ALMA
When’s the last time you were all four together?

CECILE
Women’s March? The Pussy Hat one?

ALMA
Damn. That’s 2 election cycles ago. You sure this isn’t gonna be weird?

CECILE
Oh it will. But not because of you.

ALMA
You sure?

CECILE
They’ll be too into their own grief to notice...

ALMA
... some rando crashed their Big Chill redux?

A black town car pulls up. Driver, LEO, 60’s, LATINX, gets out, goes around the back of the car, pushes the trunk open.

CECILE
You’re not *some rando*. You’re...

ALMA
(grins at her)
What?

Leo reaches the women. As he takes their bags:

LEO
Good afternoon, Mrs. Wang-Cohen.

CECILE
Hi Leo! Heading to O’Hare.

As he puts the bags in the trunk.

LEO
I drove Mr. Cohen and the girls to the Cubs game Tuesday...

CECILE
Yeah, I hated to miss it. Work.

CECILE (CONT’D)
Leo, you know Alma. My assistant.

LEO
Oh yes! You know, Alma means soul.

ALMA
Soul...Assistant. ‘Kay.

Cecile smiles at her. Alma turns and looks out the window.

INT. UBER

The Uber Driver, MORGAN (male, Caucasian, 20) wakes Dolly.

MORGAN
Um, Dorothy? Sorry. You said to wake you when we were close?

As Dolly comes to, begins fixing her face...

MORGAN (CONT’D)
Man, you look familiar. Been trying to figure it out since the airport.

DOLLY
Dorothy’s my legal name. Everyone knows me as *Dolly*. *Dickson.*

She smiles expectantly. A beat.

MORGAN
Ohhhh!!! Your son played soccer for Marist, right? You’re Todd’s mom!

DOLLY
Pull over.

MORGAN
It’s still another block...

DOLLY
Will this Kia be a limo in a block?

She pulls 2 mini Smirnoffs from her bag, downs them.

CUT TO:

INT. GORGEOUS AIR B&B - RHINEBECK, NY

Huge. A serving hatch between the kitchen/dining room keeps it wide open. A dining room gives way to a large living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM, AIR B&B

At the serving hatch, Mo finishes making a pitcher of margaritas. As he pours, Cecile enters. He slams the pitcher down so hard it froths over. Runs to her.

MO
Oh my GOD!

CECILE
Oh my GOD!

Mo picks her up, swings her around. Cecile shrieks with laughter. Alma gapes. Recovers.

ALMA
Damn. I hope somebody is that excited to see me one day.

MO
I'm Mo. *You're* beautiful. Now who the hell are you?

CECILE
This is Alma...

ALMA
I'm her assistant.

CECILE
Mo, is one of my three best friends on this earth. I mean. Well. I guess now there are only two. Fuck.

Cecile's eyes well up. Alma stares. She's never seen this.

MO
I can't believe he's gone.

CECILE
What are we drinking?

ALMA
You *drink?*

CECILE
This weekend I drink.

MO
What'll it be ladies?

CECILE
Vodka. Rocks. I need the loo...

Cecile rushes out. Alma is stunned by all of it.

ALMA
Rocks? That's Varsity Drinking.

MO
Well, we went to Vassar.

ALMA
Smith.

MO
Soooo Wild Turkey wrapped in flannel?

ALMA
Oh cool. A dyke joke.

MO
Oh my God. I'm sorry. Really.

ALMA
I'm breakin' your balls. Tequila.

Mo grins, goes to pour her a tequila.

MO
But really. You guys have a...

ALMA
I'm her assistant.

MO
You said.

ALMA
No for real. We're just up against a deadline for this pitch so...

Cecile rushes back in, holding a note, laugh/crying.

CECILE
This was on the toilet!
(reading aloud)
"Welcome to the Send-Off. I went. Now <u>you</u> go."

Marcus pulls a note out of his pocket.

MO
I found this one at the bar.
(reads aloud)
"Welcome to the Send-Off.

MO (CONT'D)
If you drink yourself to death, we can hang out."

ALMA
So your amazing friend rented this place, stocked it, AND left notes. But his death surprised everyone...

This hits Mo and Cecile. Cecile lashes out.

CECILE
Pick two rooms and put our bags in them, please. Also, hang my dress, so it doesn't wrinkle? Thank you.

ALMA
My pleasure, Mrs. Wang-Cohen.

Alma, crosses to the hall, grabs the bags, overhears:

CECILE (O.C.)
She's getting too familiar.

Alma gives her the finger, which she of course can't see.

INT. KITCHEN - CONT.

MO
Yeah well, you're trying too hard.

DOLLY (O.C.)
Send-Off Spirit! Let's fuck it up!

Mo and Cecile rush to the front door where:

INT. RENTAL - FRONT HALLWAY

Dolly, now made-up, sky-high heels, sashays in like the movie star she knows how to be. Mo and Cecile both scream. Mo picks Dolly up just like he picked up Cecile before. As he lets her down, Dolly is teary. She tilts her head back, fans her eyes.

DOLLY
God. I just... wasn't ready.

MO
For Marcus to...

DOLLY
To be this happy. I mean, to see you. God I missed you!

DOLLY (CONT'D)
(to Cecile)
I even missed *you*.

She hugs Cecile. Cecile hangs on. Dolly pulls away. Mo sees.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
Look at the most powerful advertising exec in the country!

CECILE
All of North America, actually...

DOLLY
And Mo?! National LGBTQIA Bar Association's...Something Huge?!

MO
Top ten attorneys under 50...

DOLLY
Only one from the ACLU though. See? I *read*. Brava, Baby! Drinky?

INT. RENTAL - DINING ROOM

Mo pours a dirty martini for Dolly. Adds olives. She frowns.

MO
Oh, have you already eaten today?

DOLLY
I'm prepping for a shoot, so...

Mo pulls the olives <u>out</u> of her martini, eats them in a bite.

CECILE
How's Phil?

DOLLY
Great! His John Lewis biopic is on fire. He wanted to be here but pre-production is just insane...

MO
His ancient ass can't keep up with 3 Gen X witches party-slash-mourning.

DOLLY
Cheers to that. How's Ray?

MO
Fabulous. Teaching a charity dance intensive in Harlem all weekend, so getting here was just impossible. And Howard, Cece, how's he?

CECILE
Good! Home with the girls. We didn't want to have the whole death talk with them yet, so we just told them Mom was going away for work.

MO
With her assistant...

DOLLY
(to Cecile)
I could have brought my assistant?!

MO
Alma. Smokin' hot B-T-Dubs.

CECILE
God. Who cares? She's brilliant. And relentless. Reminds me of me.

Dolly snorts at this. Mo high fives her. She misses.

MO
Dolly Dickson drank on the plane!

DOLLY
Accidentally! I signed the First Class Flight Attendant's napkin. She brought vodka. I can't help that I'm the face of Gray Goose.

CECILE
You were photographed *once* holding a bottle...

DOLLY
On Clooney's yacht. It went viral. Where's my room?

MO
The one that's left upstairs?

DOLLY
You all picked without me?

CECILE
Your agent should've called ahead.

DOLLY
I brought you something from LA!
(gives her the finger)
BRB!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM

Dolly closes the door behind her, throws her bag on the bed. She unrolls a vibrant emerald green dress from the bag. She hangs it, then very carefully clips the price tag, not the plastic stem it hangs on, from the designer label in the back. She fishes in her bag for a glue stick.

CU: TAG: Nordstrom. She pulls the red CLEARANCE sign off carefully, revealing the original price of the dress: $750.

Dolly puts the original tag and glue stick on her bedside table, picks up her phone.

CU: PHONE: WYZE CAMERA APP: A GRAINY ROOM APPEARS

ON DOLLY: WATCHING HOME SURVEILLANCE, BEGINNING TO CRY.

She puts her hands over her face to keep quiet.

EXT. HALLWAY

Heading back downstairs, Alma hears Dolly's muffled sobs.

INT. DINING ROOM

Mo and Cecile whisper...

CECILE
...and *I'm* trying too hard?

MO
She's an actress. She's "on". It's different for her, Cece. She and Marcus were together a long ...

Alma walks in. She's obviously heard. Mo lightens the tone.

MO (CONT'D)
Celebrations of life are tricky...

CECILE
Call it what it is. A funeral.

MO
No. You wear black to funerals.

CECILE
I always wear black.

MO
The *celebration* aspect suggests...

CECILE
I choose to celebrate the Life of Marcus *and* the House of Chanel.

ALMA
That's pretty on brand.

Cecile smiles at Alma, who looks away. Mo clocks it.

MO
How was unpacking, Mrs. Hughes?

ALMA
I feel like more of a Mr. Bates.

Alma slides onto a bar stool, her back to Cecile.

MO
My husband looooooves him.

ALMA
I had the Free Bates teeshirt!

MO
So did he!

Cecile is being ignored. Mo is encouraging it. As she leaves:

CECILE
I should really call home.

ALMA
Say hi to Mr. Cohen!
(to Mo)
So, tequila?

He nods. She goes, refills both their glasses.

MO
Sorry. Emotion makes her icy...

ALMA
As long as the check clears, right?

But when they toast, Alma takes hers down in one. Mo notices.

MO
I'll get you another one...

As he does, his cellphone, on the bar, rings.

ECU: PHONE: CALLER ID: BABE: *RAE IN A DANCE COSTUME, HER FACE OBSCURED BY A FEATHER MASK*

ALMA
Holy smoke show. Who is THAT and how does your husband not care?

MO
Here. I need to grab this. Mwah.

He hands her a drink, rushes out, upset. Alma notices.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM

Dolly's repairs her face at her dresser. Cecile enters.

CECILE
Something's off with you.

DOLLY
Marcus is dead. Is that not enough?

CECILE
You seem a little... tightly wound.

DOLLY
I took some Adderall on the plane.

CECILE
I know you on Adderall. And diet pills. And coke. This is not that.

DOLLY
I'm fine. I just miss Phil.

CECILE
Oh *okay.*

DOLLY
Why can't I miss Phil? You don't miss Howard? Oh wait of course not.

Cecile, shaken, sees the glue and price tag, pounces on it:

CECILE
Returning something *off-the-rack*?

DOLLY
Like I want to re-wear Marcus' funeral dress. But I had to get something new. All I own is black.

CECILE
Fuck.

Cecile rushes out. Dolly stares at herself in the mirror.

INT. CECILE'S ROOM

Cecile enters to find her black dress balled up on the floor. She hangs it, then goes into her bag for a steamer. As she stands, holding it, waiting for it to heat:

CUT TO:

INT. MARCUS' CHELSEA LOFT - FALL 2022 - FLASHBACK

It's masculine, industrial. Exposed brick, pipes running overhead. A rich man's house. MARCUS TAYLOR, 40's, BLACK, Afro, gorgeous, fit, perfect in a tuxedo shirt, ties his own bow tie. Cecile, in a black pants suit, stands again next to a carry-on bag, this time steaming a black evening gown.

CECILE
Thanks again for doing this.

MARCUS
Woman! You might win a Clio! And I get to be your Don Draper.

CECILE
Technically *I'm* Don Draper.

MARCUS
Oh my bad. So I'm January Jones.

CECILE
What did you name your look?

MARCUS
I call it Ad Bae. Where *is* January?

CECILE
I assume she lives in LA....

MARCUS
I meant Howard. It's a metaphor, Cecile. Where is Howard?

CECILE
Home with the kids...

MARCUS
That's what the nanny is for, no?

She turns her back, pulls off her black jacket and blouse, pulls her black evening gown on, steps out of her pants.

CECILE
Talked to Dolly lately?

MARCUS
She asked, changing the subject.
She's coming in 2 weeks to do SVU.

Marcus zips her up. She turns to face him, suddenly shy.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Yes *ma'am*.

CECILE
Is it okay? I want to look perfect.

MARCUS
How could Howard refuse an invite
to New York City with THIS?!

CECILE
Maybe he didn't get an invite.

MARCUS
Cece, what are you not telling me.

CECILE
It's just... if I win, this will be
the best night of my life..

MARCUS
You're a winner just by being...

CECILE
I'm Asian. We don't buy that shit.

MARCUS
Cecile. Angel. What is going on?

CECILE
It's just, when I was, fantasizing
about how tonight would go?

MARCUS
Howard wasn't there?
(she studies the ground)

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Who *would* be there if you went from the Clio Awards to... the hotel I *know* your company got you tonight?

Cecile flushes red, grabs her Chanel bag.

CECILE
That's why I'm staying with you.

She goes. Marcus grabs a PURPLE VELVET TUX JACKET, follows.

CUT TO:

INT. CECILE'S ROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

The beeping of her steamer startles Cecile out of her memory. She starts steaming, the realizes it's her PHONE DINGING.

CU: THE NUMBERS WE SEE INDICATE IT'S NOT A SAVED CONTACT

CU: TEXT: TELL THEM THE TRUTH

Cecile drops her phone, tries to return to steaming but her hand is shaking so badly she singes the fabric.

CUT TO:

INT. MO'S EN SUITE BATHROOM

Mo hides in the bathroom, his voice low but echo-y.

MO
I just need until tomorrow night! It's weird here. Dolly's sort of manic. I think Cecile's lying...

INT. DANCE STUDIO, HARLEM

Rae stretches at the barre between classes.

RAE
You're lying!

Phone conversation: Intercut.

MO
I'm *waiting*. That's not lying.

RAE
I may be defrocked, but we Catholics called that a Sin of Omission. Do not omit my ass!

MO
I'll tell them, babe. Jesus.

RAE
You don't know Jesus. But you 'bout to meet him if you don't tell them.

She hangs up, pulls a fan from her leg warmer, snaps it open.

MO
Love you too....

End phone conversation. Mo splashes water on his face, freezes when he notices, behind him, in the reflection:

A PURPLE VELVET SPORTS JACKET HANGS from the shower door.

CUT TO:

INT. MARCUS' THERAPY OFFICE - SPRING 2023 - <u>FLASHBACK</u>

Marcus wears the same purple jacket, tee shirt, jeans. <u>Now totally bald</u>. Mo in jeans and a sweater. Both hold beers.

MO
You let your patients drink?

MARCUS
Only the ones who don't pay.

MO
Thanks for seeing me, man.

MARCUS
Sounded so dire I canceled my date.

MO
That's why you're wearing that pimp-ass jacket. I like the bald look.

MARCUS
I call it Fine Ass Wine. As in Aging Like A.

MO
Lemme guess. She's 25.

MARCUS
Next month. Do not even judge.

MO
I'm not. I get it. You listen to people's shit all day; you want to spend your sexy time with women too young to have emotional baggage.

MARCUS
Speaking of, have you talked to my emotional steamer trunk?

MO
Are you calling Dolly FAT?!

Marcus snorts. High fives Mo.

MO (CONT'D)
Not since she came for SVU that time. How 'bout Cecile? Anything?

MARCUS
Nah, not since last fall. The Clio Awards. She seemed...conflicted.

MO
Who isn't.

MARCUS
I feel pretty at peace with life.

MO
Oh, Congrats, you Gen-Z-banging, purple velvet wearing fuck.

MARCUS
You said you liked it!

MO
I don't like it; I *covet* it. I hate you a little for having it.

MARCUS
Well, here. Damn.

He takes it off, throws it at Mo, who wraps himself in it.

MO
That Marcus. Gives you the designer jacket right off his back...

MARCUS
Dude. You're vamping. What is it.

MO
It’s Rae.

MARCUS
Did he do something or did you?

MO
It’s...she’s...

MARCUS
Who?

Crying silently, Mo focuses on folding the purple jacket.

MO
I... I think I made a mistake.

MARCUS
Can you fix it?

MO
I think I have to leave.

MARCUS
Wait. Tell me what it is first.

MO
No, I mean I have to leave Rae.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLY’S ROOM

Still seated at her dresser, she checks her phone.

ECU: PHONE: TEXT: PHIL: *WATCHING THE LAKERS LOSE AGAIN. HAVE FUN BABY DOLL. LOVE YOU (heart emoji, star of david emoji)*

Dolly blinks back tears, throws her head back, breathes, stares at her newly made-up face in the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLY’S TRAILER - NEW YORK - DECEMBER 2022 - <u>FLASHBACK</u>

Dolly sits in her spacious honey wagon, removing make-up from her face. <u>She wears a ratty teal kimono.</u> In her reflection:

Marcus, killer trench, hair a buzz and fade, watches her.

DOLLY
What’s this look called?

MARCUS
I call it SVU-topia. We going out?

DOLLY
Joe Allen.

MARCUS
Why do you insist on Joe Allen?

DOLLY
It makes me feel like an actor.

MARCUS
You are an actor. You're on SVU!

DOLLY
Also, their martini is a small trashcan full of vodka.

MARCUS
I still can't believe I got to eat lunch with Olivia Benson. This might be my favorite day.

DOLLY
I can't believe you're a world-renowned therapist who fan-boys out like a dork-monster.

MARCUS
You make me seem so bourgeois. Now it's my second-favorite day.

DOLLY
I'm glad I could give you that, since loving you for 4 years didn't.

MARCUS
Damn. You managed to be self-aggrandizing and passive aggressive in one sentence. Props.

DOLLY
Can we go back to your place?

MARCUS
In lieu of Joe Allen?

She rises, turns her back to him, pulls on a sweater and jeans. He enjoys the view in the mirror. She clocks it.

DOLLY
Apres. I need the martinis if I'm going back to your place.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - KITCHEN - EVENING

Cecile and Dolly go through the cabinets, amazed.

DOLLY
It's all our favorites from our apartment senior year! Everything!

CECILE
Damn. I can't host a weekend *alive*.

DOLLY
Vintage Marcus.
(a beat)
Cece. He knew exactly when he'd...

CECILE
Yeah. I've wondered too.

DOLLY
But I mean, if he didn't tell me he wouldn't have told anybody. Right?

CECILE
When's the last time you saw him?

DOLLY
Oh, a few years ago? I guess?

CECILE
(knows she's lying)
But, you were...

She's interrupted as:

INT. KITCHEN - CONT.

Mo, Vassar tee and jeans, and Alma, jeans, hoodie, enter the kitchen from a sliding glass door, followed by a pot cloud.

DOLLY
Whaaaaaat? Not the Mary Jane!

CECILE
'Member Stoned Marcus' Angels? We used to get high and roam around the Rose Garden in character.

Dolly/Mo/Cecile hit well-practiced Charlie's Angels poses.

ALMA
The first-ever Middle-Eastern Gay Dude Angel! Now *that's* a Diversity Reboot I've been waiting for!

DOLLY
Diversity. Bane of my existence.

A beat. They gape at her.

CECILE MO ALMA
What? Did you... Um...

DOLLY
Not in life! Diversity in the actual world is great. I just keep losing parts because of it.

MO
Because you're a beautiful white lady? That can't be a thing.

CECILE
Also lady is a stretch...

ALMA
You're not actually saying...

DOLLY
I'm *saying* that there are new mandates for the way that television should look.

MO
And that's a bad thing?

DOLLY
It's a great thing! Theoretically.

ALMA
So, there aren't enough white people on TV for your taste?

DOLLY
I'm saying that there used to be more jobs. For me.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
For the last 3 years, it'll be between me and someone else, and we'll get a call that the network only wants diversity for the part.

ALMA
And you don't see that as progress?

DOLLY
Can't pay a mortgage with progress.

CECILE
Like *you're* paying your mortgage..

ALMA
What about actors of color who went to a great drama department like you, who are talented like you, who've never even gotten to HAVE a mortgage? Do you *hear* your privilege?

DOLLY
I've known you for 10 minutes, sweetheart. Don't you dare presume to school me on my life.

CECILE
HEY!

DOLLY
It was a comment about how a necessary, and laudatory reality, has impacted my life. Period.

ALMA
It's a really Gen X assessment.

MO
It's a really Gen X gathering.

Mo has defended Dolly. Dolly clocks it. She sighs, then approaches Alma, as a hunched old crone, points her finger.

DOLLY
(old lady voice)
Get off my lawn!

Alma starts laughing. Dolly bows. Mo exhales.

MO
I made a Play List!

CECILE
Could you also make dinner?

MO
You bitches still can't cook?

DOLLY CECILE
I mean... I don't...

MO
Unbelievable.

ALMA
I'll cook. You guys hang out.

She opens the fridge. Pulls out a note.

ALMA (CONT'D)
(reads aloud)
Salmon and filet mignon. I would die for a good steak. Oh wait...

Mo and Dolly crack up. Dolly turns to Alma.

DOLLY
Can we maybe start over? Please?

ALMA
Listen to your 90's angst medley. Grieve. Dance. Keen. Whatever. I'll make steak and salmon. Okay?

CECILE
But no...

ALMA
Dairy. I know, I know. I can do the white wine reduction you like.

Cecile flinches. Dolly notices. Heading into the living room:

DOLLY
When was the last time *you* saw Marcus, Cece?

CECILE
Oh, God, a few years ago?

MO DOLLY
(they know she's lying)
But you... But the...

Before it can get any further, Alma yells from the kitchen:

ALMA (O.C.)
Mo do you have any Violent Femmes?

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dolly, Cecile, and Mo dance around screaming the lyrics to "Add it Up" by The Violent Femmes. Suddenly they break apart and switch into manic jumping up and down and pointing at each other and freaking out like very old club kids.

CECILE/MO/DOLLY
(singing)
I guess it has something to do with luck but I've waited for my life for just one...

Alma runs out of the kitchen, an oven mitt on her hand, joining in. They jump around for the whole conversation.

CECILE/MO/DOLLY/ALMA
Daaaaaaaaay after daaaaaaay! I get angryyyyyy and I will....

Dolly grabs Alma's hands, starts spinning her around.

MO
Cecile and I saw them live!

ALMA
YOU saw The Violent Femmes?!

CECILE
I was cool once! See? I'm not just your boss!

Alma stops spinning. Dolly clocks it.

ALMA
I gotta... check the fish.

INT. DINING ROOM - AIR B&B - LATER

The four are laughing, passing wine bottles back and forth, gesturing with forks full of salmon.

MO
This is amazing, Alma!

DOLLY
SO good! I was starving.

CECILE
You've been starving for years...

MO
God it's nice to have a night off.
Rae doesn't cook at all.

ALMA
What does he do?

MO
Who?

ALMA
Um, Ray?

MO
Oh. Dancer. Alvin Ailey for years.

ALMA
Damn. I bet his body is....

MO
You have no idea...

His phone dings. He checks it. We can't see the numbers.

CU: TEXT: TELL THEM THE TRUTH OR I WILL

INT. DINING ROOM - AIR B&B - CONT.

They all stare at Mo. He's gone somewhere in his head -good or bad - can't tell. A beat. He's missed Dolly's question...

DOLLY
Mo focus! What's that song? *Life!*

MO
Feeds On Life! Feeds On Life!

CECILE
Tool.

MO
Shut up those are the words.

CECILE
The band, dummy. It's Tool.

ALMA
(to Cecile)
You know Tool? Who are you?!

CECILE
It’s called Disgustipated.

MO
You’re making that up.

CECILE
Google it.

Dolly grabs her phone, starts typing.

ALMA
Oh, um you can just ask Siri....

DOLLY
What’d I say about my lawn...
Holy fuck. Disgustipated by Tool.

CECILE
(hiccups)
See? I forget NOTHING.

DOLLY
That must be fun for Howard.

Mo chortles. Cecile throws a piece of fish at Dolly. Who throws a piece back at Cecile. It lands in her hair. Both women jump up. Mo lobs a fistful of mashed potatoes at Dolly’s head. She shrieks.

DOLLY (CONT’D)
Not the blowout! I will destroy you!

She grabs a baguette off the table, beats him with it. Cecile dips a piece of asparagus in sauce, flicks it at Mo’s head. Mo, pulls the ice from his cocktail, hurls it at Cecile. They’re all shit-canned, laughing so hard they’re crying. They all collapse into their chairs, on sensory overload. The laughter could tip so easily, as they catch their breath..

DOLLY (CONT’D)
I can’t believe he’s gone. I don’t know if I can do it.

MO
The Celebration of Life?

CECILE
(mumbles)
Feeds On Life! Feeds on Life!

DOLLY
Just... life.

CECILE
This mood-destroying moment brought to you by Performative Grief....

MO
(sotto, to Alma)
Help me clear. *Now*... trust me...

Alma and Mo grab plates and scurry out. Dolly gets up.

DOLLY
I hate to inconvenience you, Cecile, but my heart is broken. It happens when people you love DIE.

CECILE
Why does your heartbreak always seem to mean more than mine?

DOLLY
Because my love, actually happened. It was reciprocated; it was real.

CECILE
You have always been a cunt.

DOLLY
Well, you keep asking for it.

Dolly breezes out, leaving Cecile alone. Cecile closes her eyes, sits by herself at the dining room, table, remembers:

CUT TO:

INT. DORM PARTY - 1997 - <u>FLASHBACK CONT.</u>

YOUNG CECILE, tee shirt, shorts, Buddy Holly glasses, Converse, watches the chaos.

YOUNG CECILE'S POV:

Amid a THRONG OF YOUNG PEOPLE, YOUNG MO, 21 attempts to break up a fight between YOUNG DOLLY and YOUNG MARCUS, 21.

Young Dolly holds a bottle of vodka in one hand and a cigarette in the other, in a skimpy black slip, fishnets, and combat boots. Young Marcus, joint in mouth, flannel, grabs her by the shoulders - *not the grab of a man who beats women* - the grab of someone dealing with a very drunk person.

As Young Mo throws himself between them, Young Dolly hauls off and smacks Young Marcus in the face with the (plastic) vodka bottle. He rears back, punches the wall, races off.

Young Mo runs after Young Marcus. Young Cecile runs up to Young Dolly, puts her arms around her, leads her to:

INT. DOLLY'S DORM ROOM, LATER THAT NIGHT - FLASHBACK CONT.

Young Cecile finishes the jumbo plastic vodka bottle. She opens Young Dolly's closet, with 5 hangers only, hangs up the black slip dress, the fishnets around the hanger.

Vomiting is heard. Flushing. Gargling. A beat. Dolly enters.

YOUNG CECILE
You okay?

YOUNG DOLLY (O.C.)
Yeah.

Dolly stumbles out, wearing the teal kimono we recognize from the scene in her SVU trailer. Still drunk, reeling.

YOUNG CECILE
Let me take care of you tonight.

YOUNG DOLLY
I don't know what that... what?

YOUNG CECILE
I've been speaking English since I was three. You can understand me.

YOUNG DOLLY
(getting it)
Oh. Babe. No. You're my best friend.

YOUNG CECILE
You're my best friend too. So...

YOUNG DOLLY
No, but, Cece? I love Marcus, even if he doesn't love me back enough to go...

YOUNG CECILE
Go where...?

YOUNG DOLLY
Nowhere. Can you just talk to me while I fall asleep? I'm scared I'm gonna get the spins.

YOUNG CECILE
Let me make you feel better.

Cecile walks up to her, kisses her. Dolly pulls back, then responds. The teal kimono slips to the floor.

End Flashback.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM - PRESENT

She pulls the SAME TEAL KIMONO on, piles her hair up, rummages in her bag. As she does, her phone dings:

CU: THE NUMBERS WE SEE INDICATE IT'S NOT A SAVED CONTACT

CU: TEXT: TELL THEM THE TRUTH OR I WILL

Dolly, shaken, grabs a pack of cigarettes from her bag, goes.

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM- BACK TO PRESENT

Mo and Alma finish a drink. She pulls out her pipe, gets up.

MO
Fuck it. Let's stay in here.

He takes the pipe from her, lights it.

ALMA
They can fine you if it smells.

MO
It's on Marcus' card.

ALMA
We can roast a goat in here tomorrow!

MO
(another huge hit)
Goat! Marcus was the GOAT. Fuck.

ALMA
(after a hit)
Hey. Can I ask you something?

MO
Now would be the very best time.

ALMA
Why don't you talk about Ray?

MO
It’s...uh...she’s tricky, and I...

ALMA
Cecile?

MO
No.

ALMA
Oh. Dolly. Yeah.

MO
What?

ALMA
You said she was tricky?

MO
Oh.

ALMA
(realizing)
OH.

MO
What?!

ALMA
Ray’s non-binary. Duh. Pronouns.
God I’m as bad as Dolly. My bad!

MO
Oh yeah no it’s, it’s fine!

He starts laughing hysterically. Then he starts crying.

ALMA
Maybe this weed is stronger than
you’re used to? Here lie in my lap.

He does. Within seconds, he’s asleep.

EXT. AIR B&B PATIO

Smoking, alone, Dolly closes her eyes, remembers:

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLY'S DORM ROOM, 1997 - FLASHBACK

THE MORNING AFTER. AN ALARM GOES OFF. Cecile reaches for Dolly, who practically levitates out of bed, rushing around.

DOLLY
Jesus. Brava, babe. For real.

CECILE
See? I made you feel better.

DOLLY
You sure as fuck did. I mean the hangover is an issue but...

CECILE
I can put it out of your mind....

DOLLY
Hey, Cece? I told you. I love you and I always will, but this? It's not real. You get that, right?

Dolly yanks the slip dress from the closet.

CECILE
Seriously?

DOLLY
I told you it wouldn't change...

CECILE
You're such a fucking user.

Dolly starts to pull on fishnets. Then she rips them off, fishes panties from a drawer, puts them on, grabs her boots.

DOLLY
Don't do that. I can't...I gotta catch a train into the city. Sorry.

Shoving her feet into the boots, she grabs a jean jacket.

CECILE
Wow. You really are the cunt that people call you behind your back.

DOLLY
Well, Cece, you *literally* asked for it.

Dolly grabs her bag and leaves. END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM, LATE THE NEXT MORNING

Cell phone vibrating. Mo awakens with a start, his fist clenched around the pipe. Hungover. Checks his phone.

CU: PHONE: DID YOU TELL THEM?

He sits up, shaky, puts the phone in his pocket.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - DOLLY'S ROOM

Dolly, in that same ratty-ass kimono, talks to an increasingly impatient Evelyn ON SPEAKER as she does her toner/serum/moisturizer combo.

DOLLY
And he ate all his food?

EVELYN (O.C.)
All the food.

DOLLY
And the formula didn't upset him?

EVELYN (O.C.)
Nope. Seemed fine to me.

DOLLY
So no stomach upset? No accidents?

EVELYN (O.C.)
I kept four children alive at the same time. Hang up the phone.

DOLLY
Just please call if there's a...

EVELYN (O.C.)
Hanging up love yooooooooou!

Evelyn hangs up. <u>End Phone Conversation</u>

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - HALLWAY

Holding a steaming coffee cup, still in pajamas, Cecile has overheard the phone call. She pulls her own phone out of her pocket, texts a message with one thumb.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - DOLLY'S ROOM

As Dolly hangs up; a text. NUMBERS: IT'S NOT A SAVED CONTACT

CU: TEXT: *TELL THEM OR I WILL*

CUT TO:

LAINIE (PRE-LAP)
And then we watched Frozen again!

INT. AIR B&B - CECILE'S BEDROOM

Cecile, Facetimes her daughter on her laptop.

CECILE
Again?! No way!

CUT TO:

INT. CECILE'S DAUGHTER'S BEDROOM

LAINIE, 7, in a unicorn hat, is in an all-pink room.

LANIE
And we had waffles for dinner!

Facetime Conversation, Intercut.

CECILE
You did? Well then what are you going to have for breakfast?

LAINIE
Daddy, what are we going to have for breakfast?

Cecile's husband, HOWARD, 40's, bends into the frame.

HOWARD
Ella ate a yogurt and Lainie and I are gonna do acai bowls. Big day.

CECILE
Sounds like you've got it handled.

HOWARD
They won't be any better for this weekend, but they won't be worse.

CECILE
Hey, in parenting, that's a win.

HOWARD
So are you guys having a good time? Besides, I mean, the occasion.

CECILE
Yeah, it's been great. I'd rather have a pap smear than go to this thing today, but...

LAINIE
What's a pat smear?

HOWARD
Aaaaand, now I know what I'm doing for the rest of the afternoon.

CECILE
Sorry.

Lainie squirms out of frame. Cecile and Howard laugh. Friends.

HOWARD
Give my love to Dolly and Mo, yeah?

CECILE
Yeah. They asked about you last night. I told them you were holding steady at awesome. Love you, honey.

HOWARD
Love you too sweets.

End Facetime Conversation. Cecile puts the phone down.

CECILE
I'm such a shitty person.

ALMA (O.C.)
You really are.

Pull out to reveal Alma, naked, in Cecile's bed.

ALMA (CONT'D)
You didn't bring me any coffee.

CUT TO:

INT. MO AND RAE'S BEDROOM - CONT.

Rae, her hair in a wrap, picks up her phone. FaceTime.

RAE
Oh, naked? Tryin' to distract me.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - MO'S EN SUITE BATHROOM

Mo, a towel around his waist, Facetimes Rae.

Facetime Conversation, Intercut.

MO
I just got out of the shower.

RAE
Lemme guess. Woefully over-hung.

MO
If this dance thing doesn't work out you can always be a psychic.

RAE
That's how I know you didn't tell them.

Mo pulls on his pants, a tux shirt, as he talks.

MO
Shit went left. Dolly and Cecile did their scene from Dynasty...

RAE
I am sorry I missed that.

MO
I think she might have a new fling.

RAE
Dolly?

MO
Cecile.

RAE
No! She seems asexual to me, but...
(then)
Oh. See? Distraction! Tell them. Or I shall get unpleasant on your ass.

She hangs up. End Facetime Conversation

Mo puts his phone down to put on Marcus' purple velvet jacket, grabs his phone, heads out of the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. DOLLY'S ROOM

Dolly watches Wyze Cam footage on her phone. We can't see what or who she's watching but she's doing baby talk.

DOLLY
Hi babyyyyyy! Hiiiiiiiiiiii!

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLWAY CONT.

Mo, passing Dolly's room, hears this. A beat. He pulls out his phone, texts a message. Keeps walking.

INT. AIR B&B - KITCHEN - EARLY AFTERNOON

The kitchen is now clean. Alma, boho chic Anthroplogie dress, fedora, makes mimosas. Mo enters, takes one. Dolly saunters in, wearing the green dress, made up, blown out, puffy-eyed.

MO
You ladies look gorge. Doll.
You can't pre-game while crying.

DOLLY
Had to do it here. I don't emote in public unless I'm being paid.

Cecile enters in the black dress. A minor burn visible.

MO
You look beautiful, Cecile.

CECILE
I look like Wednesday Adams. Fuck.

DOLLY
(sotto to Cecile)
Hey. At least yours is paid for.

Mo and Alma don't hear. But they clock the shift. It's over.

CECILE
I'm sorry, babe.

DOLLY
Yeah, me too.

MO
(to Alma)
See? It always blows over...

Cecile pours herself a drink. Dolly goes to the wine fridge.

DOLLY
Yes! Marcus stocked my Prosecco!

MO
Tell me there's not *diet* Prosecco.

DOLLY
No Sugar Prosecco! Guess who makes it!

CECILE
Monsanto...?

DOLLY
Christie Brinkley.

ALMA
She's still wicked hot.

DOLLY
And an absolute class act.

She moves her skirt out of the way, sticks the bottle between her knees, pops the cork, swigs straight from the bottle.

MO
Takes one to know one...

DOLLY
Fuckin' A.

MO
To Marcus. He was everybody's favorite. Which is super annoying because I always wanted to be everybody's favorite.

CECILE
(re: Dolly)
You're the favorite now.

DOLLY
(re: Cecile)
Yeah, because *this* bitch...

But they're smiling.

ALMA
I love your jacket, Mo.

MO
Marcus gave it to me last time I saw him.

DOLLY
When was that?

MO
Spring?

CECILE
Did he seem sick?

MO
I didn't...oh, well... God.

DOLLY
What?

MO
It's just. He was bald.

CECILE
And you didn't mention it?

MO
Why would I? Do you ask Common if he has cancer? He named the look!

ALMA
He what?

CECILE
Mo named his look. Every single day. And he'd unveil it to you.

MO
He called it Fine-Ass Wine.

DOLLY
Did he say anything weird?

MO
We... mostly talked about me.

CECILE
Ohhhh. You were there as a client.

MO
I was there as a friend who happened just once to be a client.

DOLLY
So you got a free session. Damn.

CECILE
(to Dolly)
You are the cheapest person I know.

DOLLY
And you are the most tragically dressed for a Celebration of Life.

Mo takes the opportunity to change the subject. As he goes:

MO
Which starts in half an hour so somebody please Waze this thing while I go to the boys' room. Thanks for the mimosas, Alma!

CECILE
(to Dolly, re: Alma)
She really is indispensable.

ALMA
Yeah. Just ike a Swiffer.

She walks out. Cecile's face falls. Dolly clocks it.

DOLLY
(arm around Cecile)
Come on. *We gotta motor if...*

CECILE/DOLLY
We *wanna be ready for that funeral.*

They walk out together.

EXT. GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

A CROWD OF PEOPLE mill around the beautiful outdoor setting, holding cocktails, listening to the jazz of a live TRIO. Dolly, Mo, Cecile, and Alma sip drinks, eye the crowd.

ON A STUNNING BLACK WOMAN, halter dress, legs for days, her face partially obscured by her dramatic pink hat with a veil.

CECILE
It's amazing that we don't know another person here.

MO
He had a big life for 25 years after we left school. His practice, his friends, his followers.

ALMA
Followers?

MO
Oh after his big Ted Talk he because a world-famous blogger and talk-show fixture.

CECILE
Like Dr. Drew but hot and Black.

MO
I looooooved Dr. Drew.

DOLLY
Oh my God.

MO
I mean before he denied Covid...

DOLLY
No. LOOK who it as. Cece holy shit!

They follow Dolly's gaze. CYNTHIA MILES, 60's, approaching.

CECILE
She won't even recognize me.

CYNTHIA
Hello, Cecile.

CECILE
Hi, Cynthia...
(suddenly dumb and shy)
You...remember...um.. Mohammed and Dolly? From...Shakespeare Seminar?

CYNTHIA
(does not care, to Mo)
Of course.
(to Dolly, disdainfully)
You're that film actress.

DOLLY
Yes! You and Marcus...stayed close?

CYNTHIA
We were neighbors in the city. His building was around the corner from mine. But then, Cecile knew that.

CECILE
I...

CYNTHIA
I kept up with you through Marcus. You won a Clio. Congratulations. You're in Chicago now, yes?

CECILE
Uh-huh.

CYNTHIA
Look me up next time you're in town. I realize business cards are environmentally reprehensible but I'm a proud luddite. Chat soon.

She hands Cecile a card, ignores the others, goes.

CECILE
So she totally knows we stalked her in Manhattan senior year.

MO
She totally knows *you* stalked her in Manhattan senior year.

ALMA
You stalked her?

CECILE
I admired her. I wanted to see how she lived, outside of work. I wanted to be friends with her...

MO
(to Alma)
Cecile was so obsessed with her that we dared her to present her Shakespeare thesis *to* her, AS her.

DOLLY
And she fucking did it! Aced it!

ALMA
So, was Cynthia....interested?

CECILE
What? No. It was a brilliant paper.

ALMA
And you never told her how... important she was to you?

CECILE
God no. Why would I humiliate myself?

ALMA
That makes so much sense...

Alma rolls her eyes, walks off, as MALIYAH TAYLOR, 30's, Black, dreads, long purple dress, approaches.

DOLLY
Mali!

They all throw their arms around Maliyah. A beat.

MALIYAH
No no I can't lose it before I have to get up there and talk. Thank you for coming, you guys. Really.

MO
Wouldn't have missed it.

DOLLY
Mali? I just... did you *know?*

MALIYAH
He didn't tell me til it was too late for me to take a leave of absence and fly back to the States. I kinda feel robbed, you know? We could've had a long goodbye.

DOLLY
Long goodbyes are overrated.

An awkward beat. Dolly is somewhere else. Mo notices.

MALIYAH
Don't leave til I give you what I have for you okay?

The same beautiful BLACK WOMAN in the pink hat walks by as Maliyah turns away from them. Maliyah turns back to them.

MALIYAH (CONT'D)
(re: the woman)
Yet another friend of Marcus' that I *know* I know, but can't place. I can't remember anybody's names but yours. Damn I hate this day....

She heads off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GARDEN - LATER

Maliyah steps up to a dais surrounded by stunning flowers and greenery. Behind her, set between two trees, is a screen.

MALIYAH
Hi everyone. I'm Maliyah Taylor, and I want to welcome you to the celebration of the life of my brother, the uniquely gifted and generous, Dr. Marcus Taylor.

MONTAGE: MALIYAH SPEAKING, SLIDES SHOWING PHOTOS OF YOUNG MARCUS/CECILE/DOLLY/MO - SOME WITH DOLLY/PHIL, /RAE/MO, CECILE/HOWARD, MARCUS AND SOME GORGEOUS YOUNG SUPERMODEL... MARCUS AS A KID WITH BABY MALIYAH, MARCUS AT THE TED TALK, SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS, ON TV, ETC.

MONTAGE: MOVE FROM THE PRESENTATION TO THE CROWD, LAUGHING, CRYING, CLAPPING, POINTING, SIPPING COCKTAILS. DOLLY, HEAD TILTED BACK, A TISSUE EXPERTLY FOLDED INTO A SQUARE TO DOT TEARS FROM HER EYES, CECILE, WILLING HERSELF NOT TO CRY, MO, TEARS FALLING ON HIS VELVET, HOLDING ALMA'S HAND. ALMA, DAMP EYED JUST FROM WATCHING THESE PEOPLE SHE LIKES SUFFER....

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

People are hugging, filing out, waving as they leave. Maliyah approaches with an urn, smiling through glassy eyes.

DOLLY
(re: the run)
Um. Oh. Is that...

MALIYAH
Marcus? Yeah. He wanted you...

CECILE
Nope. No.

MO
That's... he's... not... for us....

MALIYAH
He wanted you guys to scatter his ashes at Vassar Lake. Sorry. I knew if I gave it to you earlier I'd fall apart before the speech, so...

She extends the urn toward Dolly. Dolly tries to take it, can't, panics. Maliyah starts crying. Mo grabs the urn.

MO
Okay, Mali. Okay.

CECILE
Is Sean with you at Marcus'? You shouldn't be alone, babe.

MALIYAH
Sean ended up hating Paris. I ended up hating Sean. So. I'm solo.

MO
Wanna go to Vassar with us?

CECILE
Or, like, instead of us?

MALIYAH
I'm not invited. This is for you guys to do. Oh and this.
(pulls out a letter)
Read it together, he said.

Across the yard, the beautiful Black Woman in the pink hat waves to Maliyah, beckons her over. As Malyiah walks away:

MALIYAH (CONT'D)
I have to go tell Woman Whose Name Escapes Me goodbye. Love you.

ON ALMA: STARING AT THE WOMAN IN THE PINK HAT

DOLLY
Motion to acquire booze for the field trip.

MO
Second.

CECILE
There is no fucking way I'm going to Vassar right now.

Alma gapes at her.

ALMA
Un. Believable.

Alma walks away. A beat. Mo and Dolly clock it, then head toward the bar, leaving Cecile alone. She follows Alma to:

EXT. GARDEN, UNDER A BEECH TREE

CECILE
I'm leaving.

ALMA
So am I.

CECILE
What?

ALMA
I didn't know Marcus. I shouldn't go to that lake. But you should. And the fact that you won't? Gross.

CECILE
I just..don't have the need to...

ALMA
What, prove that you care? You really *are* kind of a shitty person.

CECILE
I know. I'll see you at the...

ALMA
No no. I'm *leaving*. The pitch will be in your office Monday. I won't.

CECILE
Alma, please...

She starts to reach for her, then checks who's looking.

ALMA
I'm sorry your friend died. And I'm sorry that the ones who didn't die? Treated me way better than you did this weekend.

She walks away. Cecile, stunned, refuses to move. Then:

<u>The beautiful Black Woman in the pink hat waves to Cecile, who looks behind her, thinking she's waving at someone else.</u>

EXT. GARDEN - CONT.

Dolly poses for a selfie with the BARTENDER, 50's, as Mo packs the leftover vodka and tequila into a wine box.

Mo, kneeling on the ground, takes a breath, looks at the urn next to the box of booze, puts the urn in the box too.

MO
Sorry man.
(then, to Dolly)
Hey Diva, can we wrap this up?

DOLLY
Where's Cecile?

EXT. GARDEN, CONT.

CECILE'S POV: ALMA AND THE WOMAN WITH THE PINK HAT CHATTING

MO
Cecile! Now!

Cecile jumps, startled, then heads over to Dolly and Mo.

EXT. GARDEN, BAR, CONT.

DOLLY
(to the Bartender)
Bye Danny!

BARTENDER
Donny...

She saunters off. Mo follows. Cecile looks behind her one more time, then sullenly brings up the rear.

EXT. VASSAR ENTRANCE - DUSK

Cecile skulks behind Mo, a messenger bag across his chest. The bottles in it clink loudly. Dolly carries the urn.

CECILE
This is total fucking bullshit. We're going to get caught.

MO
May I remind you who served as Campus Patrol our senior year?

DOLLY
All you and Marcus did was lie outside the chapel and smoke pot.

MO
Ummmmm, and utter observational brilliance over the walkie-talkies.

DOLLY
Remember that time Marcus and I had sex behind the theater while you sang Sade?

CECILE
YOU WATCHED?

MO
Bitch, I'm a gentleman.

DOLLY
He turned his back and did a perfectly adequate rendition of No Ordinary Love.

CECILE
I actually hate both of you.

DOLLY/MO
Bummer. *That's* too bad.

They reach the entrance of Main Hall.

INT. MAIN LOBBY ENTRANCE

MARTHA, 60's, NAME TAGE, GUARD, sits behind a partition.

MARTHA
Sorry, tours are over for the day.

MO
Oh! We don't need a tour. We're alums. Class of '97.

MARTHA
Oh how wonderful! Welcome back!

MO
Thanks!

They start to go.

MARTHA
But the thing is, we don't allow people to roam around campus after dark. Security, you know, and if you fall, of course. Insurance.

CECILE
Martha? This is Dolly Dickson.

MARTHA
Hi Dolly, I'm Martha...

MO
Vassar Drama Department, Golden Globe nominee, Dolly Dickson?

MARTHA
Oh Congratulations.
(a beat)
We don't allow visitors after...

CECILE
I'm her agent, so I'm going to level with you. Dolly has just made a *significant* donation to the Film and Drama Departments, and now we're scheduled to do a photo shoot. No one was told about it because we didn't want the press to show up and ruin campus security.

MARTHA
Ohhhhh I just love that! Giving back! Go right ahead.
(then, re: The Urn)
What is that?

DOLLY
This? Is... my Independent Spirit Award. Of all the accolades I've collected for my craft, the Independent Spirit most represents my time at Vassar. My photographer, Richard Avedon, agrees.

MARTHA
Isn't that marvelous! Have a wonderful shoot! Thank you for the gift! You know, I see every play!

DOLLY
Good for you!

We follow them through the lobby, into Main Hall, outside.

EXT. VASSAR CAMPUS

The minute they get outside, they break into hysterics.

MO
Richard Avedon is dead, dumbass!

DOLLY
Narc-Face Martha doesn't know that.

CECILE
An Independent Spirit Award?

DOLLY
Who's ever seen one? Not me.
Great work on the agent thing!

CECILE
Hey I sell shit for a *living*...

Dolly smacks Cecile. Hard. But she's smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET LAKE - ACTUAL SUNSET

The three stand, awed by the sunset hanging over the lake that bears its name. Dolly sets the urn down. Mo opens his bag. Pulls out a bottle of tequila. They pass it. Gulp it.

MO
Should we like, pray or something?

CECILE
A Buddhist, a Muslim, and a...

DOLLY
...defrocked Methodist....

CECILE
....walk into a lake...

DOLLY
Oh. Wait, I know. Hold hands.

They do. Dolly pulls her hand away from Mo's, and holds it up to the sky. Mo smiles, raises his free hand up to the sky.

CECILE
Well that's a wildly facile symbol of where people go when they die.

DOLLY
Right? And see if *you* were dead...
(arm toward the ground)
We'd do *this*.

CECILE
Oh. An asshole with choreography.

MO
ANYWAY.

DOLLY
(extends arm to heaven)
Marcus? We honor the place in you, in which the entire universe dwells. We honor the place in you, which is of love, of light, of peace, and of truth. In that place, in ourselves, we are one.

Cecile starts sobbing. They gape at her.

MO
Cece? You okay?

CECILE
That was actually really nice.

MO
Yo, was that improv?

DOLLY
It's actually the Namaste prayer we say in yoga. I love it.
(as Cecile and Mo hug her)
They give me free classes to post on Insta.

MO
That was almost a beautiful story.

CECILE
So, should we... pour him out?

MO
The verb is scatter, Cecile. Jesus.

Dolly picks up the urn. Puts it down. Takes her shoes off. Picks it back up. Walks right to the edge of the water.

She stands, solemnly, eyes closed. Cecile and Mo stand on either side. Without opening her eyes, she opens the lid.

DOLLY
(eyes still closed)
Be free, my love.

She hurls the ashes so hard she loses her balance, trips into the shallow water. The ashes coat her dress and arms. Still holding the urn, she sits down in the lake. A beat.

CECILE
Is she in shock?

Mo is laughing so hard he's bent over, struggling for breath.

CECILE (CONT'D)
Goddammit.

She kicks off her Chanel shoes, walks into the lake.

CECILE (CONT'D)
(to Dolly)
Did you hurt yourself?

DOLLY
I think I'm just tired.

Cecile holds her hands out to Dolly.

CECILE
Come on babe. We're gonna freeze getting back to the fucking car.

Mo, jacket off, walks into the lake.

MO
Doll? Is this some weird baptismal remnant of your Christianity?

DOLLY
(to Cecile)
Aren't *you* tired?

CECILE
I'm tired of being in the fucking water.

Cecile gets out, heads off.

MO
(to Dolly)
I'm tired. I'm so tired I can't think straight. Or gay.

Dolly, still holding the urn, puts her arms around him. They watch as Cecile, soaked, puts on her shoes. Cecile turns.

CECILE
I'm taking the car. Are you staying to reenact an Esther Williams film?

DOLLY
I'm on the fence...

MO
Can I be Esther Williams?

DOLLY
I've decided to stay here unless we all start being honest. Cece?

CECILE
I would give one of my children for a cigarette right now.

MO
Now see *that* seems true....

CECILE
Wait, are *you* going to be honest?

DOLLY
Yeah. I am. Mo?

MO
I'm down.

Mo and Dolly get out of the lake. Mo passes the bottle around one last time. Dolly's dress is covered in wet ash.

CECILE
Um, Doll? You've got a little Marcus on your skirt.

MO
Wouldn't be the first time.

CECILE
(re: dress)
Guess you can't take it back now.

DOLLY
There's a lot I can't take back.

CECILE
Are you ready to apologize?

DOLLY
I apologized this morning.

CECILE
Not for last night. For....then.

DOLLY
How ‘bout this? I’ll apologize for *then*, when you tell the truth about now. In dry warm clothes cuz this sucks.

Cecile shoves the empty urn into Mo’s bag. She sees a text light up Mo’s cell:

CU: MO’S PHONE: TEXT: CALLER ID “BABE”: *TELL THEM TONIGHT.*

MO
What?

CECILE
You have to tell the truth too.

MO
Fine. Doll are you coming?

DOLLY
Can I just say goodbye alone?

MO
Of course. See you at the car.

Mo takes Cecile’s hand. They go. Dolly, alone, looks up.

EXT. SUNSET LAKE - CONT.

DOLLY
Hey. I just wanted to say I love you. And I’m sorry for what happened last time we were here.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUNSET LAKE - (BEFORE THE PREVIOUS) FLASHBACK - 1997

Young Dolly, shaking, paces, in the black fishnets/slip dress we recognize from later that night. Young Marcus runs up.

MARCUS
What is so important? I’m missing Behavioral Genetics! Hey. You okay?

DOLLY
I don’t think so. No.

MARCUS
Is it your mom?

She looks at him, starts crying. He puts his arms around her.

DOLLY
No. Although to be fair she does factor in, as does yours, as does their poverty, as does ours.

MARCUS
I don’t know what you’re...

DOLLY
Pregnant.

MARCUS
HOW? Nobody’s more careful than us. When that one pill made you spot for 3 months we *still* used condoms!

DOLLY
We were model fornicators. And yet.

She pulls cigarette from her boot, lights it.

MARCUS
Okay.

DOLLY
Will you take me to Manhattan?

MARCUS
That’ll be too expensive.

DOLLY
Where else would we go?

MARCUS
Our scholarships are for the rest of the year, so that’s free housing and medical care through May. And we’ll have degrees when we start looking for work. Maybe we stay here in town for a while, work and save, and *then* go to Manhattan...

DOLLY
Not to, like, live, babe. To have an abortion. Tomorrow morning.

MARCUS
What?

DOLLY
What? Wait. You want to keep it?

MARCUS
Maybe things happen for a reason.

DOLLY
That doesn't mean you can't change what happened. For SEVERAL reasons.

MARCUS
I don't... believe in that.

DOLLY
Who are you? I thought you believed in a woman's right to choose!

MARCUS
I do! It just doesn't feel right to me.

DOLLY
Luckily, it's not happening *to you.*

MARCUS
I can't... feel good about this.

DOLLY
So how will you feel about me when I do this? I'm doing it. I'm not making a kid grow up with nothing.

MARCUS
I don't think I can...

DOLLY
Can *what*? Love me?

MARCUS
Get past it? I'll always love you.

DOLLY
That turns out to mean nothing...

MARCUS
I'll ask Mo to drive you. You can't be alone for this.

DOLLY
Fuck. You. Nobody's going to know! I'm not going to be the girl everybody feels sorry for. That's not going to be my LOOK. Ever.

She bends over the lake and throws up. END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET LAKE - BACK TO PRESENT

Dolly takes a sip of vodka, throws up in the lake.

CUT TO:

EXT. VASSAR CAMPUS

As Dolly leaves the lake, Mo and Cecile casually appear from behind the bushes. They've been watching her the whole time.

CECILE
Did you just puke?

DOLLY
I puked here 25 years ago.

CECILE
Shitfaced?

MO/DOLLY
Pregnant.

Dolly gapes at Mo. Cecile gapes at Dolly. Mo walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIR B&B, SHORTLY LATER

A car pulls OUT of the driveway. Behind it, another car pulls in. Mo, Cecile, and Dolly get out of the car. Silent. Mo frowns.

MO
Who was just at our house?

CECILE
It must be Alma's Uber.

MO
When you said she left, I thought you meant the Celebration of Life.

CECILE
Right but also *my* life. So.

She slams her car door so hard it shakes. Storms inside.

MO
(re: the car)
I have to return this, dude.

Mo looks at Dolly.

MO (CONT'D)
Someone's not ready to be honest.

DOLLY
You mean her? Or you?

MO
What?

DOLLY
You knew this whole fucking time?

MO
Marcus asked me not to tell you.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR, RHINEBECK

Alma gets out of her Uber, her overnight bag on her shoulder. Looks around the CROWD of loud hipsters. She sees the PINK HAT among the fedoras. She walks over, yells over the noise.

ALMA
Hey! Thank God for your hat!

The woman turns, smiling. Takes off the hat. It's RAE.

RAE
That's why I kept it on!

CUT TO:

INT. CECILE'S SHOWER

Naked, sitting, knees pulled up to her chest, Cecile sobs.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, CONT.

The BARTENDER, male, delivers drinks. Rae and Alma toast.

ALMA
To Marcus. Were it not for him, we wouldn't have met.

RAE
Do you want to tell me why you brought an overnight bag to drinks with a stranger? I mean I'm hot and you lesbians move fast, but damn.

ALMA
We lesbians?

RAE
I'm not a lesbian. I'm so sorry.

ALMA
No I didn't think...

RAE
Do I seem like a lesbian?

ALMA
Honestly? You just seem like NOT this girl I need to get away from.

RAE
Ahhhh. So me about your girl.

ALMA
She's not my girl!
(downs her whole drink)
Whatever.

RAE
Yeah you seem whatever about it.

ALMA
What about you?

RAE
Oh, I'm up here on some casual espionage. Husband trouble.

ALMA
Aren't you from the city? Who'd come this far out to cheat?

RAE
He's not cheating. He's lying.

ALMA
What else is there to lie about? Work stuff, or, like fentanyl...?

RAE
(kills her drink)
The state of our union.

Rae flags down the server.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - KITCHEN

Dolly sits in the kitchen, wearing the ratty teal kimono. Her hair's in a towel. Mo walks in, hair wet, in sweats.

MO
Cecile's door's still closed.

DOLLY
Well we should wait then.

MO
Right.

DOLLY
And have a drink.

MO
Obviously.

Dolly's cell dings. She looks at it. Laughs. Hands it to Mo.

MO (CONT'D)
(reading)
"*Perfect send-off for our Marcus. Sorry the dress got wrecked. I bet you looked like a shiksa mermaid. Who made the first Esther Williams joke*" Heart Emoji..Star of David Emoji????
(grinning)
Damn, I miss me some Phil.

DOLLY
Me too.

MO
But you're with him all the time.

DOLLY
Not like I used to be.

MO
I knew it. You guys are in trouble.

DOLLY
What? No.

MO
You can tell me. I wouldn't judge. I mean eventually a 25 year age gap comes back to bite you in the....

DOLLY
Mo, seriously, stop, okay?

MO
Think about it. He was our age now? When we were at Vassar. That's...

DOLLY
Mo? Fucking stop. Please.

MO
I'm trying, here! For honesty!

Cecile walks in. Glares at Dolly.

CECILE
You never told me Marcus got you pregnant. ME! You're such a liar.

DOLLY
I didn't tell anybody! Ever!

CECILE
It's scary how well you lie.

DOLLY
Do you say that into your mirror?

CECILE
You told Mo! And not me! You betrayed me. Again. You lied.

MO
She didn't tell me. Marcus did.

DOLLY
When?

MO
That night after the fight. He was s scared you wouldn't be okay in the city alone the next morning.

DOLLY
Not worried enough to come with me.

MO
Worried enough to send me.

On Dolly's face. She's stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. METRO NORTH TRAIN STATION, POUGHKEEPSIE, 1997, FLASHBACK

Young Dolly shivering, stubs out a smoke on the platform, gets on a train. Another FOUR people get on behind her.

Find Young Mo, in his clothes from the night before, plus a baseball hat, slipping in behind the others.

MO (V.O.)
I followed you that day.

INT. TRAIN, FLASHBACK CONT.

Young Mo sits several rows in FRONT of Young Dolly.

DISSOLVE TO:

MO (V.O.)
Waited outside while you got the...

CECILE (V.O.)
Abortion. Just fucking say it.

INT. TRAIN, FLASHBACK CONT.

Dolly boards the train home. Young Mo follows her.

MO (V.O.)
And then I made sure you were okay to get home.

Young Dolly reaches into her bag, pulls out a Village Voice, unfolds it, looks around to see if anyone is watching, then carefully spreads it out on her seat. She sits down on it. Alone on the two-seat, she takes the aisle, faces out toward the window, draws her knees up to her. A beat.

DOLLY (V.O.)
I wasn't...

YOUNG MO's POV: Her back shakes as she cries. END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B KITCHEN, CONT.

Dolly looks at the ground. Mo puts his arm around her. She flinches, then relaxes into it. A beat. She aims for casual:

DOLLY
I wish I still had that black dress! 90s Goth chic is in again!

CECILE
Mo, I guess you're the hero. Unbelievable.

DOLLY
What's unbelievable, Cece, is that I've let you dine out on that one morning for 25 fucking years.

MO
What one morning?

DOLLY
(to Cecile)
That morning! I wasn't able to listen to your feelings because I had to hurry off to my abortion.

CECILE
That's no excuse for using me.

DOLLY
I warned you that you'd only be a distraction if we slept together!

MO
You two slept together?

DOLLY
Once!

CECILE
It destroyed me. Do you get that?

DOLLY
I have been apologizing for 25 years! Get over it! I have real shit to worry about!

CECILE
You just keep doing it! Saying I'm not real.

MO
You both lied to me all this time?

CECILE
We withheld information. Like you.

MO
Mrs. Wang-Cohen, you are a Varsity Withholder. Just be honest. Jesus.

CECILE
Oh, hey, Mo? What does Ray want you to tell us?

Warning shot. Mo backs down. But he's pissed. Dolly sees it.

MO
Let's do the letter.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM

Dolly, Cecile, and Mo sit on the couch, with the envelope.

DOLLY
So you're going to read it?

MO
Oh. Do you want to?

DOLLY
Nope.

MO
Cece?

CECILE
You're the lawyer.

MO
Not Marcus' lawyer.

CECILE
English is my second language...

DOLLY
I'm a stupid actress...

Mo rolls his eyes opens the envelope. Reads aloud.

MO
(reading)
Open the entertainment center.

Dolly jumps up and opens it. There's laptop inside. She grabs it, returns to the couch. On the lap top, is a POST-IT.

CU: LAPTOP: POST-IT: OPEN AND PLAY

CECILE
Oh for fuck's sake. Is this gonna be like that Ricky Gervais show?

MO
Afterlife? I love that show!

DOLLY
I wanted to play the wife but they wouldn't see American actresses...

CECILE
How is this about you right now?

Cecile grabs the lap top from Dolly, opens it.

CU: Screen: Blank except for ONE FILE: <u>THE SEND-OFF</u>

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, RHINEBECK, CONT.

Alma and Rae, buzzed, laughing and telling horror stories.

ALMA
She, like, high-fived my pussy.

RAE
There's nothing worse, right?

ALMA
It's like, now women get bored with their dudes, and instead of dying their hair, they fuck a lesbian.

RAE
It's all gotten so fluid.

ALMA
I'm for all of that! Do *you*! Just don't make me your experiment.

RAE
I am very much my own experiment.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B, CONT.

ON SCREEN: INT. MARCUS' HOSPICE HOSPITAL BED, IN HIS HOME

Marcus sits in his bed, bald, a single IV, but still amazing looking in a gorgeous red silk robe with a dragon.

MARCUS
Hey guys. Hope you like the digs. Belongs to a client who owed me a favor. I saved his marriage, he gave me his Air B&B and did my bidding with the accoutrements.
(pops the robe collar)
Y'all like this look? I call it Fresh To Death. Too Soon?

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM

Dolly, Mo, Cecile, laughing/crying at his joke.

BACK TO SCREEN:

MARCUS
Here's how I'm guessing shit went down with the ashes thing. Cecile bitched the whole time, Dolly made it beautiful while also pissing you both *all* the way off, and Mo tried to keep the peace cuz, dude, that's just who you are.

MO
YES!

CECILE
He knows us better than we do.

DOLLY
We all know you better than you do.

MARCUS (O.S.)
So? How close am I?

DOLLY
(looks at the screen)
Not close enough.

ON THE SCREEN:

MARCUS
Sooooo as you three fools know, after four years of listening to your problems, Harvard Medical School and my residency were really just for looks. Which is what this is about. The looks you're presenting. In your lives. And I'm gonna start with Miss Cecile.

CECILE
Oh I'm not drunk enough for this.

She gets up, heads to the kitchen. Dolly and Mo follow.

INT. RHINEBECK BAR - CONT.

Rae and Alma wrap it up. Alma's pretty drunk.

ALMA
So then why do you want it to work?

RAE
Cuz my man? When we're working the way we *can* work, is a damn genius. Not just, at the world. At me.

ALMA
I want a genius at me. I want somebody who feels like she got a manual of my, like, instructions.

RAE
You teach people how to treat you. If she was married - to a man no less- and you let her have you...

ALMA
I just wish I could be as mad at her tomorrow as I am right now.

RAE
Don't wish that. Anger's still hot. A hate-fuck is the best. Trust me.

ALMA
Really? What do I do?

RAE
I can only tell you what I'd do.

ALMA
Well tell me, Sherae!

RAE
If she can't claim you, bitch, run.

ALMA
Can you take me to the train?

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B KITCHEN, CONT.

Mo, Cecile, and Dolly all take a shot. Mo opens a window.

DOLLY
Ew no it's cold in here....

CECILE/MO
Shut up.

DOLLY
We have one more shot...

As Mo pours more shots...

DOLLY (CONT'D)
I mean to tell the truth. You heard Marcus. He's gonna deep dive into all our lives. He knows everything!

CECILE
I think doctor patient privilege should extend well into death...

MO
Is that why he was all our confidant? Because he *had* to keep our secrets? Legally? That's sad.

CECILE
Why?

DOLLY
Totally...

DOLLY
I'll start. Who did Marcus tell?

MO
Only me.

CECILE
We've done this already.

DOLLY
No! Who did he tell about Phil? Who's been texting me about Phil?

CECILE
What about Phil? Are you guys done?

MO
I knew it!

DOLLY
We are not done, that's not..

CECILE
You have our cell numbers, dummy. You'd know who was texting you.

DOLLY
It's an unknown number! Warning me. Threatening me about Phil shit.

MO
You lost me at unknown number. You can't just create a phone number.

CECILE
Of course you can. But I didn't.

MO
Are you sure?

CECILE
Fuck You!

MO
No I mean are you sure you can make a fake number? Is that a thing?

CECILE
Of course it’s a thing, you antiquated fuck! It’s a virtual phone number, I think. You just...

DOLLY
Stop! What did he tell you guys?!

MO
Phil?

DOLLY
Marcus!

CECILE
About Phil? Is that what you’re...?

DOLLY
I’m trying, here. We agreed we’d be honest. So who’s been threatening me about Phil? Tell me!

She’s serious and they honestly don’t know.

MO
Honey I don’t know what you mean.

CECILE
I swear, Doll. I don’t either.

DOLLY
(to Cecile)
It was you. Had to be. Cuz then you texted me to be honest about *us*.

CECILE
You and Phil? No I didn’t...

DOLLY
You and me! Last night!

MO
You guys slept together last night?

DOLLY/CECILE
NO!

MO
So what were you texting her about?

CECILE
I didn’t text anybody anything! Except Howard! And the girls! Get your phone. Let me see the number.

DOLLY
You just said you can create a number! I didn't know that. Phil and I still have a fax machine...

CECILE
No I want to see if it's the same number that's been threatening me!

MO
Wait, who's been threatening you?

CECILE
I don't know! I thought it was Alma at first, using a bot text number.

MO
(into his own phone)
Siri, what is a *bot text number*...?

CECILE
(to Dolly)
But then I decided it was you.

DOLLY
Why would you think it was me?

CECILE
Because you were so mad at me!

DOLLY
I'm always mad at you. I wouldn't threaten you. I'd just tell you.

CECILE
Like you're just telling me about what's going on with Phil?

SIRI AUTOMATED VOICE (O.C.)
Here's what I found. For bots, texting is the most common way to interact with users anonymously.

MO
(into his own phone)
Great thank you so much. Bye.

CECILE
Did you just thank Siri?

DOLLY
And bid her good evening?

MO
Get your phones. Now. I don't like the idea of somebody fucking with you two. I need to solve it. Maybe report somebody. I mean I've been getting threatening messages all weekend too but they're from Rae.

DOLLY
Why?

MO
What?

CECILE
What does Ray want you to tell us?

MO
You're up next on the tape, Cecile.

He walks out. They follow. They don't notice....

EXT. AIR B&B SIDE PORCH, CONT.

Alma, overnight bag in one hand, vape in the other, watching.

INT. LIVING ROOM, CONT.

Cecile picks up the remote. She hits play.

CECILE
Fuck it.

ON THE SCREEN:

MARCUS
Cecile, the last time I saw you? The Clios? You were in that evening gown, looking like the black fucking swan. You knocked me out. I asked you your dream partner was, to be with on that dream night. Remember who you said?

CECILE
Alma.

ALMA (O.C.)
You told Marcus about me?

Cecile drops her glass, whirls around to see Alma standing behind them. Cecile jumps up, reaches for her, hesitates.

CECILE
You came back!

ALMA
No I didn't. Sorry to interrupt the After-Funeral. I just left my Nike file upstairs and I want it for tomorrow. See? I really *am* her assistant. I'll grab it and go.

CECILE
You don't have to go.

ALMA
Oh, yeah. I do. I got some real clarity tonight over drinks...

MO
I don't know that one ever gets real clarity over *drinks*...

ALMA
If you can't claim me, I'm out.

Cecile and Alma stand there, looking at each other. A beat.

DOLLY
She did.

ALMA
What?

DOLLY
She told Marcus about you. You saw it. Alma. She claimed you.

ALMA
To one dude? In secret? Fuck that.

DOLLY
You have to understand her starting point. It's a big step for her.

CECILE
Doll. You don't have to...

DOLLY
Yeah I do. I shat on your love because I didn't feel it back. Maybe that scared you from ever putting yourself out there again.

MO
Did you just make Cecile's obsessive-compulsive perfection facade about *you*?

DOLLY
Mohammed, everything is about me. Alma, can you maybe hear Cecile out? Please. While I go smoke?

MO/CECILE/ALMA
I want to smoke.

DOLLY
Well damn, I was trying to give y'all some privacy.

ALMA
You guys do privacy a little too well. I'll listen, but then I'm calling a car.

MO
Ummm do you have enough weed for...

ALMA
Jesus, dude. Come on.

CUT TO:

EXT. RHINEBECK HOTEL, CONT.

Rae, now out of her Celebration of Life finery, joint in hand, sits outside her hotel, looking at the stars, crying.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIR B&B PATIO

Mo and Alma share a joint. Dolly lights a cigarette, hands it to Cecile, light her own, takes a long drag. As she exhales:

DOLLY
We're old, Alma. We want things to look right. That's why social media threw us. We had to learn to filter and curate. Even to our best friends. That's why Marcus was the only one who knew about you. It wasn't your fault; it's how we were raised. We're afraid of looking...

CECILE
Doll. I can do it. I need to do it.
(to Alma)
I broke you this weekend. I saw it. I hate myself for it. I'm sorry.

ALMA
Don't do it again. To anybody.

CECILE
I won't. Can we maybe try again?

ALMA
I don't know.

CECILE
I brought you here because I thought I'd get to love you out in the open like you deserve...

ALMA
Like YOU deserve too! God!

CECILE
I pussied out because I realized it would make me look...

MO
Bisexual?....gay?....

DOLLY
Infinitely cooler and less uptight?

CECILE
Wrong. I didn't want to admit I'd made the biggest mistake of my life with Harold. Because if I called him a mistake? I was calling the girls a mistake! They weren't a mistake! I love them so much...

ALMA
I know, babe. I know you do.

CECILE
I was afraid to up-end everything I'd worked for, even if I didn't want the foundation anymore.

ALMA
So you'd rather be unhappy for the rest of your life, than start over?

CECILE
Give it 20 years. You might feel that way too. It's terrifying.

ALMA
Okay I'm gonna call a car.

CECILE
Is that a goodbye?

ALMA
It's a car.
(reaches for her phone)
Godfuckingdammit.

For the first time, she breaks. Cecile reaches for her. Alma pulls away. Dolly tries. Alma lets herself go.

DOLLY
It's okay, honey. You're okay.

ALMA
It's too fucking much.

MO
What's the matter? Can I help?

ALMA
I left my phone in Sherae's car.

MO
Can we call her?

ALMA
I don't know her number. We met at the Celebration of Life. Pink hat?

CECILE
You went out with the woman from...

ALMA
Do not *even.*

MO
Shut up Cecile.

CECILE
Yep....

ALMA
Can somebody please call me a car? I can Venmo you from...

DOLLY
Alma? Stay.

MO
(puts his arm around her)
Stay. I don't know how to Venmo...

CECILE
Please? Even if it's over. Please.

A beat. Alma is fighting tears. She swallows. Then:

ALMA
What's up with that Marcus movie?

INT. LIVING ROOM, CONT.

Alma, Dolly, Cecile, and Mo plop down on the couch. Mo is holding a bottle of tequila. Dolly holds a bottle of vodka. Cecile sits next to Alma. Alma moves, picks up the remote.

ON THE SCREEN:

MARCUS
My Dolly. My heart. Not even you can pull this off by yourself,baby. Tell them, or I will. That's all I'll say now but stay tuned...

DOLLY
NOPE! Fuck this! No.

She lunges across Cecile and Mo, grabs the remote. Throws it across the room. Hits something on the laptop.

THE SCREEN GOES BLACK.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
I can't do it. I just can't do it.

She takes a long pull off the bottle.

MO
It's okay. You don't have to. We know you have a baby.

DOLLY
I....what? I don't like babies.

CECILE
That's what we thought, but you know, you were running out of time so, maybe you just decided...

MO
That night with Marcus...

DOLLY
WITH MARCUS? Who never forgave me for... the other baby we made together that time? Are you crazy?

CECILE
Or maybe you just pulled a Diane Keaton and bought yourself some children late in life...

ALMA
You can't say *bought yourself some children*...

MO
You have to foster for a long time before it's official so maybe you were afraid to, like, jinx it...

DOLLL
Jinx my imaginary baby that I don't like who may or may not be fathered by my dead college boyfriend? WHAT?

CECILE
It's totally understandable...

ALMA
To who....

DOLLY
Why do you think I have a baby?

CECILE
I heard him. Well not him, but you.

MO
You were talking baby-talk to him. In your room. I heard you.

CECILE
Talking to a nanny about formula and upset stomach and accidents. If that's not a baby, what is it?

MO
You can tell us anything.

A beat. Dolly stares at them and starts laughing. The kind of laughter that turns into tears, which are now threatening....

DOLLY
Phil's sick. Like really sick. Bad bad throat cancer sick.

MO
He had it years ago yeah?

DOLLY
It’s back. And like any sequel it’s more expensive and much scarier.

MO
But those texts were vintage Phil.

DOLLY
He’s still him. He just can’t speak. Or eat. I feed him through a tube; the medicine upsets his....

CECILE
Shit that’s what we heard....

DOLLY
Yeah. And the baby talk? I know it’s dumb but that’s how I get when I see him through the monitor I set up so I could come here. I’ve never left him, since... you know. We can’t afford a nurse.

MO
But Phil’s rich.

DOLLY
He was. And then he wasn’t. I used to pick up the slack. But now,if I get one of the very few jobs that come up? I have to hire nurses to do it. Nurses make more than I do.

CECILE
So why do the job?

DOLLY
Right? So then I pass on the work. So then my agent drops me.

MO
How are you supposed to work then?

DOLLY
Aaaaaand scene.

MO
So the John Lewis biopic....

DOLLY
Over. He’s to weak to produce it.

CECILE
And the assistant you were complaining about wanting to bring?

DOLLY
Doesn't exist.

MO
And the shoot you said you were...

DOLLY
We are well and truly fucked. The house looks like Grey Gardens. I've liquidated stocks, film rights. I'm out of shit to sell. But Phil keeps hanging on, and I'll be goddamned if I kill his spirit by moving somewhere shitty, and letting him know how bad things got on his watch. It's not his fault. So I confided in Marcus. Only. I told myself it was to protect Phil. But now I realize I was protecting myself and my own stupid ego.

MO
Jesus, Doll...

DOLLY
Because 25 years later, I'm still that knocked-up girl at Sunset Lake. I still can't be the one people feel sorry for.
(to Cecile)
You can't look wrong? I can't look weak. I'm so sorry, Cecile. Oh God.

Dolly finally, truly breaks. Cecile gets up, holds her.

CECILE
So I'm not going to be an aunt?
(as Dolly laughs)
Wait. *Tell them or I will,* Marcus said. That's what my texts said.

DOLLY
Mine too.

CECILE
Alma can you schedule bot text messages to happen in advance?

ALMA
I mean, if I watch a you tube video about it I think?

MO
No, she means, can it be done?

ALMA
Totally.

DOLLY
Fucking Marcus.

MO
I wish Marcus had been texting me.

DOLLY
What's going on with you and Ray?

Mo sighs. Hits a button on the lap top.

MO
I don't have it in me. So.

ON THE SCREEN:

MARCUS
Mohammed Been-Slayin' Akhtar. My brother for life. I can only hope you wore that purple jacket to my funeral.

ALMA
Holy shit he's good....

MARCUS
You don't know how to love the person you were born to love.

MO
I think I might be sick.

He gets up, runs to the bathroom. As he does, the doorbell rings. He keeps running. The three women stand there.

ALMA
Did somebody drunk-order pizza?

INT. LIVING ROOM, CONT.

Alma walks to the door, looks through the window.

ALMA
Yes! Sherae! Guys it's my phone!

Alma throws the door open, throws her arms around Rae.

INT. AIR B&B - HALLWAY

Dolly and Cecile stop short. They look at each other. Back at Rae. They've never seen Ray as Rae. Dolly recovers first, jumps into Rae's arms. Rae smothers her with kisses.

DOLLY
Why are you prettier than I am?

RAE
It's just not fair is it, sugar?

Cecile is next. Rae squeals with delight as she hugs her.

CECILE
I didn't know you were into drag!

Rae winces. As if she's been hit. Doesn't see Mo enter.

CECILE (CONT'D)
Rae? Did I do something wrong?

MO
No. I did.

DOLLY
Oh my God. This is what he....
Fuck. Sorry, the pronouns might take me a minute. What SHE...
RAE...wanted you to tell us.

MO
Yeah.

CECILE
This is what Marcus was talking about!

RAE
How is Marcus talking about <u>me?</u>??

ALMA
Wait, you're like, Mo's Rae!

RAE
I'd like to be, darlin', but he makes it tricky sometimes.

CECILE
That was you, at the celebration of life. Waving to me. I didn't...

RAE
It was kind of a test.

CECILE
Of me?! I'm sorry!

RAE
No, baby-girl. Of me. I thought my, I don't know, essence, would shine through or some shit. But the fact is, my female-ness, has never occurred to anybody but me. And when I realized that, I kind of saw my shadow and was ready to take my fine ass back to the Manhattan for 6 more weeks of winter.

DOLLY
Punxsutawney Phyllis!
(hiccups)
Sorry. It's been a long day...

RAE
But then I met Alma. And it was so nice to be talked to as a woman, and asked my advice, as a woman.

ALMA
But, you are a woman.

For the first time, Rae breaks.

RAE
Thank you.

MO
You were there? Why didn't you say anything?

RAE
Why didn't you.

MO
I didn't know you were...

RAE
I mean in general, Counselor. Why didn't you. Say. Anything.

She glares at him. He glares back. Nobody moves. Then:

ALMA
I'm sorry if I fucked things up.

RAE
I'm sorry! I didn't realize you knew Mo's crew. How do you...?

CECILE
Alma is the woman I love.

ALMA
(to Cecile)
Oh my God.

RAE
Oh my God!
(to Alma)
Was that a claim I heard?

CECILE
(to Alma)
Yes.

RAE
Well, mamasita, let's start over! I'm Rae. Mo's former husband.

She extends her hand to Alma. Alma kisses it.

DOLLY
Wait, former because you've split or because you're now his wife?

RAE
Depends on the day, sis.

DOLLY
I feel ya.

RAE
That's weird coming out of your mouth.

DOLLY
Yeah no it doesn't work.

CECILE
So this is what Marcus was saying!

RAE
Marcus? Was saying? Tonight? Are you drunk fools having a seance?

MO
Marcus is on screen, actually, in the living room. He left us a tape. Um. Movie. File. Thing.
(approaches Rae)
I'm glad you're here, baby...

RAE
(walks right past Mo)
I'm gonna need to hear this shit.

Dolly, Cecile, Alma, Rae go into the living room. Mo follows.

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM

Everyone circles around the screen. Mo pushes play.

CUT TO:

BACK TO SCREEN:

MARCUS
You don't know where to put your love. Metaphorically or physically. You're mourning the loss of your husband - while trying to learn how to celebrate this gorgeous wife you've been blessed with. You're worried you're doing it wrong.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM

Mo starts sobbing. We've never seen him break.

RAE
You told him that?
(Mo nods)
You went to therapy?
(Mo nods)
For me?
(Mo nods)
About me?
(Mo nods)
Why didn't you tell me?

MO
I was afraid you'd think I thought you were the problem.

MO (CONT'D)
That you'd be hurt. But I was just trying to get you *right*. To get us right.

RAE
I can't believe you did that for me.

MO
I would do fucking anything for you. How do you STILL not know that?! But when I try and it's wrong, I get so scared that I, like....I just... I can't do it.

He pushes play.

BACK TO SCREEN:

MARCUS
And so you turn inward.

AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM

RAE
That's exactly it! You turn inward! It's okay! So did I!

MO
No, no, you're very vocal and...

RAE
No! That's why this is happening!
(grabs her crotch)
Do you get that I'm literally trying to turn *myself* *inward?!!!*

The women are laughing so hard they can't breathe. Mo blinks.

MO
What the fuck?

RAE
Baby, it's funny. I just....

He jumps up, turns on Rae and the women laughing.

MO
No. I... can't keep up. Marcus' death selfie just put us both on blast, *before* I told my best friends;

MO (CONT'D)
which you've been <u>on me</u> to do all weekend. And now you're suddenly NOT mad at me? How can I know how I'm supposed to fucking BE?

RAE
Baby, this is awkward. It's messy. It's a surprise that you didn't want; that I can't live *without*. So as long as you try, I'm happy.

MO
You don't seem happy! You don't trust me! You came all the way up here to, what, spy on me? Catch me? Punish me? What?!

RAE
I trust you. I don't always trust your faith in this process! You're going to get it wrong! Everybody gets it wrong! Shit *I* get it wrong!

MO
So what do I do?

RAE
It's what you don't do. Don't leave me alone and go wallow in your own shame spiral.

They're on their feet, screaming, crying. Mo takes a beat.

MO
Wallowing is not very elegant. I steep in my shame spiral...

RAE
(to the girls)
This bitch...

MO
I'm sorry. I'm sorry for abandoning you. It must have been scary.

RAE
You're my person, babe. You're my constant. I'm not even my own constant right now, you know?

MO
I'll be your constant. I swear.

DOLLY
Me too!

CECILE
Me too!

ALMA
Listen I know I'm new, but girl, I'm in!

DOLLY
See, babe? You've got a whole tribe? Oh shit that's wrong, right? Can I say tribe to a black woman?

RAE
You got *woman* right, so I'ma let it go.

DOLLY
Can I plan a vow renewal?!

CECILE
Oooh! Can I buy you a dress? Like custom Carolina Herrera or....

RAE
We're saving for bottom surgery.

CECILE
I...did not think of that...

RAE
Why would you? It's all new. But maybe when the time is right, I'll take you up on it? And y'all could be my bridesmaids?

CECILE
You would really want me?

ALMA
Hey. Don't sell yourself short.

Cecile beams. She's changed. She hugs Rae. Alma stands behind Cecile, holds her. Mo kisses Rae, as Dolly takes a running start and jumps on all of them. They end up in a heap.

RAE
Jesus, Dolly, you're so heavy.

DOLLY
Crap, I'm bloated from the...
(gets that she's kidding)
Shut up. Should we play the rest?

They untangle themselves, look at each other, and hold hands. Mo presses play.

ON THE SCREEN:

MARCUS
I knew this was coming. I left Vassar a shit ton of money. And some geese. Cuz it makes me laugh to imagine drunk teenagers being chased by those maniacal fuckers like we were. I left donations to a couple other causes I believe in. Rae, Dolly? Call my lawyer Monday. The number will arrive in a text. Guess y'all figured out those were me, huh? Rae, there's enough for your surgery. Doll, there's enough to keep you and Phil comfortable for as long as he, well, you know.

Rae and Mo scream. Dolly starts sobbing, covers her face.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I know you. Move your hands away from your face. Show it. Tell the truth. All of you. Tell. The truth.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AIR B&B - LIVING ROOM, THE NEXT MORNING

The sun is now coming up. They're all still sitting there. Everyone is asleep except Dolly. Alma's head is in Cecile's lap. Rae and Mo spoon on the other couch. Dolly gets up, wobbly, hits her knee on the coffee table.

DOLLY
Godcocksuckingdammit.

Alma stirs, sits up.

ALMA
Did you watch the end?

The others come to, slowly.

DOLLY
No. Watching the end makes it over.

ALMA
But...doesn't it have to be over, for you to get to Monday, and the amazing gifts he left to you?

MO
I guess it does. Yeah.

DOLLY
You have got to stop being smarter than we are.

RAE
Just because it's over doesn't mean Marcus is. I mean I got Creole in me. We can bring that mothafucka back whenever.

CECILE
Ready?

She presses play.

MARCUS
Yeah, yeah. I know. I'm no more honest than you. No more evolved. No better. I want to control my look as much as you do. And I'm going out in Fresh to Death, not a hospital gown. Now, I'm gonna go to sleep and unless I've forgotten my chemistry, I won't wake up. I'm gonna watch this while I fade. Hope you like it.

FADE TO:

MONTAGE: TO THE SAME MUSIC AS THEY'RE EARLIER PLAYLIST:

DIGITAL SLIDESHOW: DOLLY, CECILE, MO, AND MARCUS AT VASSAR:

DOLLY, CECILE, & MO WITH MARCUS IN FORMAL CLOTHES AT A DANCE

DOLLY, CECILE, & MO WITH MARCUS: OG STONED MARCUS' ANGELS IN S&M GEAR AT A VERY DIFFERENT DANCE

DOLLY IN COSTUME, HOLDING FLOWERS, WITH MARCUS, CECILE & MO

MO LEAPING THROUGH THE AIR CATCHING A FRISBEE

CECILE IN A KEG STAND HELD UP BY MO AS DOLLY LAUGHS

DOLLY AS ALICE IN WONDERLAND, MO AS THE QUEEN OF HEARTS, CECILE AS THE MAD HATTER, MARCUS AS THE WHITE RABBIT

DOLLY AND CECILE AND MO GIVING THE FINGER TO CAMERA

DOLLY, CECILE, & MO WITH MARCUS: OG STONED MARCUS' ANGELS

DOLLY, CECILE, MO & MARCUS ON GRADUATION DAY, GRINNING

FADE TO BLACK.