

NELSON

WRITTEN BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. LONG ISLAND CITY STREET - NIGHT

A parked white van with "Rainbow Brushstrokes" emblazoned on the side.

NELSON, (30), sporting short, unkempt hair, hops out of the van. A few distinct tattoos peek from her arms, each one a story in itself. She is dressed in paint-splattered white overalls, splotches of paint dot her hair and hands.

She trudges toward a multi-family home facing the New York harbor, but stops in her tracks and turns back.

INT. BUSHWICK CLUB - NIGHT

Music blares. The club is packed with a mix of young and old, black and white, straight and gay.

Nelson is alone on the crowded dance floor. She moves awkwardly, but somehow makes it look cool.

INT. BUSHWICK CLUB - NIGHT

A bartender hands Nelson a drink, and she makes her way back to the dance floor, oblivious to her surroundings.

From a distance, HANNAH (28) has been watching Nelson. She is tall and strikingly beautiful. Her warm eyes, always full of understanding, are the first thing you notice about her.

After watching Nelson for a while, Hannah makes a decision. She approaches Nelson.

HANNAH
Hi.

NELSON
Hey.

HANNAH
It's Hannah.

Nelson doesn't respond.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Hannah...

NELSON
I'm Nelson.

HANNAH

You don't recognize me? Well, I-- I do look a lot different. I had my cheeks and nose--

Nelson looks incredibly confused.

NELSON

I'm sorry, do we know each other?

HANNAH

Um, yes. Well, we went to--

A Joy Division song starts to play.

NELSON

Oh, I love this song!

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH

(to herself)

Yeah, I know.

NELSON

Let's dance.

HANNAH

Uh, no. I'm a terrible dancer.

NELSON

Me too.

HANNAH

No, really, I'm--

Nelson heads back to the dance floor, leaving Hannah standing there. Hannah watches her dance. She smiles, then turns and walks away.

EXT. QUEENS - MORNING

The iconic Pepsi-Cola sign looms against the morning sky. Cherry blossoms cover the Unisphere. An Astoria ferry cuts through the East River. A spring morning in full bloom.

INT. NELSON'S LONG ISLAND CITY APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Mostly dark in the spacious apartment, the light from the window illuminates a well-kept space. Everything is controlled and clean. Art books neatly stacked on shelves.

Artwork covering the walls. The centerpiece is a Diane Arbus: Retrospective poster framing an entire wall.

Nelson is passed out on the couch, still in her white overalls.

INSERT - NELSON'S DREAM

Nelson and a MAN are in the throes of a raw, physical encounter. Kissing, moving with hurried intensity, their bodies coated with sweat.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Nelson is jolted awake by the insistent buzzing of her cell. Sleepily, she fumbles for it and squints at the screen.

NELSON

Fuck.

She buries her face in the pillow and screams.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

The white van speeds through traffic.

INT. WHITE VAN - DAY

Nelson drives aggressively, gripping the steering wheel tightly with her hands. MARCO, (30s), handsome, tattooed, and growing a beard, fidgets in the seat beside her.

MARCO

Jesus, Nelson! Slow down!

She glances at the clock on the dash.

NELSON

I'm running out of time.

MARCO

For what? Where are we going?

She clears her throat.

NELSON

A wedding...

MARCO

Wait, what? Whose wedding?

She pauses several seconds before replying.

NELSON
Claudia's.

MARCO
Shit. You guys just broke up.

She looks emotional.

NELSON
Three months ago we-- we were planning our future. Now she's marrying some doctor she met at a barbecue in fucking Long Island!

MARCO
She's not worth it. She's a self-absorbed, selfish bitch!

NELSON
What's your point?

MARCO
She doesn't share her french fries with you, Nelson! What kind of person does that? A sociopath.

NELSON
She's marrying a man! A fucking man!

He sighs and shakes his head.

MARCO
Not this again. What are you going to do when you get there? What's your brilliant plan?

She pauses, realizing she hasn't thought this through.

NELSON
Uh, I... I don't know. I'm not sure...
(after a pause)
I've been watching her, you see. I followed her when she gets outta work. She looked so sad... She, uh, cut herself again. There-- there was blood everywhere. If I wasn't following her, I-- I wouldn't have found her.

MARCO
Oh, that's great. You're a stalker
now.

NELSON
I saved her life!

MARCO
Stop the car.

NELSON
No.

MARCO
Stop the fucking car!

She ignores him.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Pull over, Nelson!

He grabs the wheel, causing the van to swerve to the right.

NELSON
Hey, cut it out!

MARCO
Stop the car!

She pulls over.

MARCO (CONT'D)
We're not going to Claudia's
wedding, okay?

NELSON
I have to stop her. She wants me to
stop her!

MARCO
No, she does not.

NELSON
She sent me several texts this
morning...

She pulls out her cell and shows him the texts.

NELSON (CONT'D)
See...

MARCO

You're always looking for something
or someone to give your life
meaning, Nelson.

She looks defeated.

NELSON

I feel like... like my soul left my
body.

MARCO

You're freaked out because another
one of your bisexual girlfriends is
marrying a man, and in your
insecure brain you're doubting
yourself again. You're thinking,
"What's wrong with me?" "I'm not
good enough." You don't need a
woman to give your life purpose,
Nelson.

She drops her head.

NELSON

You'd think I would know better by
now.

MARCO

Maybe you should take a class or
get a hobby. "Don't exist. Live."

She laughs.

NELSON

Thanks for reminding me how
pathetic I am.

She is on the verge of tears. He pulls her into a comforting
hug.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. She inhales
deeply, attempting to calm her racing thoughts, but to no
avail. With a sigh, she rises from the bed.

EXT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Nelson smokes a cigarette, looking at the NYC skyline. Her
leg fidgets restlessly. She stubs out the cigarette and
returns inside.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelson meticulously cleans the already spotless white cabinets.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marco and ROB, (late 30s), sit on the couch. Rob shows him some pictures on his iPad.

ROB

This house has a front porch.

MARCO

It's too much money.

ROB

Okay, what about this share in Fire Island? It's a lot cheaper.

Marco scratches his arm.

MARCO

The sand worsens my eczema.

ROB

What about a house upstate? Maybe something on the Hudson or the Catskills.

MARCO

I'm allergic to grass.

ROB

God, you're so sensitive. Can't you take allergy medicine?

MARCO

Yeah, I guess I can take something.

ROB

I think we should get a dog?

MARCO

But--

ROB

Before you say no, remember that there are hypoallergenic dogs, and you do have a backyard.

MARCO

I don't want a dog.

ROB
It's important to me.

MARCO
Can we just wait and think about
it?

ROB
For what?

Marco hesitates.

MARCO
I... I don't know. I just don't
think getting a dog is the right
thing for us at the moment.

Rob stands up, frustrated.

ROB
I don't know how to make you feel
the same way I do.

Marco looks down.

MARCO
I'm... I'm trying my hardest.

ROB
I love you.

Marco stays silent, inhaling deeply.

MARCO
I'm so sorry.

Rob exits, and the door slams shut.

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT - DAY

Ceiling-high windows overlook downtown Manhattan. Nelson and Marco are painting a large wall. Marco looks depressed, hunched over with slumped shoulders.

MARCO
I've decided to take a break from
dating. Just going to have empty,
trashy sex from now on.

NELSON
You're Catholic. You're just gonna
feel dirty after.

MARCO
You're right.

NELSON
So, Rob broke up with you?

MARCO
I don't think we were ever really
together.

NELSON
Well, that was the problem.

He sighs deeply.

MARCO
I feel bad for leading him on. I'm
just...

NELSON
In love with someone else.

MARCO
I'm a mess.

NELSON
How's James?

MARCO
The same. He's still afraid to
leave the house. And now Pepi has a
tumor. The vet doesn't think he'll
live much longer.

NELSON
Shit. This could push him over the
edge.

MARCO
Stop it.

NELSON
Look what happened with, Alex. We
missed all the signs, and he--

MARCO
You're not very helpful.

NELSON
Sorry, I just...

She hesitates for a moment, rubbing her neck. Then, she
clears her throat.

NELSON (CONT'D)
It's gonna be two years.

MARCO
You're obsessed.

NELSON
You never wanna talk about it.

MARCO
I fucking hate him, okay!

They look at each other for a moment, then he goes back to painting.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson tosses and turns in bed, lost in a dream.

INSERT - NELSON'S DREAM

Nelson and a MAN are entangled in a tense moment of attempted intimacy. Her body language is visibly tense, hesitant, and clumsy. Fumbling through the encounter, her anxiety turns the dream into a suffocating nightmare.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson jolts awake, breathless and sweating. She lies back down, trying to calm herself. After a long moment, she gets up.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAWN

An array of cleaning products sits on the counter. Nelson is on her knees, scrubbing the floors. Her hands are rashy and swollen, indicating that she has been doing this all night.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Nelson slumped across from her therapist, CATHERINE (50s).

NELSON
Why do I-- I keep dreaming about
having sex with men?

CATHERINE
Have you ever been attracted to
men?

Nelson twists her hands nervously.

NELSON

No, never.

CATHERINE

It's often common to dream about things we don't intend to act on.

Nelson rambles on, panicked.

NELSON

Bu-- But what if my subconscious is trying to tell me something? Tell me something about my innermost desires that-- that I may not be consciously aware of and I've just been denying them all along? I've been having these dreams for months!

Nelson takes a breath.

NELSON (CONT'D)

What if I'm a closet heterosexual?

Catherine notes the blisters on Nelson's hands.

CATHERINE

Are you obsessively cleaning again?

NELSON

My mind races at a hundred miles per second. I can't control it!

Catherine looks at her with concern.

CATHERINE

Nelson, did you stop taking your medication again?

Nelson looks down, feeling ashamed.

NELSON

The sweating is disgusting. I get so embarrassed. And they also make me bloated and constipated.

CATHERINE

You have to learn to deal with it.

Nelson bites her nails.

NELSON

I think... I think I'm ready to explore whatever this is.

CATHERINE

I'm worried this can trigger your PTSD.

NELSON

We've been working on my trauma for years now. I think I'm ready... I can handle it.

Restless, Nelson gets up and paces the room.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Where do I start? How do I do this?

CATHERINE

Are you sure?

NELSON

Yes.

CATHERINE

Having sex with a man doesn't require dating or falling in love, only a physical attraction. Find one you're sexually attracted to and see where it goes...

The room falls silent as Nelson considers Catherine's suggestion.

INT. JULIUS' BAR - NIGHT

Nelson and Marco sit at the bar, both visibly drunk.

NELSON

You're in love with someone you haven't seen in three years.

MARCO

It's a long distance relationship.

NELSON

He lives in New Jersey.

MARCO

He doesn't want me to see him like that.

NELSON

Like what? Fat? What is it with gay men and body dysmorphia?

MARCO

He's insecure. He lost his job, his dad died during COVID, and now his dog is sick.

NELSON

I-- I read somewhere that gay men, as they get older start hating their bodies. It-- it messes with their dating life because they feel so much uglier compared to the people they're with.

She laughs at herself.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Oh, God. What the fuck did I just say? I'm drunk and stupid again.

Marco looks depressed and downs his drink. He signals the bartender.

Nelson chews her lip.

NELSON (CONT'D)

You know what? I'm ready. I'm going to do it.

MARCO

Do what?

The bartender pours Marco another drink.

NELSON

You know?

He shakes his head.

NELSON (CONT'D)

"Something round, split in the middle. Surrounded by hair, and water comes out."

MARCO

I'm too wasted for riddles, Nelson.

NELSON

Penis!

MARCO

I'm sorry-- Maybe I'm just a little too drunk here. What are you fucking saying?

NELSON

I'm ready to have penetrative sex with a man.

MARCO

Oh.

There is a long silence.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Holy Mary, mother of Saint Theresa. Not this again. Are you out of your fucking mind? If you want attention, just say it!

NELSON

"Don't exist. Live."

MARCO

I told you to get a hobby not start having sex with men. This is crazy, even for you.

NELSON

This could lead to something special.

MARCO

Yeah, it sounds very romantic.

NELSON

I'm trying to be more adventurous.

MARCO

Jump out of a fucking plane.

NELSON

Life is short.

He looks down, clearly sad.

MARCO

It doesn't matter. We're all dead, sleeping with the fishes.

NELSON

What's eating you?

He pauses, rotates his glass.

MARCO

I asked James if I could come over this weekend. He said no.

NELSON

But you already knew that. Why keep doing this?

He avoids the question and changes the subject.

MARCO

This isn't really a dick issue, is it?

NELSON

I often wonder what it will be like. How it will feel.

MARCO

Okay, that's enough. I can't-- This is a really bad idea.

NELSON

I don't know why you're so worried.

MARCO

Oh, it sounds so safe. This is a great way to get raped and killed.

NELSON

You know what? I think I'm going to set up a *Tinder* profile.

He shakes his head.

MARCO

Do me a favor. Leave me out of it.

NELSON

Oh, come on. I need your help. What's the worst thing that can happen?

MARCO

Oh, let see, there are several possibilities: weight gain, insomnia, depression... Feeling hopeless or thinking you're not good enough.

NELSON

Can you please take this seriously?

MARCO

I just don't get it, Nelson. Why now?

NELSON

It's hard to say. I can't really explain it. Maybe I'm just depressed. I don't feel much these days... I'm just looking for something... different.

She drifts off.

NELSON (CONT'D)

There's no one special in my life, Marco.

He sadly nods.

MARCO

I never met a Ryan Gosling nor a Jared Leto.

NELSON

It's so sad.

MARCO

I know you're not very good with rejection, but your last break-up was actually a really good thing. Maybe you should fall in love again.

NELSON

Why should I? All that suffering for nothing.

MARCO

For every girl that breaks your heart, remember... there's a chocolate-covered-strawberries-eating-from-your-puss-say girl out there.

Nelson cackles.

NELSON

Right, right, that's it. I haven't found my "chocolate-covered-strawberries-eating-from-my-puss-say" girl yet.

MARCO

One day you will.

He locks eyes with a YOUNG MAN at the end of the bar. She motions to Marco's beard.

NELSON

You may have enough testosterone to grow whatever you called that on your face, but you don't have the balls to go over there.

He flashes a mischievous grin, quickly finishes his drink, and stumbles towards the young man.

NELSON (CONT'D)

How brave.

She drains her beer. A YOUNG WOMAN (20s) leans over.

WOMAN

Hi... I love chocolate covered strawberries...

Nelson sighs.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Nelson paints a wall while Marco, on a ladder, paints the trim.

NELSON

So, do I have to suck--

MARCO

Ugh. Don't say it. Please don't say it. Revolting.

NELSON

Why?

MARCO

You're like my sister. It's gross, okay?

NELSON

Oh, come on. Please.

He rolls his eyes.

MARCO

Some guys I've dating did not hunger for mouth cock.

NELSON

Do you like it?

MARCO
I want it in my mouth all the time.

NELSON
Any tips?

MARCO
Just don't bite it off.

NELSON
Please, be serious.

He sighs in resignation.

MARCO
It's really about the head... the
tip. That's where all the feeling
is.

He jumps down from the ladder.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Do you like going down on a girl?

NELSON
Uh, not always. It really depends.
When I'm in love, it becomes my
absolute favorite thing to do.

She dips the roller.

NELSON (CONT'D)
So, um, what about hand jobs?

He covers his face.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Come on, please. I should learn to
give a proper hand job, right?

He shakes his head.

MARCO
"Mahorrla Intoxicating Pleasure
Method," all right. Just google it.
It's a good guide for giving
awesome hand jobs.

She quickly reaches for her cell to google it. He places a
soothing, reassuring hand on her shoulder.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Just remember, don't do anything
you're not comfortable with. The
decision is yours and yours alone.

She hugs him.

NELSON

Thank you.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Marco stands in the living room, looking at framed photos on
a shelf.

INSERT FRAMED PHOTOS

-- Nelson, Marco, and ALEX, (30s), on the edge of a canyon,
radiating happiness.

-- Nelson and Alex holding a birthday cake with blazing
candles, standing in front of Marco.

-- Alex proudly seated on his surfboard in the ocean.

-- Nelson dressed as Ziggy Stardust, Marco as Halloween Jack,
and Alex as Thin White Duke for Halloween.

Marco sinks onto the couch, his spirits crushed by the sight
of the photos. Nelson enters with two glasses and a bottle of
wine, and sits down beside him.

NELSON

Ready...

He forces a smile.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Chinese takeout boxes litter the coffee table, alongside an
empty wine bottle. Nelson sits on the couch, swiping eagerly
through *Tinder* on her cell. Marco, visibly exhausted, rubs
his head.

NELSON

What about him?

MARCO

I can smell the fish from here. A
can of tuna left in the sun for a
day.

She swipes.

NELSON
Okay, what about this one?

MARCO
He looks like the type of guy who
sells coke at a community college.

She swipes.

NELSON
Him?

MARCO
He's a perfect example of what
happens when cousins marry.

Frustrated, she swipes once more.

NELSON
Last one, I promise.

MARCO
Definitely someone who sniffs glue
and snorts lead paint chips.

NELSON
Okay, enough! You're not taking
this seriously.

MARCO
Listen, I think they're slipping
something wild into your
antidepressants.

She looks down.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Oh, Jesus. You've stopped taking
them again!

NELSON
I hate it.

MARCO
But--

NELSON
I know, I'm really intense.

MARCO
I think you're absolutely terrific.

She laughs.

NELSON
Yeah, right. I drive you crazy.

MARCO
That's an exaggeration.

NELSON
It's true.

He takes the cell from her hand.

MARCO
Okay, let me concentrate.

He swipes, swipes, swipes until he finally stops.

MARCO (CONT'D)
This is the one.

She looks puzzled.

NELSON
Really?

MARCO
He looks like he has a small dick.
You don't want to be cracked open
like a can opener.

She grimaces, that sounds painful.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Trust me. That's the one.

They both laugh.

EXT. CONNECTICUT MANSION - DAY

Nelson and Marco jump out of the van, quickly unloading the back.

NELSON
So... I have my first date tonight.

MARCO
I really wish you would stop trying
to make "losing-my-virginity-to-a-
man" happen.

NELSON
Don't worry.

MARCO

Nelson, you are historically messy.
Nothing is ever easy with you.

NELSON

I need you to be supportive.

MARCO

It's weird, okay?

NELSON

Please try.

MARCO

All right, all right. Show me who
the lucky guy is.

She shows him a picture on her cell.

MARCO (CONT'D)

You've got to be kidding me.

NELSON

What wrong now?

MARCO

He's the white dude who sings made-
up love songs to his dog while his
mommy makes him organic mac-n-
cheese.

NELSON

Jesus.

MARCO

Leave Jesus out of this. He's been
traumatized enough.

NELSON

Will you please be serious?

MARCO

Okay, okay. Show me again.

She shows him the picture again.

MARCO (CONT'D)

He does look like he has a
little...

He makes the sign for a tiny penis with his fingers. She
shakes her head, indicating that she has reached her limit.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nelson makes out with TINDER GUY (20s). He unzips his pants. She looks ill at the sight of his large erect penis. He motions for her to suck it. But instead, ends up vomiting all over it.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Catherine sits across from Nelson.

CATHERINE
What happened?

NELSON
I puked.

CATHERINE
On him?

Nelson covers her face and whimpers.

NELSON
All over his penis.

CATHERINE
It's okay.

NELSON
What's wrong with me? Why was that my reaction?

CATHERINE
You're afraid of men in power. The phallus symbolizes authority, and you prefer to be in control.

Nelson lets that sink in.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Or maybe you just find the penis utterly disgusting. It's not your thing, Nelson.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The restaurant is lively and down-to-earth, filled with Brooklyn locals. Nelson and GREG, (30s), his hair in a bun, wearing a Megan Rapinoe T-shirt, sit at a table. The waitress, Hannah, approaches. Upon seeing Nelson, she briefly pauses, caught off guard.

HANNAH
Hi.

NELSON
Hi.

Hannah intently focuses on Nelson, like she's the only person in the entire place.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I'll have a--

NELSON (CONT'D) HANNAH
Corona. Corona.

Nelson looks up at Hannah.

NELSON (CONT'D)
How did you know?

Hannah doesn't say anything.

GREG
Maybe she's telepathic.

NELSON
Hmm.

GREG
(to Hannah)
Uh, I'll have nachos with guac and a margarita. No salt.

Hannah finally acknowledges Greg. Unimpressed, she slips away.

Greg pulls out his wallet and begins counting out a small amount of cash.

NELSON
It's okay, this one's on me.

GREG
Thanks.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Hannah looks in the mirror and takes a pin out of her hair, allowing it to fall around her shoulders. She applies lipstick.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson looks bored, she's already regretting this.

GREG
Like my T-shirt?

NELSON
Megan Rapinoe is cool.

Greg winks at her.

GREG
I wore it to make you feel
comfortable.

NELSON
Thanks.

An awkward silence hangs between them.

NELSON (CONT'D)
So, where do you live, Greg?

Greg hesitates before responding.

GREG
My mom's basement. I lost my job
during the pandemic.

NELSON
But the pandemic is over.

GREG
Uh, no rush to get back to work.
I've become less ambitious.

NELSON
I see.

GREG
We can't do it at my mom's place,
so it'll have to be at your place.
She would totally flip out.

NELSON
Sure.

Hannah returns with drinks and nachos on a tray. She serves them while staring at Nelson.

HANNAH
(to Nelson)
Anything else?

Nelson looks up at her mildly bewildered.

NELSON

No.

Hannah lingers for a moment, then slips away. Greg stuffs nacho chips into his mouth.

GREG

So you want to fuck men now?

Dripping food onto the plate.

GREG (CONT'D)

It's okay. You don't have to be embarrassed. I think what you are doing is really brave. Sometimes I want a man to suck my dick. So, um, I'll go to a gay bar, and I'll just stand outside. I can't bring myself to actually go in.... Do you want to suck my dick? I'll go down on you if you want.

Nelson looks mortified.

NELSON

Uh, look, I... I'm sorry. I...

GREG

No pressure. You don't have to suck my dick.

Nelson rubs her head.

NELSON

I-- I can't do this. I'm so sorry.

GREG

Are you sure?

Nelson nods.

NELSON

Yeah.

GREG

It's all right. Well, if you change your mind, just text me, okay?

Greg heads for the exit, and seconds later, Hannah arrives to clear the table. Nelson looks sad and confused.

HANNAH
Can I get you another drink?

NELSON
Just the check. Thanks.

Hannah lays the check on the table, turns, thinks to herself, and then turns right back.

HANNAH
Hey, are you okay?

NELSON
No, not really.

Nelson stares into Hannah's eyes, the intensity palpable.

NELSON (CONT'D)
You know, you remind me of someone.
But I just can't remember--

HANNAH
We went to college together.

NELSON
Sarah Lawrence?

HANNAH
Yes.

NELSON
I...

Hannah touches a tattoo on the inside of Nelson's arm, right below her elbow.

HANNAH
Your mother's signature. You got it
right after she passed away. I went
with you.

Nelson looks down, a shocked realization dawning upon her.

NELSON
You held my hand the whole time.

Nelson looks up at Hannah.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Hannah.

They stare into each others' eyes for a moment.

HANNAH
I've always felt like you should be
wearing glasses.

NELSON
I never quiet see what's in front
of me.

HANNAH
No, you don't.

Nelson can't stop staring at Hannah.

NELSON
You look so different.

HANNAH
I was in the beginning stage of
transitioning when you graduated.

NELSON
You're beautiful.

Hannah smiles.

HANNAH
Thank you.

There is a pause.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Um, were you on a date?

Nelson chews her lip, feeling embarrassed.

NELSON
Yes.

HANNAH
You're not gay anymore? Not that it
matters.

NELSON
No, I'm still gay. I'm just in the
middle of an existential crisis.

HANNAH
Aren't we all.

There share a smile.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Well, um, I'm getting off soon.
Would you like to--

NELSON

Yes.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - NIGHT

The Brooklyn Bridge stands nearly empty, with few people in sight. Nelson and Hannah stroll along, engaged in conversation.

NELSON

Are you seeing anyone?

Hannah shakes her head.

HANNAH

Dating is hard. But when you're trans, it's even harder. Most people are smart, but lazy. They don't ask questions. If you don't understand something, just ask.

NELSON

I ask a lot of questions.

HANNAH

You always did.

NELSON

What's the hardest part?

HANNAH

I always fall the hardest.

NELSON

They do say one person always loves more.

There is a pause.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Are you teaching?

HANNAH

Yes, I only wait tables on the weekends for extra money.

NELSON

Do you still like it?

HANNAH

Oh, I do. I love kids. I'm convinced they are smarter than most adults.

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

They see right through you.

(laughs)

They're also very persistent. They don't accept the word "no". They keep trying, and trying until they get what they want

NELSON

I'm glad you're doing what you love.

HANNAH

What about you?

Nelson looks down.

NELSON

Um, nothing. I'm just doing nothing.

HANNAH

You're not curating?

Nelson sadly shakes her head.

NELSON

I-- I joined my friend's painting company.

HANNAH

You don't miss it?

NELSON

Sometimes.

Hannah looks at Nelson curiously and confused.

HANNAH

Why did you stop?

NELSON

The museum was overwhelming. Too many people, everywhere. With painting homes, I don't have to deal with anyone or talk to anyone. Marco, my best friend, takes care of all the talking and business aspect.

HANNAH

I remember in college you had a lot of panic attacks.

NELSON

I still do. It gets worse when you get older.

HANNAH

Life gets harder, not easier.

NELSON

I know this may sound terrible, but I kind of miss the lockdowns. It cured my anxiety. I felt safe in the isolation.

HANNAH

Honestly, Nelson, I think it may have made it worse. The lockdown was like a shield, but now that it's gone, facing the world seems even harder...

Nelson takes in Hannah's words. The sun rises over the city, casting an orange glow on everything. They step up to the railing, pausing to absorb the stunning view.

NELSON

Isn't that amazing?

HANNAH

It sure is.

A jogger breezes past them, Hannah looks at her watch.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

We've been walking and talking all night.

NELSON

I like talking to you.

HANNAH

Me too.

INT. SEX SHOP - DAY

Nelson is browsing when suddenly she notices a STRAIGHT COUPLE making out against a wall. The woman slides her hand down the man's pants. Nelson can't help but watch.

The couple catches Nelson staring and stops what they're doing, glaring at her. Nelson feels embarrassed and quickly shuffles away.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson lies in bed masturbating while glancing at heterosexual porn on her laptop screen. She closes her eyes, but nothing is happening. She laughs and shuts the laptop, then kills the bedside lamp.

INT. MOMA - DAY

The museum is nearly empty. Nelson and Hannah spin around with their eyes closed

NELSON

Now...

They open their eyes to "The Lovers" by René Magritte. They take in the painting, completely absorbed.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Together... yet apart.

Hannah looks at Nelson, taking in her words.

INT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Nelson and Hannah stroll through the park, eating ice cream.

HANNAH

Can I ask you something?

NELSON

Sure.

HANNAH

Why were you really on a date with that guy the other night? I'm not being judgmental. I mean, you were such a militant lesbian back in college.

NELSON

Remember my mullet?

HANNAH

Oh, God I hated that mullet.

The both chuckle.

NELSON

Well, I just turned thirty and I've never been with a man.

HANNAH

Never?

Nelson shakes her head.

NELSON

Never even seen a penis until the other night.

HANNAH

Oh, wow. What happened?

NELSON

I threw up all over it. You should have seen his face. He looked like he was going to cry.

Hannah laughs.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Do you think it's weird?

HANNAH

Nope, never had coffee.

NELSON

Really? Why not?

HANNAH

Just the smell of it makes me sick.

NELSON

I have a cup every morning. Can't open my eyes without it.

HANNAH

I've never tried pot. People always have this odd reaction when they find out I've never been high.

NELSON

I've never had a pickle. Ever.

HANNAH

I've never had Japanese food.

NELSON

Wait-- What? How is that even possible? You live in New York City.

HANNAH

I know, I know. I'll have to try it sometime... And I've never seen "Desert Hearts".

NELSON

Best film ever!

There is a brief pause.

HANNAH

So why now?

Nelson pauses before replying.

NELSON

Uh, every one of my ex-girlfriends is now married to a man. They go out with me, leave me, and get married to men and-- and have children. I... I guess I want to know what it feels like. What they feel.

HANNAH

So, you think they leave you because you don't have a penis?

NELSON

I... I think so.

HANNAH

Fascinating.

Hannah chuckles in disbelief.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You're kidding, right? Do you really believe that?

NELSON

I... I don't know. I know it sounds stupid. Well, uh, what do you think?

HANNAH

Maybe they end up with men because of all the biphobia. A lot of the gay community flat-out refuses to date bisexuals.

NELSON

Maybe I just have bad luck with women.

HANNAH
Can I be honest with you, Nelson?

NELSON
Of course.

HANNAH
I think your ego is hurt. Uh, you feel inadequate, and you've convinced yourself that "the penis" is the problem... It's easier to blame that than to face the truth... They leave you because you're not completely open. You push everyone away. No one can get close to you. Intimacy terrifies you.

Nelson takes a moment to process this.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
You can't be scared of life, Nelson.

NELSON
I guess it wouldn't be meaningful if I didn't put myself through unnecessary suffering.

They both chuckle.

HANNAH
No, it wouldn't.

NELSON
I've missed having you in my life. You always tell me the truth.

INT. BROOKLYN MEXICAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hannah approaches a table of DRUNK MEN.

HANNAH
What can I get for you?

DRUNK MAN #1 leers at Hannah and snickers with his friends.

MAN #1
What do you recommend?

HANNAH
Well, our specials tonight are—

DRUNK MAN #2 interrupts, pointing at Hannah's big hands.

MAN #2

Wait a minute, are you a dude?

Hannah's smile fades, and she stands up straight, visibly uncomfortable.

HANNAH

I'm sorry, what?

MAN #1

Yeah, what's your deal? You're a man in a dress?

Hannah takes a deep breath and tries to maintain her composure.

DRUNK MAN #3

We don't want no trannies serving us. Get someone else!

HANNAH

Asshole.

The men at the table start to shout insults at Hannah, and drunk man #1 aggressively grabs her arm. She reacts instinctively, defending herself by throwing a bowl of spicy salsa in his face. The hot sauce splatters everywhere as he yells in pain.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Get your hands off me!

MAN #1

I can't see! I can't see! You fucking bitch!

The MANAGER (50s) rushes over.

MANAGER

What's going on?

HANNAH

He grabbed my--

Hannah tries to explain, but the men continue to shout over her.

MAN #2

This freak attacked us!

MAN #3

We're gonna fucking sue you!

MANAGER
(to Hannah)
Get out! Out!

Hannah rips off her apron and walks out.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Hannah sits on her bed, crying. Nelson sits beside her.

HANNAH
Who cares, right?

NELSON
I care.

Nelson tenses up, her anger rising.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I wish I was there I would have--

HANNAH
It's okay.

NELSON
I can't believe this shit still
happens.

Nelson hands Hannah a tissue.

NELSON (CONT'D)
You're still teaching, right?

Hannah nods and wipes her face.

HANNAH
Yeah, but I need the extra money.
The landlord raised the rent again.

NELSON
Bastard.

HANNAH
I can't afford to live in Brooklyn
anymore.

NELSON
It's sucks teachers don't get paid
enough.

Hannah looks at Nelson.

HANNAH

You didn't have to come right over.

Nelson looks at Hannah.

NELSON

I... I was worried. I didn't want you to be alone.

Hannah looks at Nelson, touched by her kindness.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Let's go for a walk, get some fresh air. It'll help take your mind off things.

HANNAH

I should be looking for another job.

NELSON

Oh, come on. It's a nice day.

EXT. BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN - DAY

Hannah and Nelson walk past the cherry blossoms.

HANNAH

How's the dating going?

NELSON

Honestly, I don't think I can go on another date with a man. I don't know what I was thinking.

HANNAH

I don't blame you. They have such big hands.

Hannah looks at her hands and chuckles.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

All the hormones in the world couldn't shrink them.

Nelson seems distracted, deep in thought. Hannah glances at her.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Is everything okay?

Nelson shrugs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

What are you thinking?

NELSON

I'm... Uh, It's hard to explain.

HANNAH

I'm a good listener, remember?

Nelson hesitates for a moment, then opens up to Hannah.

NELSON

It's just... I can't seem to figure out what I really want. I don't know what it is with me. One day, I feel one way, and the next, something else. The truth is, when I'm with someone, in a relationship, I want to flee. But I hate being alone. It's scary. It sounds crazy, right?

HANNAH

Not at all.

NELSON

God, I'm always talking about myself again. I know, I can be self-absorbed.

HANNAH

No, you're not, I'm your friend. Your feelings are important to me. Go on...

NELSON

I admire people who know what they want, and they're out there doing whatever it takes to make it happen.

HANNAH

Most people don't know what they want, Nelson. They don't like what they're doing, and they don't even like themselves. I look around and all I see is sad people.

NELSON

Don't be ungrateful, right? What do I have to worry about? I'm healthy. Well, my body is -- my brain is all screwed up. I have a job, a roof over my head...

HANNAH

Jesus, you're so hard on yourself.

NELSON

It's just... I haven't figured anything out.

HANNAH

When you're young, you don't have the answers. When you're old, you still don't have the answers. That's life in a nutshell.

Nelson looks down, feeling distressed.

NELSON

I... I feel like I'm floundering. I have no direction.

HANNAH

What about the museum? You loved working there.

NELSON

They'll never take me back.

HANNAH

Why? What happened?

Nelson bites her nails.

NELSON

I-- I was doing a tour on O'Keefe... I was standing in front of her infamous Black Iris, and all of a sudden, I-- I-- I started hyperventilating. I was sweating and shaking uncontrollably. They were afraid that-- that I was going to knock over one of the paintings. 911 was called, and I was taken away on a stretcher.

HANNAH

You had a meltdown in front of the most famous painting of female genitalia?

NELSON

Uh-huh.

They both chuckle.

HANNAH

What about working in a gallery? I mean, they don't have the same amount of foot traffic as a museum, and it's not like people are buying art right now.

NELSON

I don't know if I could handle it.

HANNAH

Just be yourself, Nelson.

NELSON

I don't know what that is anymore.

Hannah stomach growls.

HANNAH

I forgot to eat today.

Nelson approaches a hot dog stand.

NELSON

(to vendor)

Two with mustard. Thanks.

The vendor hands over two hot dogs. Nelson pays and turns to Hannah, handing her one.

HANNAH

You know what I like about you?
You're honest. You say what's on
your mind. You feel human.

Nelson watches as Hannah takes a bite of her hot dog.

NELSON

Why is it that in most movies,
couples walk around eating hot dogs
on dates?

HANNAH

They sure are.

Nelson takes a bite of her hot dog, and mustard drips down the corner of her mouth. Hannah reaches over to wipe it off, and they both pause.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Are we on a date?

Nelson and Hannah's eyes meet. A moment.

INT. RUSS & DAUGHTERS - DAY

Nelson and Hannah sit at a small table, surrounded by the bustling atmosphere of the iconic deli. Hannah holds out a pickle to Nelson.

HANNAH
Ready...?

Nelson hesitates for a moment before closing her eyes and taking a bite. Hannah watches on with anticipation as Nelson chews thoughtfully. Finally, Nelson opens her eyes and looks at Hannah with a grin.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
And?

NELSON
Not bad. Actually, really good.

They share a moment of laughter.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hannah and Nelson sit cross-legged on the floor. Nelson takes a hit on a joint and is about to pass it to Hannah but hesitates.

NELSON
Are you sure?

HANNAH
Yes.

NELSON
I'm a bad influence.

HANNAH
You sure are.

Nelson passes her the joint. Hannah inhales and coughs.

NELSON
How are you feeling?

HANNAH
Dizzy.

NELSON
Let's lie down.

They lie down on the floor and stare at the ceiling for a long time. High.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

HANNAH
I want to read "One Hundred Years
of Solitude." In Spanish.

NELSON
Do you want to watch a movie or
play some word games?

Hannah laughs.

HANNAH
Word games? Really?

Hannah points to a record player.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Music.

Nelson thumbs through records and selects "Ghosteen" by Nick
Cave & the Bad Seeds. She puts it on the spindle and lies
back down. The music is dreamy and haunting. Hannah laughs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
I can't believe you chose that
record outta all the records. You
really are depressed.

They listen to the music, completely absorbed. Hannah glances
at Nelson, whose eyes are closed.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
What is it?

Nelson opens her eyes and looks at Hannah.

NELSON
Why did we drift apart?

HANNAH
Everything comes to an end.

NELSON
But we were so close.

HANNAH
We were young. You graduated a year
before I did. After graduation, I
moved back home. Transitioning was
really hard in New York.

NELSON

I should have been there for you.

HANNAH

Uh, I moved back in 2013. I looked you up, but you were gone.

NELSON

The museum sent me to Paris for a year.

HANNAH

Did you visit the Musée Rodin?

NELSON

It's breathtaking.

HANNAH

I always wanted to go to Paris.

NELSON

You'd fit perfectly.

Nelson lets out a long, deep sigh.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I wish we kept in touch.

HANNAH

Me too.

Nelson and Hannah share a long, complicated moment, their expressions conveying the weight of their shared history and the complexity of their current feelings. There is a palpable sense of tension and longing in the air.

NELSON

Time passes quickly, doesn't it?

HANNAH

Yeah, it certainly does.

They both look in different directions, deep in thought.

EXT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

Light rain falls. Nelson stands on the fire escape, smoking a cigarette. A lightning bolt cuts through the sky. The rain grows heavier. She puts out her cigarette and goes back inside.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The cabinets are all open, and on the counter, there are piles of dishes, glassware, flatware, and pots. Nelson is in the middle of drying them. Her cell buzzes, and she looks at the screen.

HANNAH (TEXT)
You awake? Can't sleep.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hannah lies in bed, watching the end of "Desert Hearts" on her television while holding her cell to her ear.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson lies in bed, talking on her cell. She reaches for the remote and clicks the television off.

INTERCUT: HANNAH AND NELSON

Hannah's eyes well up with tears.

HANNAH
 Hottest sex scene ever.

NELSON
 Yeah.

Hannah sniffles.

NELSON (CONT'D)
 Hannah...

HANNAH
 What?

NELSON
 Are you crying?

HANNAH
 It's just the rain.

There is a silence, both deep in thought.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
 Thanks for staying up with me
 through the storm.

NELSON
I'm glad you called.

HANNAH
Well, I appreciate it. Good night,
Nelson.

NELSON
Good night, Hannah.

Nelson and Hannah hang up.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marco lies in bed, staring at the TV as the credits roll.
He's on his cell.

MARCO
(into phone)
Good night...

He hangs up, full of regret. He buries his head in the
pillow.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SECONDS LATER

Suddenly, filled with a newfound determination, Marco seizes
his cell and dials a number. It rings.

MARCO
(into phone)
I... I want to watch a movie,
sitting next to you, on the couch,
not on the phone...

He listens, nervous and uncertain.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Okay.

He hangs up and a huge smile spreads across his face.

INT. BROOKLYN CAFE - DAY

Hannah and Nelson sit across from each other at a table with
one cup of coffee.

NELSON
Are you ready?

Hannah takes a deep breath and nods.

HANNAH

Yes.

Hannah brings the cup to her mouth but the smell makes her gag. She coughs and sputters. Reacting quickly, Nelson snatches the cup from Hannah's hand and hurls it to the floor. It shatters with a loud crash.

An ANGRY WAITER rushes over to their table.

ANGRY WAITER

What the hell is wrong with you people?

HANNAH

Run for your life!

Hannah and Nelson bolt out of the door.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

Nelson and Hannah catch their breath on a bench. Nelson bursts into hysterical laughter, feeling a newfound sense of freedom and ease, even if it's only for a moment.

HANNAH

What's so funny?

NELSON

I feel like I can do anything.

HANNAH

Anything?

NELSON

Anything!

Hannah takes out a folded paper from her bag and hands it to Nelson.

HANNAH

Um, a small gallery in Brooklyn is looking for a new curator.

Nelson starts to sweat. Hannah pulls out a tissue from her bag and gently dabs Nelson's forehead.

NELSON

I can't do it.

HANNAH

Yes, you can.

NELSON
I always fuck things up. I-- I fuck
everything up.

HANNAH
Why, Nelson?

NELSON
I-- I don't know. I-- I-- I-- think
I don't deserve it. It's easier not
to want anything, you know. It-- it
won't hurt if I-- I don't want
anything...

Hannah takes Nelson's hand.

HANNAH
There's pain in everything. There's
joy in everything. That's life,
Nelson. You can't run away from it.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Marco shoots the ball, but it bounces off the rim. He passes
the ball to Nelson, who's staring into space.

MARCO
Hey! Wake up.

She snaps out of it and takes the ball.

NELSON
Sorry, I'm just...

MARCO
What's going on?

She can barely dribble the ball.

NELSON
I... I just feel like I'll never
have the courage to go after what I
really want.

MARCO
Just because you keep repeating
that lie to yourself doesn't make
it true.

She aims and shoots but misses. He chases after the ball. She
chews her lip.

NELSON

I-- I want to ask Hannah out on a real date. You know, the kind where you-- you dress up and spend a lot of money to impress the girl?

MARCO

So, just do it.

She shakes her head.

NELSON

It won't work.

MARCO

Why not?

NELSON

I'm a mess.

MARCO

That's true.

NELSON

You should really stop me.

He shakes his head no-way.

MARCO

Tell me what's really bothering you, Nelson.

She answers as if it goes without saying.

NELSON

I'm scared that I'll just disappoint her, you know?

MARCO

Do you like her?

NELSON

So much.

She suddenly looks overwhelmed.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I-- I have panic attacks all the time. My anxiety is taking over my life again. I can't function without taking a fucking pill every day.

MARCO

Nelson, you're using your mental health problems again as an excuse to avoid life.

NELSON

Yeah, I know.

MARCO

Doesn't she know all this about you already?

She nods.

NELSON

When we were in college, I had this really bad panic attack. She sat with me the whole night, in the dark, humming Ian Curtis' songs.

MARCO

She sounds amazing.

NELSON

She is.

MARCO

You're really lucky she's back in your life. Don't fuck this up!

NELSON

The whole world is a lot easier to handle with her in it. I-- I just wish I had it all figured out, you know?

MARCO

I think no one has it like all figured out. And anyone who thinks they have it all figured out is so stupid. But I think people who-- people like you, Nelson, who are committed to trying to be better are the coolest people alive.

She takes this in, her expression softening. He shoots and misses again.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Um... I'm seeing James.

She looks surprised.

NELSON
Wow. Really?

MARCO
I told him I wanted to see him, and
he finally said yes.

NELSON
That's great!

She aims but stops before shooting.

NELSON (CONT'D)
What are we doing?

MARCO
What do you mean?

NELSON
Look at us. This is humiliating.

She motions to a pair of laughing KIDS (10).

NELSON (CONT'D)
They're laughing at us.

MARCO
No, they're not.

NELSON
Who are we fooling? We're not good
at sports.

MARCO
Gay people are great at sports.

NELSON
Yeah, but we suck.

MARCO
We only hang out in bars.

NELSON
I know.

MARCO
Let's go grab a beer.

NELSON
Okay.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Nelson lies awake, staring at the ceiling. She looks exhausted, with dark circles under her eyes. She can't sleep.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Nelson stares out of the window, her eyes slowly closing.

INT. SUBWAY - SECONDS LATER

A PASSENGER (30s) attempts to squeeze into the seat beside Nelson, but her bag takes up some space.

PASSENGER

Hey, can you move your bag?

No response.

PASSENGER (CONT'D)

Hey! Can you move your--

Nelson jolts awake, startled and disoriented. She looks around, confused and panicked, swinging punches in the air.

NELSON

Stay away from me! Don't touch me!
Don't touch me!

The passenger takes a step back, clearly alarmed by Nelson's reaction. The other passengers turn to look, but quickly return to their own business.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry! I'm so sorry! I didn't
mean to!

The doors open, Nelson runs out, feeling embarrassed by her outburst.

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Nelson paces anxiously.

NELSON

I-- I don't know what's happening
anymore. What's wrong with me? I
can't even handle a simple train
ride. It feels like-- like I'm
losing my mind again.

CATHERINE

You have PTSD, Nelson. You're afraid someone might hurt you at any moment. Your past traumas still affect you. You don't trust anyone.

Nelson looks down.

NELSON

(almost to herself)

I know.

Nelson sits and takes a breath.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'm not sleeping again.

CATHERINE

Why is that?

NELSON

I have a date with Hannah.

CATHERINE

And how does that make you feel?

NELSON

I'm fucking scared. I keep having these negative thoughts that-- that I'm not good enough. Ugh, I'm so pathetic.

CATHERINE

You're not pathetic, Nelson. Do you still want to go on the date?

NELSON

Yes.

Catherine leans forward.

CATHERINE

Let's try a CBT exercise, okay? We'll challenge negative thoughts with positive ones.

Nelson groans.

NELSON

Will it really help?

CATHERINE

It can. Trust me.

NELSON
Okay, how does it work?

CATHERINE
Says something negative about
yourself. Anything...

Self-deprecation comes easy for Nelson, and she responds quickly.

NELSON
I hate myself.

CATHERINE
Now counter it with a positive
affirmation.

Nelson rolls her eyes.

NELSON
I love myself.

CATHERINE
Keep going.

Nelson bites her nails.

NELSON
I'm crazy.
(after a pause)
Um, I'm eccentric.

Nelson covers her face with her hands, feeling vulnerable.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I'm so stupid... Hannah is going to
think I'm an idiot. She's a
teacher, for Christ's sake.

CATHERINE
Keep challenging those thoughts.

NELSON
I'm smart. I have a college degree
in art history!

CATHERINE
One more.

NELSON
I'm a fucking coward.

Nelson's eyes well up with tears.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I'm brave...

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nelson cleans and organizes her closet. She pulls out a bunch of clothes, revealing an old surfboard leaning against the back wall. As she runs her fingers across it, a painful feeling stirs inside her, causing her to feel short of breath.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Nelson smiles as Alex teaches her how to surf. They both appear radiant and full of life.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Nelson snaps out of the flashback and looks at the surfboard with a mix of longing and pain.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Nelson lies on her surfboard, gently rising and falling with the waves, gazing at the stars.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Nelson walks along the beach with her board, deep in thought, watching her feet sink into the sand.

INT. MARCO'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Nelson shaves Marco's beard. He looks at himself in the mirror.

MARCO

What was I thinking? James would have hated it.

She doesn't say anything. He looks at her.

MARCO (CONT'D)

What's up?

She pauses for a moment.

NELSON
We should go see him.

MARCO
What for?

NELSON
I don't know... But I think we
still need to figure things out.
Will you come with me? Please.

He pauses for several seconds before replying.

MARCO
All right, sure.

NELSON
Thank you.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Nelson and Marco stand in silence beside a grave surrounded by fresh flowers. The headstone reads: "Alex Young." Nelson's eyes are red from crying, while Marco's eyes show no emotion.

NELSON
I miss him so much.

MARCO
Of course you do. You both shared
everything: despair, loneliness,
depression, anxiety...

NELSON
Self-hatred too.

He lets out a pained chuckle.

MARCO
Yeah, you both were a real blast
together. So much fun to be around.

She looks down, lost in a thought.

NELSON
I don't want to end up like him.

He screams and kicks the flowers, venting his anger. She watches him.

MARCO
(to the headstone)
Asshole! You fucking selfish piece-
of-shit!

He paces frantically.

MARCO (CONT'D)
I'm so fucking mad! Can you believe
he did this? Fuck him!

There is a long silence before she suddenly falls to the
ground, laughing uncontrollably.

MARCO (CONT'D)
Wh-- Why are you laughing?

NELSON
He left you alone with me. You're
stuck with me now.

He drops to the ground, joining her in laughter.

MARCO
Fucking bastard.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRANCEWAY - DAY

Nelson retrieves her mail from the mailbox while Maureen
(70s) struggles inside with shopping bags.

NELSON
Hey, Maureen, let me help you with
those.

Nelson takes the bags from Maureen's hands.

MAUREEN
Oh, thank you, dear.

Maureen coughs repeatedly.

NELSON
Are you okay?

MAUREEN
Yeah, I just can't seem to quit
smoking.

NELSON
I don't have it in me to quit
either.

They head down the hallway.

MAUREEN

I hope my date on Saturday doesn't mind. I tried vaping, but it's just not the same.

NELSON

No, it's not.

Maureen pauses and looks at Nelson.

MAUREEN

Do you think, at my age, I can still meet someone and fall in love again?

NELSON

Why not?

MAUREEN

The heart doesn't stop beating, right?

NELSON

No, it doesn't.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maureen fumbles for her keys at the door and laughs to herself.

MAUREEN

You know, I've salvaged myself from more romantic messes than you can ever imagine.

NELSON

I bet.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maureen flips on the light. It's a mess: garbage, clothes, empty soda bottles, unopened mail, loaded ashtrays. Nelson looks anxious.

MAUREEN

Sorry about the mess.

NELSON

Oh, it's okay.

MAUREEN

My arthritis makes it hard to move
sometimes.

Nelson heads into the kitchen.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Dirty dishes, overflowing trash can, and more empty soda
bottles. Nelson places the groceries on the counter and
starts aggressively scratching her arm.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maureen flops down on the recliner.

NELSON

Do you need anything?

MAUREEN

No, I'm fine. Do you want to come
over later? There's a Barbra
Streisand marathon tonight.

NELSON

I'm sorry, I can't. I have a date
with Hannah tonight.

MAUREEN

You're a lesbian?

NELSON

Yeah.

MAUREEN

Well, you look great.

Nelson laughs a little.

NELSON

Thanks.

MAUREEN

Do you know what Hannah means?

Nelson shakes her head.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

God's gift.

Nelson smiles.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

Don't go, wait there.

Maureen disappears into the bedroom.

Nelson looks around the apartment, riddled with anxiety.

Maureen reappears holding a gold shell pendant. She hands it to Nelson.

MAUREEN (CONT'D)

It's the symbol for the goddess of love. It'll bring you luck on your date with Hannah tonight.

Nelson looks deeply moved.

NELSON

This is really nice. Thank you.

MAUREEN

Don't ever take God's gift for granted, Nelson.

NELSON

No, I won't. I promise.

Nelson heads out, stops and turns back.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Uh, my date is not until tonight. I can help clean the apartment, if you like.

MAUREEN

Oh, no, dear. I can't ask you to do that.

NELSON

I don't mind really. I like to clean. It, uh, helps me with my anxiety.

MAUREEN

Are you nervous about your date tonight?

NELSON

Yeah.

MAUREEN

Well, only if it'll help you feel better.

NELSON
Oh, it will. I swear.

Maureen looks at Nelson with kind eyes. She says genuinely:

MAUREEN
Thank you, dear.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Everything is neat and orderly. The floors spotless. Maureen is peacefully asleep on the recliner.

EXT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - BACKWARD - DAY

Nelson waters Maureen's wilted flowers. As she finishes, she notices the filthy hose and lays it out on the brownish grass. She grabs a sponge and starts scrubbing it.

Her cell rings, and Marco appears on FaceTime with the Rag & Bone logo on the wall behind him.

NELSON
Whoa, Rag & Bone. Expensive.

MARCO
Money is not an option when you're seeing your soul mate for the first time in years.

He holds up a bright pattern print shirt.

NELSON
Patterns make you look wide.

He then holds up a black shirt.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Love it. That's the one.

As he puts the shirt aside, he notices her on her knees, scrubbing the hose.

MARCO
What are you doing?

NELSON
The hose is dirty.

MARCO
Whose hose?

NELSON
My neighbor's--

MARCO
What's wrong now?

NELSON
Nothing.

MARCO
Nelson, you go on a psychotic
cleaning frenzy when your anxiety
is at its peak.

NELSON
My date with Hannah is tonight.

MARCO
What if you just be yourself?

Nelson chuckles at the suggestion.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nelson stands frozen in the kitchen, her hand shaking as she pours herself a glass of water. After a moment, she takes a pill, swallows it, and briefly closes her eyes.

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson paces back and forth, adjusting her hair and shell pendant repeatedly. She's anxious and it shows. Hannah approaches in a flowing spring dress, nervous but radiant. Nelson tries to appear calm.

NELSON
Hi.

HANNAH
Hi.

NELSON
You look beautiful.

Hannah touches her dress, self-conscious about her appearance.

HANNAH
Really? I was worried it might be
too much.

NELSON

No, not at all. You look absolutely amazing.

HANNAH

Thank you... I'm sorry, I'm just a bit nervous. I've been on so many bad dates. There are so many creeps out there.

NELSON

It's okay.

Nelson opens the door for her. Hannah smiles.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A trendy spot with an attractive, unique-looking crowd. Nelson and Hannah sit on the floor at a low table. Nelson gulps down sake while Hannah looks around.

HANNAH

You ever notice how everyone in New York is so attractive and unique?

NELSON

As beautiful as the photos of Diane Arbus.

HANNAH

I saw her retrospective at the Met a couple of years ago.

NELSON

I curated it.

Hannah looks impressed.

NELSON (CONT'D)

"You see someone on the street, and essentially what you notice about them is the flaw."

HANNAH

Why do we always do that?

NELSON

Sometimes I think seeing others who are worse off than us makes us feel better somehow.

HANNAH

Yeah.

They lock eyes for a long moment. Nelson starts to sweat. She quickly wipes her forehead with a napkin, trying not to hyperventilate.

NELSON
I'm gonna-- gonna go use the
bathroom now.

HANNAH
Okay.

Nelson darts across the restaurant to the bathroom.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nelson hyperventilates, sweat dripping from her brow. She stares at herself in the mirror, overwhelmed.

NELSON
I can't-- I can't do this.

She composes herself, takes deep breaths.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I can do this. I can do this!

Nelson splashes water on her face, attempting to regain control.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson exits the bathroom, muttering to herself.

NELSON
I'm scared. I'm confident. I'm
boring. I'm interesting. I'm--

She slams into a low table.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Shit.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson limps toward the table, and Hannah looks concerned.

HANNAH
Why are you limping?

NELSON
It's-- it's just a cramp.

The waiter sets down plates of food. Nelson reaches for the chopsticks while Hannah looks embarrassed.

NELSON (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

HANNAH
I don't know how to use chopsticks.

NELSON
It's all right. Actually, many Japanese people eat sushi with their hands.

Nelson drops the chopsticks and picks up a crab roll. Hannah follows suit.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Good?

HANNAH
It's different...

Hannah takes another bite.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Mmm, it's actually quite delicious.

There is a brief silence.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Can you imagine what I'm thinking?

Nelson shakes her head.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
It's so surreal. What are the odds of us meeting again? In a city of eight million people.

NELSON
That's the beauty of New York. Anything is possible.

Hannah looks at her. Nelson looks down, she stuffs her face with roll after roll.

HANNAH
You're quiet.

Nelson swallows.

NELSON
Um, I...

Their eyes meet.

HANNAH

What?

NELSON

Can I ask you something?

HANNAH

Sure. What is it?

NELSON

Um, do trans-- No, never mind.
Forget it.

HANNAH

You can ask me anything, you know
that, right?

Nelson tenses and bites her lip.

NELSON

Do trans women usually keep
their... um...

Nelson looks down to the crotch area.

HANNAH

Penis?

Nelson feels embarrassed and already regrets asking. She
talks nervously.

NELSON

I'm so sorry. I-- I didn't mean it
like that. What a stupid thing to
say. I have poor social skills. I
never go out. I-- I really can't
help myself sometimes.

HANNAH

It's okay, Nelson. Really, it's
okay. Uh, it depends. We're not all
the same. Each trans woman has her
own reasons why.

Hannah pauses.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You want to know if I kept mine,
right?

Nelson nods slowly.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Yes.

NELSON

Why?

HANNAH

I want a family. I want to fall in love, get married, have kids.

NELSON

I think you'd make a good wife and mother.

HANNAH

I want the whole package. The happily ever after. Do you think it's silly to want all that?

NELSON

No.

HANNAH

I figure there has to be one woman on this earth who will accept me just the way I am.

NELSON

I would bet my life on it.

They share a smile.

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Nelson and Hannah exit the restaurant.

HANNAH

I had a nice time tonight. I--

Hannah sees blood seeping through Nelson's pants.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You're bleeding.

NELSON

Oh, it's nothing. I'm okay, really.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Hannah cleans Nelson's cut.

HANNAH
What happened?

Nelson looks down, embarrassed.

NELSON
I, um... I'm really clumsy when I'm nervous. I-- I walked into one of those low tables at the restaurant.

HANNAH
Why were you nervous?

Nelson pauses.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Did I make you nervous?

Nelson nods. Hannah leans closer.

NELSON
You smell nice.

Nelson gently touches Hannah's mouth. Hannah closes her eyes.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Your mouth is so warm...

Nelson gently kisses Hannah.

EXT. HOLLAND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Marco's van exits the tunnel headed toward New Jersey.

INT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

Marco, in his new Rag & Bone shirt, sings along to a love song on the radio as his cell rings. He quickly lowers the volume and answers; it's James.

MARCO
(into phone)
Hi, I'm on my way. I picked up some smoked fish, caviar, pickles, tuna salad... Oh, and I got your favorite chocolate chip pudding--

Suddenly, he grows emotional but holds it together.

MARCO (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I can come with you if you want.
(MORE)

MARCO (CONT'D)

You don't have to do this alone--
But I--

He takes a moment and decides that an argument would be pointless. He does not want to upset James more than he already is.

MARCO (CONT'D)

(into phone)
Oh, okay, sure. I understand.

A whimpering dog in the background.

MARCO (CONT'D)

(into phone)
It's fine, really, I'm still in the city. Haven't jumped on the tunnel yet. I'll call you tomorrow.

He ends the call, on the verge of tears, gripping the steering wheel tightly.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Fuck.

EXT. MARCO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Marco pulls into his driveway.

INT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

Marco, red-eyed and hunched at the wheel, grabs the take-out shopping bags.

EXT. MARCO'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Marco dumps the take-out bags in the trash.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nelson sits on the couch, her cell pressed to her ear. It rings but goes straight to voicemail.

NELSON

(into phone)
Hey, just checking in. My date with Hannah was pretty amazing! How did your date go? Oh, I'm heading to the Slipper Room tonight with her.

(MORE)

NELSON (CONT'D)

Let me know if you'd like to come.
I really want you to meet her...

INT. THE SLIPPER ROOM - NIGHT

Packed with tourists and couples, both queer and straight. Hannah and Nelson sit at a table. The stage lights dim as the performance comes to an end. Everyone claps, and Hannah whistles along.

HANNAH

Thank you for coming with me. My friend has been begging me to see her new show.

NELSON

I'm having a really nice time.

HANNAH

Um, I got a new waitressing job at a Brazilian restaurant in the East Village.

NELSON

That's great. You'll learn some Portuguese.

Hannah leans in close to Nelson.

HANNAH

(in Portuguese)
"Take me to bed."

Nelson looks impressed.

NELSON

You speak Portuguese?

HANNAH

Uh-huh.

NELSON

What does that mean?

HANNAH

Um, I'll tell you later.

The stage lights come on, revealing CLAUDIA, (mid 20s), naked and covered in gold glitter, strutting onto the stage. Nelson turns pale.

NELSON

Shit.

HANNAH
What's wrong?

NELSON
My-- my ex...

Claudia and Nelson's lock eyes. A tense moment.

HANNAH
Are you okay?

NELSON
I... I...

Hannah laughs.

NELSON (CONT'D)
What's so funny?

HANNAH
You don't find this funny?

NELSON
Not really. I-- I think I'm gonna
have a stroke.

HANNAH
Come on, it's ridiculous. I mean,
what are the chances, right?

INT. THE SLIPPER ROOM - LATER

Claudia approaches the table and hugs Nelson, leaving gold
glitter everywhere.

NELSON
Wh-- What are you doing here?
Shouldn't you be in Long Island?

CLAUDIA
I hate Long Island. I don't know
what I was thinking. You know me,
I'm crazy. How are you?

NELSON
I-- I'm okay... This is Hannah.

CLAUDIA
Hi, I'm Claudia.

HANNAH
Hi.

Claudia leans over Nelson and whispers into her ear.

CLAUDIA
I'm getting off soon. Do you want
to take me home?

NELSON
No.

Claudia looks stunned.

CLAUDIA
No?

NELSON
I'm not gonna follow you anymore,
Claudia.

CLAUDIA
Okay.

Claudia looks over at Hannah.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
It was nice meeting you.

HANNAH
Nice meeting you, too.

CLAUDIA
I like your dress. It's very
pretty.

HANNAH
Thank you.

Claudia walks off, disappointed.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
You-- you didn't have to do that.
Go if you want. I'll just wait for
my friend and--

NELSON
I want to stay here with you.

Hannah smiles.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

The diner is semi-empty. Nelson and Hannah sit at a table, eating. Nelson reaches over to grab one of Hannah's french fries but hesitates.

HANNAH

It's okay. You can have one.

Nelson smiles and takes the french fry.

NELSON

I should have seduced you in college.

HANNAH

I should have made you worship me.

They both laugh.

NELSON

So, what did you say in Portuguese tonight?

Hannah pauses, looking unsure.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Come on. Tell me.

Hannah takes a deep breath, summoning her courage.

HANNAH

Take me to bed.

A moment.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hannah and Nelson are kissing and undressing each other when Hannah suddenly pulls back.

HANNAH

Nelson...

Nelson kisses her neck, Hannah pulls away again.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I want this, I really do. But--

Nelson smooths Hannah's hair back tenderly.

NELSON

Did I do something wrong?

HANNAH

No. It's just... What are we doing? I really need to know.

NELSON
What do you mean?

HANNAH
What is this?

Nelson doesn't know what to say.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
What do you want, Nelson?

NELSON
I... I...

HANNAH
I want to know what you're feeling.

Nelson pauses before replying.

NELSON
I don't know. I mean, I-- I like
you a lot, but... Uh, I think I
need to straighten my life out
first. I'm a mess.

HANNAH
That's bullshit.

Nelson rubs her neck.

NELSON
Uh, I-- You're great and--

HANNAH
I don't need you to tell me that.

Nelson stands.

NELSON
Right, right, I'm sorry. I don't
know what to say.

HANNAH
Just tell me how you feel?

Nelson searches for the right words, feeling the weight of
the moment. She knows how terrible she is at this.

NELSON
Oh, Hannah. I feel... I feel...

HANNAH
I'm falling in love.

Nelson's body tenses up, her shoulders hunch, and her eyes dart around the room, clearly nervous and uncomfortable. She speaks fast, twisting her hands. She can feel the walls going up again, and she knows she's about to self-sabotage yet again.

NELSON

Uh, the truth is, I'm-- I'm struggling right now. There are a lot of things in my life that-- that I'm trying to figure out, and-- and it's not easy-- I don't want to lead you on or make any promises that I can't keep. I'm not ready for any big commitments like-- like marriage or starting a family--

HANNAH

Oh, my God. How arrogant! How stupid! Presumptuous!

Hannah picks up a book and throws it at her.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You're so conceited, Nelson! What gave you that impression? Have I proposed to you? Have I asked you to have my baby? What's wrong with you? That's a pretty stupid thing to say.

Nelson rubs her head.

NELSON

I'm sorry, I-- I misunderstood. I just need some time--

HANNAH

For what? You don't have a fucking clue!

Nelson looks at Hannah.

NELSON

I didn't mean to hurt you. Please, give me a second chance.

HANNAH

I'm in a place in my life where I know better.

Hannah's face crumples, tears welling up in her eyes. She covers her face with her hands, as if trying to hide the pain.

NELSON
Please, don't cry.

HANNAH
Just go. I want you to go.

NELSON
Hannah...

HANNAH
Please go.

Nelson looks at Hannah, overcome with emotion. She feels horrible.

NELSON
I just want to say, these last few weeks have been the best weeks of my whole life.

Nelson leaves. Hannah wipes away her tears.

INT. JULIUS' BAR - NIGHT

Nelson walks in, looking bleak. She spots Marco slouched over the bar, nursing his drink, clearly drunk.

NELSON
I had the worst night. I'm a horrible person. Hannah hates me.

He scoffs and shakes his head.

MARCO
You're incredible. Someone should commission a statue of you, made entirely out of shit.

NELSON
What are you getting all mad for?

He downs his drink.

NELSON (CONT'D)
You didn't see him, right?

He signals the BARTENDER (60s) who pours him another drink.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Give me a break. He hates himself because he doesn't look like he did when he was twenty.

His veins are about to burst. He snaps back angrily.

MARCO

How dare you judge him. Have you taken a long look at yourself?

NELSON

I'm sorry, I--

MARCO

Do you think I'm better than him? I'm not. I'm insecure too. I used to have a six-pack. Look at me now!

He lifts his shirt to show her his flabby pouch.

MARCO (CONT'D)

Do you ever ask me how I feel? No! It's always about you and one of your crazy epiphanies.

She looks down.

NELSON

I hate my epiphanies.

MARCO

It doesn't matter. I don't care anymore.

There is a tense silence. He chugs his drink, and she goes back to sulking. She really can't help it.

NELSON

I really need your help. I fucked things up with Hannah. We were about to have sex when--

MARCO

Stop forcing me to know things about your sex life. Everything I know about it-- I know against my will.

NELSON

I have no one to talk to. You're my only friend.

MARCO

Because you drive everyone crazy.

NELSON

Everyone's against me.

He shakes his head and laughs.

MARCO
You got to be kidding me.

NELSON
Maybe I should move. I don't care where. I'll just start over. Make new friends--

MARCO
That honestly will be the greatest "I told you so" in the history of your pathetic life. Stop whining!

NELSON
I'm feeling sorry for myself again, I know.

He shakes his head with annoyance.

MARCO
As usual. You poor, pathetic lesbian. Snap out of it!

NELSON
Asshole.

MARCO
I'm no longer interested in the rehabilitation of Nelson.

She looks hurt.

NELSON
Stop mocking me.

MARCO
It helps me keep my sanity when dealing with you.

NELSON
Don't be mad at me. I'm not the one who didn't show up!

MARCO
I'm sick of you. You are exhausting.

A barfly buzzes around them. He tries to swat it.

NELSON
Flies are drawn to garbage. You know that, right?

MARCO

You're average, nothing special.
Just-- just a bundle of anxiety.

She stares at him incredulously.

NELSON

How can you say that? I'm your best
friend.

MARCO

You do the absolute bare minimum.
What do you know about my life,
huh? You never give me the time of
day!

NELSON

That's not fair.

MARCO

You're self-absorbed. You live in
your own world, Nelson!

NELSON

Stop it! Please!

MARCO

No one can't count on you!

She stares at him disgusted.

NELSON

How much does one have to drink to
reach this level?

MARCO

Don't throw rocks if you're not
willing to get some thrown back at
you, baby.

NELSON

Fuck you.

MARCO

Get the fuck outta my life.

NELSON

Don't worry, I'm done. I'm leaving.
Never talking to you again!

She scrambles to get ready to leave. He slams his fist on the
bar.

MARCO

Hurry up. Get out. Get out!

NELSON

You son of a bitch!

Everyone turns to look. She is on the verge of tears.

MARCO

Don't fall for the tears. It's all
for attention!

She runs off. The bartender shakes his head, full of sadness.

BARTENDER

What is this planet I live on,
where everyone is constantly
fighting with each other?

Tearing up, Marco immediately regrets what just happened.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

Nelson tosses and turns in bed, her eyes dark and puffy. She checks her cell, which reads 5:13am. Frustrated, she gets out of bed and walks out of the room.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAWN

An array of cleaning products is scattered on the floor. Nelson vigorously scrubs the bathroom tiles with a toothbrush.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Nelson collapses on the couch, utterly exhausted. She surveys the apartment, mentally making a list of things to clean next. Her cell rings. She looks at the screen and closes her eyes.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Nelson and Claudia sit outside at a cafe, eating and talking.

CLAUDIA

Seeing you again, it's... nice.

NELSON

Yeah, same here.

Claudia bites her lip, wrestling with her next words.

CLAUDIA
I'm... getting a divorce.

NELSON
You okay?

Claudia responds with an unexpected laugh.

CLAUDIA
I feel nothing. I'm a cold-hearted
bitch, remember?

NELSON
Yeah, you are.

They chuckle, a shared laughter only they understand.

NELSON (CONT'D)
Is that why you called me?

Claudia takes a deep breath.

CLAUDIA
I miss you, Nelson. And I'm sorry.
I really mean it.

Nelson takes a moment to digest this.

NELSON
You hurt me, Claudia.

CLAUDIA
I know.

A heavy silence hangs in the air.

CLAUDIA (CONT'D)
So, um, are you seeing anyone?

NELSON
Yes.

Claudia clears her throat, fighting off the twinge of discomfort.

CLAUDIA
Who?

NELSON
Hannah... You met her the other
night, remember? Well, um, we just--

CLAUDIA
Wait, Hannah, she's trans, right?

NELSON
Yeah, this is... this is a bit new
for me.

CLAUDIA
I'm proud of you, Nelson.

NELSON
Why?

CLAUDIA
It's very... mm... brave of you.
You're challenging yourself.

NELSON
Was I really that scared all the
time?

CLAUDIA
Yeah, you were.

NELSON
Is that why you left me?

Claudia pauses before replying.

CLAUDIA
You put all these walls up.

Nelson sighs heavily.

NELSON
I know.

CLAUDIA
You wanted a perfect relationship.
You put me on a pedestal. There was
no way I could live up to it.

NELSON
I'm sorry.

CLAUDIA
I forgive you.

They both smile at each other.

INT. MARCO'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Beer cans and takeout boxes are scattered around the room. Marco slumps on the couch in front of the TV, disheveled and emotional, comfort-eating from a takeout container.

On the TV screen: "Call Me By Your Name," showing the scene where Elio and Oliver share their first kiss.

MARCO

More fucking unrealistic bullshit.

Marco turns off the TV, cracks open a beer, and takes a long swig. He stares blankly ahead, lost in his thoughts.

INT. MAUREEN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nelson and Maureen sit on the couch, tears streaming down their faces as they watch the end of "The Way We Were."

Maureen reaches into her pocket, pulls out a cigarette, lights it, takes a drag, and passes it to Nelson.

INT. BROOKLYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HANNAH'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Hannah appears dazed while Matthew, a 10-year-old student, squirms in his seat, desperately holding his bladder.

MATTHEW

Miss Hannah! Miss Hannah!

Hannah snaps out of her daze.

HANNAH

I'm sorry, Matthew. What is it?

MATTHEW

I need to go to the bathroom.

Hannah hands him the hallway pass, and he darts out.

INT. NYC APARTMENT - DAY

Marco paints a wall, looking forlorn as he looks over at the empty space where Nelson usually is.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Nelson stands in a long line, her basket filled with cleaning products. She rubs her bloodshot eyes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Nelson shuffles down a street with her shopping bags. Suddenly, she stops in her tracks, drops the bags, and clenches her fist, tears welling up in her eyes. In a burst of frustration, she punches a mailbox.

NELSON

Fuck.

A group of TEENAGERS across the street start laughing and pointing at her.

TEEN #1

Look at that fool!

INT. HOSPITAL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Nelson, now with a cast on her hand, stands next to a wheelchair-bound WOMAN (30s) singing softly to her NEWBORN BABY.

Nelson looks moved by the beauty of new life but can't help feeling a tinge of jealousy, yearning for that same fresh start - free from fear, regret, and hopelessness.

INT. BROOKLYN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Nelson stands outside the elementary school, watching Hannah as she joyfully engages with the students during recess.

Hannah, engrossed with the children, remains unaware of Nelson's presence.

Nelson walks away from the school, consumed by her depression and the void left by their separation.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Nelson sits down on a bench, her knee bouncing up and down restlessly. Next to her is a drunk HOMELESS MAN (50s). The sound of her bouncing knee irritates him.

HOMELESS MAN

Anxiety doesn't exist. It's made up by cowards.

(mocking)

"I'm can't do it. I'm so scared.
Oh, my God. They'll laugh at me."
How stupid. Fuck off!

Nelson looks down. The homeless man takes a sip from a small vodka bottle.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Go! I'm tired of you stupid idiots
sitting on my bench, wallowing in
fucking self-pity!

Nelson jumps up and walks off.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)
Poor baby! Try being homeless with
no friends!

INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Nelson sits slumped in front of Catherine, looking broken. Catherine looks at Nelson's cast.

CATHERINE
How's your hand?

Nelson looks at her hand and shrugs. She couldn't care less about the state of her hand, underscoring the depth of her depression.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
Do you know how long a feeling
last, Nelson?

Nelson shakes her head.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
A tenth of a second.

NELSON
That's impossible. My feelings
never go away. They drive me crazy.

CATHERINE
A feeling only last because you
feed it.

Nelson rubs her forehead.

NELSON
But...

CATHERINE
Feed the happy feelings, Nelson.
Stop feeding the negative ones.
Let them go.

Nelson looks at Catherine.

NELSON
Thank you.

INT. NELSON'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Nelson stands in the shower for a long moment, under the water, deep in thought. Her cast is covered in plastic.

EXT. BROOKLYN ART GALLERY - DUSK

Nelson nervously holds a manila envelope. An ARTSY WOMAN (50s) leans out the door.

ARTSY WOMAN
Can I help you with something?

NELSON
Um... I...

ARTSY WOMAN
You've been standing out there all day. Are you all right?

Nelson hands her the manila envelope and runs off.

EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - DUSK

Nelson runs through the streets with a sense of exhilaration, as if she has just conquered Mount Everest.

INT. MARCO'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dazed, Marco sits on the couch, a disheveled mess, holding a beer. Suddenly, a knock at the door startles him. He opens it to find Nelson standing there.

NELSON
You're the most important person to me. I'm so sorry.

She hugs him tightly. He squeezes back.

MARCO
I've missed you so much.

She looks around. The apartment is a wreck: clothes everywhere, empty beer cans, unopened mail, and empty take-out boxes.

NELSON
You okay?

MARCO
No, not really.

NELSON
What can I do?

MARCO
Nothing.

He notices the cast on her hand.

MARCO (CONT'D)
What did you do to your hand?

NELSON
I punched a mailbox.

MARCO
Why?

NELSON
I don't know.

MARCO
You don't know why you attacked a
defenseless mailbox?

NELSON
Defenseless? I'm the one with the
broken hand.

They sink down on the couch, both feeling broken. Marco takes
a sip from his beer.

NELSON (CONT'D)
I saw her the other day.

MARCO
She agreed to see you?

NELSON
No, I stood outside her school,
watching her during recess.

MARCO
You're stalking again?

She nods sadly.

NELSON

I'm so lonely without her. I miss her so much.

She lets out an anguished gasp.

NELSON (CONT'D)

How did it come to this?

She rubs her forehead.

NELSON (CONT'D)

I was so awful to her. I'm so ashamed. I hate myself.

MARCO

Unbelievable.

NELSON

What?

MARCO

Goddamn it, Nelson. What are you doing? Can't you see?

She looks confused.

MARCO (CONT'D)

You're in love with Hannah!

He motions to her cast.

MARCO (CONT'D)

This is what people do when they're in love. They punch things...

He stares at the scattered take-out containers and the empty beer cans on the floor.

MARCO (CONT'D)

They stuff their faces. Drink till they puke. Hurt themselves.

NELSON

I love Hannah!

MARCO

That's all that matters.

NELSON

Why do I always run away?

MARCO

Because it's fucking scary.

He comes to his own realization.

MARCO (CONT'D)

But you can't let fear control you anymore.

She kisses him on the head.

NELSON

Thank you.

MARCO

What are you waiting for? Go get your girl!

Nelson dashes towards the door, while Marco takes a deep breath and dials a number on his cell.

EXT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Nelson stands outside of Hannah's terrace, calling her name repeatedly.

NELSON

Hannah! Hannah! Hannah!

Nothing.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Hannah! Hannah!

A light turns on, and Hannah appears in her robe.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Hannah! Oh, Hannah.

HANNAH

What are you doing here, Nelson?

NELSON

Come down!

HANNAH

Are you drunk?

NELSON

No, I'm not drunk. Please, come down!

HANNAH

Go home, Nelson.

As Hannah starts to turn back inside, Nelson calls out to her again.

NELSON
Hannah! Hannah!

HANNAH
You're going to wake up all of
Brooklyn.

NELSON
I don't care.

HANNAH
They'll come out with bats and beat
the shit out of you.

NELSON
Let them. I deserve it. I'm an
asshole. A blind piece of shit!

An angry WOMAN, (60s), throws a head of lettuce at Nelson, missing her, and clenches her fist angrily.

WOMAN
Shut up, or I'll punch you in the
mouth!

HANNAH
Please, Nelson. Just go home.

NELSON
No, I'm not leaving! Come down, or
I'll scream your name till the sun
comes up!

HANNAH
Okay, okay. Just shut up!

EXT. HANNAH'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Hannah exits the building and notices Nelson's cast.

HANNAH
What happened to your hand?

NELSON
I'm in love.

Hannah turns away, visibly upset.

NELSON (CONT'D)

Wait! Don't go. You don't understand. I'm in love with you, Hannah.

HANNAH

Please, don't.

NELSON

I fucked up. It's what I do. I get scared. I run away. I never meant to hurt you.

HANNAH

But you did.

NELSON

I'm so sorry, Hannah.

HANNAH

I'm afraid you'll just do it again, Nelson.

Nelson is assured and confident for the first time in a long time.

NELSON

I love you!

HANNAH

Don't say that unless you mean it.

NELSON

Oh, Hannah, I mean it. I do. I'll show you.

Nelson jumps onto the hood of a car.

NELSON (CONT'D)

See?

HANNAH

What are you doing?

NELSON

This is what people in love do.

Nelson jumps down.

NELSON (CONT'D)

They make fools of themselves.

Nelson attempts a cartwheel but crashes into a row of metal trash cans.

HANNAH
Oh, my God!

Hannah rushes over to Nelson.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Nelson gently touches Hannah's face.

NELSON
I love you, Hannah. I'm so sorry it
took me so long to get here.

Hannah gazes into Nelson's eyes.

HANNAH
Love isn't always on time.

NELSON
No, it's not.

Nelson kisses her.

EXT. HOLLAND TUNNEL - NIGHT

Marco's van exits the tunnel, headed towards New Jersey.

INT. WHITE VAN - NIGHT

Marco sits in the van, takes a deep breath, and jumps out.

INT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nelson and Hannah make love.

EXT. HANNAH'S APARTMENT - TERRACE - DAWN

Nelson smokes a cigarette in her underwear, her body
silhouetted against the morning light.

Hannah appears behind her and wraps her arms around Nelson.

For the first time in a long time, Nelson looks at peace.

FADE OUT.