

Spring 5-17-2013

# The Lonely

Brent Steven Scott

University of New Orleans, Brent@thehouseofhoney.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td>



Part of the [Fiction Commons](#), and the [Other Film and Media Studies Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Scott, Brent Steven, "The Lonely" (2013). *University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations*. 1667.  
<https://scholarworks.uno.edu/td/1667>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Dissertations and Theses at ScholarWorks@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of New Orleans Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UNO. The author is solely responsible for ensuring compliance with copyright. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uno.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uno.edu).

The Lonely

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of  
The University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in  
Film, Theatre and Communication Arts  
Creative Writing

by

Brent Scott

B.S. University of Missouri - St. Louis, 2008

May, 2013

FADE IN:

INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lights are out in the modest apartment with decent furnishings. Leather couch, a flatscreen.

A MUFFLED MOAN from another room.

INT. JENNA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Movement on the bed.

Another MOAN.

DEREK (early 30's) holds himself over JENNA (early 30's).

Jenna wraps her arms around Derek's back. They're cheek to cheek.

JENNA  
Derek?

DEREK  
Huh?

JENNA  
I think you should move out.

Derek stops. Lifts himself to look at Jenna.

DEREK  
Did you say move out?

Jenna nods.

Derek stares.

Jenna rolls Derek over, takes top and resumes.

JENNA  
I mean, what are we doing?

DEREK  
We're having sex, Jenna.

JENNA  
No. Us, you and me. This relationship.

DEREK  
I don't know.

JENNA  
I feel like neither of us are in  
it.

DEREK  
Is this really the time?

JENNA  
I've slept with a few other guys.

DEREK  
Seriously.

Jenna nods.

JENNA  
In this bed.

Jenna stares at Derek.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
I'm only telling you because I knew  
this would be your reaction. You  
don't really care, do you?

DEREK  
Now that I think about it.

Derek shakes his head.

JENNA  
That's why I ask. What are we  
doing? Do you have any plans?

DEREK  
I've been working on that story.

JENNA  
The one about the call girl?  
You've been on that for over a  
year, and you barely touch it.

DEREK  
And I've been teaching.

JENNA  
A dwindling schedule.

A beat.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
Other than that, we just hang out.  
Sometimes we fuck.

Derek nods.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry Derek, but it seems like  
we're just really good friends.

DEREK  
How is that a bad thing.

JENNA  
I can't be in a relationship where  
we just use each other, you know?

DEREK  
We don't do that.

JENNA  
If there's no romance, then what  
would you call it?

Derek stares, shakes his head.

JENNA (CONT'D)  
Yep.

Jenna presses on Derek's chest, rides harder.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

A WOMAN (mid 20's) walks down the hallway, with a piece of  
paper in hand. Heels, black stockings, black miniskirt,  
halter top, some loose jewelry, and a small clutch.

The woman looks at the paper then some doors. She stops at  
one, stuffs the paper in her clutch, composes herself, and  
knocks on the door.

After a moment, the door opens and TRENT (30's) who wears a  
suit minus jacket and tie looks at the woman. Smiles.

TRENT  
Marie.

MARIE (WOMAN) smiles.

MARIE  
Ready to party?

The man stands to the side, and Marie enters.

HOTEL SUITE - MONTAGE

Marie, Trent, and two other similarly dressed guys dance.

Someone pours four drinks.

The group taps glasses and drink.

They dance.

Marie teases and flirts with one of the guys.

Someone snorts a line of coke.

More frantic with the drinking and dancing.

Coke.

Clothes come off.

Coke.

Marie kisses a guy, then reaches for and kisses another guy.

FADE TO WHITE.

HOUSEKEEPER (V.O.)

Excuse me. Miss. Miss?

Marie GROANS.

HOUSEKEEPER (V.O.)

Hey. Hey. You okay?

FADE TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - BEDROOM - DAY

Marie wakes, half naked in a bed. Torn clothing, bruises, and a minor black left eye. She sits up.

MARIE

How did I... Where am I?

HOUSEKEEPER

Lakeside Suites.

Marie pulls herself from the bed and heads for the door.

HOUSEKEEPER (CONT'D)

Do you want me to call someone?

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek carries a box into the apartment, then drops it on the living room floor, next to a few others. He catches his breath, looks around.

Two couches form an "L" around a coffee table in the living room. Several potted plants sit on pedestals or hang from hooks. Helen keeps her place spotless and organized.

HELEN (mid 30's) enters the living room from the hallway. She wears a robe and towel-dries her hair.

HELEN  
That everything?

DEREK  
The last of it.

Helen glances at the items. Two framed blown-up book covers: "Cuba by Night," and "Code Name: Icarus," by Derek Anders.

HELEN  
Those... can go in your room.

Derek LAUGHS.

DEREK  
You know I appreciate all this.

HELEN  
It's what family does.

DEREK  
Just a few months, Helen. Then I'll be back on my feet and out of your hair.

Helen smiles.

HELEN  
Better you here than with her. I never liked her.

DEREK  
Jenna's not so bad.

Helen walks to the kitchen.

HELEN  
If you say so. Either way, it'll be nice having someone around for a change.

DEREK  
You've got a pretty nice place.

HELEN (O.S.)  
Think so?

DEREK  
Very cozy. Comfortable.

Helen enters with a glass of orange juice.

HELEN  
Oh, yeah?

Helen walks to curtains on the far wall. She pulls a string, they open.

Light fills the room. A high-rise patio overlooking the Chicago skyline sits on the other side of the windows.

Derek stares for a moment.

DEREK  
So this is what Chicago looks like.

Helen LAUGHS. She walks to a couch.

HELEN  
Got plans for the Summer?

DEREK  
Not really. Teaching a class.  
That will take a little time.  
Maybe do a little writing.

HELEN  
The continuing saga of Super Secret  
Agent Troy Chambers. Exciting.

DEREK  
I was thinking of going in a  
different direction. Something  
new.

HELEN  
Oh, wow. Well, we're working on a  
new display at The Gardens, so I  
won't be around much to pester you  
while you write.

Derek LAUGHS.

DEREK  
I appreciate that.



HELEN

But let's also go out when we can.  
The city's more fun with company,  
even if it's your sister.

Derek nods.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - DAY

A large residential space re-purposed as office/communication hub. Very plush. Fluffy furniture, and rugs. Expensive tables and decorations.

About a dozen girls buzz about the space, some half-dressed. They model clothing for each other and talk.

In the corner a man sits at a desk with a computer and a phone. A dry erase board titled, "APPOINTMENTS," displays a time-table and various names.

Marie sits on a couch, arms crossed, and black-eyed.

DIANE (late 20's), sits on a couch across from Marie. Diane wears business attire, blouse unbuttoned half-way, with heels and stockings more sultry than professional.

Diane stares at Marie.

MARIE

Need something, Diane?

DIANE

No, no. Nothing.

Diane holds the stare.

MARIE

Then mind your own damn business.

They stare each other down.

JAKE (O.S.)

Why don't you take the rest of the  
day off, Cherie?

JAKE (30's) comes from a back area with CHERIE (20's). He wears a robe. Cherie, flush, puts her hair up and straightens her clothes as she walks through the office.

Marie stands, and marches toward Jake.

MARIE

Jake!

JAKE  
Marie, my God. What happened-

Marie slaps Jake in the chest.

MARIE  
Who the fuck were those guys I got  
set up with last night?

JAKE  
As far as I know, you had no  
appointments.

MARIE  
Bullshit. It was on the board.

Jake looks around the room.

JAKE  
Anyone see Marie on the board?

The girls shake their heads.

DIANE  
No.

JAKE  
You've been coked up all month.

Jake walks to the desk. Marie follows.

MARIE  
They were on the board. They  
slipped me something, and  
fucking... look at me.

JAKE  
Face it, Marie. You've lost it.

Jake grabs printouts off the desk. Looks at them.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
"I don't know what the people at  
Exclusive are doing, but this girl  
was a mess. Three- Four."

Jake shuffles to another page.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
"Barely coherent. Felt like  
plowing a coma patient. Two-two."

Jake shuffles.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
"Disgusting."

Another page.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
"Gutter slut."

Jake holds up the pages.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
This isn't the image we want.

MARIE  
Those have to be fakes, or  
something. You know I'm the best.

JAKE  
They're all paying members of the  
site with regular reviews.

MARIE  
Let me make it up to them.

JAKE  
Don't worry about it, I already  
have. Now you're black marked.  
(slams the papers)  
We're going to have to cut you out.

MARIE  
Oh, Jake. Are you serious?

JAKE  
Exclusive Chicago can't be  
affiliated with shit service.

A beat.

MARIE  
You know what? Fine. Give me my  
money and I'll go.

JAKE  
Money?

MARIE  
You still owe me ten grand.

JAKE  
Think so? Then sue me.

Marie SLAPS Jake.

The room goes silent.

Jake smiles.

Marie looks around, shakes her head, then storms out.

DIANE  
Best of luck, Marie.

Marie gives the finger over her shoulder as she exits.

MARIE  
All the same.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

About dozen students sit at desks, arranged in a circle.

Derek sits at the head of the circle.

DEREK  
Next class we'll figure out  
submission dates for everyone. In  
the meantime, read the stories I  
gave you so we can all get a feel  
for discussion and criticism.

Derek checks the time.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
And that's it for the day. Anyone  
have any questions?

ALEXA, a gorgeous female student, raises her hand.

Derek looks at Alexa, nods.

ALEXA  
Are you published?

DEREK  
Yes, Alexa, two short novels.

ALEXA  
What're they about?

DEREK  
Spies. They're spy novels.

TOM (50's) professionally dressed enters, stops at the doorway.

Another student, STEVE, raises his hand.

STEVE

Didn't you say not to write stuff like that?

DEREK

Not until you learn how to tell a real story without relying on genre elements.

ALEXA

Why spies?

DEREK

I just always liked spies.

ALEXA

Oh.

Derek looks at Tom, then back to the class.

DEREK

We'll talk more next time. Happy writing, everyone.

The students gather their belongings, and exit the room.

Tom enters.

TOM

Getting yourself all settled?

DEREK

For the most part.

TOM

It's good to have you back.

Tom shakes Derek's hand.

DEREK

Thanks, Tom.

Derek puts the desks back in order.

TOM

How've things been at the other schools?

DEREK

Been making cuts. The only job I have left is here.

TOM

Well, that's good.

DEREK

Good?

TOM

I should fill you in on what's been going on in the department since last semester.

DEREK

Tom, that's rarely good.

TOM

Don't know if you heard, but Professor Salzmann just retired.

DEREK

I knew he was considering.

TOM

We've been fortunate with promoting and tenure and all that.

DEREK

New faces?

TOM

Some. We're still working on getting an Assistant Professor.

DEREK

Bet you're flooded with applicants.

TOM

Deluge.

A beat.

TOM (CONT'D)

You still writing?

DEREK

Here and there. Have a little more time for it now.

TOM

I suggest you go for this opening.

DEREK

For Assistant Professor?

Tom nods.

TOM  
You're one of the more professional  
writing instructors we've had. The  
only hitch is publication.

DEREK  
I have those.

TOM  
You know how you were just talking  
to your students about genre.

DEREK  
Something genre-free. You know I  
can't get a story written and  
published in time to apply.

TOM  
Like I said, we like you. Give us  
a solid manuscript. That's it.

Derek looks at the floor.

DEREK  
Ok... Ok...

TOM  
Got anything on the shelf?

Derek looks up.

DEREK  
Yeah, I've been working on this  
thing. About a call girl.

TOM  
There you go.

DEREK  
It's pretty rough, though.

TOM  
You have all Summer. Get it to us  
with an application, and I see good  
things for you.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek browses the Internet on his laptop while Helen tends to  
her plants.

HELEN  
First day went well?

DEREK

Uh, huh.

Derek sits up.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Did you know that there's a web site where people rate call girls?

Helen stops.

HELEN

What?!

DEREK

Yeah, like you'd rate a restaurant, or an online purchase.

Helen walks to Derek.

HELEN

That's what you've been doing this whole time?

DEREK

See.

Helen looks at the screen.

HELEN

That's... quite descriptive.

Helen squints.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Height, weight... bust... puss-

Helen shuts the laptop.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Why are you on that site?

Derek opens the laptop.

DEREK

Research. For a story.

HELEN

Secret Agent Troy Chambers meets Heidi Fleiss in: Insertion.

DEREK

A real story to get a real job. Writing in a new direction.



Derek resumes browsing.

HELEN  
You found a job?

DEREK  
Yep.

HELEN  
You could have opened with that.

DEREK  
I wanted to get to work.

HELEN  
Strange subject for a story.

DEREK  
It's amazing how much you can find  
on the Internet.

Helen returns to her plants.

HELEN  
Just keep yourself out of trouble.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - TIME LAPSE

Derek researches as Helen tends to her plants. Then Helen  
reads a book on her couch as the sun goes down.

Helen turns on a light, kisses Derek's forehead and exits.

The city shows a busy night. Derek still fixated.

Derek shuts the laptop.

Derek turns off the light.

Derek exits.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Derek sits at an outside table. He sips coffee as he reads a  
newspaper.

ALEXA (O.S.)  
You look rough, Professor Anders.

Derek flinches. Looks up.

Alexa and Steve take seats at the table.

DEREK  
It's... instructor Anders. And  
yeah, had a late night.

STEVE  
Instructor Anders, gettin' his  
party on.

DEREK  
No, Steve. Wasn't getting on any  
parties. It was research.

ALEXA  
You still have to research after  
college?

DEREK  
Especially in writing.

ALEXA  
You said, "Write what you know."

STEVE  
Doesn't that mean experience, not  
book work?

DEREK  
Experience is good, but hard to  
come by. Like my spy stories,  
there's no way I'd get experience  
with espionage and covert stuff.

ALEXA  
Probably why they weren't good.

Derek looks at the Alexa.

ALEXA (CONT'D)  
I read some reviews. I was  
curious.

DEREK  
It's okay, you're right.

STEVE  
Then why waste your time if all you  
have is research? Seems like it  
could be put to better use.

DEREK  
You know what you just did there?

STEVE  
What?

DEREK  
Had a writing revelation.

STEVE  
Okay...

Steve nods.

DEREK  
What you just said. Experience  
trumps all. Why bother if all you  
have is a vague idea of something?

STEVE  
Alright... yeah.

ALEXA  
Then why are you doing research?

DEREK  
That's a good question. I'm not  
sure.

Derek stands. Folds his newspaper.

STEVE  
You wanna come get lunch with us?  
Talk about more writing stuff?

DEREK  
I'm sorry. I have work to do.

ALEXA  
Research?

DEREK  
Something like that.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek sits at the computer. He browses the rating site.  
Helen reads a magazine and drinks wine at the dinner table.  
Derek scours the reviews.

DEREK  
Man, there are a lot of escorts in  
this city.

HELEN  
You're still on that?

DEREK  
How does anyone pick?

Helen shakes her head, resumes reading.

Derek clicks on the 'sort' column then clicks 'rate.'

The first name on the list: "Marie - \$150/hr."

Derek looks at the second name: "Gizelle - \$450/hr."

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Huh.

Derek clicks "Marie", and her profile comes up. He looks over some of the stats: "Agency: Independent."  
"Incall/Outcall: Both." "City: Chicago." "Phone: "

Derek leans in and looks at the number.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Really.

HELEN  
What?

DEREK  
They just put their numbers out there. For anyone to call.

HELEN  
Do I need to be worried about you?

Derek waves her away.

DEREK  
No, no. Just learning. It is a lot to process.

HELEN  
Alright...

Derek takes his cellphone and enters Marie's number.

Derek takes a deep breath.

Holds it.

Exhales and shuts the phone.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie's apartment looks like it could belong to a college girl. Too much stuff, with little space. Full racks of clothes all over the place. Various trinkets and knickknacks that one could only describe as "just fabulous."

Marie sits on her bed, cigarette in mouth, laptop in front of her and ashtray to the side. She reads a negative review.

MARIE  
What the fuck...

Marie clicks through to another review.

Marie takes a drag, and clicks to another. She slams the computer shut as she exhales.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Bullshit.

Marie falls back and stares at the ceiling. Takes a drag.

Marie's cell phone RINGS. She sits up, flips it open.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

DEREK (V.O.)  
Is this... Marie?

MARIE  
What can I do for you, Honey?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - SAME TIME

DEREK  
I wanted to... I was... wondering  
how I could make an appointment.

MARIE  
An appointment. With me?

DEREK  
This is Marie, right?

MARIE  
Yes.

DEREK  
I want to see you so that I can-

MARIE  
-Slow down, Sweetie. We should  
discuss specifics in person.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Helen watches Derek pace out on the balcony.

BACK TO:

INTERCUT

DEREK  
Ok, ok. So how do I...

MARIE  
First tell me when.

DEREK  
Tonight?

MARIE  
You understand my rates?

DEREK  
I was thinking an hour.

MARIE  
Silver Fox, 8:00 P.M. Order a long  
pour rum and coke.

DEREK  
Alrig-

Marie hangs up.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Marie sets down her phone. She shrugs.

Marie stands and walks to a rack of clothing.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Derek enters through the back door.

HELEN  
Goddammit, Derek. You just made a  
date with a hooker, didn't you.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Helen adjusts Derek's clothing and hair in front of a mirror.

HELEN  
Remember to be on your best  
behavior, professional.

DEREK  
Yeah, I know. I've read all the  
do's and don'ts.

HELEN  
Say them.

DEREK  
Don't talk about sex. Don't talk  
about money, and pay up front.  
Don't be messed up on drugs.

Helen laughs.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
I know. Right? Don't get drunk.  
Don't ask about her name or her  
life. Be presentable.

HELEN  
And?

DEREK  
And...

Helen slaps Derek on the back.

HELEN  
No sex.

DEREK  
Right. No sex.

Helen brushes Derek's lapel. Looks him over.

HELEN  
I thought the first time I'd have  
to do this was when I had kids.  
But now... This is effed up.

DEREK  
It's just research. You don't have  
to worry. I'm a big boy.

Helen LAUGHS.

INT. SILVER FOX - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The ladies room at the Silver Fox is your typical bar bathroom. Not the management's first priority as far as quality, but far from a cesspool.

Marie sits in a stall, knees together. She twists a bullet and pours coke on her wrist... then, the flow stops.

MARIE

C'mon.

Marie shakes the bullet. Nothing.

Marie sits a moment, then snorts the coke.

She breathes, then stands.

INT. SILVER FOX - CONTINUOUS

Derek sits at the bar with a book. The Silver Fox is a quiet, rustic place. Not too busy. Somewhere you'd expect to find a lot of retired guys drinking beers.

Marie steps from the bathroom, looks around.

The bartender hands Derek a tall rum and coke. Of the few customers, Derek's the only one with this sort of glass.

Marie approaches Derek.

DEREK

Thanks.

Derek pays.

MARIE

Hey, Sweetie. I got us a table.

Derek flinches, then looks at Marie.

Marie motions with her head and walks.

Derek takes his drink and book and follows.

Derek and Marie sit in a cushioned booth with tall sides and dim wall lamps. Marie has a tequila something on her side.

Marie smiles. She points at the book.

MARIE (CONT'D)

For me?



Derek grabs the book, opens the cover.

DEREK

Uh... yeah. It has the-

Marie places her hand on Derek's and shuts the cover. She takes the book: "Code Name: Icarus by Derek Anders."

MARIE

Thank you.

Derek looks at Marie, then at her healing eye.

DEREK

Excuse me for asking, but your...

Derek rubs the side of his eye.

Marie covers the bruise.

MARIE

Oh, that.

Marie composes herself.

MARIE (CONT'D)

I like to have fun, and sometimes I play a little too rough.

Marie smiles at Derek. She sips her drink.

MARIE (CONT'D)

From around here... uh...

DEREK

Oh, Derek.

Marie smiles.

MARIE

Marie. So, from around here, Derek?

DEREK

It's been a long night for me. Mind if we just get to business?

MARIE

We're on a date, Honey. You should treat it like one.

DEREK

I wasn't looking for one.

MARIE  
Not how it works, sorry.

Marie collects her things.

DEREK  
Wait, wait.

Marie freezes.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
I'm a writer. I wanted to get to  
know you. Interview you.

Marie resumes gathering her stuff, minus the book.

MARIE  
You think that just because of who  
I am, I'll do whatever for money?

DEREK  
Well... sorta?

Marie stands.

MARIE  
I don't need your money, Asshole.

Marie walks off.

DEREK  
Shit.

A beat.

Derek stands, grabs the book, and makes his way to the exit.

The patrons watch the commotion, then resume their drinking  
after Derek exits.

EXT. SILVER FOX - CONTINUOUS

Marie walks down the street, in a huff.

Derek exits the restaurant, looks around, then spots Marie.

DEREK  
Hey!

Marie keeps on.

Derek jogs after Marie.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Will you just hear me out?

Derek catches up.

Marie continues her walk.

Derek takes a Sharpie from his pocket, then writes something on the inside of the book.

Derek hands the book to Marie.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
At least take this.

She shoves it back.

MARIE  
What aren't you getting?

Derek pushes the book back.

DEREK  
My number's in it. Think things over, call me if you want.

Marie stops. Looks at Derek.

MARIE  
And you'll leave me alone?

Derek nods.

Marie accepts the book.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
You're wasting your time.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Derek enters the apartment.

HELEN (O.S.)  
Derek?

DEREK  
Yeah?

Helen runs in from another room.

HELEN  
Oh my, God. Tell me how it went.

Helen leads Derek to the couches.

DEREK  
I thought you didn't approve.

HELEN  
I don't. But seriously. You just met with a hooker!

Derek and Helen sit.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Was she all, like, greasy and disgusting. Drugged out. Meth mouth. Hardly coherent? C'mon.

Derek laughs.

DEREK  
Normal girl. Kinda high energy.

Helen sits back.

HELEN  
Really?

DEREK  
Had a bit of a black eye.

HELEN  
Probably from her pimp. Wasn't turning enough tricks, or talked back. Got herself slapped.

Derek shakes his head.

Helen stands, walks off.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
At least it's all out of your system, and you can get back to doing actual work.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - NIGHT

Marie walks the sidewalk.

A car passes. A few guys WHISTLE at her.

DUDE  
How much, Baby?

Marie flips off the car as it pulls away. It stops at a group of guys, then continues down the street.

Marie looks at the book Derek gave her.

MARIE  
Asshole.

Marie examines the cover.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Code Name: Icarus. Derek Anders.  
Derek, huh.

Marie shoves the book in her purse, and crosses the street.

Some guys stand against a building on the other side.

Marie approaches.

SPECIAL T  
Marie, Marie, Marie. Get your  
vixen ass over here, girl.

Marie smiles, walks up.

MARIE  
Hey, T.

SPECIAL T, a big dude dressed for the shadows and alleys.

SPECIAL T  
Those white boys, the ones just  
giving you a hard time?

MARIE  
Yeah?

SPECIAL T  
Wanted some stuff, but left with  
the fear of T in 'em.

MARIE  
My knight.

SPECIAL T  
Gotta protect what's right.

Marie hugs Special T.

SPECIAL T (CONT'D)  
Look at you, girl. Who did that to  
your fine face?

MARIE  
Nobody important.

SPECIAL T  
That's right, nobody important.  
Anyone important do that stuff to  
you I know they got it comin' back  
in a bad way. Marie don't play.

Marie smiles.

SPECIAL T (CONT'D)  
What you need?

MARIE  
Eight ball.

SPECIAL T  
I got ya. Three.

MARIE  
Three? Are you fucking serious?

SPECIAL T  
Girl, news travels. If you ain't  
with Exclusive anymore, then you  
don't get VIP treatment.

MARIE  
C'mon, it's me.

SPECIAL T  
I know. It's tough. But business  
is business. I can't lose my sales  
from Exclusive if they learn you're  
still workin' their discount.

Marie digs through her purse.

MARIE  
Fuck.

Marie pulls out cash and counts it.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
I got two-seventy. That's halfway.

SPECIAL T  
Gotta be three, gotta be three.

MARIE  
Oh. Hold on.

Marie pulls the book from her purse, opens the cover, pulls out cash. She hands more to Special T.

SPECIAL T  
Alright, alright.  
(behind him)  
Get our girl a ball.

A guy from the back hands Special T a baggie. T hands it to Marie. He winks.

SPECIAL T (CONT'D)  
Our girl's all set.

Marie shoves it all in her purse. She walks off.

MARIE  
Thanks.

SPECIAL T  
Things gonna change, fortune always favors the foxies.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Derek sits in the room with coffee and a newspaper.

Alexa and Steve sit at their desks. It's still early.

STEVE  
So... Instructor Anders.

DEREK  
Yeah?

STEVE  
I went and looked up some authors after our conversation. You know, about writing what you've done.

DEREK  
What'd you learn?

STEVE  
I found this awesome book. This guy, like, went and met all these suave dudes in L.A. Real ladies men. And he lived with them and they taught him how to get laid, like all the time. 100%. Learned a lot already

ALEXA  
Why the hell are you reading that?

STEVE  
It... sounded interesting.

Alexa slaps Steve on the shoulder.

ALEXA  
Hope you paid attention. You may  
need that advice soon.

DEREK  
Are you two?

Alexa nods.

Steve grins and nods.

STEVE  
But, I'm not going to do any of  
that, Babe. Don't worry.

ALEXA  
I'm thinking of going out and  
experiencing something new.

DEREK  
That's very ambitious.

ALEXA  
Think it's too soon?

DEREK  
I say go for it.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek enters the apartment.

DEREK  
Helen?

Derek looks around the living room and kitchen.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
You home?

Derek walks down the hall and looks in Helen's room.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Helen?



Derek walks back to the living room. He takes his cell phone, makes a call.

The line RINGS... RINGS...

Derek paces.

HELEN (V.O.)  
Derek?

DEREK  
Helen. Where are you?

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. CHICAGO BOTANICAL GARDENS - SAME TIME

Helen exits a building through a side door.

HELEN  
Uh... At work?

DEREK  
I need a favor.

HELEN  
Yeah, what is it?

DEREK  
I need you to set up another appointment with that escort.

HELEN  
Are you out of your mind?

DEREK  
I know, I know, but I'm walking blind. I need a second shot.

HELEN  
Then call her yourself.

DEREK  
She's not going to agree to meet with me after last time.

HELEN  
Take it as a sign.

DEREK  
This isn't about me. This is about the book, and a new job. This is what I need to get back on my feet.

HELEN  
So now I'm the bad guy if I don't?

DEREK  
You're the caring loving sister  
that you've always been if you do.

HELEN  
God dammit, Derek.

Helen SIGHS.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Alright, but under two conditions.

DEREK  
Anything.

HELEN  
This is the absolute last time in  
your life that you meet with an  
escort, ever. No more.

DEREK  
Alright.

HELEN  
And you have to come with me to the  
Lunch in the Garden event I've been  
setting up.

DEREK  
Done.

INT. SILVER FOX - NIGHT

Derek enters the bar, book in hand. He walks past the stools  
and heads to the table he and Marie had last time.

Marie sits at the table. She plays on her phone.

Derek sits.

Marie looks up.

MARIE  
Mother fucker...

DEREK  
Hey.

MARIE  
What the fuck are you doing here?

Derek slides Marie the book.

DEREK  
I have an appointment.

Marie pushes it back.

MARIE  
No.

Marie stands.

DEREK  
Just give me a second, please.

Marie looks at Derek.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Only a second.

Marie points to the book, holds out her hand.

Derek hands the book to Marie.

Marie sits.

MARIE  
I'll listen, but that's it.

DEREK  
I'm in sort of a bad way.

Marie stares.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
I'm working with this deadline, and  
my topic is you. I mean, not you,  
but your... industry?

Marie nods.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
And I have no idea how any of it  
works. Or what any of the girls-

MARIE  
-And guys.

Derek nods.

DEREK  
...are like. I need a window.  
Your insight. Something.

MARIE

Why me?

DEREK

I saw your name on that review site. You seem to have tons of experience. And you were cheapest.

MARIE

Well... it's Derek, right?

Derek nods.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Well, Derek. Even if I wanted to help you, I couldn't and won't.

DEREK

It'd be anonymous.

MARIE

Fuck anonymous. My name's all over this city. Now it is about what that name says about me.

DEREK

What's that?

MARIE

Fucked. That's what. I don't know if you looked too hard at that site, but I have a string of bullshit negative reviews, which is a fucking death sentence for me.

DEREK

I saw a few.

MARIE

My agency dropped me. Without them, it's tough to get appointments, especially with dicked up ratings. So I have to lower my price and hope someone half-way decent bites.

Derek sits back.

DEREK

Wow. I'm sorry.

MARIE

I'm only here now because my phone isn't ringing.

(MORE)

MARIE (CONT'D)

And, even if I wanted to help, you wouldn't be generating reviews for our time, and it would take away from chances with clients who might actually help me regain my prestige and demand.

DEREK

You were that good?

MARIE

Aces, Man. Aces.

DEREK

Why not start fresh? Create your own agency, and rebuild.

MARIE

An agency with one escort who answers her own phones. Even if it was a girl other than me, she wouldn't last long at all.

DEREK

Think there would be anyone else out there to help me?

MARIE

Can you afford twelve-hundred an hour?

DEREK

God no.

MARIE

I can't help you, and you can't possibly help me. That's more or less what I said last time.

Derek takes out his phone, checks the time.

DEREK

I hope things get better for you. I'm sorry for wasting your time.

Marie looks at Derek's phone, then Derek.

MARIE

We still have some time together, why not hang out for a while?

DEREK

Kinda pointless, isn't it?

MARIE  
Chillin' with a failed escort's  
gotta be better than nothing.

Derek thinks.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
What else you got to do?

DEREK  
Yeah. Alright.

Marie smiles. She stands.

MARIE  
Let's go.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek follows Marie into her apartment.

Marie tosses her purse to the side and walks in.

Derek stands at the door.

MARIE  
Oh, come on.

Marie exits to another room.

Derek enters, looks around, then sits on a couch.

Marie returns, with a vial. She pulls an ottoman next to the coffee table in front of Derek and sits.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
So. What is it you do when you're  
not harassing escorts.

Marie opens the vial, then pours a line of coke on the table.

DEREK  
I write a little. Teach some. Is  
that...

Marie pours another line.

MARIE  
What? Coke?

Marie kneels. Snorts a line.

Derek stiffens.

Marie holds her straw out to Derek.

DEREK  
Oh... no thanks.

Marie nods.

MARIE  
So this teaching and writing thing  
keeping you busy?

Marie does the other line.

DEREK  
Used to. I was hoping to spend  
more time on writing, but you know.

Marie wipes at her nose, sits.

MARIE  
Yeah, yeah.

Marie leans forward.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
I'm gonna shoot straight with you  
for a minute, alright?

DEREK  
Yeah, sure.

MARIE  
I'm fucked. Your fucked. We're  
both fucked.

DEREK  
According to you, yeah. I'll have  
to try to find another way.

MARIE  
What do you say we help each other?

DEREK  
I don't follow.

MARIE  
Try to, 'cause I need you on this.

Derek nods.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
I reinvent myself. Make up a new  
name with a clean slate. Make a  
new agency, and get me out there.

DEREK

The exact plan I had at the bar.  
Said people wouldn't buy it.

MARIE

Not if it was me setting all my  
shit up, but you? That has a good  
chance at looking legit.

DEREK

I'm not going to be your pimp.

MARIE

No, no. Not a pimp. Apprentice?  
Take the calls for me, tell me  
where to go.

DEREK

A pimp.

MARIE

Think about it, Man. You want to  
know about the industry for a book  
or whatever, what better way than  
seeing it from the inside? And  
watching how it takes off?

DEREK

Would be cool. Still illegal.

MARIE

You won't touch any money, won't  
pay anything, and won't receive any  
payment. Just relay info. What's  
illegal about that?

DEREK

I'm not sure if it is something I  
should get involved in, regardless.

MARIE

No pressure. Take some time, think  
things over. Get back to me.

Derek stands.

DEREK

Alright.

Derek heads for the door.

MARIE

And you can cut out whenever.



Derek opens the door.

Marie shuts her eyes.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
You'd be doing me a huge favor, and  
have my eternal gratitude.

Derek stands at the door.

DEREK  
But I can leave whenever.

MARIE  
Ten minutes, days, or months with  
no hard feelings. All up to you.

Derek EXHALES.

DEREK  
Alright. Alright, I'm in.

Marie opens her eyes, smiles.

MARIE  
Get your ass back over here.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek sits at his laptop, and types: "The name of an agency  
does more..."

FELICITY, the protagonist in Derek's book has a voice of a  
woman in her late 40's.

FELICITY (V.O.)  
The name of an agency does more for  
the service than you'd think. It's  
the first impression clients  
receive, and should entice.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek and Marie sit in her living room with a note pad.

FELICITY (V.O.)  
Clients are interested in two  
things: Intimacy and Privacy. The  
name should support that. It  
should sound sexy and discreet.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek and Marie sit next to each other on her couch. They look at Derek's laptop. A web site loads.

"Garden of Ambrosia: Chicago's Premiere Service"

Marie bounces up and down. She slaps Derek's shoulder a few times. He smiles.

FELICITY (V.O.)

After that, you set yourself up at a review site. Not a very tough thing to do. Submit a name, some statistics, services, a link to the web site. The users take it from there. It keeps things honest.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marie looks over the submission form for her profile. Everything is complete but name. Marie types.

"Victoria."

FELICITY (V.O.)

Pictures, too. Give them enough solid proof that the girl is who she says she is, and they know exactly what to expect.

Marie submits the form.

A new page loads. The complete profile for "Victoria," and glamour photos of Marie with her face censored.

Marie smiles.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek continues to type at his laptop.

Helen watches T.V. and eats popcorn.

FELICITY (V.O.)

After that, it's pretty much a waiting game. Get a call, hopefully get a good review, and pray it encourages more calls.

Derek hits the enter key, clicks save, closes the laptop, then stretches.

HELEN  
Looks like your meeting went much  
better this time around.

Derek stands and walks to the couch.

DEREK  
Got me off to a good start.

Derek sits next to Helen.

HELEN  
And no more appointments, right?

DEREK  
I will have no more appointments  
with Marie.

HELEN  
Marie?

Derek grabs some popcorn.

DEREK  
Uh huh.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek and Marie sit in Marie's living room and stare at a  
cell phone on the table.

MARIE  
When it rings, answer it.

DEREK  
No problem.

MARIE  
Set it up like a meeting for two  
people. If they start asking stuff  
like what they get, hang up. No  
specifics.

DEREK  
And how do I keep organized? Call  
you? Make a schedule?

MARIE  
Hands off, remember? The less you  
have, the better. Just... be over  
here every day.

DEREK  
Every day.

MARIE  
As much as you can. Hang out, and when a call comes, you can tell me when and where. No papers, no books. 'Cause if you're caught with a black book... trouble.

Marie stands and walks to the kitchen.

DEREK  
I'm gonna have to leave to teach classes, and check in with my sister and stuff.

MARIE (O.S.)  
Sister?

DEREK  
I've been staying with her for a while.

Marie enters the room.

MARIE  
She know about any of this?

DEREK  
Just the appointments.

MARIE  
I don't mean to make you lead a double life, but...

DEREK  
... Yeah, I get it.

Marie hands Derek a key.

MARIE  
Come and go, whatever. Do some writing if you want. I'll try not to be a bother.

A beat as Marie goes back to the couch and kneels at the coffee table. She prepares a line of coke.

DEREK  
When do you think they'll start calling? Is something wrong?

MARIE  
It hasn't even been a day. And  
it's a weekday.

Marie does a line.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Give it time.

DEREK  
If I can ask. Why the drugs?

Marie shrugs, climbs back on the couch.

MARIE  
To have fun, to party. Then it  
becomes the only way I can keep at  
it for seventy-two straight hours.

DEREK  
Couldn't take a break?

MARIE  
As soon as one call ends, another  
comes in. And if you're a popular  
girl, like I was.

Marie dismisses the thought with a wave.

DEREK  
But you had those bad reviews.

MARIE  
I had good reviews. Stellar  
reviews. Then, all of the sudden.

Marie stick out her tongue and lowers her thumb.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
No fucking clue, what-so-ever.  
Guess I lost control. Got  
careless, or unprofessional.

A moment.

The cell phone lights up, RINGS.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Holy shit!

Derek picks up the phone, Marie sits next to him.

DEREK  
Hello?

Marie slaps Derek on the arm.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
... Garden of Ambrosia, what can I  
do for you... uh, huh... Victoria,  
she's new to town, but I promise  
she's worth it... that's right,  
one-thousand... tomorrow afternoon?

Derek looks at Marie.

Marie nods. She writes on the note pad.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Tomorrow afternoon is fine...  
three o'clock for two hours.

Marie shows Derek the pad: "The Fox."

DEREK (CONT'D)  
At The Silver Fox... and, uh...  
order a long pour rum and coke.

Marie smiles and nods.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
All set. Thanks for calling.

Derek hangs up.

Marie squeals, hugs Derek.

MARIE  
Come by tomorrow? I wanna tell you  
how things went.

DEREK  
I've got an afternoon class.

MARIE  
Even better. I'll meet you there,  
afterward. Business dinner.

Marie smiles.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek types at his laptop.

HELEN  
It's nice to see all this energy.

Helen walks over with a plate of food, places it next to him. She kisses him on the side of the head.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
You smell strange.

Derek stops, turns.

DEREK  
What?

HELEN  
Yeah. Like perfume...

Helen smells Derek's hair.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
And smoke?

Derek resumes typing.

DEREK  
Kids practically bathe in the stuff, and it's impossible to leave a building without passing through a cloud of smoke.

Helen stands there for a moment. She shakes her head.

HELEN  
Alright.

Helen walks away.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Derek sits in the circle of desks with his students.

Silence.

STEVE  
I still don't understand.

DEREK  
What's got you confused?

STEVE  
Well, it's supposed to be a war story, right? But all this guy does is talk about the weapons and gear, but nobody uses any of it.

DEREK

I think you're misunderstanding the point of the story.

STEVE

It shoulda been called, "Our Boring Inventory."

The students CHUCKLE.

ALEXA

It isn't about all that stuff, it is about the similarity. Like, all that stuff was heavy, and weighed them down, but not as much as all the emotional stuff that came with the war.

DEREK

That's exactly right.

STEVE

But it is a war story. It should be all action and guns.

DEREK

That's setting, genre. It comes secondary to the people. This story could have taken place on The Oregon Trail. Just change some of the props. Same story.

A beat.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Did we all at least enjoy the story, even a little?

Everyone nods.

DEREK (CONT'D)

Good. Now, nobody write anything like this for our class. Emulation is not creation.

Derek looks at his watch.

DEREK (CONT'D)

And that's it for today. Remember your readings, and start thinking of subjects for your own stories.

The students stand, and leave.



Steve kisses Alexa on the cheek.

STEVE

I gotta run. See ya tonight.

Steve exits.

Derek puts the room back in order.

Alexa heads for the door.

ALEXA

Are we going to read any more interesting stuff like that?

DEREK

I know of a few. I'll dig some up.

ALEXA

Looking forward to it.

Alexa passes Tom as she exits. Tom enters the room.

DEREK

Hey, Tom.

TOM

We're past add/drop and your enrollment hasn't budged.

DEREK

We're already at that point?

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marie walks down the hallway with a bag in her hand and a swagger in her gait. Her clothes leave little to the imagination.

Steve passes, in a hurry. He glances. Marie smirks. Steve looks away.

Marie smiles.

Marie spots Alexa, who is headed her way.

Marie puts on a friendly face.

Marie points at Alexa's shoes.

Alexa stops.

MARIE  
Those are too cute. Where did you  
get 'em?

Alexa looks at her shoes, looks at Marie, smiles.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Derek and Tom stand at the head of the room.

TOM  
Looking real good for you, Derek.  
Just came to check in. How's the  
writing?

DEREK  
It's going well. Still on track.

TOM  
Good, 'cause I've been ignoring the  
other applications.

DEREK  
Is that legal?

TOM  
No idea. I'll just set up some  
interviews or something.

MARIE (O.S.)  
Derek?

Derek and Tom look to the hallway.

Marie enters the room, plastic bag in hand.

TOM  
Hi.

Marie reaches to shake Tom's hand.

MARIE  
Hello. I'm Marie.

TOM  
Tom.

MARIE  
Pleasure to meet you, Tom.

Tom looks at Derek.

DEREK  
Marie's... a new friend.

TOM  
I see.

Marie holds up the bag.

MARIE  
Dinner, remember? And it's getting  
cold, too.

DEREK  
Tom, I'm sorry.

TOM  
No, no. We can talk later. Enjoy  
your evening.

Derek walks to the door.

Marie follows and fans him along.

MARIE  
Scoot.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek sits on Marie's couch, and stares at Victoria's reviews  
page. Empty take-out containers litter the table.

In another room a SHOWER RUNS.

Derek reloads the page.

A beat.

Derek reloads again.

DEREK  
Come on.

Another reload.

Marie LAUGHS from the other room.

MARIE (O.S.)  
Derek, relax.

DEREK  
Why hasn't he posted?

MARIE (O.S.)  
Industry advice: Don't try to force  
anything. When it comes, it comes.

DEREK  
You guys really say that?

Marie LAUGHS.

MARIE  
(singing)  
"Relax, don't do it, when you want  
to go to it..."

Derek reloads the page.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
(singing)  
"Relax, don't do it-

A review.

DEREK  
Marie! Marie!

FUMBLING in another room.

Marie enters, towel against her chest.

MARIE  
Holy shit. Read it, read it.

Derek looks at the screen.

DEREK  
"We met at a bar, a strange place,  
and I ordered a long pour rum and-"

MARIE  
Yeah, yeah, yeah. Next paragraph.

DEREK  
"When we got to the room, we talked  
and then there was some DFK..."

MARIE  
Deep french kissing. Go on.

DEREK  
"We got to the bed and she took me  
in her hands, then knelt and..."

Derek lifts the laptop over his head.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Yeah. I can't read this.

Marie squints and looks at the screen, mouths some words.

MARIE  
"Overall I would say that Victoria was incredible, and I would recommend her and Garden of Ambrosia to all." Appearance nine, performance ten.

Marie jumps, jumps, jumps.

DEREK  
Good?

MARIE  
Gang-busters.

Derek lowers the laptop. Marie dances back to the shower.

DEREK  
All right.

MARIE  
(singing)  
"When you want to come."

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Girls buzz about, while MARK (30's, the phone guy), looks over the review pages.

MARK  
Jake? You may want to see this.

Jake enters from the back room.

Mark points at the screen. Jake reads.

JAKE  
Eight-Eight, Nine-Ten? What the hell is Garden of Ambrosia, and who the fuck is Victoria?

MARK  
Hold on.

Mark clicks through to the pictures.

Jake studies them.

JAKE  
I've never seen these before.

Mark shakes his head.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Alright, no problem. Let's just  
keep this Victoria on our radar.

MARK  
Sure thing.

Jake slaps Mark on the back. Walks off.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek types at his laptop.

FELICITY (V.O.)  
You'd think that in an industry  
where privacy is a huge concern,  
people would be much more discreet  
about their experiences. This  
whole world is a cycle of irony.

FELICITY (V.O.)  
The girls, they're right there.  
Internet, phone book, local papers  
and magazines. They don't come  
right out and say, "sex for money,"  
but that's the implication.

FELICITY (V.O.)  
Then there are the reviewers. A  
whole community of "hobbyists," who  
pay, not only for sex, but for site  
memberships where they can have  
open conversations about their  
experiences. These people get to  
know, trust, and respect their  
peers. It's a social club.

FELICITY (V.O.)  
But in the end, it is a balanced  
system in a world where getting  
duped could otherwise go  
unpunished. Any executive will  
tell you that word of mouth is  
crucial. Whatever helps the girl,  
helps the girl. No harm in that.

Derek shuts his laptop. Stands and turns off the lights.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek enters Marie's apartment, looks around.

DEREK  
Marie?

MARIE (O.S.)  
In here, there's something I want  
you to see.

DEREK  
I'm just here to drop off your key.

Marie enters the room.

MARIE  
What?

DEREK  
We got you back up, and I saw it  
from the inside, like we agreed. I  
figure now it's just wash, rinse,  
repeat. No need for me anymore.

MARIE  
Oh, no, no, no. We've been playing  
in the shallow end. There's much  
more to see.

DEREK  
Pretty sure I can guess the rest.

MARIE  
Don't you want to see how things  
grow? See this become a real  
agency? Have access to several  
girls, for free?

DEREK  
Couldn't I just stop by?

MARIE  
That wasn't our deal. Besides, the  
girls need to trust you.

A beat.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
You haven't even seen a girl get  
her real first start. Come here.

Marie takes Derek's hand, and leads him to her bedroom.

Derek looks up.

Alexa stands before him, fully nude.

Derek covers his eyes.

DEREK  
Holy shit.

MARIE  
This, is Alexa.

DEREK  
Yeah, I know.

ALEXA  
Instructor Anders?

Derek turn his back to Alexa.

DEREK  
Marie, she's my student.

MARIE  
Then you already know each other.

DEREK  
I definitely can't stay. This  
crosses so many lines.

MARIE  
Stay or go, she's made her choice.  
She'll still be your student and my  
employee. Gonna have to deal.

ALEXA  
I want to do this.

Derek turns back, looks to the ground and shields his eyes.

DEREK  
Think about this. An escort?

ALEXA  
I'm exploring, like you said.

DEREK  
God dammit.

MARIE  
You're gonna have to look. Be  
familiar with her.

Marie pulls Derek's hand away from his face.

Derek looks at Alexa.



MARIE (CONT'D)  
Meet Lexi. Pretty fucking hot.

ALEXA  
Lexi?

MARIE  
Your real name's your only shred of  
privacy.

DEREK  
Marie's not your real name?

Marie exits.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
What is it?

MARIE (O.S.)  
I got a date. Give Lexi the  
rundown while I'm out.

Derek looks at Alexa, rubs his face.

INT. SILVER FOX - DAY

Marie enters the bar, walks back to her booth.

Someone's already there. Jake.

MARIE  
Jake, what the fuck.

JAKE  
I have a date with Victoria.

Marie sits.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
I should have known.

MARIE  
Told you I could pick things up.

JAKE  
I see. Come back to work for me.

MARIE  
Fuck you.

JAKE  
Not a nice way to talk to the man  
who helped you get your start.

MARIE  
And stole money from me. Gonna  
give that back too?

JAKE  
Consider it a fee for lack of  
loyalty. It'll be a fresh start.

Marie stands.

MARIE  
Fuck off.

Marie walks to the door.

JAKE  
You know you stand no chance  
against us. You can't keep up.

Marie exits the bar.

MARIE  
We'll see about that.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek types at his laptop. Helen tidies the apartment.

MARIE (V.O.)  
Cherie, heard anything about this  
new girl in town, Victoria?

CHERIE (V.O.)  
That she's, like, a rock star or  
something. A complete mystery.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Marie sits on her bed, a mirror with coke on the sheets.

MARIE  
Jake say anything about her?

CHERIE (V.O.)  
That she's probably a fluke, or a  
fake profile.

Marie does a line.

MARIE  
So, he didn't tell you that he  
knows I'm Victoria?

CHERIE (V.O.)  
Shit, really? No, he didn't.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

MARIE (V.O.)  
Why don't you and the other girls  
talk to him about it? And let them  
know my house is open, and I won't  
keep them from their money.

Derek closes his laptop.

HELEN  
Done for the night?

Derek rubs his eyes.

DEREK  
Yeah, yeah.

HELEN  
This stuff's wiping you out.

DEREK  
Not too much.

HELEN  
Just make sure you'll be awake  
enough for The Gardens.

DEREK  
Oh. Right. When is it?

HELEN  
Two days.

Derek thinks.

DEREK  
Two days.

HELEN  
You better not forget.

DEREK  
No. We're good.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Circle of desks. The students have manuscripts in front of  
them. Alexa sits back.

STUDENT

I think that the... part at the hospital is cliché?

STEVE

Yeah. Like it's been done before.

DEREK

Alright. And what might Alexa do to smooth it over?

STEVE

Maybe, he could not make it to the delivery?

DEREK

Why do you think that would be effective?

STEVE

We know this dude doesn't want to be with this lady, but at the same time, he doesn't want to be an absent father like his father was.

DEREK

Alright...

STEVE

Well, if he doesn't make it to the delivery, it carries the story past the last page.

Derek stares at Steve.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Okay, he makes it, and it is all sunshine and roses. But if he doesn't make it, he's screwed up the first thing he possibly could for the kid. When the story is over, we'd know the path ahead is gonna be rough.

Derek nods.

DEREK

Who here agrees with Steve?

A beat.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Well, I think it is excellent  
insight and that Alexa should  
consider it for her next draft.

STUDENT  
Yeah. It does seem more real.

Steve smiles.

Derek's cell phone RINGS.

The students look.

Derek fumbles for his phone.

DEREK  
Sorry... just one...

RING.

Derek pulls the phone from his pocket. Nothing.

RING.

Derek puts the phone on the desk, reaches in his bag and  
pulls out another. He stands.

RING.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Keep going, guys.

Derek exits the room, answers the phone.

Alexa shifts her attention to Derek in the hallway as the  
students continue their discussion.

Derek nods a few times, hangs up the phone, enters the room.

Derek sits at his desk and nods as the students drone. He  
flips a few pages in to the manuscript and writes something.

The conversation ends.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Alright, great discussion guys.  
You all did real well. Everyone  
pass their marked up manuscripts  
back to Lexi.

STEVE  
Lexi?

DEREK  
Alexa, I mean.

The manuscripts come around to Alexa. She flips through one:  
"Lakeside, Doubles, 9:00 PM, Ste 540."

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Doubles?

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek and Alexa sit in Marie's living room.

DEREK  
It means you and another girl.  
Marie. It's good for a first.

ALEXA  
I won't be alone. Good.

Alexa shakes out her hands. Smiles.

ALEXA (CONT'D)  
Nervous.

Marie enters the front door.

MARIE  
Got anything tonight?

ALEXA  
Me and you. Doubles!

MARIE  
Gonna make a lot tonight, Girl.

Marie looks at Derek. Holds up an envelope.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Derek, some girls may be stopping  
by. Work them in the system. And  
I need you to run an errand.

She tosses the envelope to Derek.

DEREK  
What is it.

MARIE  
Instructions on the back.

Derek nods.

Marie goes for the door, then comes back. She kisses Alexa on the side of the head.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Don't worry, Dear. You'll do fine.

EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - NIGHT

Derek holds the envelope and walks the sidewalk. He stops. Looks around.

Special T and his guys stand next to a building.

Derek approaches.

DEREK  
Excuse me?

The group looks at Derek.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
I'm looking for...  
(looks at the envelope)  
Special T?

Special T LAUGHS.

SPECIAL T  
Who's asking?

Derek hands over the envelope.

DEREK  
This is for you.

Special T stares at Derek for a moment, then looks inside. Tons of cash, and a note. "This is Derek, he's cool. I've got an order. VIP prices I assume? Love, Marie."

Special T studies Derek.

SPECIAL T  
A'ight. It's gonna be a hot minute. You good to hang?

DEREK  
What is?

SPECIAL T  
Your package, Kid.

DEREK  
Package? Wait... you mean drugs?

SPECIAL T  
Whoa, whoa. Relax.

Derek looks around. Leans in.

DEREK  
Is this a drug deal?

SPECIAL T  
What. You think you were out here  
buying pineapples?

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Marie talks to Cherie in the park. She hands her a key.

Cherie nods. They hug and part ways.

Marie's cell phone RINGS. She looks, answers.

MARIE  
Alexa?

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Where are you?

MARIE  
Got held up, on my way now.

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Something doesn't feel right.

MARIE  
What's up.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - SAME TIME

Alexa stands in a quiet area of the suite. A few guys party  
behind her.

ALEXA  
These guys. They're getting kinda  
pushy, handsy.

MARIE  
Guys? Derek said this was a  
double, not a group thing. Where  
are you again?

Marie digs through her purse. Pulls out a slip of paper.



ALEXA  
Lakeside Suites.

The paper reads: "Lakeside Suites."

MARIE  
Lakeside... shit. One of the guys  
doesn't happened to be named Trent,  
does he?

ALEXA  
I don't know.

MARIE  
Ask.

ALEXA  
Trent?

TRENT  
Yeah, Babe?

MARIE  
Tell him I'm on my way.

ALEXA  
Nothin'. Just wanted to let you  
know the other girl's almost here.

TRENT  
All right, time to party.

MARIE  
Alexa, sit tight, don't drink  
anything, I'll be there soon.

ALEXA  
Hurry.

Marie hangs up her phone.

MARIE  
Motherfucker.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Trent and his friends drink and laugh.

Alexa sits on a couch, quiet.

A KNOCK at the door.

TRENT

'Bout time.

Trent walks to the door, looks through the peep-hole. Sees Marie, though her head is turned.

TRENT (CONT'D)

All right.

Trent unlatches the door. Opens it.

Special T and his guys rush through the door.

Trent back pedals.

SPECIAL T

Evening, fella's.

Alexa spots Marie in the hallway.

Marie motions for Alexa to come.

Alexa runs out of the room, and they leave.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek sits on a chair. Three women sit on the couch, Cherie, RUBY, and SASHA (both 20's dressed skimpy).

The ladies smoke. One does a line off the table.

Derek writes on a note pad.

SASHA

Jake's, like, a complete douche, anyway. Always playing people. Treating them like trash.

Ruby nods.

RUBY

Cocky son-of-a-bitch, too. You know, he has a safe full of cash in plain sight with a 1-2-3 code. Says he knows nobody's gonna steal from him. And nobody does, even though it's their money anyway.

Derek nods, writes more.

CHERIE

Plus, he's got a small dick.

Cherie holds out her thumb and forefinger.

The girls LAUGH.

CHERIE (CONT'D)

Never gave me so much as a single cup of coffee.

RUBY

Then why the fuck you keep fucking him?

SASHA

Even the most boring hobbyist got me cups. Sometimes two.

CHERIE

He's the boss. Didn't know what I'd do if I got cut.

DEREK

Cup of coffee?

RUBY

Oh, that mean orgasm, Honey.

Derek writes.

INT. LAKESIDE SUITES - LOBBY BAR - NIGHT

Marie and Alexa drink at the bar. Marie takes a bump.

MARIE

God damn. Never thought I'd be seeing that fucker again.

ALEXA

If you wouldn't have been there...

Marie puts her arm around Alexa.

MARIE

Don't worry about it, Babe. We stick together.

Special T, his crew, Trent, and friends walk through the bar.

Marie sits up.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Everything good?

SPECIAL T  
It's all good, Baby Doll. Had a  
nice talk upstairs, didn't we?

Special T shakes Trent by the collar.

SPECIAL T (CONT'D)  
Looks like it ain't just girls on  
Jake's payroll.

Special T holds up a wallet with pictures of kids.

SPECIAL T (CONT'D)  
But these cats had a change of  
heart. On our way to the ATM.  
Reparations and stuff.

He pushes Trent and they continue through bar.

Marie and Alexa watch them go.

Marie looks at Alexa.

MARIE  
We stick together.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Derek, Cherie, Ruby, and Sasha sit in Marie's living room.

Smoke fills the room.

RUBY  
So I'm just there waiting, like  
some Greek statue or something.  
Arms and head back, tits out, just  
waiting for this guy.

SASHA  
Oh, those are some nice tits, too.

RUBY  
Aww, thank you. Anyway, he's  
jackin' it, like he's some boy  
scout trying to start a fire.

SASHA  
Ughh. Kills my neck and back.

RUBY  
Right? So this dude's just workin'  
it, workin' it, workin' it, and  
finally he pops on my chest. Then  
guess what he does.

Everyone waits.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
The motherfucker start cryin'.

CHERIE  
No way. What'd you do?

RUBY  
Brother's time was up. Got my ass  
outta there, and didn't look back.

They all LAUGH.

The front door opens.

Marie and Alexa step through.

Marie points at Derek.

MARIE  
Do you have any fucking idea what  
you did to me tonight?

DEREK  
What?

RUBY  
Aww, shit.

The girls grab their stuff, and head for the door.

Sasha grabs Alexa by the shoulder.

SASHA  
Time to go, Sweetie.

They exit. Derek and Marie remain.

Marie approaches Derek. Stares at him.

DEREK  
I... I don't know.

MARIE  
Our date tonight? They were Jake's  
people gunning to take me down.

DEREK  
I'm sorry. I wasn't aware.

MARIE  
Why the fuck are you sorry? You  
know what this means?

Derek shakes his head.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
I'm back on top and I'm a threat to  
that prick. Know how that makes me  
feel?

DEREK  
Good?

Marie grabs Derek's hand and shoves it down her pants.

MARIE  
Very good.

Derek pulls his hand out.

Marie closes in.

DEREK  
That's... pretty good..

MARIE  
The way I see it, I can do, and  
have, whatever I want. And right  
now...

Marie grabs Derek's belt and pulls him toward her room.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - DAY

Jake and Mark sit in the office, alone.

Jake throws a tennis ball against the wall, catches it.

MARK  
Well, this is pretty fucked.

Jake chucks the ball, it bounces off the wall and shoots  
across the room.

JAKE  
Have we had any calls?

Mark shakes his head.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Any girls show up?

MARK  
No. And I hate to tell you, but  
online it says they're all with  
Garden of Ambrosia.

Jake stands.

JAKE  
Fuck, fuck, fuck. God damn, Marie.

Jake shakes his head. Walks to his room.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
I'll think of something.

A SHOWER RUNS.

FADE TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Derek rests in Marie's bed. Hands behind his head.

Marie showers, with the bathroom door open.

MARIE  
Got anything lined up for me today?

DEREK  
Yeah. Some, guy, I forget who, but  
Cherie said he's pretty important.

MARIE  
A VIP, huh? This is good for you  
to witness, for your book and all.

The shower STOPS.

DEREK  
Get a lot of these?

MARIE  
Musicians, rock stars, senators.

Marie steps out of the shower, wraps herself in a towel.

DEREK

Jesus.

MARIE

Everyone has a private life.

Marie enters the bedroom.

MARIE (CONT'D)

I mean, you're not gonna go around  
telling people you fucked an  
escort, right?

DEREK

No, probably not.

Marie does a line of coke.

DEREK (CONT'D)

You ever considered trying to quit?

MARIE

What, blow?

Marie does another line.

Derek rolls over.

DEREK

Yeah.

MARIE

Not really. Some day, maybe.

A beat.

Marie smacks Derek on the arm.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Up. Let's see how our girls did  
last night.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek and Marie walk into the living-room. Derek stops.

Marie looks into the room.

Diane sits on the couch, Cherie across from her.

Marie looks at Cherie.



MARIE  
What is she doing here?

CHERIE  
Get this, she says that Exclusive  
is pretty much a ghost town. Word  
spread that girls get paid better  
with Victoria.

DIANE  
And seeing as you're Victoria, I'm  
not surprised.

MARIE  
So, what. You want to join me?

DIANE  
Jake's fucking lost it, Marie. You  
know I know the business, you know  
I'm good. I can help out.

MARIE  
You understand that I'm in control?

Diane nods.

DIANE  
I'm just trying to get paid, like  
anyone else.

Marie shakes her head.

MARIE  
Whatever.

Marie looks at Derek.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Set her up. I'm gonna get ready.

Marie exits.

CHERIE  
Sheesh.

Derek walks to Marie's room.

Marie's on her bed, pouring lines of coke on the night stand.

DEREK  
You alright?

Marie does a line.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Slow down.

Marie does another line.

MARIE  
I'm fine, Derek.

Marie stands, walks to her closet.

DEREK  
You sure?

MARIE  
I'm not your responsibility.

A beat.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
I need to get ready.

Marie shuts the door.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek, Alexa, Ruby, and Diane sit in Marie's living-room with what's left of lunch on the table.

Derek has the phone to his ear. He looks at Alexa.

DEREK  
Her tits? Uh... perky. Youthful?

Alexa smiles.

DIANE  
Jesus Christ, where did Marie find  
this guy?

Derek's phone BEEPS. He looks at it: "UNKNOWN." He puts the phone back to his ear.

DEREK  
She's... nineteen?

Alexa nods.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Nineteen... yes, I assure you, her  
tits are great... as a matter of  
fact, I have... alright, then,  
you're booked... no problem... bye.

Derek sets down the phone.

RUBY  
Girl, you ready for your IPO?

The phone buzzes: "VOICEMAIL" Derek picks it up, listens as the women carry on their conversation.

MAN (V.O.)  
I hope this is the right number, if so, your girl's a mess. I had to leave, but you should probably send someone for her, soon.

Derek looks at the phone, freezes.

DIANE  
What's up?

Derek looks up.

DEREK  
I... I think Marie's in trouble.

Ruby holds out her hand.

RUBY  
Let me see that.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Derek and Ruby run down the hall. Derek scans the numbers.

DEREK  
There.

Derek looks at the door, which has been propped open with a hanger. He pushes the door open, and they enter the suite.

RUBY  
Marie? Marie, Honey?

Derek and Ruby look around.

A SHOWER RUNS.

DEREK  
Bathroom.

Derek and Ruby enter the bathroom.

Marie lies in the tub, unconscious, clothed, under a downpour of cold water.

RUBY  
Oh, shit.

Ruby kneels next to the tub and grabs Marie's chin.

DEREK  
Holy... Is she dead?!

RUBY  
She OD'd.

DEREK  
Shit.

Ruby taps Marie's cheeks.

RUBY  
Marie? Marie, Sweetie? C'mon  
Marie, wake up.

Ruby looks at Derek.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
She's burnin' up.

Ruby hands Derek her purse.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Find me a Valium.

Derek digs through the purse.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Answer me, Marie.

DEREK  
Valium...

RUBY  
Blue pill.

Marie GROANS.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
There we are, look at me.

Derek pulls a blue pill out of the purse.

DEREK  
Got it.

Ruby holds out her hand, takes the pill, looks at it. She looks back at Derek.

RUBY  
That's a dick pill.

Ruby throws the pill.

Derek digs more.

DEREK  
Ah, here.

Derek hands Ruby the pill.

RUBY  
Marie, Marie? Open up, Baby.

Ruby tilts Marie's head back opens her mouth.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Cup your hands, get some water.

Derek catches a handful of water.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
When I say, pour it in.

Ruby drops the Valium in Marie's mouth, waits, then pinches her nose.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Now.

Derek pours as Ruby shut Marie's mouth and holds it.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
Swallow for me.

Marie swallows.

Ruby loosens her hold.

Marie exhales and spits water.

Ruby opens Marie's mouth, looks, then lets go.

RUBY (CONT'D)  
It went down.

Ruby slumps to the floor.

DEREK  
What do we do? Do we need to call  
paramedics, go to the hospital?

Ruby shakes her head.

RUBY  
Go find the ice machine, and keep  
bringing buckets, so I can stay and  
feed her aspirins.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Helen sits on her couch, dressed for an event. She stares at her phone and shakes her head.

The front door OPENS.

Helen stands.

HELEN  
It's about damn time, Derek. I  
told you about this, and you  
promised me-

Derek carries Marie into the apartment, arms around his neck.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
What the fuck, Derek. What's...  
Who is this?

Derek walks through the apartment, to the hallway.

DEREK  
Marie.

Helen follows.

HELEN  
The hooker? What did you do?  
What's wrong with her?

DEREK  
Overdose.

Derek enters his room, lays Marie in his bed.

HELEN  
You said you were done seeing her.

Derek pushes Helen out of the room with him, then shuts the door. He walks to the living room.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I don't want her here. Somewhere  
else. Not here.

DEREK  
No.

Derek sits.

HELEN  
Excuse me?

Derek shakes his head.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
You bring a coked out hooker to my  
place and tell me she's not  
leaving? My place?

DEREK  
That's right.

HELEN  
How can you possibly-

DEREK  
-Listen. This is my fault.

HELEN  
Bullshit.

DEREK  
My actions. My responsibility.

HELEN  
Yeah, like you just threw cocaine  
at her until she OD'd.

Derek SIGHS.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
What are you even doing with her?

DEREK  
She gave me a chance to see how the  
system works. I needed that.

HELEN  
You need to get the fuck out of  
that system.

DEREK  
No, shit, Helen. I just gotta fix  
this first. Have to.

HELEN  
You don't owe her anything.

DEREK  
I do, and I am going to handle this  
then leave her in better condition  
than I found her and keep a clear  
conscience.

Helen paces.

HELEN  
Clear conscience? So now you're  
emotionally invested in this?

DEREK  
Fuck, Helen. I don't know.

Derek stands, walks to the hallway.

HELEN  
We're not done here.

DEREK  
Give it time, Helen. We'll talk  
later. Right now, I need a shower.

HELEN  
Dammit, Derek. I want to talk-

A door SLAMS.

Helen sits, in a huff.

INT. DEREK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Derek sits in a chair and types on his laptop.

Marie stirs in the bed. She sits up.

MARIE  
Where the fuck am I?

DEREK  
My room.

Marie turns and looks at Derek.

MARIE  
Derek? How long have I been here?

DEREK  
Few days.

Marie falls back to the bed.



MARIE  
I feel like shit.

DEREK  
You're lucky to be alive.

Marie stares at Derek.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
You don't remember.

Marie shakes her head.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
You OD'd. Ruby and I had to bring  
you out in a hotel bathtub.

MARIE  
Was I dressed?

Derek LAUGHS.

DEREK  
Yeah.

MARIE  
Then I at least have some dignity.

Marie sits up.

DEREK  
What are you doing.

MARIE  
We have to get back to work.

Derek pushes her back down.

DEREK  
No, no, no. You need to rest up  
and detox. No more coke.

MARIE  
Man, I really want some.

DEREK  
That's how a detox works, and  
that's why you're here.

MARIE  
Hold on. Didn't you say you lived  
with your sister?

DEREK

Yeah.

MARIE

And she's okay with this.

DEREK

Not exactly. We had a really long fight. But I think she understands, maybe.

Helen steps out of her room and into the hallway. She listens in on the conversation.

DEREK (CONT'D)

She'd get mad at me all the time when we were little. I'd pretend to be a secret agent, and mess with her stuff, crash her parties.

MARIE

You little brat.

DEREK

I was terrible, but through all that she knows that I always have her best interests in mind, and she has the same for me.

MARIE

You know, nobody else would have done this for me.

DEREK

That's not true.

MARIE

I've seen it before. They just rehab girls to working condition, and send them back out. They don't get that moment of clarity where they see themselves dead, violated, anonymous, alone, and naked.

DEREK

Detox isn't a time to think depressing thoughts.

Marie starts to cry.

MARIE

I don't know if I can keep doing all this.

DEREK  
You don't have to.

MARIE  
The drugs? No. Fuck coke. The rest? I'll put on a time line. Run the course, and cash out ahead.

DEREK  
Good plan.

MARIE  
I may need your help sticking to it, though.

DEREK  
You know, I think I'm out, too.

MARIE  
But that doesn't mean we can't talk or anything, right?

DEREK  
Not at all.

Marie smiles.

MARIE  
You know, I know things have been just business and all that, but I want to thank you. This is the nicest thing anyone has ever done for me.

DEREK  
That can't be true.

MARIE  
Derek, you didn't just save my life. You're kinda still doing it.

Marie sobs.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
And I genuinely appreciate that, more than you probably understand.

Helen puts her hand over her mouth. Tears up.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. COLLEGE HALLWAY - DAY

The door to Derek's classroom is shut.

Tom walks down the hallway, grabs the handle, then spots a sign: "Intro to Fiction Cancelled Today."

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is busy.

Derek talks to a couple girls and takes notes.

The front door opens, Marie enters, and everyone hushes.

Marie looks around, grabs her hands, and raises her shoulders.

MARIE

I'm back.

Marie smiles.

RUBY

Girl, you had me worried.

Alexa runs to Marie, hugs her.

ALEXA

I got my first review.

MARIE

Oh yeah?

ALEXA

Ten eight.

MARIE

Oh, Honey, that's amazing!

Marie spots Derek.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Thought you were cashing out?

DEREK

Tying up a few more threads.

MARIE

This'll be awkward, then.

Marie reaches in her purse.



INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Marie sorts through her closet.

Derek enters.

DEREK

Hope your not looking for anything.  
I got the girls to agree to keep  
this place clean.

MARIE

No. No. Just want to make sure  
all my clothes are still here.

DEREK

Sure you're ready? After our  
conversation I figured-

MARIE

What's with you all? I'm good.  
And the sooner I get started, the  
sooner I reach the end.

DEREK

Alright, alright. That's good.

A KNOCK.

Diane pokes her head in.

DIANE

You're on.

Diane places a slip of paper on the dresser, leaves.

MARIE

I know you said you're leaving, but  
can I ask one favor?

DEREK

Sure.

MARIE

Stick around for when I get my  
second review?

DEREK

Nervous?

MARIE

A little. But also, you helped,  
it's only right you leave knowing  
you made it work.

DEREK  
I'll be here.

Marie taps her bed.

MARIE  
Right here. I want the first  
person I see it with to be you.

DEREK  
Will do. But I already know this  
thing's working. All the girls  
are booked.

MARIE  
Even Diane?

DEREK  
Even Diane.

Marie smiles.

MARIE  
Wow.

Marie approaches Derek, kisses his forehead, and leaves.

Derek falls into bed. Shuts his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK.

SILENCE.

FADE TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Derek wakes in Marie's bed. Stretches. He stands, looks  
outside. Morning. Looks at the clock: "11:45."

DEREK  
Marie?

Derek walks into the living room. Empty.

He checks the time again: "11:45."

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Where is everyone.

Derek takes his phone, dials Marie. Straight to voicemail.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Desks in a circle. The students drone in their critiques.

Derek stares at Alexa's spot. Empty.

A long moment.

STEVE  
Instructor Anders?

A beat.

STEVE (CONT'D)  
Instructor Anders?

Derek sits up, looks around.

DEREK  
Yes, Steve.

STEVE  
Isn't it about time to finish?

Derek looks at the clock.

DEREK  
Oh, yeah. Wow. Pass your manuscripts around. Great workshop, everyone.

Derek looks at his phone. Nothing.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Hey, Steve.

STEVE  
Yeah?

DEREK  
Hear anything from Alexa?

STEVE  
We haven't talked for a while, actually. She's been strange.

DEREK  
Oh.

STEVE  
Why?



DEREK  
She... just didn't seem like the  
type to miss class unannounced.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek enters the apartment. Still empty.

DEREK  
What the fuck.

Derek pokes his head into Marie's room.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Marie?

Derek walks to the couch and sits. He pulls out his phone,  
dials Marie. Straight to voicemail.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Fuck.

Derek dials Ruby. RINGS. RINGS. RINGS. Voicemail.

Derek dials Cherie. RINGS. RINGS. He hangs up.

Derek scrolls his contacts. Dials Alexa. RING. RING.

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Derek?

DEREK  
Alexa! What's-

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Shh. Hold on.

Derek hears some background TALKING, a door OPEN, then SHUT,  
then SILENCE.

ALEXA (V.O.)  
You there?

DEREK  
Where is everyone?

ALEXA (V.O.)  
We're holed up at Exclusive.

DEREK  
You're at Exclusive? All of you?

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Diane said it would be safe.

DEREK  
What's going on?

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Derek, I'm not even supposed to be talking to you. None of us are.

DEREK  
You're going to need to fill me in.

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Diane has everyone convinced that you're toxic. That you weren't screening calls properly. We're supposed to stay away.

DEREK  
I don't understand.

ALEXA (V.O.)  
You didn't hear?

DEREK  
You're the first person I've been able to get a hold of all day.

ALEXA (V.O.)  
Derek, Marie got pinched.

DEREK  
Marie's in jail?

ALEXA (V.O.)  
It must've been a sting, or something like that. That's what Jake and Diane are saying.

DEREK  
How did they hear about it and I didn't?

ALEXA (V.O.)  
I really don't know, but Derek, I gotta go. They think there's something off about you, and if they know we're talking... I'm sorry... I just... I gotta go.

The line clicks.

Derek leans back.

DEREK  
Holy shit.

Derek goes to Marie's kitchen, looks around. He finds a phone book, drops it on the table and thumbs through.

Derek finds a number, puts his finger on it and makes a call.

RING.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
Chicago P.D. How may I assist you?

DEREK  
I'm looking for someone who was arrested last night or possibly early this morning.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
Do you know which district?

DEREK  
I don't.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
How about a name and charge.

DEREK  
Yes, Marie, and I don't know a last name. Charged with prostitution, most likely.

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - HOLDING CELLS - DAY

A FEMALE OFFICER approaches the holding cells. She looks at a clipboard, then looks up.

FEMALE OFFICER  
M. Coleman.

Marie stands in one of the cells, wearing an orange suit.

MARIE  
Yeah?

INT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - PROCESSING - DAY

Marie, in the clothes she wore the night before, signs a sheet and collects all her stuff.

OFFICER  
Have a nice day.

EXT. CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Marie exits the department, looks around.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
Sir, you said Marie?

DEREK (V.O.)  
Yes, Marie.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
I'm sorry, but nobody with that  
name was picked up last night.

Marie spots Jake.

JAKE  
Hey.

INT. MARIE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Derek leans over the table. He POUNDS it.

DEREK  
Not her real name.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
However, we did have only one  
prostitution pick-up last night.  
While I can't give you her name, I  
can tell you that she made bail  
earlier today.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - DAY

Diane and Alexa sit on opposite couches.

Diane smiles.

A door SHUTS.

Jake walks in to the room.

JAKE  
It'll take her a while, but she'll  
eventually see she's home.

Jake looks at Alexa.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
You're new.

Alexa nods.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Got a name?

DIANE  
Lexi.

Jake examines Alexa.

JAKE  
Very cute. Young, too. We could  
use a coed type.

ALEXA  
I don't think this is for me.

DIANE  
You got great reviews.

ALEXA  
I want to do other things.

JAKE  
I think I know what's going on.  
You don't want to work for someone  
else. I understand your bond.

DIANE  
That's probably it.

ALEXA  
I tried, and that was enough.

JAKE  
Twice isn't trying, Lexi. Work  
with me for a week, see how you  
feel about it after that.

DIANE  
You can't possibly know enough to  
know it's not for you.

A beat.

Jake holds out his hand.

JAKE  
Come on. Let's go make a list of  
all you have to offer.

Alexa takes his hand. They exit the room.

A door SHUTS.

Diane stretches, then stands.

Diane walks to the dry erase board and writes, "Lexi," in an empty slot. Diane looks at a smudged name higher.

Diane SIGHS. She wipes away the smudge and writes, "Marie."

A BUZZ.

Diane tosses the marker aside and walks to a window. She looks down to the front door.

EXT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

Derek examines the front to The Exclusive Chicago office. He looks up and spots a figure in the window.

The figure disappears behind a curtain.

Derek waits.

DEREK  
Come on, really?

Derek presses the buzzer repeatedly, then stops and looks back to the window.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
I'm not going anywhere.

Derek presses the buzzer three long times.

A CLICK. The door opens.

Jake stands at the entrance in a robe.

JAKE  
So you're Derek, huh?

DEREK  
I want to speak to Marie.

JAKE  
I expected the guy who gave me so much trouble would look different.

Derek peeks in.

DEREK  
Where is she?

Jake guards the door.

JAKE  
Take it easy.

Derek stares at Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Marie doesn't want to see you.  
She's ashamed, or pissed, or  
something, but it is what it is.

DEREK  
Bullshit. Let me see her.

JAKE  
I'm just respecting the girl's  
wishes, and you should do the same.

DEREK  
You don't own her. You don't make  
her decisions. Let me see her.

Jake steps forward on Derek. Gets in his face.

JAKE  
She's in to me for a lot of cash,  
and she's gotta pay it back. So,  
yeah, I do make her decisions. Now  
take my advice. Get the fuck out  
of here, and forget about her. I  
don't want any complications.

Jake taps Derek on the cheek.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Understand?

A beat.

Jake shakes his head.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Pitiful.

Jake steps inside, SHUTS, and LOCKS the door.

DEREK  
Fucker.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Derek sits at his laptop. Looks at his document.

Helen brings Derek a drink.

HELEN

You know, something like this was bound to happen.

Derek nods.

HELEN (CONT'D)

I know you guys had some weird little thing, but that's the risk I suppose. Luckily you didn't get caught up in any of that.

DEREK

She promised my hands would be clean. She came through.

HELEN

And now that it is all over and done with, you can finish writing.

DEREK

I can't finish. It seems like there is no way out. An escort who gets her start, goes through the adventure, and at the end is no different? That's a shitty story.

Derek shuts the laptop.

DEREK (CONT'D)

I have no idea how it all ends. I mean, you start to do something, and eventually you stop, right?

HELEN

Yeah.

DEREK

I find it hard to believe that they only stop when they're dead.

Derek stands, picks up his phone.

HELEN

What are you doing?

DEREK

I'm not done, and that jackass, Jake, doesn't get to say I am. I need to see Marie, get a few answers, say goodbye.



HELEN  
Yeah, you at least deserve to be  
able to say goodbye.

DEREK  
I'm glad you agree.

Derek holds the phone to Helen.

HELEN  
What.

DEREK  
They know my voice.

HELEN  
You want me to call?

DEREK  
Set something up with Marie.

HELEN  
I'm not- No.

Derek dials. Holds the phone to Helen again.

DEREK  
You said I deserved it.

Helen stares at Derek. Takes a deep breath.

She hits send.

Derek mouths "Thank You."

RING.

DIANE (V.O.)  
You've reached The Exclusive  
Chicago, what can I do for you.

HELEN  
I was hoping to set up an  
appointment with one of your girls.

DIANE (V.O.)  
Of course. Do you know what kind  
of girl?

HELEN  
Marie?

DIANE (V.O.)  
Marie.

HELEN  
Yes. An appointment with Marie.

DIANE (V.O.)  
One moment.

MUFFLED CONVERSATION over the phone for a while.

DIANE (V.O.)  
It looks like Marie is free and  
available for the evening.

Helen gives a thumbs up to Derek.

EXT. VISIONS NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

A large brick building with canopied entrances and velvet ropes. The windows flicker with different colored lights and music THUMPS from inside.

Derek approaches the entrance. Marie stands to the side. She smokes a cigarette.

DEREK  
Marie?

Marie looks up. She raises her hands.

MARIE  
Derek!

Derek runs up to Marie.

Marie smiles. Stumbles.

DEREK  
You okay?

Marie dismisses the comment with a wave.

MARIE  
Oh, yeah, yeah. I'm fine.

Marie stumbles, falls into Derek's chest. She giggles.

DEREK  
You're drunk.

MARIE  
Of course, it's a party. I'm out  
of jail. Aren't you happy?

DEREK

I am, I am.

Marie eyes Derek.

MARIE

What are you doing here?

DEREK

Meeting you, remember?

MARIE

They probably wanted you to be a big surprise.

DEREK

Big surprise? Who?

MARIE

Who? Come on, Derek. Jake, and Diane, and Ruby, and Lexi, and...

DEREK

Jake's in there?

MARIE

Everybody's in there.

Derek puts his arm around Marie's shoulders.

DEREK

We need to leave.

They walk to the side parking lot.

MARIE

But you just got here.

DEREK

Yeah, I know. But I can't stay.

MARIE

Aww.

Derek and Marie round the corner to the lot.

Jake stands in the lot.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Look, Jake, Derek made it!

Jake waves his hands.

JAKE

Yay.

Jake approaches Derek.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I assumed you were a smart guy.  
Had common sense.

MARIE

Derek is smart.

JAKE

Shut up, Marie.

Marie recoils.

DEREK

Take it easy on her.

MARIE

Jake, what's going on?

JAKE

Derek is a bad influence on you,  
Honey. I told him to stay away but  
he didn't listen.

MARIE

He's not a bad influence.

JAKE

Marie, I said shut up.

Derek walks forward.

DEREK

You know, you're kinda a tool.

JAKE

Really?

DEREK

Or lack-there-of, from what some of  
your girls told me.

Derek nods at Jake's crotch.

MARIE

Derek, don't do this.

JAKE

Marie!

DEREK  
Overcompensation. I get it.

Jake LAUGHS. He steps up to Derek, and stops.

JAKE  
So what, you just came here to  
insult me?

DEREK  
I came here to see Marie. That's  
it. Had nothing to do with you.

JAKE  
She's my girl, so it has everything  
to do with me.

Marie straightens.

MARIE  
I may work for you, Jake, but I am  
*not* your girl.

Jake stares at Marie.

JAKE  
Really?

Marie nods.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Well...

Jake sucker-punches Derek in the eye.

Marie shrinks, cries.

Derek recovers.

Jake socks him again, in the opposite cheek.

MARIE  
Jake, Stop!

Jake grabs Derek by the collar, looks him in the eyes, then  
shoves him to the pavement.

JAKE  
I tried to be nice, Man, and I am  
done with that.

Jake takes out a business card, writes on the back.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
And if you need a reminder...

Jake throws the card at Derek.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Here's my number.

Derek tries to push himself up, he GROANS.

Jake walks to the entrance.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Come on Marie.

Marie looks at Derek.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Now.

Marie follows Jake.

EXT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - BALCONY - NIGHT

Derek and Helen sit in chairs at an outdoor table.

Derek holds a bag of ice to his face.

Helen looks at Jake's card, turns it over: "FUCK OFF." She tosses it on the table.

HELEN  
I think you should press charges.

Derek shakes his head.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
The man assaulted you.

DEREK  
With the money he makes, his  
lawyers will make sure it's dead at  
the gate.

Derek removes the ice.

Helen grimaces.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
He's gonna do the same thing to  
Marie, too. To keep her working.  
(MORE)

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Use his lawyers for the trial she's  
gonna have, then make her work off  
their rates.

HELEN  
That's like indentured servitude.

DEREK  
Not like. Is.

Derek puts the ice to his face. He winces.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
You'd think a guy who thinks so  
high of himself wouldn't sucker-  
punch someone. Or set a trap.

HELEN  
Guy's a snake. What can you do?

DEREK  
Knock him down a few rungs.

HELEN  
He definitely needs that.

DEREK  
No, he needs to fall off the damn  
ladder. Lose everything.

HELEN  
That would be misery for a man like  
that. Humiliating.

Derek takes out his phone and types a text.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Who are you texting?

DEREK  
One of the girls.

HELEN  
And why would you want to do that.

Derek sends the text.

DEREK  
She might be able to help.

HELEN  
You aren't gonna stop, are you.

Derek shakes his head.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
If this is about pride-

DEREK  
-it's about helping a friend.

HELEN  
A friend?

DEREK  
It was business. Her and I  
together. In the course of making  
this whole mess happen I've seen  
sides of her she hides. I know, as  
a friend, what she wants. And it  
is not this. Not at all.

Derek's phone CHIMES. He looks at it, smiles, holds it up.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
See?

EXT. VISIONS NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Derek and Alexa talk in the shadows of the side lot.

Alexa hands Derek a key.

DEREK  
How long will you guys be here  
tonight?

ALEXA  
I'm not sure.

DEREK  
Ok, message me when you are on your  
way back.

ALEXA  
Alright.

DEREK  
And remember, get out as soon as  
you can.

ALEXA  
Got it.

Derek smiles.

DEREK  
Thanks Alexa.



ALEXA

Marie told me we stick together  
that night at Lakeside. It's the  
least I can do.

Alexa hugs Derek, turns, and walks toward a side door.

EXT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Derek climbs a fire escape on the back of the building, with  
a duffel bag across his shoulder. He reaches a platform in  
front of a few windows.

Derek looks through the windows. Dark.

Derek checks the alley. Empty. He closes his eyes, tightens  
his lips and jabs his elbow into the window.

THUNK.

Derek looks at the window for a moment. He turns away from  
it and runs the heel of his shoe into the glass.

The window SHATTERS.

Derek checks the alley again. He looks at the windows of the  
other buildings, nothing.

Derek tosses the bag through the window.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Derek climbs into the building through the window. He picks  
up the bag, and removes a small flashlight.

Derek turns the on the flashlight and scans the room, careful  
to avoid the windows.

The light moves around the room until it hits a safe  
underneath a table.

Derek approaches the safe, kneels and examines the number  
pad. He enters "1-2-3."

The safe BEEPS, CLICKS, then pops ajar.

Derek shakes his head.

DEREK

Arrogant prick.

Derek opens the safe and looks inside. Bundles of cash, and a large bag of cocaine.

Derek picks up the cash and moves it to his duffel bag. Stack after stack, after stack, after stack.

A VIBRATION.

Derek removes his phone from his pocket.

"NEW TEXT MESSAGE"

Derek opens the message. It's from Alexa: "On r way bk now."

Derek places the phone in his pocket, and transfers the cash faster than the before. Once the cash is gone he takes the cocaine and walks to the table between the couches.

Derek opens the bag, and sets up lines.

INT. JAKE'S CAR - SAME TIME

Jake drives with Mike in the passenger's seat.

Marie and Alexa sit in back. Marie is half-awake, head propped on the window.

JAKE  
Did you girls have fun tonight?

Alexa stares out the window.

Mark looks to the back seat.

MARK  
He asked you a question.

ALEXA  
Yeah.

MARK  
What?

ALEXA  
Yeah, I had fun.

Mark LAUGHS, looks at Marie.

MARK  
Looks like Marie had a pretty good time, too.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - SAME TIME

Derek walks away from the table which is packed with lines. On the side of the table is what's left in the bag.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
9-1-1 Dispatch, what's your  
emergency?

Derek approaches the safe.

GUY (V.O.)  
Yeah. I think I seen a break in.

Derek takes Jake's business card from his pocket and places it in the safe. Something inside catches his eye.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
What exactly did you witness?

Derek pulls small book from the safe.

"Jake's Clients"

DEREK  
Well, now.

Derek carries the book to the phone desk.

EXT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - SAME TIME

A GUY stands at a pay phone directly across from The Exclusive Chicago Office.

GUY  
Well, some glass broke. Then I  
seen this guy with a flashlight  
lookin' around.

A figure moves past a window.

GUY (CONT'D)  
Still see him now.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Alright, Sir, do you know the  
address of the building?

GUY  
No. But I'm at the pay phone right  
across the street if it helps.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Yes, Sir, it does. I'm already  
sending units your way. Would you  
be able to stay-

The guy hangs up the phone.

Headlights come around the corner. Jake's car.

Jake parks in front of the building.

The guy across the street looks at the building, and sees a  
figure move past a window again.

The guy looks back at the car.

Jake and Alexa walk to the curb, where Mark pulls Marie from  
the back seat.

The group walks to the front door of the building. Jake  
unlocks the front door and they enter.

The figure moves past another window.

The front door of the building shuts, CLICKS.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

Jake, Alexa, Mark, and Marie go up the stairs. Marie makes  
the trip with Alexa's assistance.

Jake opens the door to the office and they step inside. He  
reaches for the light switch.

Derek exits through the back window and disappears behind the  
brick wall of the fire escape.

The lights go on.

JAKE  
What the fuck?

Jake points at the lines of coke on the table, then to the  
bag. He looks at the open safe.

JAKE (CONT'D)  
Mother fucker.

Jake runs to the safe, starts yelling.

Alexa guides Marie to the back rooms.

ALEXA  
I think we'd better stay away from  
this one, for now.

EXT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

The guy at the pay phone spots Derek come around to the front  
of the buildings.

FAINT SIRENS in the distance.

Derek uses Alexa's key, and unlocks the front door to The  
Exclusive Chicago. He nudges it open.

Derek runs across the street in the direction of the pay  
phone.

The guy at the pay phone flees into an alley.

Derek enters the alley, and looks around.

Special T walks out from behind a dumpster in the distance.

SPECIAL T  
Come on, Man.

T runs around a corner to another alley. Derek runs in that  
direction as a CAR STARTS. Brake lights shine on the walls  
of the adjacent alley as Derek comes around the corner.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Jake looks inside the safe, POUNDS his palms against it.

JAKE  
It's fucking gone.

MARK  
All of it?

JAKE  
Not just all of it. My fucking  
book. Someone took my god damn  
client book.

POLICE SIRENS.

The street outside lights up red and blue.

Mark runs to the window, looks outside.

MARK

Cops. Why are the fucking cops here?

Jake reaches into the safe, and pulls out his own business card. He turns it over: "FUCK OFF."

Jake throws the card.

JAKE

It was a fucking set-up. That fucking writer guy.

MARK

Shit man, this isn't good.

Jake walks to the couch sits.

JAKE

It's just drugs. The dumb fucker took the book without realizing he was helping me.

EXT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Two police officers stand at the front door. A detective and a few more men approach.

One of the officers points at the open door.

OFFICER

How long we been tryin' to bust these guys?

DETECTIVE

Too damn long.

The detective pushes the door open.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

And to think, all we really needed was this invitation.

The detective motions for the officers to enter the building.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - SAME TIME

Jake and Mark sit on the couch, lines of coke in front of them. Jake reclines. Mark fidgets.

The police rush in, followed by the detective.

JAKE  
Evening gentlemen.

DETECTIVE  
We had a report of a possible break-in.

JAKE  
No shit.

Jake points to the broken glass on the floor.

DETECTIVE  
Huh.

Jake stands.

JAKE  
And whoever it was robbed my safe.

Jake walks to the safe.

The detective sticks his hand out.

DETECTIVE  
Sit back down.

JAKE  
I'm the victim here.

DETECTIVE  
I said sit.

Jake sits.

The detective points at the table, all the cocaine.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)  
And what about this?

JAKE  
Not mine.

DETECTIVE  
Of course not. It never is.

JAKE  
It's these two girls, they're in the back. One's really messed up out of her head. You'll see.

The detective signals for an officer to enter the back room.

INT. BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The officer steps in the room. Looks around.

He checks under the bed. Nothing.

Flips the lights on in the bathroom. Nothing.

Opens the closet and pokes around at the clothes. Nothing.

The officer walks back into the bedroom and notices one of the drapes across the room is moving. The officer draws his gun and creeps across the room.

The officer approaches the drapes, holds his breath, then pushes them aside with his gun.

Nothing but a breeze coming through a cracked window.

The officer SIGHS relief as he holsters his gun. He nudges the window shut.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - CONTINUOUS

The officer comes out from the back.

Jake, Mark, and the detective look over.

OFFICER

Yeah, there's nobody back there.

JAKE

That's impossible, we all just got back. The four of us.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME TIME

Alexa shoulders Marie and moves as fast as she can away from the Exclusive Chicago. Red and Blue lights far behind them.

ALEXA

Come on Marie, work with me.

MARIE

I'm tryin'. I'm...

Alexa readjusts her support then continues walking.

ALEXA

Just a little more to go.

FOOTSTEPS echo in the alley. A walking pace.



Alexa looks up.

The FOOTSTEPS increase to jogging pace.

A figure moves toward them.

MARIE  
Who's that?

The figure approaches closer, Helen.

Helen takes up Marie's other arm.

ALEXA  
Who are you?

MARIE  
Helen?

Helen looks at Marie.

HELEN  
That's right.

MARIE  
Alexa, it's Helen.

HELEN  
My car's just up ahead.

The three women increase their pace and head down the alley.

INT. THE EXCLUSIVE CHICAGO - NIGHT

Police officers search the building.

Jake and Mark sit on the couch, handcuffed.

DETECTIVE  
Well, it looks like we're gonna get you on the drugs. Not exactly what I was hoping for, but still, that's a lot of blow you got there.

JAKE  
Clearly someone else was in here.  
You can't say any of it is mine.

The detective shakes his head

An officer enters the office with a scale.

DETECTIVE

Ah, there we are. We'll just get this weighed and I can let you know how bad things might be for you, and we can all be on our way.

The detective nods to the officer.

The officer grabs the bag, and lifts. Cocaine pours all over the table. The bottom's been cut.

A small black book sits in the mound of coke.

Jake's eyes go wide.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

What's this?

The detective picks up the book and thumbs through it.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Oh, this is good. Very good.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment door opens.

Helen steps in and turns on the lights. She runs ahead and turns on a couple more.

Derek and Special T enter. They help Marie walk to the bedroom.

Alexa walks in behind them. She looks around.

Helen enters the kitchen.

HELEN (O.S.)

Wine?

ALEXA

Oh, yes.

A moment.

Helen enters with two glasses of wine. She hands one to Alexa.

HELEN

Feel free to sit, wherever.

Helen and Alexa sit at the table.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
How do you fit in to all this.

ALEXA  
One of Derek's students.

Helen looks Alexa over.

HELEN  
Student...

Derek and Special T enter.

ALEXA  
She okay?

DEREK  
Sobered a little. Fell right  
asleep.

ALEXA  
Poor thing.

SPECIAL T  
Well, y'all, I'm glad I could help,  
but I got a long drive ahead of me.

HELEN  
Oh, stay here.

DEREK  
Really?

Helen waves Derek's words away.

HELEN  
It's fine. We all deserve a break.

SPECIAL T  
'preciate it.

T walks to the couch, and plops down.

Derek stretches. He walks to his laptop, sits, boots it up.

HELEN  
Really, Derek?

DEREK  
Got all I need.

Helen looks at Alexa and shakes her head.

Alexa smiles.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - TIME LAPSE

Derek types. T sleeps on the couch. Alexa and Helen talk.

Derek keeps on. Alexa and Helen move to the couch and watch TV.

Derek continues to type. Alexa sleeps, Helen covers her with a blanket.

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Helen walks over to Derek.

HELEN  
How you doin'?

DEREK  
Fine, fine. On a roll.

HELEN  
I'm glad.

A beat.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I wanted to ask you something.

Derek looks up.

Helen leans in.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Is that guy a drug dealer?

Derek nods.

Helen smiles.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I knew it.

Derek laughs.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
I'm off to bed. Keep at it.

Helen kisses the side of Derek's head.

DEREK  
Good night.

Helen exits.

Derek continues to type.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom sits at his desk, reads a newspaper.

Derek enters the room, fried from a night of typing.

Tom lowers the paper. Looks at Derek.

TOM

Christ, Man. Are you alright?

Derek tosses a manuscript on the desk.

"Coffee Date"

Tom looks at the manuscript.

TOM (CONT'D)

Didn't you say this was about an  
escort, or call-girl, or something?

DEREK

Yeah.

TOM

I'm afraid I can't accept this from  
you.

DEREK

What? Why not?

TOM

Don't you read the paper?

Tom turns his paper and shows Derek the front page.

"Local Escort Service Collapses, Owner Arrested"

Two pictures of Jake. One in cuffs, another a mug shot.

Tom pushes the manuscript to Derek.

Derek picks up the manuscript. He takes a breath.

DEREK

Yeah, I can understand.

TOM  
This belongs in a publisher's  
hands. Immediately.

DEREK  
You want me to get it published?

TOM  
Are you kidding me? All I needed  
was to see it. You finishing this  
when you did, with such a big story  
in the news?

Tom closes the paper.

TOM (CONT'D)  
You might have a runaway hit.

Derek smiles. He turns and heads for the door.

DEREK  
Thanks, Tom.

TOM  
Just looking out for you.

EXT. AURORA, IL GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

Marie, Alexa, Helen, and Special T stand outside the front of  
a bus.

HELEN  
Where is he?

Marie squints in the morning light.

MARIE  
I'm sure he'll be here, soon.

Alexa stands on her toes. Points.

ALEXA  
There.

Derek jogs to the group. He carries a duffel bag and an  
envelope.

HELEN  
'Bout time.

DEREK  
Sorry.

Derek hands the envelope to Marie.

Marie looks inside. Two bus tickets. She looks at Derek.

MARIE  
Peoria, Derek?

Derek catches his breath.

DEREK  
Didn't Alexa tell you?

ALEXA  
I have family there.

DEREK  
You can't leave the state, so this  
is the next best thing.

Derek hands Marie the bag.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
This might also help you out.

Marie unzips the bag, and peeks in. CASH. She zips it shut.

MARIE  
Holy shit, Derek. Where did you...

DEREK  
It's what Jake owed you... plus  
some interest.

MARIE  
Earlier retirement than I planned.  
Glad to be done with it all.

DEREK  
And use what you can for your  
trial.

Marie nods.

MARIE  
Thank you.

Special T steps forward.

SPECIAL T  
I got you a little going away  
present.

T reaches inside his coat.

Marie holds out her hand.

MARIE  
Done with all that, too.

T smiles, pulls out a small stuffed fox, hands it to Marie.  
Marie's eyes water. She hugs T.

SPECIAL T  
Foxes belong in the country anyway.  
So you're good.

ALEXA  
Peoria isn't exactly the country.

SPECIAL T  
It ain't no Chicago, either.

Marie steps back.

HELEN  
And if you're in town, you've  
always got a place with me and  
Derek.

The BUS ENGINE STARTS.

ALEXA  
Marie, we gotta get going.

MARIE  
Give me a minute.

Alexa nods, steps into the bus. Helen and T walk back to  
their cars.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
So, get enough for a story?

DEREK  
Finished it last night.

MARIE  
What a relief. I was tired of  
keeping up this escort thing just  
to give you material.

Derek laughs.

MARIE (CONT'D)  
Congratulations.

Marie hugs Derek and holds.



MARIE (CONT'D)

I never knew, but I needed someone like you in my life. Thank you.

Marie squeezes then steps back. She wipes away a tear.

DEREK

Well, I'm still in it. Just make sure next time you're in town, to set up an appointment.

Marie laughs.

The BUS SHIFTS INTO GEAR.

Marie steps back, waves.

MARIE

Bye.

Derek waves back.

DEREK

Take care.

Marie turns, and walks to the bus.

Derek watches.

Marie goes up a step, then stops. She looks back.

MARIE

Oh, and Derek?

DEREK

Yeah?

MARIE

Meredith.

Marie smiles and enters the bus.

The doors shut.

Derek nods to himself.

DEREK

Meredith...

Derek turns and walks to Helen and Special T.

DEREK (CONT'D)  
Meredith.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

## VITA

Brent Scott was born, and lives, in St. Charles, Missouri. He received a Bachelor of Science in Media Studies from the University of Missouri in St. Louis. Upon graduating, Brent joined the University of New Orleans' Low Residency Creative Writing program. He enjoys foreign travel and education and plans to pursue both in the future.