A FREE FOREST

by

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CHARACTERS

**JULES:** 21-YEAR-OLD, ASPIRING ARTIST, OUTSPoken, SARCASTic, BIG HEART

**FOREST:** 12-YEAR-OLD, WITTy, DISTRACTIBLE, MATURE FOR HIS AGE

**CELIA:** 48-YEAR-OLD, JULES’ AND FOREST’S MOTHER, OVERDRAMATIC, "BLANCHE-LIKE"

**MIHAI:** 28-YEAR-OLD, ROMANIAN, JULES’ HUSBAND

**CHRIS:** 22-YEAR-OLD, SHAGGY-HAIRED MUSICIAN, SWEET

**RICK:** 60-YEAR-OLD, FOREST’S FATHER, HOT-HEADED, ADDICT

**MOLLY:** 21-YEAR-OLD, JULES’ BEST FRIEND, PRIVILEGED/SPOILED

**JOHN:** 55-YEAR-OLD, MENTOR/FATHER-Figure to JULES, RUNS THEATRE COMPANY THAT COMMISSIONS ARTWORK FROM JULES
FADE IN:

EXT. QUEENS, NYC - MORNING

Close up on vibrant artwork painted on the side of a run down building. The early morning slanted sun rays move diagonally across an abstract image of a naked woman with black and white checkered skin in a bathtub.

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
(bland)
Mihai and Jules, today you celebrate one of life’s greatest moments and give recognition to the worth and beauties of love, as you join together in the vows of marriage.

CUT TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Zoom in on another building wall with a painting of peace sign vase with a hand reaching out of it clutching a deep red heart with climbing, thorny vines creeping out of it.

WOMAN’S VOICE (CONT’)
Mihai Lupei, do you take Jules Haven to be your wife?

MIHAI (O.S.)
I do.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM - CONTINUOUS

Camera scans another building side consumed by a massive painting all in black with playful lettering spelling out “Children of the revolution: Living life with no solution.” Three faceless abstract figures hold hands as their cigarette smoke twirls above and around them towards a cracked window in the building.

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Do you promise to love, honor, cherish and protect her, forsaking all other and holding only unto her?

MIHAI (O.S.)
I do.

Camera travels through window and fades into--
EXT. NEW YORK CITY HALL - CONTINUOUS

Camera looks through window of City Hall building and approaches JULES, in a white dress and black Doc Martins, and MIHAI in a cheap black blazer and slacks standing before a bored-looking female county clerk. 12-year-old blonde FOREST and mother CELIA stand behind them.

COUNTY CLERK
And Jules, do you take Mihai to be your husband?

JULES
I do.

INT. NEW YORK CITY HALL - CONTINUOUS

The open, sunlit room contains nothing but a small couch in the corner and a fake potted plant. The walls are yellow with a floral wall paper lining towards the ceiling.

COUNTY CLERK
Do you promise to love, honor, cherish and protect him, forsaking all other and holding only unto him?


JULES
I do.

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH CAFE - LATER THAT MORNING

Cutlery is clanging and voices overlap. Jules, Mihai, Celia, and Forest sit at the table by the window of this small, intimate restaurant. The wall adjacent to them is lined with bookshelves filled with french children’s books like “Le Voyage de Barbar”, the “Martine” series, and “Le Petit Prince”. A nearly empty pitcher of orange juice and champagne sits between plates full of half-eaten tartine, brioche, and creme fraiche pancakes. The air is light and jovial. Forest talks animatedly.

FOREST
But it was completely corny when she said you were like “two completely different threads woven to make a beautiful tapestry.” Barf-a-rama!
CELIA
Hey!

FOREST
I’m 12 and I coulda come up with something better.

CELIA
Hey, no, it’s beautiful!

FOREST
Okay, maybe if she actually cared or put some pizzazz into it.

MIHAI
(quietly to Jules)
What’s this? “Pizzazz”? Like with pepperoni?

FOREST
(giggles. Sarcastically)
Yeah, if only she had some pizza, it woulda been a way more entertaining ceremony.

JULES
(defending Mihai)
Forest stop.

FOREST
Still woulda been “cheesy” though.

CELIA
Very funny.

MIHAI
(lost)
Are you making fun?

FOREST
(puts up fists)
Yeah, punk. Whatcha gonna do about it, huh?

JULES
(laughs)
He’s just joking, hun. Pizzazz is like...

(jazz hands)
You know, sparkle-

CELIA
Pop-
FOREST
Pizzazz! That’s the only word to describe pizzazz.

JULES
Like “oomph”.

CELIA
(playful)
Glaaamour!

MIHAI
Oh, okay, okay. But what’s this “cheese”?

JULES
Cheese? Oh, “Cheesy.” “Cheesy” is like “corny.” I just explained “corny” to him the other day. It’s actually really fuckin’ hard to explain. Took us hours.

MIHAI
Yeah, I don’t wanna do that again.

They all laugh.

CELIA
So what are you guys doing now? You gonna come back home with us?

FOREST
(whispered to Celia)
What?? Mom--

JULES
(suspicious but ignores)
Well, we’ll come to midtown with you, but--

MIHAI
I have work.

FOREST
On your wedding day?!

MIHAI
People need their coffee.

FOREST
And you’re the only barista in New York City.
MIHAI
(catching on)
Yes. Only one.

CElia
Are you gonna go with him, Jules?

JULES
What, to Macchiato? Oh no, my tummy hates how much I love espresso. I needa stop. Only tea from now on. ...And mimosas. Yummm.

She pours the last bit into her champagne flute.

CElia
No more coffee?! I couldn’t survive.

FOREST
Addicts.

JULES
We all have our vices. But I’m saying it’s over. My sick dependency is conquered.

FOREST
And now you can be a tea-addict.

JULES
Yup. I’m going to drink lots of tea. And lay in bed five minutes longer than usual. And sky dive. And really soon I’ll go on a hike on a mountain so high I can barely breathe when I reach the top.

FOREST
Can I come?

JULES
Yes. And then we’ll get matching tattoos.

CElia
(sarcastically)
Yeah, okay.

JULES
And then I’ll go for my first real run even though I will feel like dying. And I will be better at math.

(MORE)
JULES (CONT’D)
And some day soon, I’ll put shelves up in my studio and organize my supplies and stuff.
(smiles at Mihai, he grabs her hand)
And I’ll speak fluent Romanian. But today...today, I will paint my fucking heart out and no one can stop me.

CUT TO:

EXT. 43RD ST AND 8TH AVE SUBWAY EXIT – LATER THAT MORNING

Jules hugs Celia and Forest and they walk separate directions. Camera follows Jules as she begins to walk uptown. She pulls out her phone as she picks up the pace.

JULES
(on the phone)
I know. I know. I just-- I’m like 2 blocks away, okay?
(beat)
Wait, how long? Why did you--
Chris, I told you I couldn’t meet that early.
(beat)
Yeah I did. Well, whatever, I’ll--
(beat)
I had a-- I had something this morning. Just-- I’ll see you in a sec.

She shoves her phone away as she walks by a gelato cafe. She stops two buildings later, pauses, turns around and goes inside “L’Arte del Gelato”. The camera stays on the street, peering through the window as Jules smiles flirtatiously at the boy at the register. She points to the back and mouths “Thank you so much. You’re the best.” She walks to the back of the store and disappears through a door.

CUT TO:

INT. L’ARTE DEL GELATO BATHROOM – CONTINUOUS

Jules, in her lace ivory maxi dress stares at herself in the mirror loathingly. Takes a deep breath and violently grabs her bag full of clothes off the bathroom floor.
CUT TO:

EXT. 9TH AVENUE OUTSIDE L’ARTE DEL GELATO – CONTINUOUS

Jules, putting her leather jacket back on, waves back to the smitten gelato boy as she swings the door open to the street and continues walking up 9th avenue. She is no longer wearing her wedding dress and now dons black waist-high skinny jeans which are tucked into her Doc Martins. She approaches a large statue of a pink, waving pig in a bow tie positioned outside of the bar Rudy’s, where CHRIS stands smoking a cigarette with his guitar leaning on the wall next to him.

CHRIS, in his Buddy Holly thick-brimmed glasses, is a shaggy-haired musician with a New York City cynicism coupled with great sensitivity. His blue eyes light up like the Messiah is walking towards him and his life becomes slow motion for those five seconds until Jules hugs him and takes the cigarette out of his hand.

CHRIS
(sarcastically?)
Please, my lady, mine is yours.

Jules smiles as she puffs away and breathes a sigh of relief, as Chris gazes.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
You’re killin’ me.

JULES
Sorry.

She flicks the cigarette butt away.
For running late.

CHRIS
I’d get worried if you weren’t.

JULES
Sorry?! Dude, I just apologized.

CHRIS
No, relax. If you weren’t late.

JULES
I’m trying to relax.

Heads to door of Rudy’s.

Can we? I ran here.

(MORE)
Look, I’m sweating. Don’t even have the class to perspire.

Chris grabs his guitar and they enter the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. RUDY’S BAR – CONTINUOUS

Rudy’s is a dimly-lit dive with red duct-taped booths, a handfull of regulars at the bar, and free hot dogs handed out every time someone orders a drink.

Jules and Chris sit in a booth at the end with a pitcher of beer and two full glasses between them. Jules turns a CD in her hand and studies it in scared silence.

CHRIS
I didn’t wanna give it to you ‘til it was completely done. I dunno if it’ll ever be, but there it is.

Feeling uncomfortable, Chris picks up his beer to do something to fill the space, puts it to his mouth, but --

CHRIS (CONT’D)
It’s pronounced “No Estoy Muerto, Mi Amor”. The album. I know it’s corny and melodramatic.

He goes to drink again, but doesn’t. Jules has opened the case and is reading the lyric insert.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Don’t worry about tryin’ to listen right away or anything. I know you’re busy with unpacking your boxes and working on your art and everything I just thought--

JULES
“Chianti”?

CHRIS
In this dump?

JULES
(not entertained)
This one’s called “Chianti”. “Let her live her life in her own way, who cares who she may meet. It all amounts to something different, little miss hard to beat.” Is this--
CHRIS
Can you-- maybe, you know, just
look later.

He reaches out and tries to close the case to put it away.

JULES
Wait, wait a second. “I know you
wanted to go dancing. I just
thought I would always fall.”

CHRIS
Jules--

JULES
And this one: “Watching you talk to
me is always a luxury. Claiming
insanity, seems like a choice to
me. I fell for you easily, now
please pick up this debris”? Chris,
I-- why are you doing this?

CHRIS
Doing what?

JULES
What am I supposed to say to this?
You expect me to be swept off my
feet? Or apologize for “breaking
you”? Why would you do this for me,
to me? I can’t give you anything.

CHRIS
I know, Jules, relax. All I want is
for you to listen. That’s it.

He sips his beer.

JULES
Please, stop fucking telling me to
relax. I don’t need to relax.

Chris almost chokes on his beer in reaction.

CHRIS
(clears throat)
Excuse me. Um, well I have no
secret agenda. I’m just writing
music.

JULES
Yeah, okay.
Jules finally puts the album down and takes a long gulp of beer.

CHRIS
Well, that show I told you about at Tobacco Road is tonight. I’m playing these songs. So you’ll be hearing them one way or another. So there it is.

JULES
What, so I can prepare myself?

CHRIS
However you wanna look at it.

JULES
Chris. So, you’ve been working on this since--

CHRIS
About 6 months, yeah.

JULES
So, while we’ve been hanging out basically every other day, you’ve been what, going home after and writing these?

CHRIS
Well, yeah, but it’s not like I was trying to trick you, Jules.

JULES
But you were lying to me. Months ago when you said you were fine, you were lying. Last week after I spent the night, you said you were fine, you were lying. And you’re lying now.

CHRIS
I’m not lying about anything. Everything I need to say is right there.

JULES
But why, why do you need to put this all into music months later instead of telling me right away. I mean, fuck, Chris. I wouldn’t still be sleeping with you if I knew you felt this way.
CHRIS
Oh, come on, Julie. You’re not an idiot.

JULES
The fuck does that mean?

CHRIS
You know me. You know how I feel about you.

JULES
This again, Chris. Please. Please, I can’t have this conversation again.

CHRIS
You say that, knowing how I feel and yet you come stay in Long Island and visit me at Purchase and call me when your brain feels like bubbling lava and I’m there. So, “you’re not an idiot”.

JULES
Nothing has changed. We’re not happening, Chris. Please, every time this happens I feel like the devil incarnate all over again and you know it. So why do you put me through this?

CHRIS
I know you love me.

JULES
Do you know why I was late?
(Beat)
Do you? I was with Mihai, from Macchiato.

CHRIS
Yeah, we met when you worked there, but listen--

JULES
My mom and Forest were there, too.

CHRIS
Stop trying to--
JULES
(draws it out)
I was late because I was at City Hall.

CHRIS
So. So, you did it. I-- I thought you were joking, Julie. Jesus.

JULES
Yeah, well. I’m-- fuck, I’m sorry I told you like-- I had this whole-- I planned. But you just kept--

CHRIS
I don’t care.

JULES
Thank you. So you understand now. That I can’t.

CHRIS
I mean, I don’t care.
(indicates CD)
Jules, you saw this. You know me. I’m not going anywhere.
(beat)
I don’t care.

JULES
What is wrong with you? I’m married. I just said I got married.

CHRIS
Come on, Jules. You know you’re not “married”.

Jules stands.

CHRIS (CONT’D)
Where are you going?

JULES
Home. To Queens.

CHRIS
That is not your home.

JULES
Yeah? So where is?
She turns and walks towards the exit. Chris catches her at the door and hands her the CD. She reaches out and grasps it.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY OF MANHATTAN BUILDING - 10 MINUTES LATER

Jules waltzes through the revolving door into the large, brick lobby of Celia’s building. The floor to ceiling window looks out onto 10th avenue. Jules walks up to the front desk where a security guard sits next to two turnstiles and a locked swinging barrier.

JULES
Omar, my man!

SECURITY GUARD
Miss. Picasso! What up girl.

He presses a button and buzzes the barrier/door open. Jules walks through.

JULES
Oh butterflies and rainbows

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Jules sits on the glossy, grey concrete steps, lights a one-hitter, inhales and doesn’t exhale.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Close up on Jules’ notebook with her pencil feverishly shading, erasing, and smudging with the side of her hand. She is drawing a lanky, hysterical-looking girl in a sun hat and long floral dress, seated with one hand forming a peace sign and the other breaking a pencil in half with a expression of horror and anguish on her face.

CUT TO:

STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Jules and two 20-something guys are standing in the stairwell. She grabs a small bag out of a sealed, glass container and hands it to one of the guys. He hands her a twenty.
JULES
Really, Brooklyn always feel colder than midtown. Fact. Thanks.

GUY #1
All in your head, chica.

JULES
So they say. You good?

GUY #2
Just a dime.

She takes another less-filled bag out of the container, puts it away and takes his ten dollar bill.

GUY #2 (CONT’D)
What’s this one called?

JULES
Does it really matter?

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:
A) Drawing in marker on stairwell banister
B) Empty stairwell, laughter echoes
C) Empty carpeted hallway, sound of the 6 elevators humming

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS
Jules and emerges from the stairwell.

JULES
Later.

She walks to the end of the hallway, approaches the door with it’s deep blue paint chipping away, pauses before she gets there. Female yells are heard. She puts her ear to the door, hand on the doorknob, sound of a door slam, yells subside. She takes her hand off the doorknob and turns towards elevators.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATRE BUILDING - 20 MINUTES LATER

On a 19th century, four floor townhouse, a purple flag with tragedy and comedy masks waves in the wind.
JULES (O.S.)
This one’s just a sketch, but you can see where I’m going. And this is for the programs for the gala and --

CUT TO:

INT. THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Jules is seated on a quilted leather couch hunched over her portfolio with colorful pages strewn across the antique wooden coffee table. 55-year-old, JOHN is seated in the armchair across from her nodding and watching Jules speak. JOHN, who runs the theatre has graying hair, a kind demeanor, and wears a brown corduroy jacket with khakis.

Oil painting portraits of actors line the walls adjacent to the red carpeted staircase beside them. The theatre’s interior, furnishings, and decor are antique or modelled according to 19th century fashion.

JULES (CONT’)
I tried to make this as tasteful as possible, but you know how I get--

JULES AND JOHN
--carried away.

JULES
(laughing)
Yeah, exactly.

JOHN
No, but I admire that. You add life to this place.

JULES
Ha right. With logos and fonts.

JOHN
Hey if it were up to the owner we’d have a bloke riding around town in a horse and buggie delivering oral invitations to the distinguished “salons”.

JULES
(British accent)
“For the Duchess. An invitation from the Queen to play croquet.”
JOHN

“From the Queen. An invitation for the Duchess to play croquet.”

They laugh.

JOHN (CONT’D)
It doesn’t have to be just logos and fonts, you know.

JULES
Oh boy, you mean posters and programs? Movin’ up in the world!
(laughs then quickly)
No, but really, that would great.

JOHN
Ha ha, yes that might be in the stars. But I was referring to something else.

JULES
Ooh, murder and intrigue.

JOHN
(southern accent)
“A lot of murder and a lot of intrigue.”

JULES
(southern accent)
“My poor little heart can barely take it no more.”

JOHN
Yes, there are whispers. They’ve been pontificating in their tower--

JULES
Your tower Mister Boss-Man.

JOHN
Ha! My say counts for less than the dust on that banister, my dear. But they are discussing plans for a mural outside.

JULES
Oh, that sound fun.

JOHN
It would be very conservative, tasteful, honoring the past, all that. Very classy.
JULES
Yes yes, but of course. This theatre has class up the butt.

JOHN
(shocked giggle, looks around)
Jules!

JULES
Ha ha. Sorry Father John.

JOHN
Well, Jules, I’ve really seen you grow as an artist. You are dedicated and passionate about your work and I brought your name up.

JULES
Whoa.

JOHN
So, this would really be an enormous undertaking.

JULES
Of course.

JOHN
And we have a lot of very, very important people to please and history to represent.

JULES
Absolutely. The theatre’s first.

JOHN
Yes, so no room for risks, personal imprint, or ventures into the unknown this time. And listen, Jules, they have a lot of people they are gunning for. Big name guys. I’m really sticking my neck out for you here, okay?

JULES
Wow, really, thank you. Thank you so much, John.

JOHN
And I know I don’t need to say it, but you’re really gonna have to, you know, put your...

(MORE)
complications aside, while you’re focusing on this project.

JULES
Everything’s grand. Coming up roses.

JOHN
It’ll be good for you, too. Force you to reassess, resolve, stabilize.

JULES
Really, you don’t have to worry.

JOHN
And we’d have to meet more too. Discuss everything in depth. This is a landmark, not a gala invitation.

JULES
John, I’ll do anything it takes. This mural will be historic.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATED SUBWAY CAR - SUNSET

Peaceful Jules gazes out of the window of the L train as buildings pass layered with graffiti and artwork; indecipherable images and tags that Jules reads like it’s a secret language.

The camera moves down to her sketchbook where she works on a city skyline whose buildings make the ridges on an antique key.

CUT TO:

INT. JULES AND MIHAI’S APARTMENT IN QUEENS - EVENING

Jules is cleaning the kitchen. Mihai is pacing, walking in and out of the room.

MIHAI

JULES
I don’t get embarrassed.
MIHAI
You think I’m stupid. You’re friends, they will be thinking I’m stupid.

JULES
My friends don’t think anything about you. They can’t have opinions about a ghost.

MIHAI
I’m not saying I’m scary.

JULES
Forget it.

MIHAI
Forget it, she says. Las-o balta, las-o balta.

JULES
Jesus. I’m saying how can my friends think anything about you if they’ve never met you?!

MIHAI
So bring them. No, I don’t want them here. No, just bring them.

JULES
I’m too nice to do something like that.

MIHAI
What you saying?

JULES
I’m not gonna bring them here just so you can go off and sulk in the next room and make them feel guilty.

MIHAI
Ma lași în pace! They feel guilty?!

JULES
Yeah, Mikey, you don’t see that how you act affects other people. Get outa your own head.

MIHAI
Stop trying to confuse me.
JULES
I’m the one sticking to one language. Are you kidding me?

MIHAI
Is this funny? I’m not joking.

JULES
No-- I-- ugh.

Beat.

MIHAI
Come here.

JULES
What?

He sits on coach and pats the place next to him.

MIHAI
Come, baby, let’s hang.

JULES
Are you fucking serious?

MIHAI
(laughs)
You need to relax. Let’s light.

He tears open a Backwoods cigar and empties the tobacco onto a marble TV table.

JULES
You’re telling me to relax?? I get home and right away you start bitching me out like I’m your little homemaker.

MIHAI
I make this home. Every month.

JULES
Ugh. And I married you, so you can stay in this home. In this fucking so-called “beautiful” country you love and hate so much. What else do you want from me?

MIHAI
Just be you. I love you. You don’t have to do anything now you’re my wife. Just-- be happy.
JULES
“I don’t have to do anything.”
First of all, I can’t be happy when you’re miserable all the time. And you won’t stop being miserable ‘til I’m happy.

MIHAI
Just be you, just be here.

JULES
I’m not gonna just sit here, be your make-believe wife and play house with you!

MIHAI
Why you have to do, do, do. Just accept my love.

JULES
There is no reality except in action, Mikey. And there is no reality in which I will accept your hostile love.

MIHAI
Jules, slow down. You know I--

JULES
You said from the beginning you didn’t want anything serious and now I’m the bitch turning you down every day. We had an agreement. You promised--

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on the front door.

JULES (CONT’D)
(whispers)
If that’s Viktor complaining, I swear--

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

Beat.

MIHAI
Well? You wanna do something, do.

Jules glares at him.

JULES
Who is it?
MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Police. Got a noise complaint. Open up!

JULES
What the--?

Jules snaps and points at the bong in the corner. Mihai knows the routine. She swings open the door.

JULES (CONT’D)
Forest! Ugh, I could-- When did your voice get so freakin’ low?! And why-- what are you doing here?

FOREST
Such hospitality.

He walks past her, entering the first room of the railroad apartment, the kitchen and walks into the adjacent living room as they talk.

FOREST (CONT’D)
Well, I heard your lover’s quarrel from Manhattan and thought I’d offer my services.

JULES
Funny.

MIHAI
Shit. You scared me.

JULES
Mikey.

FOREST
I’ve heard worse.

JULES
Well you shouldn’t. Now what the hell is going on?

MIHAI
Jules was just about to make us dinner.

FOREST
Oh really?

JULES
Oh really?
MIHAI
Oh shit.

JULES
Seriously?

FOREST
Girls.

MIHAI
Can’t live with them. Can’t live...with them.

FOREST
Ho ho. Ya come up with that all on your own, bubalah?

JULES
He’s Romanian.

FOREST
Uh huh. So, ya come up with that all on your own, bubulah?

MIHAI
Jules, grab us some pop, yeah?

JULES
Ha.

FOREST
Ha. You are brave, sir.

JULES
And you should be sleeping. Let’s get you home.

FOREST
What? No, I’m stayin’ here with Mush Mouth.

JULES
Not without me you’re not and I’m-- Forest just-- come here.

FOREST
Breathe, baby cakes, I’m a comin’.

MIHAI
Yeah, breathe your baby cakes.

FOREST
Yup, almost there, buddy.
Jules quickly gathers her jacket and backpack while Forest joins her at the door which is still open.

MIHAI
Where are you going?

JULES
What?

MIHAI
Where you going? It’s our wedding night!

JULES
What?

FOREST
Are you deaf, woman?

JULES
Forest.

MIHAI
I thought we going to-- “garden” all night??

JULES
What are-- I-- jesus.

FOREST
Ewww.

MIHAI
What?

FOREST
(whispers)
Like...plowing?

JULES
Ew Forest, stop!

MIHAI
Plow what? I mean like, garden...like green garden...like uh weeds in your garden...is this-- do you speak English?

JULES
Okay, we’re going. I’m taking you home.
FOREST
Whoa, no no no, let’s not get hasty.

JULES
Come on.

FOREST
I mean it, I’m not going home,

JULES
I said, move, andiamo, now. We’ll talk on our way.

They head out the door. Forest’s lines fade as we watch Mihai take the bong out and light it up as the door slams shut. Forest’s voice fades out as the rumbling of a subway fades in.

FOREST
You must mean on our way to the circus, cause I’m not goin’ home. Or the movies. Or ice cream or dog park, although it’s just the weird mutant muts at this time. Okay, fine, I’ll settle for a trip to the pier.

FADE TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR—30 MIN LATER

View from train car out window of an advertisement speeding past whose images create a moving picture promoting travel to Iceland. The images move from green rolling hills to rushing crystalline waters with the lettering “Life speeding past” then “While you’re sitting still” and “Still”, “Still”, “Still” continuously at the bottom of the advertisement as a drawing of a hand with yellow and black checkered fingernails and a watch on its wrist reaches out. The flowing stream morphs into a city street with a traffic light blinking red as the watch face begins to melt a la Dali. The fingers elongate and swirl adding the lettering “TAXI 7N44”. Meanwhile the traffic light post has multiplied and they spin upside down and grow upwards as stems and irises begin to bloom.

Halfway through this, Forest’s voice fades back in.

FOREST (O.S.)
(melody of Lana Del Rey’s “Ride”)
I hear the birds on the summer breeze, I drive fast.
(MORE)
FOREST (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I hear the birds on the breeze. I hear the birds on the summer breeze
I drive fast, I hear the birrrrrds.
(melody of bridge)
I hear the birds on the summer
BREEZE, I DRIVE--

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR- CONTINUOUS

JULES
Will you?! Are those the only words you know?

FOREST
They’re the only words that matter to me.

JULES
They’re the only words you know.

FOREST
Just because my weirdness is out loud doesn’t make you any less weird, miss crazy eyes.

JULES
(bats eyelashes)
My eyes are dreamy.

FOREST
The pies were creamy.

JULES
The guys were teeny.

FOREST
Ha ha ha. Gross.

JULES
Uh like short. Not tall.

FOREST
Surrre. Liike you’re short and not tall.

Jules stands up, towering over Forest as the moderately empty train continues to rumble beneath their feet.

JULES
Taller than you.
FOREST
Taller than poo.

JULES
Ew.

He stands.

FOREST
(mockingly)
“Ewww”.

JULES
(seeing he’s taller)
Ew!

FOREST
Ha ha! See, taller than poo.

Jules stands on her tippy toes. Forest stands on his tippy toes. They both lose balance and fall into each others faces and topple back into their chairs giggling. Jules fakes a pout.

FOREST (CONT’D)
Aw. You want me to chop my legs a little for you?

JULES
Yes please.

FOREST
You can have my calves.

JULES
No! They’re so boney.

She pinches his leg which tickles him and makes him thrash his limbs like an epileptic octopus.

JULES (CONT’D)
Give me your juicy thighs!

Their laughter grows and subsides like the ebb and flow of a tide pool. Beat.

FOREST
“Universe” is a cool word.

JULES
Junipers are for...drool turds.
FOREST
Oh so turds are okay but “poo” is out of the question.

JULES
Obviously.

FOREST
It’s closer.

JULES
What is?

FOREST
To sounding like what it is.
“Turd”. Like “universe”.

JULES
“Universe”.

TOGETHER
(drawing it out)
“Universe”.

FOREST
The universe is a turd.

JULES
Uh oh, cynic alert.

FOREST
Beep beep beep!

JULES
You know what?

FOREST
Chicken butt?

JULES
You know what?

FOREST
Whaaat?

JULES
You are the universe.

FOREST
Awww. I’m your whole universe!

JULES
Yes. But no. You are the universe. So you’re calling yourself a turd.
FOREST
I am a turd.

JULES
You’re not a turd. Now we’re not allowed to use that word for a week.

FOREST
Are you the universe too?

JULES
Mhm.

FOREST
Is that guy at the end of the train taking a turd the universe?

JULES
Ugh come on.

She links his arm, they stand and walk to the opposite side of the train car.

JULES (CONT’D)
But yes. Him too. And now it’s 2 weeks, bub.

FOREST
You smell.

JULES
Excuse me.

FOREST
Like a skunk.

JULES
I am. So you better be nice or I’ll Pepe Le Pew-you.

FOREST
Peppy La Who-zie?

JULES
Ugh, Disney Channel generation.

FOREST
What are you my grandma?
Jules playfully shakes her fist at Forest as the train halts and they stand face to face in front of the closed doors with pillars behind them reading “42nd St”.

CUT TO:

EXT. 42ND STREET AND 9TH AVENUE SIDEWALK—CONTINUOUS

Jules and Forest are walking with arms linked as Jules texts with her free hand.

    FOREST
    (whining)

    JULES
    (mimicking his tone)
    Whaaaaat??

    FOREST
    Jules!

    JULES
    What?!

Beat. She stares expectantly. It’s a game of who will talk first. Forest gets bored.

    FOREST
    Where are we going?

    JULES
    Not home. Relax.

    FOREST
    Are you going to sell me? Are you the child slave trade leader? IS THAT A GUN IN YOUR BAG?!

    JULES
    Shut up!

    FOREST
    You didn’t say no.

    JULES
    We’re making a quick stop.

    FOREST
    To see your flying monkey?

    JULES
    My flying what?
Jules digs a small plastic case out of her bag and pulls out earplugs.

Jules
Here. Put these in.

He puts the earplugs in his ears then pulls out 2 marble meditation spheres and holds them towards Jules.

Forest
Now you’re turn.

Jules
Psh. Wait, where did you get those?

Forest
I can’t hear youuu.

She takes one of the earplugs out of his ear and takes the spheres.

Jules
Where did-- ew. Where did you get these?

He grabs them back.

Forest
They’re mine. I found them.

She takes them back.

Jules
Not yours. Where?

Forest
Ugh. I’m pretty sure...yeah I’m pretty sure I found them up...your butt.

Jules
Grow up.
They were in a box.

The box was...? And if you say it again--

The box was in another box. In the bathroom closet.

Oh. Here.

She hands them back to him.

I thought they weren’t mine.

She puts the earplug back in his ear as they approach a hole in the wall bar on 41st and 9th ave called Tobacco Road. They slip past the bouncer who is throwing out a pimply, drunk boy with skinny jeans, eye liner, and gaged ears.

As Forest and Jules enter the bar venue, close up on a poster with the lettering “Turbulence; Thrown About Like A Shit on the Ocean” with album art clearly by Jules’ pen: blood red hands with white fingernails are wriggling as links of chains tighten around their wrists. They are held open to receive a floating pyramid with a wide, blue eye in it’s center.

INT. TOBACCO ROAD BAR

It is dimly lit with female bartenders in their bras quickly slapping down bottles of cheap beers as they all bubble over onto the soaking bar flooded with young adults all ‘too cool for school’, too ‘hipster’ for the punks and too punk for the hipsters; none cool enough for a second glance. With Forest’s hand in hers, Jules careens through the crowds towards the back where there is a small stage with Chris center, sweaty and singing, guitar in hand.

Jules finds a girl in the audience. MOLLY is a dark-haired beauty, Jules’ age, in a mini-skirt with a pink Chanel purse draped over her petite shoulder. Molly hugs Jules and Forest and whispers inaudibly in Jules’ ear. Everytime the crowd threatens to drag Forest away, Jules reaches out towards his hand and pulls him back.

Jules nods in agreement with Molly who gestures to others nearby who head over to Jules.
She discreetly, professionally takes their money and hands them plastic bags filled with “gardening supplies”. Forest’s attention meanders between the strange audience beginning to ‘mosh’ and shove each other, the music clearly about a girl, and ‘the girl’ ‘making friends’.

The camera zooms in, past Jules and Forest and towards the stage and disappears into the blackness of Chris’s amp as the music’s volume increases and peaks until it turns into the sound of a blender crushing ice.

FADE TO:

INT. MOLLY’S APARTMENT- A YEAR AGO- NIGHT

Hand drawn script lettering dances across the bottom of the screen spelling “ONE ONE ONE, YEAR YEAR YEAR, AGO AGO AGO”.

The blackness of the amp has faded into the dark slush in the blender beneath Molly’s hand above the granite kitchen countertops. Her modern Chelsea apartment reflects her family’s wealth and extravagance. The White Stripes’ “Hello Operator” blares in the background. The camera zooms out farther to see Jules leaning over the counter with her then fading red hair next to piles of organic, green produce and various bottles of alcohol that surround the blender. Molly turns the blender off and begins to pour the sludge into wine glasses.

MOLLY
Ooh, baby.

JULES
No, baby.

MOLLY
Yes, my baby baby. Chill, honey pie, it’s spiked.

JULES
It’s black.

MOLLY
It’s dark green.

JULES
This seems counterproductive.

MOLLY
No, it’s compensation.

JULES
You don’t know what that word means.
MOLLY
Cunt.

JULES
“Carry my obituary”.

MOLLY
Here ya go, my love.

Molly tries to hand the wine glass to Jules, who bounces up and down with her eyes closed.

JULES
“How you gonna get the money?!"

MOLLY
Hey, Meg!

Jules opens her eyes and sings obnoxiously in Molly’s face.

JULES
“How you gonna get the money?!”
Thank youuu. I think.

She takes the glass and they link their arms holding their drinks.

JULES (CONT’D)
If this kills me, I want the world to know, they are beautiful.

MOLLY
You are beautiful.

JULES
You are beautiful!

They playfully peck on the lips, cheers, and gulp like soldiers preparing for battle. Molly dramatically gags. Jules gives a faint cough.

MOLLY
(cursing)
Monkey balls!

JULES
Eh. I’d say ass.

MOLLY
How can such delicious things be so foul mixed together?

JULES
‘Cause you’re an idiot.
MOLLY  
(laughing)  
An idiot with a backup plan.

Molly heads towards a cupboard and pulls out a cardboard box. "Hello Operator" has started over as Jules places their glasses back on the counter.

JULES  
Your drug arsenal is not a backup plan. It is the plan. The constant, colorful-- "Can I give you number nine? Can I see you later?"

MOLLY  
Repeat, really? My turn. Here.

Molly hands Jules the small cardboard box.

MOLLY (CONT’D)  
Let’s get silly, please.

JULES  
And thank you. Thor’s hammer, this is heavy. How on Earth did you carry it all the way over here from the cupboard, girly?

MOLLY  
Shut up. Papers are in there.

Jules opens the box as Molly heads towards the iPod dock to change the song to “Hey You” from Pink Floyd’s Pulse Live.

JULES  
Damn, girl. You are tryna get silly. What the what? Seriously Molly, this is-- well-- a lot. Even for you-- us.

MOLLY  
Yeah, Jared sent it from Cali. He’s trying too hard.

JULES  
Pobrecita.

MOLLY  
I know. It’s annoying.

JULES  
You sound like a bitch. Just so you know.
Molly heads back to the white leather couch where Jules is now seated rolling a joint.

MOLLY
Actually, my little green princess, can you help me? Pleeease?

JULES
I’m already doin’ it, child!

MOLLY
No, with Thor’s Hammer. My dad’s comin’ this month for his rando raid of this place and that shit reeks.

JULES
So hide it, put it in glass, a safe.

MOLLY
He goes really hard.

JULES
That’s what she-- nope.

MOLLY
Gross.

JULES
Oops. Ha ha ha.

MOLLY
Come on, boo. Boo boo. Please sell this for me. You can keep half, I don’t care, whatever.

JULES
Half? You didn’t even pay for it, you shyster!

MOLLY
Well I--

JULES
It doesn’t matter, babe. I’m not doin’ that shit.

(MORE)
JULES (CONT’D)
I’ve gone this long without adding drug dealer to my shameful resume.

MOLLY
What are you talking about? Your resume is so fucking long.

JULES
You’d think a toddler’s resume was long.

MOLLY
Fuck you. Just because I’ve never had a job doesn’t mean I don’t know how to work.

JULES
Then why don’t you sell this? Do you think I’d be that desperate to do this illegal, by the way, thing for you?

MOLLY
You’re always shitting on all your bosses, Jules.
(playfully)
I wouldn’t be so bad a boss, would I?

Jules recoils and stand up with the now finished joint in her hand.

JULES
Wow.

MOLLY
I’m joking, Jules.

JULES
No, you’re not.

Jules walks towards the balcony and opens the door, looks back at Molly implying she can follow; it’s not the spat to end all spats. The camera follows the two onto the balcony that overlooks the twinkling city skyline.

JULES (CONT’D)
Honestly, any boss would be better right now. She just talks so much shit about everyone and vibes me if I don’t go along with it. I’m not gonna talk badly about people that have never done anything bad to me.
(MORE)
JULES (CONT’D)
She’s just cruel and treats everyone like she’s better than them.

MOLLY
That jewelry she “makes” is crap. Antique, my ass.

JULES
Uh yeah. I mean-- and she expects me to lie to the customers. She says it’s not a corporation but she treats me like a corporation would. I hate that I care so much, but I don’t want to change how much I care. But it breaks my fucking heart everyday that I think that struggling is a part of life instead of just saying, if I’m struggling, then this isn’t something I should be doing. I keep getting these jobs where I’m sacrificing my creativity and it makes me wanna vomit-- here.

She passes the lit joint to Molly.

JULES (CONT’D)
--but at the moment I have to survive, instead of saying “Fuck this. I’m fucking quitting. I hate you, you soulless bitch. Deal with your shit karma on your own.”

Beat.

JULES (CONT’D)
But I’m still not selling. Sorry. I know once I start I’ll become desensitized to it.

Jules leans her head on Molly’s shoulder. Beat.

JULES (CONT’D)
Plus you can’t become my boss. I’ll start to hate you too.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK- PRESENT- NIGHT

Close up on hands holding and swinging as their owners walk down a dark street.
Hand drawn words fall across the screen in this order: “Now”, “Here”, “Be”, “Now”, “Be”, “Here”, “Now”. Camera zooms out on Chris and blonde-again Jules holding hands. Chris’s guitar is in his other hand and Jules’ free hand holds her brothers as they walk towards the subway. Forest is visibly weary.

    JULES
    Come on, hun. Not too much longer.

Forest groans. Jules halts the group.

    JULES (CONT’D)  
    We’re literally a block away,  
    Forest. Let me just take you home.  
    This is stupid.

    FOREST  
    Really, Jules? Me not wanting to go  
    home is stupid?

    JULES  
    Fine. But you’re telling me  
    everything when we get to Chris’s.  
    I’m not letting you go to sleep  
    until then. Deal?

Beat.

    JULES (CONT’D)  
    Deal?

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS’S LIVING ROOM– LATER THAT NIGHT, 2AM

Close up on two feet hanging off of a couch. The left big toe that sticks out of a hole in the socks twitches. SNORE.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS’S BEDROOM– CONTINUOUS


    CHRIS  
    (referring to Forest)  
    Well, that was obviously gonna  
    happen.

Their eyes meet.
CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS’S BEDROOM—A BIT LATER

Jules and Chris lay naked on the carpet.

    JULES
    Well, that was obviously gonna happen.

    CHRIS
    Not obvious to me.

Without getting up, Jules grabs an electric guitar within arms reach and holds it to her body, strumming a chord every so often.

    JULES
    I’d hope not.

    CHRIS
    But then again, you are a little hussy.

    JULES
    (sarcastically)
    Ha.

Strums “Wrong Way” by Sublime.

    JULES (CONT’D)
    “A cigarette rests between her lips.”

    CHRIS
    “But I’m staring at her tits.”

    JULES
    “It was the wrong way.” Fuck. I’m exhausted.

Chris hands her a cigarette.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Lighter ignites flame

B) Jules inhales
C) Jules hunched over her sketchbook on the bed with Chris sleeping in the background.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS’S BEDROOM– CONTINUOUS

Jules falls into Chris’s armpit as he wraps his arm around her shoulder pulling her in closer. He is barely conscious. Jules breathes a sigh of relief and finally closes her eyes.

CHRIS
(sleepily)
Mm. I’m so happy you’re mine again.
Mmm. Mine mine mine.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS’S BEDROOM– CONTINUOUS

Close up on Jules’ face as her eyes abruptly open, full of fear.

CUT TO:

INT. CHRIS’S LIVING ROOM– CONTINUOUS

The naked toe again convulses. GROAN.

JULES (O.S.)
Come on. We’re going.

CUT TO:
INT. L TRAIN CAR– 4AM

Jules and Forest are squeezed together on the subway. Jules’ arm around Forest with his head resting against her. Interspersed in their conversation, the rails screech, lights flicker, and the occasional drunk stumbles by.

JULES (CONT’D)
Ya comfortable?

FOREST
Eh. “You’re so boney.”
(but he doesn’t move)
JULES
Well good. I don’t want you to fall asleep on me. Who would protect me from the scary demons of the underground?
(shaking her shoulder)
Come on, wake up, wake up.

FOREST
They’re more scared of you.

JULES
Me? I’m just an innocent blonde angel with her cute little brother.

FOREST
Ha ha. Keep tellin’ yourself that. Girl, you crazy.

JULES
No, “boy”, you crazy. Look at you!

Jules turns to face Forest who dons leopard leggings, an army print jacket, and a skull adorned scarf.

FOREST
If being fashionable is crazy, then bring on the straight jacket.

JULES
Ugh! I have nightmares about straight jackets.

FOREST
You’d have to paint with your nose. Or your tongue.

JULES
Mm. I love the taste of acrylic. Pour it on my pancakes every morning.

FOREST
Ha ha. Gross.

JULES
Do you paint in school? Oh, have you been practicing those shading techniques I showed you?

FOREST
My life is busy, woman.
JULES
Excuse me. I’m so glad you could fit me into your schedule, sir. What makes you so busy?

FOREST
My friend is abusing drugs.

JULES
What now?

FOREST
My friend is abusing drugs.

JULES
What?

FOREST
Was I not clear? Want me to say it in another language? Let me get out Google Translate.

JULES
Wait-- who is this?

FOREST
Her name is Hazel.

JULES
(teasingly)
Well, why are you friends with her?

FOREST
'Cause she’s pretty.

JULES
Ha ha. Is this the Hispanic girl from that picture?

FOREST
No, that’s Genesis.

JULES
Whoa, Genesis? OK, tell me about her after. So are you helping her?

FOREST
Well, Genesis used to self-harm but she stopped.

JULES
No, Hazel. Wait-- why are you calling it self-harm and what does self-harm mean? In your...opinion.
FOREST
Well, like, you know. A lot of people at my school do that.

JULES
Oh my God. 12-year-olds and 13-year-olds?

FOREST
Yeah, it’s not surprising.

JULES
Why was she doing that? And, yes, it is surprising, Forest.

FOREST
She’s not on a lot of people’s “friend list” per se. So to speak.

JULES
Jeez. Did she do that before she was friends with you or while she was friends with you?

FOREST
(he stops and thinks)
It’s not because of me. Shut up!

JULES
I wasn’t saying that!

FOREST
I don’t know, but she doesn’t do it anymore. She was doing dishes and her mom saw.

JULES
Man. Wait, so rewind. Did you tell Hazel to stop?

FOREST
Yes.

JULES
How are you trying to help her?

FOREST
Uh, let’s see. No. I’m not helping her at all. I don’t wanna help her.

JULES
Why?!
FOREST
I want her to realize she’s
fricking up her life herself.

JULES
Uh, that’s an intense approach.
That’s hardcore.

FOREST
I don’t mind.

JULES
Did you try helping her at first
and it didn’t work and now you’re
trying a different way?

FOREST
Joining her! Just kidding.

JULES
You better be.

FOREST
Joining her?

JULES
(sarcastically)
Ha ha. Kidding.

FOREST
Oh, okay.

A dishevelled man approaches and forcefully extends a hand
holding a Dunkin’ Donuts cup of change.

DRUNK BEGGAR
You kids are so beautiful. Look at
that hair.

He starts to reach his hand out.

JULES
Excuse me. Me and my brother are
talking right now.

FOREST
Yeah, the adults are talking,
sweetie.

They laugh. He shuffles off.

JULES
Well, damn. You’re a good friend,
but that’s a lot of responsibility.

(MORE)
Hey, can I have your full attention for like ten minutes? You keep flicking through this. Lemme see.

She grabs his notebook and flicks through the pages.

JULES (CONT'D)
Hey, can I have your full attention for like ten minutes? You keep flicking through this. Lemme see.

She grabs his notebook and flicks through the pages.

JULES (CONT’)(CONT’D)
I wanna hear something. You got poems in here?

FOREST
Maybe.

JULES
Here. Pick one.

She hands the notebook back to Forest.

JULES (CONT’D)
Ready and go.

FOREST
(reading quickly)
“Not understanding people. Selfish decisions. Not thinking “how does this affect other people?” Through the hallways, I’ve come to realize, to just fake it. Fake a smile, dye your hair, act out of character. That’s what I’ve learned. As hurtful as it may sound.

(he mumbles inaudibly)
That doesn’t mean that--”

JULES
Wait, stop stop. What was that? As hurtful as it may sound...

FOREST
“As hurtful”-- wait, where was I?

JULES
And can you go just a little bit slower?

FOREST
“As hurtful as it may sound, that doesn’t mean nobody likes you.”
(deciphers his writing)
Uhh...”nobody likes the real you. Just get there. Then, act yourself. Take this advice.

(MORE)
FOREST (CONT'D)
So, I’m telling you now, I am not”--wait...This... Ehh...

JULES
Can you not read your own handwriting?

FOREST
Ha ha, yeah. “I’m not”...Oh! “I’m not a kid anymore. I’m sick of playing pretend.”

(like he’s skipping over something)
Da da da da da. Oh, “savor!” “Savor Sixth Grade because after this, after that, it’s all downhill from there, I guess. Goodbye, my friends.”

JULES
Oh my God, Forest. You’re so cynical!

FOREST
Thank you.

Throughout the following conversation, they get off the train and walk up and down stairs to another track to transfer to the A-C-E.

JULES
Ha ha. Yeah that is a compliment. Cynicism means you’re smart. ‘Cause the more you know, the harder life is right?

FOREST
Uhhh...I needa text Molly real quick.

JULES
What?! Why do you need to text her? Can’t I have your attention?

FOREST
(playfully)
You have my attention, sweetheart.

JULES
Why are you texting Molly?

FOREST
She says I’m a “Little Her.”
JULES (slightly offended)
What? You’re a “Little Me!”

FOREST
We have-- in some ways, yes. In other ways, I’m her.

JULES
Okay, so why do you guys have secrets?

FOREST
’Cause you were gone. And the secret is: we bonded.

JULES
Bonded over what?

FOREST
Time.

JULES (sarcastically)
Ha. Ha. Ha. Well I’m back now and I’m gonna be around all the time. You’re gonna get annoyed with me. Tell me more about school.

FOREST
Uhhh... I just got a text.

JULES
You want me to guess?

FOREST
No, shh, I got a text.

JULES
From Molly?

FOREST
Umm...

JULES
What?

FOREST (distractedly texting)
Uhh...

JULES
Forest.
FOREST
Promise you won’t get mad and it
won’t change anything you feel
about me?

JULES
(agitated)
Okay!

FOREST
Okay, well, let me get out my fancy
planner. On...on November...

JULES
Come on.

FOREST
Okay, what?

JULES
What is it, Forest??

He’s still texting with one hand, fumbling for his planner
with the other as they walk down the platform.

FOREST
Calm yourself, woman.

JULES
Forest!

FOREST
What?

JULES
You’re taking your planner out...on
some day...what?

FOREST
Oh, on November 13th, it was so
awesome. I found this really cool
pair of earrings and I thought they
might be yours.

JULES
Okay.

FOREST
But I don’t think so. They’re like
spirally and like feathers and
stuff and leather. But they weren’t
yours.
JULES
Okay.

FOREST
We might sell them to a thrift shop or something.

JULES
Okay, is that it?

FOREST
Yeah.
(beat)
I tend to over-exaggerate things.

JULES
You suck.

They’ve boarded the A train, the doors close and they disappear into the blackness.

CUT TO:

INT. MOLLY’S APARTMENT—DAWN

Close up on Forest’s toes again, this time with bright pink PUMA ankle-socks stretched across his giant feet. Camera zooms out to see Forest sleeping on the same white leather couch from a year ago with a faux fur blanket wrapped around him. Camera turns to Jules who sits and the table nearby. She sighs and puts her head in her hands as the sun moves across the lacquered wooden floor beneath her bare feet. She quietly sings “How Still My Love” by Stevie Nicks.

JULES
(whispered singing)
“Still the same old story. What price glory. Oh you make it easy. In the still of the night.”

FADE TO BLACK. A YEAR AGO.

JULES (O.S.) (CONT’D)
“In the still of the night. How still my--”

Sound of a spray paint can.
CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING WALL—NIGHT

Shot of a half finished wall painting of a girl sitting cross-legged with arms crossed and no face. POLICE SIREN.

JULES (O.S.)
Don’t—don’t take sympathy on me. Just please, help me?

MOLLY (O.S.)
I don’t know, hun. You know—how my dad, you know feels about you.

JULES (O.S.)
Which is completely twisted, but I never said anything. I let him go on believing I was the one corrupting you.

Beat.

JULES (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Molly. Please. You just need to ask once and he’ll help me. A tear and he’ll fly. Please. I can’t afford a lawyer.

MOLLY (O.S.)
That would mean he’d come here, to my place, to you know, talk and I still have, you know. I don’t know, Jules. Is it really that bad?

JULES (O.S.)
What are you saying? What do you want?

MOLLY (O.S.)
The same thing. Help.

Beat.

JULES (O.S.)
Fine.

CUT TO:
INT. MOLLY’S APARTMENT - DAWN - PRESENT

Change, bills, a dime bag, and a cell phone are dropped onto the table Jules sits at. Her hand reaches into the shot and presses a button on the cell phone. Black screen. She picks it up in both her hands and frantically presses buttons. Black screen. She places it back on table. Camera slides across table to Forest’s cell phone. She picks it up.

FADE IN:

INT. CELIA HAVEN’S APARTMENT - EARLY THAT MORNING

Jules’ mother is sprawled out on the raggedy couch, complete with stereo system and massage chair built in, both of which are ancient and simply decorative, which is a generous description of the mismatching furniture scratched up by the array of cats that leap in and out of the shots.

Around the corner, Jules bursts open the front door and the mechanical creak echoes throughout the unseen hallway. Forest trails behind sheepishly.

JULES
(like breathing fire)
Hello?! Mother?

Jules rounds the corner, cocks her hip out, gives Celia one of those icy, judgemental stares you only learn from your mother.

JULES (CONT’D)
Uh, hi...

CEILIA
Hi, sweetie. Ya wanna watch this with me?

JULES
What? What are you-- Did you even notice that your son is not in his bed?!

Celia props herself up as Forest peeks his head around Jules’ slender, but domineering figure.

CEILIA
What the f-- I-- Forest, what is going on?
JULES
Now you’re interested? Go get ready for bed, babe.

CELIA
No, Forest, what the hell is going on?

JULES
Don’t try to make this his fault. He obviously had a reason for leaving here and coming all the way to fucking Queens.

CELIA
You what?!

Celia brushes the blanket off her and stands wearing just an over-sized shirt.

JULES
Not that he could sleep with this blaring. What the fuck, Mommy? Seriously.

The characters from “Somewhere in Time” disappear as Jules turns the TV off.

CELIA
Okay, okay, so someone talk to me.

JULES
First of all, are you aware that some perv 9th grader has been harassing your 12-year-old son?

CELIA
Is this a joke? Why did he-- why did you leave in the middle of the night?

JULES
That’s what I’d like to know, but that’s not even why I’m here right now.

(holds up phone)
Do you know about this shit?

CELIA
What, okay, Jules, what is it?

Celia motions for the phone, Jules complies. Celia scrolls, then rotates phone, tilts her head...
CELIA (CONT’D)
I don’t see any-- Jesus. Oh my-- Oh my God.

JULES
Yeah.

Looks behind her, remembers Forest is still there.

JULES (CONT’D)
Forest, really, does he have to be here for this?

CELIA
Forest, why are you texting this boy?

JULES
Why is he-- Are you seriously trying to blame him for this sicko’s penis pics??

FOREST
(cringes, embarrassed)
Ehhh.

JULES
Sorry, Forest.
(to Celia)
Listen, you let this happen. You allowed this to go on. How can you not see this shit when he’s right in the next room? I can’t track everything he does from another borough, mother.

CELIA
I’m going to deal with this, Jules. But, please, lower your voice.

JULES
Lower my-- you were just-- wait, why do you care how loud we are? Is someone else here?

CELIA
Jules, you know, you storm in here and start attacking me while I’m worried sick about Forest--
JULES
You didn’t even know he was gone! What are you talking about?!

CELIA
Thank you for bringing him home. I think you should just go now.

JULES
Ha. Yeah ‘cause I feel real secure leaving him here now.

FOREST
Guys, it’s fine, whatever.

CELIA
Tell me again, why he went to your house in the middle of the night? How did he even know how to get there? Has this happened before, Jules?

JULES
What? No, not everything is some plot for your downfall. And stop, don’t try to change the subject. I’m asking you if someone else is here.

FOREST
Jules, it’s fine. Can we just go now?

CELIA
Go now? You are not going anywhere. Have you lost your mind? You think you can just come and go as you please? I’m taking this cell phone away from you. And no computer, no TV.

JULES
Wow. I think he has bigger concerns, Mommy.

The bedroom door CREAKS O.S.

JULES (CONT’D)
(whisper)
Uh, Mommy, what was that? Do you have a guy over right now or something?
CELIA
No, no. Well-- you know, Jules, you really need to leave now.


JULES
Wait a second, hun. Please.
(to Celia)
I really, sincerely hope that that’s some random dude you brought home.

RICK (O.S.)
Of course you would hope that.

JULES
Excuse me?

RICK, a towering but lanky man with wild gray hair turns the corner.

RICK
I said, of course you would hope that. It’s your forte after all.

JULES
(like seeing a ghost)
And fuck you. Forest, let’s go.

RICK
(blocks the way)
Whoa, whoa, I don’t think so.

JULES
(to Celia)
Have you killed all your brain cells? Are you drunk? Are you experiencing memory loss?! Why the fuck is Rick here?

CELIA
Jules, stop.

RICK
This is my son. I have a right to be here.
JULES
(as though she’s
speaking to a child)
You’re son. Wasn’t even. Here!

RICK
(chillingly)
Don’t raise your voice at me,
little girl.

JULES
I can’t believe this is happening
right now. Seriously, get out of
our way.

RICK
I told you, I’m not going anywhere.

JULES
Do you even care why Forest wasn’t
here? Or where he went? Or what’s
going on? Please, tell me, do you
have any situational awareness at
all?

CELIA
Jules, stop it.

JULES
(starting to break)
Why are you always defending him?
He’s not even in our lives anymore
and you still defend him, years
later. I am your daughter.

RICK
You okay, Celia? What do you want
me to do?

JULES
Yeah, Celia, what do you want the
addict to do? How should he
“responsibly” take care of the
situation?

RICK
This again. I take what I need to
take for my pain, which is
constant. You don’t even know what
pain is.

JULES
Is that a threat?
CELIA

Jules.

JULES

Really, what pain? You keep saying this. The pain of getting old? Your back, your legs, whatever. You know what, my father is in a lot pain too, but he doesn’t spend all his money and time on how to make himself feel a little better.

CELIA

Jules! Rick is staying here because he-- he has cancer.

Beat.

FOREST

What?

JULES

(to Celia)

What is wrong with you? Forest, no, he doesn’t.

CELIA

Yes, Jules, he does.

(to Forest)

I’m sorry, honey.

(to Jules)

I went with him to the doctor and everything, okay? This is real.

JULES

Well, I guess miracles do happen.

(beat. To Forest)

Fuck. I’m sorry, hun. Fine, even if this is true, I don’t see why he has to stay here. Ugh, whatever, this doesn’t change anything. We’re leaving.

FOREST

Jules. I-- I can’t.

JULES

Forest, you’re telling me you really wanna stay here. With them?

RICK

There is no choice involved in this decision right now.
JULES
    (breaks)
    Shut the fuck up! Get out of my face!

Jules tries to push by Rick, her fire is fuelled and though petite, she is strong, but he is a 60-year-old man with the strength of a 30-year-old and pushes her to the ground with what seems like a tap. As she picks herself right up...

RICK
    My death certificate might be signed, but I still got a ways to go, sweetheart.

Jules looks to Celia to do something, say something, anything. Beat. Jules looks at Forest, that “you know what we have to do” face. Forest looks around the room, picks up Celia’s wine glass, stares at it for a beat then hurls it across the room in the opposite direction of the front door. Jules grabs Forests hand and they bolt.

As the door slams--

CUT TO:
INT. SUBWAY CAR- MINUTES LATER

Forest and Jules are seated, holding hands. They look at each other.

CUT TO:
INT. SERAFINA RESTAURANT UPPER EAST SIDE- SOON THAT MORNING

A kitchen’s door swings open and the camera follows a tray of breakfast pastries as it is carried by the waiter, weaving throughout tables at this bright, posh restaurant. Drawings are overlaid on the pastries of expressionistic cherries, strawberries, kiwi, and raspberries a la Jules.

Motion stops and a hand reaches into the shot and one at a time, places the three plates onto the table where Jules, Forest, and John are seated. The drawings of fruit fall and float away.

    FOREST
    Wowie wee wa!
JULES
Mm thank you so much.

The waiter nods and exits.

JOHN
(Italian)
Manger!

JULES
Manger manger!

JOHN
(Shakespearean accent)
“Eight wild boars roasted whole at breakfast!”

John uses a cake fork with his croissant while Forest gives Jules a look and the subtitles appear at the bottom of the screen in hand-drawn font reading: “What a cornball.” Jules returns a look as the subtitles read: “Who’s paying for your cherry pinwheel pastry?” And a pinwheel is drawn and turns as though a gust of wind blows through it.

FOREST
Thank you, John.

JOHN
My pleasure.

Forest looks to Jules, Jules nods and Forest digs in and Jules takes a bite, closes her eyes and slowly chews.

JULES
The world is just one bite of a danish.

The clank of Forest’s fork hitting his plate snaps her out of her meditative state.

FOREST
If that’s all it takes, I’ll be glad to help you there.

JULES
Whoa, Speedy Gonzales.

FOREST
But first, the John.

He stands.

FOREST (CONT’D)
No offense.
Forest walks towards the restroom.

JOHN
Ha. Your snark is contagious.

JULES
I try to instill important values.

JOHN
He’s lucky to have you.

JULES
I’m lucky to have him.

JOHN
And I’m lucky to have you as well. I was glad when you called. That you felt you can rely on me.

He leans in closer.

JULES
I can always rely on you. You know, my dad used to--

JOHN
That’s good you feel that way, Jules.

JULES
Yeah, I’m really grateful for the opportunities you’ve given me. My dad always said that-- what-- what are you doing?!

John’s hand has disappeared under the table and Jules jumps with a start.

JOHN
Shh. It’s okay.

Jules looks around and stands as she speaks. Forest is walking back towards them.

JULES
Jesus.

JOHN
I thought we had an agreement.

JULES
What?
JOHN
The mural.

JULES
You-- are you-- oh my God.

JOHN
You said you’d do anything it takes, Jules. Don’t act like--

JULES
Forest.

She takes Forest’s camouflage jacket off of his chair and hands it to him.

FOREST
Let me guess.

Jules grabs her heart-shaped sunglasses off the table and as she pulls her hand away knocks her plate onto the ground. The plate falls without breaking but spins in place while the danish, missing one bite, crumbles around it.

Close up on John who rolls his eyes and using his cake fork, sticks a bite of croissant in his mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUDSON RIVER WEST SIDE PIER- NOON

Shot of a cigarette thrown into the river as the water laps up against the pier. Garbage floats around the pillars.

Zoom out to Jules who sits on the concrete step next to Forest.

JULES
I’m so tired.

FOREST
Let’s go back to your place. And sleep.

JULES
No. And I’m tired of fighting.

FOREST
I’m not fighting.

JULES
Beat.

JULES (CONT’D)
I’m sorry. Are you okay?

FOREST
I dunno.

JULES
Talk to me.

FOREST
What am I supposed to say?

JULES
Why didn’t you tell me?

FOREST
I’m sorry.

JULES
No, don’t be sorry. I’m sorry, I should have-- I was just-- I’m sorry.

She puts her head in his lap for a beat then arises.

FOREST
I don’t know what’s going on. No one tells me anything ‘til the end.

JULES
It’s hard. You’re so mature sometimes, we forget that you’re only 12. Then you’re silly and Forest-y and we forget you’re so smart. We fuck up. Shit. Sorry.

FOREST
I never know what’s going on.

JULES
Mihai and I aren’t really married. Really really married.

FOREST
I know.

JULES
What do you know?

FOREST
The gist.
JULES
Right. Well what do you want to know?

FOREST
Why did we leave?

JULES
Which time?

FOREST
Just now.

JULES
Uh, John fired me.

FOREST
Oh. Was it my fault?

JULES
What? No, sweetie. Of course not. No. It’s just-- why-- why didn’t you tell me your dad was back? I would’ve just sucked it up and stayed at home. Probably. Last night would have been completely different.

Beat.

JULES (CONT’D)
And...that boy, that asshole, why didn’t you tell me? You don’t talk to me. I can’t help if you don’t talk to me.

FOREST
You’d be mad.

JULES
Never, Forest. I love you more than the universe.

FOREST
That’s not that much-- if the universe is just me and you.

JULES
To infinity and beyond.

TOGETHER
You can’t beat that, you can’t tie.
FOREST
You won’t be mad?

JULES
Tell me.

FOREST
His name is Jake. He lives in Queens.

JULES
Okay.

FOREST
Close to where you live.

JULES
Okay. So...what-- you didn’t leave home cause’a your dad...?

Forest shamefully shakes his head.

JULES (CONT’D)
You came to Queens...to see him. To see...Jake?

Forest shamefully nods. Beat.

FOREST
I’m sorry.

JULES
(wants more)
For what?

FOREST
For-- for lying...to you.

JULES
I don’t even care about that, Forest. I do, but I just-- what matters is you being safe. That’s not safe.

FOREST
Safe?

JULES
This kid...this-- you’re only 12. Jesus. I don’t-- I don’t even know-- this is my fault. Let’s go.
FOREST
Wait. One more thing. Were these his?

He pulls out the meditation spheres.

JULES
Yeah.

She takes them from him and rolls them around in one hand.

JULES (CONT’D)
These were Garret’s. He never let me touch them. Ever. He pinched me so hard one time when I tried. Was like he was always watching me.

FOREST
Wh-- why do you think he left?

JULES
I know why he left. Forest, he left because of Rick.

FOREST
So he left because of me.

JULES
No. That’s not what I said.

FOREST
He’s my dad. If I wasn’t born, he wouldn’t be there and we would still have a big brother. Or, you would still have a big brother. I wouldn’t be born.

JULES
Look at me. It is not your fault that Garret left, okay? Okay?

FOREST
Fine. Okay. But it’s my fault that you left.

JULES
Stop. I never left. I’m-- I’m sorry. I’m never leaving.

FOREST
Lime lever weaving.
JULES
Ha ha. Shh, I’m serious. Come on, let’s--

FOREST
Let’s go?

CUT TO:

INTERCUT - INT.

Shot of another painting of Jules’ of a disheveled, homeless man shaded with the use of pointillism waving by the side of the road holding a sign that reads: “WHY LIE? I NEED A BEER?” Sounds of tin spray cans knocking together and papers rustling; general sounds of a search in Jules’ art studio.

JULES (O.S.)
I just needa grab a few little baby things real quick.

CUT TO:

INT. JULES AND MIHAI’S APARTMENT IN QUEENS– AFTERNOON

Jules’ is seen down the hall in the next room with her back facing Forest in the living room, who sits on the couch with one leg stretched out sideways and one leg propped up on a stool painted with colorful wig wags. He is playing with a blue origami cube; blowing into it then crushing it and repeat.

JULES
Then I really have to drop you off at home.

FOREST
But I like it here.

JULES
Yeah, well I don’t. At all.

FOREST
You don’t like anything.

JULES
Shut up. God dam-- where is that-- ugh, ow.
FOREST
Then why did you marry him?

JULES
I was trying to be a good human being.

FOREST
That’s weird.

JULES
You’re weird.

FOREST
Thank you.

JULES
Ugh, finally.

She stands in the next room, turns around while zipping up an overflowing backpack and walks towards the living room where she lifts up Forest’s leg, plops next to him, and lets his leg fall onto her lap.

JULES (CONT’D)
(sighing)
Ahhh bababababaa.

TOGETHER
Babababababaa.

JULES
No one wants to come here. I don’t want to come here. But no one wants to come here. My friends are all lazy.

FOREST
I like the train.

JULES
Me too. Well, with you. Alone, it sucks. I can’t believe you came here all by yourself last night. I’m still mad at you about that.

FOREST
(puppy dog face)
I’m sowwy.

Jules puts her head on his shoulder and squashes the origami box.
FOREST (CONT’D)
(voice of origami box)
“Ahhh you killed me!!! And I was so young!”

He leans his head on hers.

FOREST (CONT’D)
Why else? Besides the smell of curry in your hallway.

JULES
Mikey’s so sad all the time.

FOREST
But you’re so sad all the time.

JULES
No.

FOREST
I know these things.

JULES
Oh really? Well then I’m losing my touch.

They close their eyes.

FOREST
Can you make him happier?

JULES
I try. But I can’t make myself love someone. And that’s all that will make him happy. He says. But I can’t breathe.

FOREST
Then stop smoking, stupid.

JULES
Smoking hurts less than being smothered.

Mhm.

FOREST
Mhm.

JULES
Mhm.

Moment of silence as they fall asleep.

FADE TO BLACK.
Sound of paint can being shaken and sprayed and muffled music from headphones.

CUT TO:

EXT. THEATRE BUILDING- SUNRISE

The once blank theatre wall is covered in a mural reading “Children of the Revolution: Living life with no solution” beneath and around a girl who holds two peaches up to her face blocking her eyes with a ripped tank top that reads: “Dare to disturb”. 