

Daddio

by

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PLACE

New York City.
Night.

TIME

Modern Day, 2015.

NOTE TO READER

In 2015, quintessential New York City cab companies were begrudgingly partnered with UBER for a short time, allowing an option for what was called an "UberT."

The alliance quickly dissolved, however, as cabs refused to actually be paid through the app itself. After a great deal of legal push back on both sides, UBER deleted the UberT option and yellow cabs launched out, creating their own smart phone application.

Unfortunately, as cabs were busy clinging to their antiquated business model, their competition grew drastically with the addition of VIA, JUNO, and LYFT, among others.

Yet, it won't stop there. One day soon, car services will solely invest in vehicles that are self-driven.

The unique experience of chatting with a New York City yellow cabbie is truly about to go the way of the dinosaur, making this film a very purposeful and passionate time capsule of sorts.

Please keep this in mind as you read.

OVER BLACK:

In the darkness, an even darker rectangular object ominously presses in, the outline resembling that of an iPhone.

Nothing happens for a suspended moment of stillness.

Then, a flurry of activity ensues as the iPhone turns bright white with a CLICK and a gray-bubble illuminates screen-left with a loud DING!

GRAY-BUBBLE

(TEXT)

Today 4:32 PM
U fly today?

In the text-drafting section below, center-screen, "**Getting on the plane now,**" rapidly manifests, accompanied by that all too familiar "typewriter" clicking sound.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

A blue-bubble illuminates on screen-right.

BLUE-BUBBLE

(TEXT)

Getting on the plane now.

Another gray-bubble materializes, encompassing three little dots waving various shades of gray, indicating a new message being composed.

GRAY-BUBBLE

(TEXT)

(...)

DING!

GRAY-BUBBLE (CONT'D)

(TEXT)

Can I see u? When you gt home

Unlike the blue-bubbles, the texts in the gray-bubbles are bursting with misspelled words, incorrect punctuation and a staggering amount of emojis.

The drafting section CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICKS, "**About to take off.**"

BLOOP!

BLUE-BUBBLE
(TEXT)
About to take off.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

BLUE-BUBBLE (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Talk soon.

The iPhone blurs in focus as the sound of a PLANE TAKING OFF grows louder and louder until-

INT. DREAMLIKE VOID

The colors from the phone have smeared into dancing pools of yellow, blue and red light, as if staring directly into the sun.

Within the dreamlike void, dark SHADOWS tease and flirt in and out of focus, illusive and evasive.

CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP.

MALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(V.O.)
(barely audible, filtered
through intercom)
...will be passing through to collect all service items. Please secure your tray tables and lift your seats back to their upright positions. We'll be landing shortly.

CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP.

From within the calliope of colorful light, one of the DARK SHADOWS begins to materialize.

The figure takes human form, the form of a YOUNG WOMAN, confidently walking toward camera in slow motion, her fellow shadows shown to be nothing more than NONDESCRIPT TRAVELERS crisscross in the background.

The red and blue and yellow smatters of light also begin to take solid form, revealing-

INT. JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BAGGAGE CLAIM - NIGHT

-the JFK baggage claim, with soft blue walls, yellow overhead light, and accents of red issuing from the break lights of a passing handicap shuttle cart.

CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP.

Trailing a small piece of rolling luggage behind her, the young woman continues to march in slow motion toward camera with the hyper-focus of a seasoned New Yorker, the CLOMPS the sound of her thick-heeled, black ankle boots landing hard against the ground.

As she draws nearer, the mesmerizing details of this beauty come fully into focus:

Dressed from head to toe in gray, black and white, GIRLIE, late 20s to early 30s, sports a tight, white, see-through, plunging v-neck with a black lace bra visibly underneath, black skinny jeans, black leather jacket, a light gray scarf, and a small, black leather backpack in lieu of a purse.

CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP.

Her impressive, urban edge might cause any passerby to cowardly and shyly look away. However, Girlie's fresh, minimal make-up has allotted one color.

Red.

Bright red lipstick, perfectly painted within the soft lines of full, very kissable lips, unapologetically seducing any human - male or female - to stare as long as they like.

CLOMP, CLOMP, CLOMP.

The SOUNDS of New York City crescendo with the HONKING of HORNS, STRANGERS' INDISCERNIBLE CELL PHONE CHATTER, the STOMPING of feet, the ROAR of PASSING BUSES and the CRIES of a newborn baby.

EXT. JFK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, PASSENGER PICK UP - NIGHT

The cacophony of NEW YORK CITY NOISE swells even louder as Girlie - with the clipped pace of a city dweller - marches toward a bright yellow cab and parks her rolling luggage near the right taillight just as the trunk POPS open.

Having hurried from the opposite side of the cab, the driver, CLARK, 40s, barely catches a glimpse of the left side of Girlie's face through her tussled, long hair as she opens the back door and tosses her backpack inside.

GIRLIE
(Standard American accent)
44th and 9th.

With that, Girlie disappears into the back of the taxi with a SLAM!

Chomping on a wad of gum with the absentminded determination of a Major League baseball player, Clark hoists the small piece of luggage inside and-

WHAM!

With one strong arm, Clark forces the trunk shut just in time to notice his pretty passenger pressing the "OFF" button on the small TV screen in the back seat.

As he struts back toward the driver's side, the bright headlights of a passing vehicle embellishes the highly masculine attributes of this New York native.

At first glance, one might assume Clark to be a hardened, blue collar stereotype - tough exterior, thick arms, bold chin, gold chain necklace, blue jeans, t-shirt, rugged whiskers that are a bit sloppy, yet sexy all at the same time.

CLIP! He opens the door, jumps in, and-

SLAM!

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Though the dark shadows of HURRIED TRAVELERS still race in and out of frame, inside the cab, the sounds of the NEW YORK BUSTLE have been quieted - the STOMPING and HONKING and CHATTER far less invasive.

The darkness there also provides a comforting hiding place from the toxic, yellow cloud of light pollution just outside - a mixed florescent stew of fixed street lamps and rushing headlights.

Nonchalantly, Clark adjusts his rear-view mirror in order to secretly catch another glimpse of his mysterious passenger gazing out the window in the back.

Filtered through the glass, the yellow florescent glow from outside hints at something much deeper masked underneath Girlie's strong, stoic, city stare.

Absorbing this truth, a surprising softness streams from Clark's eyes. An empathy. Empathy that can only be crafted from a long life of hard knocks.

Throwing the cab in drive, Clark pulls away from the curb, immediately SLAMMING on the breaks, angrily HONKING his horn far more times than necessary.

HONK, HONK, HONK, HONK,

HONK, HONK, HONK, HOOOOOOONNNNNK!

Through his rolled up window-

CLARK

(thick, New York accent)

Fuck! What the shit, man?!

The neighboring cab has violently stopped only inches from Clark's front bumper.

Inside, an INDIAN CABBIE, 50s, SCREAMS back, spittle flying from his mouth, his EXPLOSIVE EXPLETIVES muffled by Clark's rolled up window.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah!

Clark HONK, HONK, HONK, HONKS again, causing the Indian Cabbie to drive off in a huff.

With an aggressive TUG on the wheel, Clark successfully pulls away from the curb-

Launching the two out into the night.

Neither Clark nor Girlie acknowledge their seat belts.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(barely audible)

Mother fucker.

Slowly resuming the chomping of his gum, Clark pointedly directs his eyes at the rear-view again, as if to apologize for his outburst.

Yet, just as his attention falls on Girlie, she avoids his gaze by turning to the window again, her red lipstick - in this particular moment - more resembling armor than a means of flirtation.

Clark wisely remains silent.

Instead, he carefully takes note of the iPhone in Girlie's hand, face down, resting in her lap.

Her phone case displays a playful design of a unicorn getting a piggyback ride from a Tyrannosaurus, suggesting that - on a better day - this striking Millennial might actually have a sense of humor.

Clark chuckles lightly with a closed mouth, the sides of his lips curling upward with intrigue.

As his cab picks up speed, the yellow florescent cloud outside begins to dissipate as the two make their way onto Interstate 678.

EXT. INTERSTATE 678 AND BEYOND - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lifting away from the yellow cab to more of a GOD'S EYE VIEW, the awe and wonder of urban living becomes evident through the beauty and poetry of light.

From high above, the many roadways, highways and freeways that lead to the island of Manhattan look more like bright veins pumping bioluminescent yellow and red life to and from the heart of an other worldly creature - the city itself possessing a heartbeat, a beacon of shimmering hope in the permeating darkness that surrounds it.

Moving back down again from macro to micro, we follow the red taillights of countless vehicles racing along the interstate until a bright yellow cab ZOOMS into frame.

The HUM of the cab's rubber wheels kissing the asphalt evoke a soothing, calming consistency.

HHHHUUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMM.

Through the back window, the lonely silhouettes of Clark and Girlie cause the cab to look more like a cage.

HHHHUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMM.

Curving around the right side of the taxi, we come upon Girlie's face, still gazing out.

Pressed against the glass, her pensive expression creates the perfect backdrop for the reflections of yellow, red and blue streaks of reflective light - resembling some abstract, animated film projected upon her porcelain skin.

HHHHUUUUUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMM.

Finally, Girlie pulls her gaze from the window.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Carefully, Girlie peeks at the rear-view mirror ahead, gifting *her* a secret glimpse of this unknown driver who doesn't seem to be paying her any mind anymore.

With a childlike curiosity, Girlie takes note of the details of this fascinating character before her:

-She observes the way his jaw moves up and down as he chomps on his gum.

-She delights in the gusto in which his thumbs lightly TAP PERCUSSION on the steering wheel to some song caught in his head.

-She notices small flecks of what looks to be dandruff powered lightly across the bridge of his broad shoulders.

The inescapable masculine qualities of this cabbie cause Girlie to bite the inside of her cheek as she allows her gaze to fall to the iPhone in her hand, resting in her lap.

The playful unicorn and T-Rex on the cover bring no comfort. Instead, they seem to cause a surge of pain in their innocent, silly humor.

A haunting reflection of better days.

Days passed.

She flips the phone over and caresses the darkened screen.

Drawing a deep, quiet INHALE, Girlie unlocks her phone, the device automatically picking up right where she left off - to a very specific text message thread.

The light issuing from the screen creates a bright white rectangle in the darkness of each of her pupils, the gray and blue bubbles prominently reflected within.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON THE PHONE

Below the previous text conversation - between Girlie (the blue-bubbles on the right) and "L" (the gray-bubbles on the left) - a new message awaits.

L
(TEXT)
Today 10:53 PM
Land yet? Miss u

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Today 11:22 PM
Landed.

CLARK (O.S.)
So... 44th and 9th, huh?

BACK TO SCENE

Looking up, Girlie finds the reflection of her cabbie's eyes staring at her in the rear-view.

She stares back, assertively.

GIRLIE
Yup.

CLARK
(chit-chat)
Midtown.

GIRLIE
Good ol' Midtown.

Girlie locks her phone - CLICK - causing the blue and white light in her lap to darken.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Up front, Clark happily TAPS out the tune to the song playing in his head, carefully noting in the rear-view Girlie flipping her phone face down again on her lap, this time holding it loosely in both hands.

It's dark in the cab. And quiet. Except for the ever present HUUUUUUUMMMMMMM of rubber on asphalt.

The street lamps of the interstate race over them in streaks of white light, contorting the darkness into living shadows that seem to have a mind of their own.

HHHHUUUUUUUUUMMMMMMM.

CLARK

You're my last fare for the night.

Once again, Girlie confidently matches his stare in the rear-view.

GIRLIE

Yeah?

CLARK

Yeah.

A good-natured smile creeps across her lips.

GIRLIE

I won?

So grateful for that red lipstick smile, Clark lets out a booming LAUGH only New Yorkers can muster.

CLARK

You fuckin' won, sweetheart. You did.

GIRLIE

What do I get? For winning?

CLARK

(mildly sexual)

Anything you want.

This time, Girlie doesn't look away, causing Clark to continue to "test the waters" a bit.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeah, I had a rough day of it. Short trips, barely nothin' extra. This fuckin' business with the credit cards. Cash? People'd throw you a ten, twenty, fifty. "Keep the change" ain't a cliché no more. And when it was, it was nice. When it's paper, you hand it over. Fucking Monopoly money, am I right? But you swipe that plastic, you got time to think, you stare at all those little numbers, and before you know it - I get fucked up the asshole.

He looks to Girlie again in the rear-view.

She seems intrigued enough.

CLARK (CONT'D)

And now, these fuckin' apps, all of 'em - can get a cab, a coffee, burger, soap, socks, wine, water, Chinese fuckin' take out - you can get all that shit, and not even reach for your purse, not once, not even for tip. *Nah*, it's all up in that cloud up there. That big fuckin' cloud, thinkin' it knows better. Swearin' it can keep a secret. But what happens when that cloud starts leakin', huh? What happens when it starts to rain? You bet your ass we're gonna wish we'd stuck with the Monopoly money, am I right?

(a beat)

I mean... *Salt* used to be money. Mother fuckin' salt. The same shit you sprinkle on your eggs. *Yeah*. Every mornin' you toss that cheap-ass-shit all over your eggs with no idea that people used to *die* for it. Tea, coffee, same thing. All that shit you gloss over at the grocery store, at one point in time, humans fuckin' killed each other for it.

(a brief pause)

Bird's eye view of that shit? Over the years, you see money go from salt to gold to paper and *now*? *Money*? It ain't nothin' but an *idea*. Little numbers on a screen. You can't touch it or hide it or bury it. *Nah*, you just tie it to a fuckin' butterfly and send it to that cloud up there. But, one of these days, I'm tellin' ya, that cloud's gonna open up and it's gonna pour acid rain down... all over our dumb faces... Yellow cabs don't play that game. Not in New York. Too much bullshit. You gotta pay me *directly*, you know that, right?

GIRLIE

I know.

CLARK

You can *order* me up on your phone, but you cannot *pay* for me on your phone. Not when you go *yellow*.

Cleverly, Girlie weights Clark's words, coming to an interesting conclusion.

GIRLIE

Well... *Not yet*.

A surprised GRUNT escapes Clark's lips.

CLARK

Fuck... You may be right. Fuuuuuuuuuck...
(a thoughtful beat)

That fuckin' credit card machine... I didn't want the damn thing to begin with. We fought it, we all fought it. Cash is king, you know? But they still put that shit in the backseat. Million dollars for a fuckin' Medallion, and they put that shit in my back seat. And one day soon, like that, they're gonna come back and rip that shit out again, like it was nothin'... Credit card machines, they're gonna be like fuckin' pay phones. Just sittin' there. Lookin' dumb. Waitin'. Waitin' for somebody, *anybody* to give 'em a ring. Havin' no idea... the world's moved on... And forget the credit cards - *Cabs*, yellow cabs? We're fuckin' Blockbuster, you know? We're fightin' it too hard, swimmin' up stream. Busy swimmin' and missin' the whole fuckin' boat... Me, too. I been fightin' it, too. Swimmin', swimmin' hard...

(another beat)

Some of the guys, they talk 'bout gettin' our own app, you know. Yellow cabs with our own fuckin' app... But... I don't know... If we're Blockbuster... it's already too late. Ten years time, there ain't gonna be yellow no more. And the other guys, the guys takin' over? They are gonna be nothin' but a blip on the screen. Fuckin' blink of an eye...

(a pause)

Yeah... you'll order up a car on your phone, just like before, but when you hop in, it ain't gonna be no human behind the wheel, I can tell ya that. You'll order up a car and that fuckin' car will drive itself to wherever-the-fuck you wanna go. And it won't speed, won't stink, won't ever get lost... Might even ask you 'bout your day... *Fuckin' apps*.

In frustration, Clark frantically itches the back of his neck like a dog trying to scratch away a flea.

Girlie offers another red lipstick smirk.

GIRLIE

Ah, I've got you covered.

CLARK

Yeah?

GIRLIE

Yeah. My luggage in the back should settle us.

CLARK

How?

GIRLIE

(teasing)

It's full of salt.

Clark chuckles. He opens his mouth to say something clever in response, but nothing comes out.

Finally-

CLARK

You want some radio?

He reaches for the radio.

GIRLIE

Not really.

Retracting his hand-

CLARK

Yeah, it all sounds the same. 'Specially in my business. After so many hours, drivin' around... all sounds the same.

In the quiet that follows, Girlie seems to be studying him with curiosity, begging the question-

CLARK (CONT'D)

You-uh... you ever get a white cabbie before?

GIRLIE

I... I've never really thought about it.

CLARK

Think about it.

GIRLIE

(after a beat)

No... I guess I haven't.

Clark nods his head, processing something in his mind.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
Is that supposed to mean something?

CLARK
Not really. I mean... some people...
Sometimes people ask about it.

GIRLIE
Really?

CLARK
*Yeah. Like, one guy, some Wall Street
fuckin' douche... he wanted to know why.*

GIRLIE
Why what?

CLARK
*Why a white guy's drivin' a cab. Wanted
to know how I fucked up so bad.*

GIRLIE
That's bullshit.

CLARK
*Right?! Bull-fuckin'-shit! I fuckin' pull
over, right then, I turn around and tell
the guy, "Ride's over, buddy. Get the
fuck outta my cab." Guy jumps out, don't
even pay.*

After a beat, he beams at Girlie in the rear-view, a squinted stare.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Didn't even occur to you. Me bein' white.

GIRLIE
No.

Nodding his head again, Clark seems very pleased with this stranger in the back.

He glances again at the iPhone still held limply in both hands, resting in her lap.

CLARK
(after a beat)
Nice you're not on your phone. I mean,
you don't have to keep talkin' to me or
nothin', but... it's just nice. You know.
To see a human. Not plugged in.

GIRLIE

Yeah, I need a break from it.

Reaching his arm to the floor of the passenger side, Clark fishes out a diet soda from a small cooler.

He pops the can open - TSSSSSST - and takes a swig.

CLARK

Picked up a couple this mornin', LaGuardia, older couple. And they got their-uh, I don't know, their granddaughter with 'em - fifteen, sixteen. And she's just textin', the whole ride. First time in the city, and she don't say a word. I make a joke to grandma - I was like, "So, what, you ask her questions and she texts you the answers?" Grandma laughed, but Princess gives me a glare. A glare, mind you, but still no fuckin' word - barely looked out the window. And get this shit. I drop 'em off near Macy's, right? Pop open the trunk, start helpin' Grandpa with the bags - Empire State, right there. I point it out to Grandpa, he points it out to Princess, and all of a sudden, Princess holds out her phone and snaps a fuckin' picture - all smilin' at the camera, big toothy grin - lookin' all excited and shit. And then, she's back on her phone. Not smilin'. Not talkin'. Nothin'. Just sendin' a fuckin' butterfly to that cloud up there. Makin' her friends all jealous she's in the big city. When the truth is?

Purposefully, in the rear-view, Clark LOCKS EYES with Girlie.

CLARK (CONT'D)

She never fuckin' showed up.

Girlie's genuine gaze glows with an extremely rare authenticity.

GIRLIE

What's your name?

CLARK

Why?

GIRLIE

Just like to know people's names.

CLARK

Fuck. You really are a human, aren't ya?
That's sweet.

He smiles at her reflection, a bashful shyness surfacing
then submerging quickly again.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Clark.

Thoughtfully absorbing the name-

GIRLIE

Clark.

CLARK

(teasing)

You thought I'd say *Vinnie* or some shit
like that.

Girlie lets out an intoxicating laugh.

GIRLIE

I... I don't know what I thought.

CLARK

It's fine, it's fine. I mean. Shit. We
pass out these names, you know, random
ass names to these cute, little babies.
Any name you want. Whatever-the-fuck has
a nice ring to it. Whatever-the-fuck
gives you high hopes for higher education
and bullshit. But that little thing in
your arms, it's never gonna be exactly
what you had in mind. I mean, Clark plays
tennis, he's got a house in the Hamptons,
goes to opera and shit. I just ain't that
guy.

GIRLIE

What name would you choose? If you could?

CLARK

(with a shrug)

Ah. *Vinnie*.

Clark secures his can of diet soda in a cup holder.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

After securing his can of diet soda in the cup holder, Clark's eyes dart to the rear-view again.

CLARK

So-uh... You live here, right?

GIRLIE

I do.

CLARK

Yeah, your little outfit gave you away.

GIRLIE

(with a chuckle)

My outfit?

CLARK

Says a lot about you.

GIRLIE

What does it say?

CLARK

That you can handle yourself.

GIRLIE

How can you possibly know that?

CLARK

It ain't difficult to read people. I mean. You didn't wait in a taxi line. No, you ordered me up on your phone. You jumped in the back, business as usual, you immediately turned off that damn little screen 'cause you already know what fuckin' Broadway shows are playin', and you didn't even think to reach for your seat belt. Why would you? You've had enough rides. In and out, am I right?

GIRLIE

(intrigued)

What else?

CLARK

You gave me cross streets, not some fuckin' address. And I can tell you're not concerned with the meter, 'cause you already know JFK's a flat rate.

GIRLIE

Impressive.

CLARK

(a chuckle)

I'm not claimin' to be some Sherlock or nothin'. Just a guy who pays attention. You've had a long day. You're tired. You wanna go home, grab a shower, sleep in your own bed. And. You ordered up a mother fuckin' taxi. Not some town-car-bullshit. That's a New Yorker that pays attention. Someone who knows what the fuck's goin' on.

GIRLIE

And what about my "little outfit"?

CLARK

You're wearin' boots, not sneakers. You've got a scarf, but it ain't cold outside. Your purse is a backpack and you're not afraid to look me in the eye.

Once again, they LOCK EYES in the rearview.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Like I said. You can handle yourself.

Girlie's smile hints at sadness.

GIRLIE

I like to think so.

Suddenly, Clark rolls down his window, inviting a warm, early autumn wind to fill the taxi with its fresh breath and all encompassing SOUND.

PPPSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHH!

As the crisp air rushes over her, a welcomed ocean wave of newness, Girlie INHALES deeply, her long hair lightly jostled by the wind.

Clark rears back and launches his wad of gum out the window with a loud-

HOCK!

The gross act causes Girlie to chuckle under her breath, gifting us a hint of a chill tomboy underneath.

Yet, Girlie's amusement quickly fades as she glances down at her unicorn and T-Rex iPhone cover.

PPPSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHH!

Looking like a junkie staring at a heroine needle, Girlie's face begins to contort with a sudden, irresistible urge.

PPPSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHH!

The SOUND of the wind decrescendos into SILENCE as Clark rolls up his window.

In the following moment of suspended stillness, Girlie closes her eyes, gifting us a moment of muddled memory.

EXT. DREAMLIKE VOID - NIGHT (MEMORY)

Against a dark night, the bright haze of yellow, blue, green and red lights twinkle in strings of shining stars.

Within the confusing, cosmic glow, two SHADOWS emerge.

It is difficult to be certain, but if you squint your eyes and watch carefully, you might conclude that these shadows are dancing.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT

As the SILENCE continues to hang thick in the air, Girlie opens her eyes, soft focused on nothing in particular, just as her iPhone chimes with a single DING! indicating a new message.

Her eyes grow wide with an aching addiction just before Girlie slowly flips over her phone and unlocks it.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON THE PHONE

The screen illuminates to reveal a new text from "L."

L
(TEXT)
where are u? need u

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Today 11:53 PM
In a cab.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Heading home from JFK.

A new gray-bubble forms with three little dots waving various shades of gray.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
There u r

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Indeed.

This incessant "ping-pong match" of a text conversation should intentionally feel cumbersome. The CLICKING and BLOOPS and DINGS is very much meant to agitate, directly showcasing Girlie's burdened, yet addicting, obligation toward this "L" person.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
hola

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Hello.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
How do I say pretty?

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Bonita.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
U r muy bonita

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Thank you.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
How do I say sorry?

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Lo siento.

The TEXTING-SOUNDS slowly begin to amplify in Girlie's mind, the pace and NOISE of this written conversation growing almost maddening.

(TEXT)
L
(...)

DING!

I need u
(TEXT)
L (CONT'D)
(...)

DING!

How do I say that?
(TEXT)
L (CONT'D)

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

Necesito usted. I think.
(TEXT)
GIRLIE

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

BLOOP!

I only took two semesters.
(TEXT)
GIRLIE (CONT'D)

(...)
(TEXT)
L

DING!

Need u
(TEXT)
L (CONT'D)
(...)

DING!

need your pink
(TEXT)
L (CONT'D)

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

With the bright light of white, blue and gray reflecting in her eyes, Girlie stares at her phone, not responding.

CLARK (O.S.)
Where you flyin' from?

In her eyes, we see Girlie type, "**It's been a long week.**"

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK!

GIRLIE
(to Clark)
Oklahoma.

BLOOP!

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
It's been a long week.

CLARK (O.S.)
What's in Oklahoma?

The three gray dots appear again, promising a response.

GIRLIE
(to Clark)
I grew up there.

REVERSE ON PHONE

The following should feel like a visual and audio attack. It is intended to be highly uncomfortable in every way imaginable. It's the text equivalent of a man sexually assaulting a woman at a bar.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Show me

(...)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Put your phone between your legs and show me

(MORE)

L (CONT'D)

(. . .)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Show me pink

(. . .)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
or brown

(. . .)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
*mmmmmmmmmmmmmm ur sweet little brown
nipples*

(. . .)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Omg

(. . .)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
cock so hard

(. . .)

DING!

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Throbbing

BACK TO SCENE

CLICK.

Suddenly, Girlie locks her phone.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

In the rear-view, Clark catches a glimpse of Girlie blankly staring at the darkened, locked phone in her hands.

CLARK

(gingerly)

What about your accent?

In the backseat, Girlie's phone lets out a soft *DING*.

Girlie glances up at Clark, in a bit of a daze.

GIRLIE

Sorry... What?

DING.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

ECU ON GIRLIE'S PHONE - The mute switch on the side of the phone is slid to the left, showcasing the color red, a sign that the phone's sound has been turned off.

BACK TO SCENE

Her thoughts miles away, Girlie takes a moment to find her driver's soft gaze waiting for her in the rear-view.

CLARK

Your accent.

GIRLIE

(confused)

My accent?

CLARK

Yeah. Don't people from Oklahoma -
(badly imitating a Midwestern
accent)
- talk like this?

Girlie relaxes, allowing a chuckle.

GIRLIE

(softly)

Not all of us, apparently.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

A sucker for that red lipstick grin, Clark continues, clearly committed to keeping this mysterious beauty happily distracted from whatever-the-hell she's got happening on her phone.

CLARK

You from Tulsa?

GIRLIE

People always ask Tulsa.

CLARK

Only place we ever fuckin' heard of.

GIRLIE

What about Oklahoma City?

CLARK

Yeah, but that's too easy. You ask Tulsa, you sound like you know somethin'. Guessin' Oklahoma City's fuckin' amateur hour.

GIRLIE

I'm from a tiny little town.

Girlie suddenly opens her back pack and plunges her iPhone deep inside.

CLARK

Where?

GIRLIE

You've never heard of it.

CLARK

Where?

Enjoying the distraction, Girlie extends her right arm.

GIRLIE

Okay. So... Oklahoma's shaped like a pan, right?

CLARK

You guys like to think so, but let's be honest.

GIRLIE

If my arm's the panhandle, then I grew up here.

She points to her right armpit.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
The armpit of Oklahoma.

CLARK
What's the name of the town?

GIRLIE
Gage.

CLARK
Gage, Oklahoma.

GIRLIE
You got it.

CLARK
How many people?

GIRLIE
Four hundred-ish.

CLARK
Huh.

GIRLIE
Yep.

CLARK
(after a pause)
I honest-to-God would have never guessed
Oklahoma.

GIRLIE
What would you have guessed?

CLARK
Not an armpit, I can tell you that.
(a beat)
How long you been in New York?

GIRLIE
Nine years, in June.

CLARK
No shit.

GIRLIE
No shit. One more year, and I'll be
official.

CLARK

Yeah, but let's be honest, you're official now. Anyone who *chooses* for nine years to wait at the post office until the idea of "goin' postal" starts to have a nice ring to it - anyone who *chooses* for nine years to ride around in those little sardine cans underground, some guy rubbin' up against you like a slobberin' dog humpin' your leg - anyone who *chooses* for nine years to drag their loads of laundry down the street to fight some tough-ass-broad for some machine that eats up all your quarters and gives ya bedbugs - and all for the *privilege* of gettin' a whiff of that sweet 'n sour piss aroma every now and again as you run down the street, eatin' your mornin' bagel? *You're a fuckin' New Yorker.*

(after a pause)

That is... unless you got money and you don't do any of that shit. That's-uh... that's a different New York, altogether. Might as well be another fuckin' planet.

GIRLIE

I did all that. For a long time.

CLARK

And what changed for ya?

GIRLIE

Worked my ass off, caught a break.

CLARK

What'cha do? For work?

GIRLIE

I'm a programmer.

CLARK

Computers?

GIRLIE

Computers.

CLARK

No shit.

GIRLIE

No shit.

CLARK

Like ones and zeros and shit?

GIRLIE

Like ones and zeros and shit.

(teasing)

You thought I was going to say something more... *girlie*.

CLARK

Yeah, like a weddin' planner or fashion or somethin'.

GIRLIE

Not a lot of women code, I'll give you that.

CLARK

And you drew a line in the sand. Lifted your leg and made your mark.

GIRLIE

(with a grin)

I don't mind squatting.

Captivated by her reflection, Clark watches as an overhead street lamp illuminates this young woman's flawless face - those red lips - for a fleeting moment of pure bliss.

CLARK

So... what's the deal with the ones and zeros?

GIRLIE

Like...?

CLARK

Like... I mean. They're like building blocks or whatnot, right? Like, when I look at my computer, I'm really lookin' at a bunch of ones and zeros or some shit.

GIRLIE

Yeah, something like that.

CLARK

No, tell me. I honestly wanna know. Clearly I like to know a lot about a lotta different shit. Can't be a know-it-all if you don't know nothin'.

GIRLIE

Well?

For emphasis sake, Girlie perches on the back seat, drawing closer to the plexiglass between them.

Clark shifts his weight, doing his best not to look too excited.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

Uh... the ones and zeros... in a way... they kind of mean "on" and "off." But, what they become though, they become these strings called *bytes*. And you line them up by eight. You take eight ones and zeros, and then, you form a number out of that.

(a beat)

There's also a data type in programming called a Boolean Value.

(pronounced boo-lee-in)

And, with that, I guess... it isn't really so much about saying "on" or "off." It's more about saying "true" or "false."

CLARK

Ones and zeros mean true or false?

GIRLIE

At the basic level.

CLARK

So if-

GIRLIE

If something is true, it's a one. If it's false-

CLARK

It's a zero.

GIRLIE

You got it.

CLARK

Huh.

GIRLIE

But nobody writes in ones and zeros anymore. We have a higher level of programming now that's been built *on top* of the ones and zeros.

CLARK

So, what do ya write? Instead?

GIRLIE

It's become its own language. Like. What programmers do, what I do, is write lines of code. But that code... it looks very... It's sort of... odd. You'll see all these weird words and punctuation that don't make any sense, but it all means something. It's not just gibberish. It's a, like a *library*, like... when I write code, it refers to something someone else has written. And what *they've* written also refers to something someone else has written. And, yeah, it all goes back, all the way down, it does go back to the ones and zeros. Like building a skyscraper or something. Right now, we're building floor fifty-five or whatever. But the foundation of the entire building, the very first level, is built from ones and zeros.

CLARK

True and false.

GIRLIE

Correct. Whether the answer was true or false, one or zero, is basically how... everything you see... operates.

Pensively, Clark analyses this new information.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Having come closer to the plexiglass, Girlie has a better view of Clark.

She studies his strong chin, his ropey neck, his rugged whiskers. Something in her eyes registers surprise by how handsome this cabbie is up close.

As she traces the back of his neck with her eyes, she notices that his gold chain has slightly shifted to reveal a very pale line of skin prominent within the darker shades of sun-kissed, pigmented brown, suggesting that Clark never takes that necklace off. Ever.

Having been lost in thought, Clark finally draws his conclusion with a shrug.

CLARK

I mean... it makes sense. We all do that.
Lay down our bricks of ones and zeros.
Build our own little fort.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

And that shit, it starts young. I mean, think about it. "You are stupid." True or false? "You are ugly." True or false? "Your mother loves you." True or false? And when you grow up? That shit don't stop. "Climate change." True or false? "Jesus Christ." True or false? "I must wear pants today." True or false? "I am gay, I am straight, I am bi, I am a man, I am a woman." True or fuckin' false. And on and on it goes.

Girlie cannot stop looking at that fine tan-line of pale skin from the gold chain around Clark's neck.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(after a beat)

We all gotta choose our ones and zeros. And whatever we decide... yeah... that becomes the *foundation* from which we operate.

SITTING BACK, Girlie falls silent a moment.

Finally-

GIRLIE

I've never thought of it like that before.

CLARK

Ah... I'm just talkin' bullshit.

In the rear-view, Girlie grins playfully again.

GIRLIE

(as if to say, "False.")

Zero.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

With a chuckle, Clark's bashful side surfaces, then quickly submerges again.

CLARK

You're a... you're a surprising person, I gotta say.

GIRLIE

Awwwww, shucks.

CLARK

Very little surprises me these days.

Clark reaches for his diet soda.

GIRLIE
And what about *you*?

CLARK
What about me?

GIRLIE
Where are *you* from?

CLARK
Hell's Kitchen. Not far from where we're goin'.

GIRLIE
Nice.

CLARK
Wasn't nice back then. Those days... if Hell really did have a kitchen, that was it.

GIRLIE
You still live in Manhattan?

CLARK
Own a place. Jackson Heights. Small house.

GIRLIE
Still. It's a house.

CLARK
You better fuckin' believe it.

GIRLIE
So. Clark lives in Queens.

CLARK
No, *Vinnie* lives in Queens. Clark's gotta loft in TriBeCa.

The two chuckle.

GIRLIE
Right, right.

Suddenly, Clark notices something up ahead, causing him to tap the breaks.

CLARK
Oh, *Fuck*. That ain't good.

CLARK'S POV

Through the windshield, a wall of countless, stationary red taillights force the cab to come to a complete stop.

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Turning, Girlie gazes out the back window, squinting against the wall of endless yellow headlights crowding in from behind.

The two have been captured between uncompromising walls of red and yellow light, the street lamps overhead glaring down, now fixed florescent stars in the night sky.

Utter gridlock.

The worst kind.

The New York kind.

CLARK

Dammit. Got some kinda fender bender up there. See the lights?

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

They both look ahead at the array of flickering emergency lights - police cars, ambulances - far off in the distance, proudly pulsing red and blue.

Clark aggressively throws the cab in park.

THRUST!

"P."

CLARK

Sorry, sweetie.

GIRLIE

Not your fault.

CLARK

I hate this shit.

GIRLIE

It's fine. Really.

CLARK

Should've been payin' attention. Could'a
got off back there.

GIRLIE

(teasing)

Well? I'm on the flat rate, so...

CLARK

(a laugh)

No, I'm gonna meter your ass!

GIRLIE

Nope. I won. I won again. Two to zero.

CLARK

Leavin' me in the dust over here.

The glow of taillights ahead dissipates, prompting Clark
to-

THRUST!

"D."

After gaining a bit of ground, the wall of red forces
Clark to stop again.

THRUST!

"P."

Grabbing his diet soda, Clark takes a long swig.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Red and blue, red and blue, pounds upon Girlie's pensive,
porcelain, a direct competition against the bright yellow
headlights that aggressively backlight this beauty from
behind.

All is still. Too still.

All is quiet. Too quiet.

Girlie watches as Clark secures his soda back in the cup
holder and begins to play percussion on the steering
wheel again - unable to sit still.

As his thumbs TAP to the rhythm of some song stuck in his
head, Girlie's gaze falls to her backpack.

The BEAT of the driver's thumbs crescendoes in Girlie's mind as that wave of fierce addiction washes over her again.

TAP, TAP, TAP - goes the "drums."

Her fingers twitch.

She softly bites her bottom lip.

TAP, TAP, TAP.

Suddenly, Clark itches at the back of his neck in frustration.

SCRATCH, SCRATCH, SCRATCH.

Girlie watches as a small flake of dandruff falls from Clark's short hair in slow motion.

Her face turns very curious by this bright white fleck, as pure as snow, as it innocently floats within the pulsing red and blue lights, until it softly falls upon the broad shoulders of Clark's cotton t-shirt.

Something about it proves perfectly imperfect.

A small glimpse of humanity.

The poetry found within our flaws.

In a daze, Girlie reaches inside her backpack, pulls out her phone and unlocks it.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON THE PHONE

Two new gray-bubbles await.

L
(TEXT)
U there?

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Lost you

The drafting section types, "**Lo siento. Caught in traffic.**"

With the phone still muted, this time the clicking "typewriter" sound has been replaced with SILENCE.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Today 12:03 AM
Lo siento. Caught in traffic.

Surprisingly, a new gray-bubble immediately appears.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

K

(...)

Hows you're sis?

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Good.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Good.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Thank you for asking.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

U r welcome

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
I know this stuff bores you.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Doesn't bore me

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
But you do lose interest.

L
(TEXT)
(...)
(MORE)

L (CONT'D)

just restless

(. . .)

Need u

GIRLIE

(TEXT)

I need you, too.

(TEXT)

I miss you.

L

(TEXT)

(. . .)

Miss you

(. . .)

Miss you naughty

(. . .)

Want those little brown nipples

(. . .)

fuck

(. . .)

Throbbing

(. . .)

Cock so hard

(. . .)

pink and brown

(. . .)

sho me

(. . .)

be my naughty

BACK TO SCENE

Red and blue pulsing on her face, Girlie simply stares at the slew of texts before her.

Biting her right thumbnail, Girlie sits perfectly still.

Red and blue.

Hovering just over her left shoulder, we eavesdrop as a new gray-bubble - with waving gray dots - appears.

Then disappears...

Then appears...

Then disappears again.

Girlie's disengagement has clearly caused "L" to greatly question what he should say next.

Finally---

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
(...)

You their?

A new gray-bubble - with waving gray dots - appears, then disappears again into nothing.

Silence...

No more gray-bubbles...

Nothing.

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

Pulling her thumbnail from her mouth, Girlie begins to compose another text in the quiet and darkness of the back seat.

Red and blue.

SUPERIMPOSED: TEXT MESSAGES ON SCREEN, GIRLIE'S TEXTS SCREEN-RIGHT, "L'S TEXTS SCREEN-LEFT.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Here.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

She bites her thumbnail again as she waits.

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
(...)

R u ?

She pulls her thumbnail from her mouth.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Am I what?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

R u wet ?

Girlie lightly shakes her head, her eyes softly rolling in agitation.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Sigh.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

What??

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Can we have a normal conversation?
(TEXT)
Ever?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

We just did!

(...)

I asked about your sister!

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
For two seconds.
(TEXT)
All you EVER want to do is whisper.

L
 (TEXT)
 (...)

My cock is so hard

GIRLIE
 (TEXT)
Yes. We've covered that.

L
 (TEXT)
 (...)

You have to see this

(...)

what you do to me

BACK TO SCENE

Girlie glances up, paranoid that Clark might be watching.

He isn't.

He remains distracted by the song in his head.

TAP, TAP, TAP.

Girlie looks down at her phone again-

GIRLIE'S POV ON HER PHONE

We see a quick CUT as a bathroom-stall-dick-pic has just been delivered.

For those of you paying attention, this man has a perfectly average cock, nothing to write home about.

REVERSE ON GIRLIE'S REACTION: *Ug. Really?*

GIRLIE
 (TEXT)
Omg.

L
 (TEXT)
 (...)

U wet yet?

Girlie glances up at Clark again.

He's still not paying attention.

She habitually puts her thumbnail between her teeth.

Then, Girlie suddenly pulls her thumbnail from between her lips and composes, **"Such a big boy."**

She sends.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Such a big boy.

CLARK (O.S.)
How long were you in Oklahoma?

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

SNAPPING BACK TO REALITY, Girlie looks up from her phone.

GIRLIE
(playing it cool)
Uh... Two weeks.

CLARK
For what? Work?

GIRLIE
Vacation.

CLARK
You-uh, visitin' family or somethin'?

GIRLIE
I have a half sister.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

GIRLIE'S POV ON PHONE

The gray dots begin their dance again.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Girlie waits.

Finally-

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
U want me to cum?
(...)
Can rub my cock right here in the stall
(...)
Just 4 you
(...)
want to explode for you
(...)
U want my cum?

REVERSE ON GIRLIE

Utter SILENCE, as if all the air has been sucked out of the scene.

Girlie herself looks as if she's literally holding her breath.

Red, blue.

Red, blue.

With a face of deep confliction, Girlie doesn't even blink for a long pause.

ECU ON THE PHONE

Impulsively and rapidly, Girlie suddenly types, "**No. Save it for me, baby.**"

She sends.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
No. Save it for me, baby.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, FRONT SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Clark watches as Girlie quickly locks her phone again and places it face down on her lap.

CLARK
(after a beat)
What's she like? Your sister?

Taking her time to answer, Girlie stares out the window again - red taillights illuminating her from the windshield, yellow headlights backlighting her from behind.

GIRLIE
(quietly)
Honestly? She's kind of a bitch.

CLARK
How's she a bitch? What she do?

GIRLIE
Little things... Like, she yells at waiters and... makes fun of my cankles.

CLARK
Your *cankles*?

GIRLIE
I have thick ankles.

CLARK
I can't believe that.

GIRLIE
It's true.

CLARK
But you're small.

GIRLIE
I'm small and I have crazy thick ankles.

CLARK
That's a thing?

GIRLIE
It's a thing.

CLARK
Huh.

GIRLIE
I have chubby knees too, but she can't make fun of those.

CLARK
Why?

Girlie pulls her gaze from the window with an almost militant refusal to show weakness.

Instead, she cleverly deflects with a bit of light humor.

GIRLIE
Her knees are huge.

CLARK
(a chuckle)
I take it you don't visit all that often?

GIRLIE
Hadn't seen her in years.

CLARK
Why?

GIRLIE
We just stopped talking. We didn't have a fight or anything, we just... stopped talking.

CLARK
Why now?

GIRLIE
She tracked me down. Asked me to visit. I had no reason to say no.

CLARK
How'd she track you down? The cloud?

GIRLIE
The cloud.

CLARK
Acid rain?

GIRLIE
We had a nice time. I mean - she's a total bitch, but we laughed a lot. We drank a lot and we laughed a lot.

CLARK
She married?

GIRLIE
She has a girlfriend.

CLARK
Nice.

GIRLIE
Named *Red-Wolf*.

CLARK
Fuck me. She born with that name?

GIRLIE
She was.

CLARK
And I thought "Clark" was some bullshit.

GIRLIE
She's Native American.

CLARK
She's somethin'.

GIRLIE
They seem happy. They live in a trailer,
have two dogs, they're saving up to move
to Napa.

(after a beat)
She's come a long way.

CLARK
She older, younger?

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB, BACK SEAT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Red and blue.

GIRLIE'S POV ON CLARK'S EYES IN THE REAR-VIEW - Something
about the empathy softly swimming in those baby-blues
causes Girlie to answer plainly.

GIRLIE
She... she was eleven when I was born,
so... she was like a mom growing up. But
she was a fucked up mom, like... she used
to tie me up, ankle to ankle, wrist to
wrist, and put me in the bathtub and lock
me in the bathroom.

CLARK
What the fuck? Bathtub full?

In the SILENCE that follows, a faint RINGING sound
emerges, the sound that can be found deep within one's
ear.

Intensely backlit by the wall of headlights, Girlie stares blankly ahead, allowing her mind to fall into a distant, hazy memory.

RIIIIIINNNNNNNG as the headlights behind Girlie begin to grow brighter and brighter until-

INT. DREAMLIKE WHITE VOID. BATHROOM - DAY (MEMORY)

All is white.

RIIIIIINNNNNNNG.

A SLOW PUSH IN ON a white porcelain, claw-foot bathtub that slowly begins to take form within the void.

As we move closer, the crisp, clean bright white of the tub gives way to the brutal reality of its bleak imperfections.

Though empty, the tub's thin yellow ring lines its water capacity, all the way around - small polyps of black mold clinging for life near the drain.

RIIIIIIIINNNNNNNG.

Above the tub, the frame of a small window takes form, pale light from a rainy, gloomy day filtered through a sheer, shabby, brown-mildew-stained curtain.

PRESSING into the light of the window, we move through the sheer curtain into-

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT

The back window of the taxi where Girlie slowly turns her head, ALMOST LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO CAMERA - as if facing the memory head on.

The RINGING stops.

SILENCE.

GIRLIE
(quietly)
Empty.

In the front seat, Clark looks at the rear-view, seeing Girlie thoughtfully staring out the back window.

This new information seems to have rattled Clark to the core.

One might wonder if it speaks to something much deeper.

A time gone by.

Memories this man has long since left behind.

CLARK

(quietly)

Why the fuck would she do that?

Girlie turns again, facing Clark's stare in the rear-view.

GIRLIE

It was her way of helping me practice.

CLARK

Practice what?

GIRLIE

If I ever got kidnapped, I'd be able to escape. That was her logic.

Clark has been rendered speechless for a moment, his thoughts held captive by something, something disturbing.

His cab in park, that stubborn, sinister wall of red taillights before him, Clark stares at the giant "P" on the dash, looking like a helpless child.

CLARK

(quietly)

That is some crazy shit.

Still staring at the "P"-

CLARK (CONT'D)

(softly, simply)

Did you like bein' tied up?

When no reply comes, Clark TURNS HIS HEAD FOR THE FIRST TIME, engaging in a real human connection - a moment in time, capsulated in slow motion - advancing these two souls far beyond mere reflections in a rear-view mirror.

The cab suddenly ceases to be "front seat" and "back seat."

Somehow this place, this metal cage, has emotionally expanded.

And you can feel it.

It's in the air.

It's in the light.

It's in the shared silence.

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

GIRLIE

(sincerely)

I liked the challenge of getting free.

CLOSE UP ON CLARK

A sense of recognition, an understanding, registers in Clark's eyes.

And what he sees in her is clearly a piece of himself.

CLARK

You got loose... didn't you? You sat there in the bathroom... in that cold, empty bathtub... for God knows how long... and you wiggled yourself free. Every. Fuckin'. Time.

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

A resiliency washes over Girlie's face.

Red and blue.

A shared understanding.

Red and blue.

These two are *survivors*.

GIRLIE

Kidnappers be damned.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON CLARK

CLARK

Like I said... you can handle yourself.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

Her eyes simply reply, "Damn fucking straight."

BACK TO SCENE

The red glow in the cab dims as the wall of red lights ahead moves a bit.

Turning from Girlie, Clark THRUSTS his cab from "P" to "D" and pulls forward a few yards.

Putting the cab back in "P," Clark falls silent, his right leg prominently bouncing up and down.

Red and blue.

CLARK (CONT'D)
(after a beat, quietly)
You get a prize or somethin'? For gettin'
lose?

GIRLIE
Not really. By the time I'd get free...
my sister would... be at work or
whatever.

CLARK
(after a pause)
So... where was mom?

GIRLIE
Mom was gone.

CLARK
And where did mom go?

GIRLIE
(with a deep, dramatic voice)
Mom went out for a pack of smokes and
never came back.

CLARK
That's funny. You're funny.

Unable to engage again directly just yet, Clark relies on Girlie's reflection in the rear-view.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Cute as all hell. What are you? Twenty-five? Twenty-six?

Shaking her head-

GIRLIE
No. I don't answer that question.

CLARK
Why the hell not?

GIRLIE
Because it's bullshit.

CLARK

What, you weird about your age?

GIRLIE

The whole world's weird about my age! If I told you I was twenty-four or if I was thirty-four, your opinion of me would drastically change.

CLARK

That is not true.

GIRLIE

For women? It is. It is fucking true. The moment we turn thirty, our value is cut in half.

CLARK

I mean... Fine, fuck it, it's true. It is true. But, listen- I mean- You really do look twenty-somethin', but... by the way you talk, if I wasn't lookin', I'd guess you were fifty, so-

GIRLIE

So, what does it matter how many times I've been around the sun?

Put in his place, Clark draws a breath, but cannot muster a reply.

Then-

CLARK

Hell if I know... It's just a question, I guess. Somethin' people ask. Maybe you're right, maybe it is bullshit.

(a beat)

I guess... it's just, it was my way, my way of tryin' to understand. I mean... it is a bit confusin' to meet some chick who looks twenty-two, but is clearly a fuckin' rocket ship.

GIRLIE

(amused)

A rocket ship, huh?

He imitates the SOUND of a NASA rocket launching, accompanied with a hand gesture.

CLARK

That's you.

GIRLIE
(like a bad ass)
Yeah. I feel it.

CLARK
Feel it. Own it.

GIRLIE
I get shit done.

CLARK
Gonna take over the whole wide world, no question.

GIRLIE
I'll build a small empire and leave the rest.

CLARK
(after a chuckle)
You-uh... you plan on sharing that Empire with someone? A boyfriend or whatnot?

Girlie's smile fades. She stoically looks out the window again.

CLARK (CONT'D)
What? You need me to kick someone's ass?

GIRLIE
Nah. It's okay.

CLARK
What's his name?

GIRLIE
Doesn't matter.

CLARK
He fuck up that bad?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Come on. I told you *my* name, let's hear his.

GIRLIE
I'd rather not say.

CLARK
Oh. I see. I get it.

This grabs her attention.

GIRLIE

You get what?

CLARK

He's married. I get it.

Throwing the cab into "D," Clark inches forward.

As they reach another full stop, Girlie doesn't say anything for a long pause.

THRUST!

"P."

Finally-

GIRLIE

Why do you think he's married?

Clark casually reaches across the dashboard for another stick of gum.

CLARK

You could've said his name and how would I ever know? As if there's only one Bob or Sam or Jeff in New-York-fuckin'-City. Nah... you so afraid to say a name? The guy's married. Or you're married. Or someone's fuckin' married and no one wants to say that shit out loud. Gum?

Clark offers the pack of gum to Girlie.

Accepting his gift, Girlie pulls the pack of gum through the small opening in the plexiglass divider between them.

Quietly, Girlie takes a stick and returns the pack to Clark.

After the gum has successfully softened in her mouth-

GIRLIE

(plainly)

He's married.

CLARK

I know he's fuckin' married. I know people. Don't drive a cab for twenty years and not know people.

Clark turns his whole body toward Girlie again, looking directly at her.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Word of advice? And this is comin' from a man married twice with a lotta action on the side. You ready?

GIRLIE

Ready.

CLARK

Don't ever say the word "love," all right? Just... don't say it.

Silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Oh, sweetheart... You fuckin' said it, didn't you?

No reply - "deer caught in head lights."

CLARK (CONT'D)

You did! You said the fuckin' "L" word! Oh, God, honey! That's fuckin' suicide in that world, didn't you know that?! Fuck! He does not want to hear that from you. He wants to hear it from his mother, his wife, his kids - but he does *not* want to hear that shit from you. In the cognitive wheel that is his life, that is *not* your function.

GIRLIE

And what is my function?

CLARK

Sex! Touch me, suck me, lick me, but do not love me. Don't you fuckin' love me!

This time, Girlie opens her mouth to say something, but falters.

It takes a few tries until-

GIRLIE

I'm not... *that girl*, okay? I just... I couldn't *not* say it anymore.

CLARK

And what? He's supposed to love you back? He's supposed to ride in on a big, white horse and whisk you away to some cliff in Greece? Live out his days braidin' your hair with wild flowers and forget-me-nots? No fuckin' way.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

(a beat)

He's not gonna be there when your olive oil dries up, sweetheart. You're not that important. *He* knows that. *I* know that. But *you*, you just gotta catch up, it's all right. Gotta change your ones to zeros, I get it, it takes time.

Girlie wants to say something, but sits utterly dumbfounded.

Clark, in true form, barrels forward.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Honest-to-God, my first wife was everything you'd ever want - five-eight, hundred and fifteen pounds, tits out to here, hair full of bleach and a head full of *nothin'*. Men love women that are dumb as shit. They're fuckin' pigs in the bedroom. Mother-fuckin'-pigs and we love that shit.

GIRLIE

You think that smart women-

CLARK

Cannot reduce themselves to pigs in the bedroom. That is right. Can't have it both ways. Don't exist.

GIRLIE

That is not true.

CLARK

You look like a smart girl. Went to college, read a lot, talk politics, all that shit?

GIRLIE

Yes.

CLARK

You ever been a pig in the bedroom?

GIRLIE

What's your definition of a pig?

Clark throws his head back, howling with laughter.

CLARK

You see! Dumb chicks don't need explainin' - they just do it! Like they were *made* for it.

GIRLIE
(offended)
I do stuff.

CLARK
(imitating her, but
offensively too high
pitched)
"I do stuff."

Becoming all too serious, almost dark-

CLARK (CONT'D)
Yeah, but do you love your own *filth*?
Love it so much, you'd roll around and
around and around... until you fuckin'
stink?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)
That was my first wife. Man... Everything
a guy could ask for.

For a moment, Clark loses himself in what must be fond
memories.

CLARK (CONT'D)
But, uh... she-uh... she starts gainin'
weight, right? And it makes her feel bad
about herself and she stops wantin' to,
you know-

GIRLIE
(begrudgingly)
Oink?

CLARK
Do her wifely duty and whatnot. And, in
no time flat, honest-to-God, I go out and
find myself a nineteen-year-old, put her
up in an apartment down the street, pay
for everything.

GIRLIE
Are you *serious*?

CLARK
Oh, yeah. Cute little thing. Polish. Long
legs. Fucked the shit out of her. Best
year of my life. Would've kept her around
longer, but-

GIRLIE

Ahhh... the "L" word.

CLARK

(in a bad, Polish accent)

"Please, Clark, please. I love you. I die for you. I want I should have your babies."

They stare at each other in the rear-view.

Red and blue.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Not your function. You are there because their wives had kids and got fat. Or their wives have a career, or cancer, or whatever-the-fuck it is - men don't want to hear that shit come outta your mouth. They barely want you to say a word at all.

Red and blue.

GIRLIE

So, why get married? Why don't men just... stay single so they can fuck whoever, whenever?

With a cheeky grin, Clark corrects her grammar.

CLARK

Whomever.

GIRLIE

Dude. Seriously?

With a chuckle, Clark continues, very much enjoying this lively debate.

CLARK

Men? We wanna look good for other men, if that makes sense. We wanna have a fancy suit, a phat house, a fast car. "He who dies with the most toys wins." Sure, that's talkin' about the suit, the house, the car, but it also *includes* the wife and the kids. *Toys.*

(a beat)

Now... lotta guys out there, maybe they did fall in love. Maybe they really did wanna get married and have kids and whatever-the-fuck. But deep down? If they're honest? Really honest?

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

Lookin' like a family man's more important than bein' one.

GIRLIE

There are good guys out there.

CLARK

Yeah... But they are very few and very far between. Much more than you would ever wanna know.

GIRLIE

(after a beat)

Women cheat, too.

CLARK

Sure, but for different reasons. Women wanna feel sexy. But they wanna feel sexy, 'cause they wanna feel wanted. And they wanna feel wanted, 'cause they wanna feel loved. And, there it is - the "L" word again.

GIRLIE

That is such bullshit. I am certain there are plenty of women out there that can cheat just like a fucking man!

CLARK

Sure, sure. There are some women out there that just wanna get fucked, no question. But, those women... they don't just fuck any Joe Blow down the street. Nah. They reserve their skills for men that have money. Men who have power. Thus, causing men to want money and power all the more. The suit, the house, the car - we want those things, because we want those skilled women to fuck us, fuck us senseless, like a man, no strings attached. Therefore? You ladies fightin' so hard to be our equal, is actually, in essence, still just reducing most of you to nothin' but toys. And so the cycle continues.

GIRLIE

I... seriously hate you right now.

Clark laughs.

CLARK

Look. At the end of the day, I do agree with you. Man or woman, people are people.

GIRLIE

Thank you.

CLARK

And people get lonely. Don't matter the reason. Humans just want a soft spot to rest their heads. For an hour even... one fuckin' hour to forget yourself.

(after a thoughtful beat)

But... in your particular case...

GIRLIE

In my case, what?

CLARK

You mean it.

(a pause)

Don't use the "L" word unless you mean it. And that puts you in the "stereotypical category" as much as it makes you hate me.

Silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Look. I know you're not "that girl." I get it. I can tell. All the little boys out there, they been chasin' you. You don't remember their names, you don't wanna cuddle, and you most definitely don't use the "L" word. You wanna get in, get out, go home, take a shower and sleep in your own bed. It's not about havin' babies for you. It's not about bullshit. It's about bein' *distracted*. Just long enough that you can forget about whatever-the-fuck.

(a beat)

But then... one day... for whatever reason... this guy grabs your attention. And suddenly... you don't know yourself. Suddenly, you want things you never fuckin' wanted. Am I right?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Good news is... you'll know right when it happens next time, 'cause you'll actually know what the fuck's goin' on. Won't be caught with your panties down on the next round, sweetie. Unless you wanna be.

GIRLIE

Please don't say "panties." Can you just... call them *anything* else.

CLARK

Pantaloons, underwears-

GIRLIE

Great. Fantastic.

CLARK

Regardless... it will happen again.

Girlie looks instantly sick at the very thought.

GIRLIE

(barely audible)

Ugh.

CLARK

Oh, *yeah*. You'll meet someone. Doesn't matter where. And the-uh, the conversation'll start to go a certain way. Men know how to do that. Steer the conversation to see if there's interest. When you met your fella, he was doin' the same thing. He was pokin' around to see if you had any candy to give. And the answer, clearly, was *yes*.

Girlie almost objects.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Whether you knew it or not, you told him, "Yes. I got candy." So, he kept pushin' and pokin' 'til he got it. And there you were, thinkin' how great this guy is and how nice he's listenin' and, oh, such a perfect smile and so warm behind the eyes.

(a pause)

Bullshit. Bull-fuckin'-shit, sweetheart. It wasn't no accident. He's done it before. He'll do it again. Ain't nothin' special about it.

(a declaration)

And now?!

With his right knee dramatically bouncing up and down, Clark grabs an empty water bottle.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Now, I gotta piss like a Russian racehorse.

He starts to unbutton his jeans.

GIRLIE

Dude! Do not do that in here!

CLARK

What the fuck am I supposed to do?

GIRLIE

Take it outside!

CLARK

And get arrested?

GIRLIE

Who the fuck is gonna arrest you?! Come on, Hell's Kitchen! You've never taken a piss outside before?!

Clark desperately glances around the gridlock.

CLARK

(under his breath)

Fuck.

With that, Clark jumps out of the cab and SLAMS the door.

Left alone in the dark, in the quiet, Girlie stares at her phone, but does not unlock it.

Red and blue.

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Red and blue.

Ahead, the cars start to pull forward a few feet, the red wall gifting some room.

Girlie nervously glances about, but cannot see Clark anywhere.

The cars behind the cab begin to HONK, some even pass in a fury.

HHHHOOOOOOONNNNNNNKKKK!

Still no sign of Clark.

The lane to the left of the cab finally halts, leaving a white sedan just parallel to Girlie.

One LITTLE BOY, 3, in the back of the sedan stares at her from his car seat, with large, dark, fascinated eyes.

She stares back.

The boy's beautiful Afro perfectly frames his stunningly innocent face.

He smiles at her with bright, white teeth and lifts a little FISH CRACKER in her direction - a genuine impulse to share with Girlie the little he has.

CLIP!

The driver's door opens.

Clark jumps inside.

SLAM!

As Clark pulls the cab forward, the white sedan and the little boy are stolen from **GIRLIE'S POV**.

After a few yards-

THRUST!

"P."

Silence.

Then-

GIRLIE
(quietly)
He gave me his card.

CLARK

What?

The two LOCK EYES in the rear-view.

GIRLIE'S POV

SLOW PUSH IN ON CLARK'S RIGHT EYE until it morphs into-

INT. DREAMLIKE VOID. MANDARIN ORIENTAL - NIGHT (MEMORY)

-an elevator button, FLOOR 35.

"L" S POV

The small yellow light from the elevator button turns off, prompting the doors to open.

All is SILENT as we move from the elevator into The Lobby Lounge, hosting a high-end, corporate, cocktail soiree.

NONDESCRIPT BUSINESSMEN in dark suits crisscross in and out of frame as "L" makes his way to the bar.

A HANDSOME MALE BARTENDER, 20s, glances up, immediately recognizing "L."

The bartender quickly pours "L" a snifter of Macallan 25, neat, sliding the etched crystal tumbler across the bar.

"L" throws a hundred dollar bill down (no change necessary) and lifts the tumbler to his lips.

Though the camera is undeniably tracking "L" s POV, we should never see even the slightest glimpse of what this man looks like - his hands, his physique, his race, not anything.

After sipping from his scotch, "L" turns from the bar.

This gorgeously appointed lounge has somehow been bastardized into a very boring landscape of MEN in dark suits doing business over cocktails.

Across the room, however, a few SUITS suddenly part ways to reveal Girlie, standing against the panoramic floor-to-ceiling windows of The Lobby Lounge, gazing out at the magnificent views of the steel skyscrapers of Columbus Circle against the expansive backdrop of the green broccoli treetops of Central Park.

Dressed in an extremely form fitting, floor-length, green silk gown, Girlie resembles a priceless emerald in this dim "man cave" of charcoal-gray and black suits.

Moving across the room, "L" approaches Girlie, her fully exposed back an aching vision of female softness that would drive even the most powerful of men to crawl over glass for but one gentle touch.

Shimmering against the spots of red, blue and yellow issuing from the spellbinding skyscrapers behind her, Girlie turns as if having been greeted by "L."

She offers a sweet, red lipstick grin, her hair curled and piled high, a few loose strands playfully dangling.

In slow motion, Girlie reaches out her hand and accepts a nondescript business card.

Genuinely, she glances up, LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO CAMERA.

The red and blue lights from Columbus Circle grow brighter as Girlie presses the straw of her vodka-soda to her LUXURIOUS LIPS and takes a sip, still staring straight ahead.

Red and blue pulses from the skyscrapers-

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT

-Red and blue pulses from the emergency lights.

GIRLIE

He didn't ask for my number or anything.
He just... he gave me his card.

CLARK

Well...? There you go.

GIRLIE

No... that's my point. He gave me his card and I e-mailed him, not the other way around.

CLARK

Uh-huh. Yeah. He's good.

Her head spinning-

GIRLIE

No, but-

CLARK

I bet that man gives out a shit ton of cards, wherever he goes. It's a numbers game. Sometimes he gets the candy, sometimes he don't. But you better believe he's dishing out those cards like it's fuckin' ice cream. And when you contacted him, sweetie, you gave away your first piece of candy. Can't blame a guy for wantin' more.

(after a pause)

Think about it. His card had a *business* e-mail on it, am I right?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)

How long it take for him to switch you over to somethin' more *private*?

Clearly mentally dissecting her first interaction with "L," something starts to take hold in Girlie.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Blink of a fuckin' eye, am I right?

With the utmost sincerity, Clark turns to her again, his face slightly distorted from a few scratches embedded within the plexiglass.

CLARK (CONT'D)

He wasn't lookin' for love, sweetheart.
He wasn't lookin' to replace his wife.
Who the hell wants to go to all that trouble? *Nah*. He's all set up, the way he wants to be. He was just lookin' for another toy to play with. And he found it.

(after a pause)

For all your smarts and all the time and effort and everything you've clearly done to make yourself a fuckin' fortress... somehow... you have found yourself back in that bathtub again. Your hands and legs all tied up. Fightin' so hard to get free.

Attempting to lighten the mood-

CLARK (CONT'D)

One to two. I'm catchin' up to ya.

Girlie forces a smile.

GIRLIE

Touché.

Quietly, Girlie turns her gaze to the window again.

Clark notices her swallow, hard. Clearly, he's gone a bit too far.

Red and blue.

Clark lets out a very soft EXHALE.

He stares at Girlie, her sweet, yet militant face, her red lips...

And his brow furrows at himself.

CLARK

Listen... I'm sorry. I run my mouth off sometimes... I'm too honest. That's my problem.

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)

It's just somethin' people don't wanna talk about. You know? Who fuckin' talks about this shit? No one.

Red and blue.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Look... I can tell you're a wonderful person. A *human*. Askin' my name and shit... You got a good heart. I can see that. That's why I gotta tell ya... you're better off walkin' away. Honestly. I mean, here you are all sad and shit... and you just gotta know... *that guy* of yours, right now, in this moment, if any sweet thing came along - I don't care if she tells him to meet her in a fuckin' outhouse - he'd be there, with his pants down, in two minutes. In two fuckin' minutes. And he'd be pissed to have to wait that long. It's just how men are made. How we're wired. I mean... the way you look right now, that face of yours... It's why I don't go for the full candy no more. I mean, I'll take a b.j. now and again, but... a lot of you girls these days, you grow a conscience in the mornin', and I can't deal with that no more. I'm too old.

Girlie pulls an old receipt - a receipt for three IPA beers and a burger - from her backpack and buries her gum inside it.

After only a beat, Clark presses forward, a slave to curiosity.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Your guy young or old?

GIRLIE

Old.

CLARK

How old?

GIRLIE

Old.

CLARK

Like what? *Daddy* type shit?

GIRLIE

(after a pause, plainly)

He could be my father, yes.

CLARK

So... I'm guessin' you don't have a daddy, right?

GIRLIE

I mean, I do, but-

CLARK

But you don't have a daddy. And you wanted *him* to be your daddy, am I right?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(after a beat)

You call him "Daddy"?

Girlie forces another melancholy grin.

GIRLIE

(after a pause)

Two to two.

CLARK

We're tied?

GIRLIE

We are tied.

CLARK

You call him "Daddy."

GIRLIE

I do.

CLARK

That's hot.

GIRLIE

It's fucked up.

CLARK

Nothin' fucked up about that. I mean... I don't know much about psychology or whatnot, but it don't take rocket science to know that you got a little girl inside you. The little girl you used to be. She didn't go nowhere. And that little girl didn't have a daddy, but she still fuckin' needs a daddy, right?

(a pause)

So, you meet this guy, what, with his bald head - whatever the hell he's got goin' on - would make most girls your age wanna puke, but not you. 'Cause he's everything you missed out on back in the day. He's all the things your friends had, but you didn't fuckin' have. All your friends who had daddies that gave 'em allowance, keys to the car, a credit card... somethin' shiny and pretty anytime they did somethin' right. You were happy for your friends - you're not a bitch - but let's be honest, it was hard for you. I get it. *I really do know.*

(a pause)

And now, years later, yeah, you meet this older guy, and the little girl on the inside, she just wants her daddy to hold her, tell her nice things, read her bedtime stories. But, the grown woman you are on the outside wants, well... She wants a different kind of bedtime story, if you catch my drift. Put the two together, and *that* guy gets a chance at having somethin' he would have never been able to fuckin' touch otherwise.

GIRLIE

(after a pause)

Me.

CLARK

You.

(after a beat)

He's a lucky son-of-a-bitch to have gotten your candy. If you don't mind my sayin'.

Clark pulls the cab forward a quarter of a mile, the emergency lights growing closer than ever before.

Red and blue.

CLARK (CONT'D)
He got kids?

GIRLIE
He does.

CLARK
How many?

GIRLIE
Three.

CLARK
Shit. How old?

GIRLIE
Young.

CLARK
How old?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Single digits?

GIRLIE
Single digits.

CLARK
His wife young?

GIRLIE
Not really. I think they just waited.

CLARK
Have you met her?

GIRLIE
No.

CLARK
You seen her?

GIRLIE
No.

CLARK
But you seen pictures.

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Come on. This day and age? You wanna picture, you can fuckin' find a picture. Hell. For a little salt? You can even find out where they live. Shit, the last *three* places they've lived if you set your mind to it.

GIRLIE

(after a beat)

Why do you care?

CLARK

Huh?

GIRLIE

Why do you care if he has kids or a wife or any of it? What does it matter to you?

Clark sincerely weighs the question.

CLARK

I guess... I don't know... Guess I've always been curious. About people. Gets me into trouble, I'm not gonna lie. I got a mouth on me, and I need to learn how to zip it now and again, I do know that.

(a thoughtful beat)

I guess, I-uh... To be honest, I drive this beast around and... can't do much else but think, you know? And when you think too much, you ask too many questions. Nothin' special about it.

(a pause)

But, hey, it ain't all for nothin', I mean - who else you gonna talk to about this shit?

(another pause)

Not like you're ever gonna see me again.

Girlie looks down on her own fingernails perfectly manicured in a very cool gray hue.

But one of her nails, her right thumbnail - the one she bites on - has been slightly chipped.

Silence.

GIRLIE

I found *one* picture of her. They're pretty private.

CLARK

They both in the picture?

GIRLIE

They're at some corporate thing. Like an award thing.

CLARK

What are they doin' in the picture?

GIRLIE

They're just... sitting next to each other... smiling at the camera.

CLARK

And?

GIRLIE

And... they look... normal. They just look normal.

CLARK

He win the award?

GIRLIE

He did.

CLARK

What, he some kinda big-shot or somethin'? Someone I'd recognize?

No reply.

CLARK (CONT'D)

How old is she? The wife?

GIRLIE

Late forties, I would say.

CLARK

She pretty?

GIRLIE

(sincerely)

She looks really sweet.

CLARK

(a laugh)

So, she's not pretty.

GIRLIE

She's lovely. She has this huge smile, like a really happy smile.

Girlie thoughtfully grazes the rough edge of the chip in the nail polish of her right thumb.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

(a beat)

I looked at that photo for a long time.
It gave me this strange feeling like,
like maybe... maybe she and I could have
been friends.

CLARK

(genuinely)

Yeah. Maybe. Another time, another place.
Maybe.

(a beat)

You meet the kids?

GIRLIE

Oh, God, no.

CLARK

You find pictures?

GIRLIE

He shows me pictures.

CLARK

Fuck. Like on his phone?

GIRLIE

Yeah. Video, too.

CLARK

(actually surprised)

No kiddin'. That is some fuckin' trust
right there. That is some real fuckin'
trust.

(a thoughtful beat)

Huh.

GIRLIE

What?

CLARK

You did it.

GIRLIE

What did I do?

CLARK

I don't know. But you did somethin'.

Girlie's expression begs for Clark to explain further.

CLARK (CONT'D)

He let you in. As far as anyone in *your*
position can possibly go.

GIRLIE

And what am I supposed to do with that?

CLARK

Look. It don't change nothin'. But it *is* a compliment.

Silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

The kids cute?

GIRLIE

They're adorable.

CLARK

Boys? Girls?

GIRLIE

Twin boys and a girl.

CLARK

Huh.

GIRLIE

(after a beat)

He showed me this... this video of his daughter, dancing. Three years old and... she's wearing this red cape. Like a princess cape or something. And she was just twirling and twirling.

CLARK

Dancin' for her daddy. That's sweet. You ever dance like that for your daddy? Your *real* daddy, I mean. When you were a kid?

GIRLIE

(simply)

No.

Picking at the chip in her nail polish, Girlie accidentally causes a larger piece to break off.

She throws the piece of gray polish to the ground.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

I had a cape though. A long, purple cape.

As Girlie loses herself in another hazy, distant memory, the emergency lights pulse, this time in what feels like a circular motion, as if on a dizzying carousel ride.

Red and blue, red and blue circle, circle, circle until-

EXT. DREAMLIKE VOID. OKLAHOMA BACKYARD - DAY (MEMORY)

Red and blue blend together to make purple - purple that circles around and around and around.

From within the void - filtered through what looks to be an old, VHS recording - we see LITTLE GIRLIE, 3, in a white t-shirt, white cotton underwear, pink cowboys boots, and a long purple cape, spinning around and around and around.

Little Girlie suddenly looks into the camera, beaming at whomever is filming - the sheer joy of childhood just exploding from the innocence of her sweet, little face.

After one, toothy grin, Little Girlie begins to twirl again, around and around and around and around until the hue of the purple of her cape begins to be torn apart, separating once more into-

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT

-Red and blue.

Girlie swallows, hard.

Red and blue.

GIRLIE

Made me think I could fly.

CLARK

Cape wasn't lyin'. You can fly just fine.

After a silence-

GIRLIE

I still have it.

CLARK

What?

GIRLIE

My purple cape. It's the only thing I kept. From back then.

CLARK

Ever put it on?

GIRLIE

No.

CLARK

You should. Every once in a while.

GIRLIE

Yeah?

CLARK

Yeah. Why the fuck not?

GIRLIE

It's under my bed. In a garbage bag.

CLARK

Pull that shit out, put that shit on, and walk down the fuckin' street. In this town? No one's gonna bat an eye.

Silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)

So, what about the twins? What do they do?

GIRLIE

They're silly. They like to shake their butts at the camera and say, "Nanny-Nanny-boo-boo."

CLARK

I thought it was "Nanna-Nanna-boo-boo"?

GIRLIE

I don't know. They say, "Nanny-Nanny."

CLARK

Guess it don't matter either way. They're still gonna get a pop on the ass for wavin' it around.

The two chuckle lightly together.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Nothin' "Nanny" or "Nanna" can do 'bout it, am I right?

GIRLIE

Ah, they seem like good kids.

The two lock eyes.

CLARK

(with sincerity)

And you get the feelin' you coulda been
friends. With the kids. Another time,
another place.

With a sad smile, Girlie simply nods.

Another ocean wave of true empathy crashing over Clark's countenance.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Yeah, well... He can pretend to be a
daddy to you, but he's gotta be a real
daddy to them. So... you get why you
ain't goin' to Greece.

Girlie looks down. Her fidgeting has causes her perfect manicure to look a bit homely.

She throws another piece of gray polish to the floor.

THRUST!

"D."

As Clark slowly pulls forward, the emergency lights pound upon their stark faces.

We don't ever see the wreckage, but the reaction on Clark and Girlie's faces suggests that it's bad.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Shit. That ain't no fender bender.

Girlie moves to the left side of the taxi, peering out.

EXT. INTERSTATE 495 AND BEYOND - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

MALE POLICE OFFICER #1 SPARKS and drops a few bright red flares, throwing them to the black asphalt as MALE POLICE OFFICER #2 waves the yellow cab forward.

The cab carefully maneuvers around the RED and BLUE, gifting us a glimpse of Clark and Girlie each gazing out their windows with a reverent fear and awe of mortality, their faces aglow from the fire of the red flares.

As the cab begins to pick up speed, the fixed street lamps morph into shooting stars of passing light, the HUUUUUUUMMMMMMM of rubber kissing asphalt beginning its comforting song again.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Still rattled by the accident, Clark has fallen silent.

In the back, Girlie has habitually chipped away at all her nail polish.

Her manicure now looks truly horrible.

There it is again.

The perfectly imperfect.

Another glimpse of the poetry that is the human condition.

Putting her thumbnail between her teeth, Girlie stares at her phone for a moment of hesitation.

Suddenly, she flips it over and unlocks it to find new gray-bubbles awaiting.

ECU ON PHONE

L
(TEXT)
Hold, K? Paying bar tap

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
**Tab*

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Heading home. You there?

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
Lost you.

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

SUPERIMPOSED: TEXT MESSAGES ON SCREEN, GIRLIE'S TEXTS SCREEN-RIGHT, "L'S TEXTS SCREEN-LEFT.

The phone illuminates her beautiful, conflicted face.

She types, **"Still stuck in traffic."**

She sends.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Today 12:22 AM
Still stuck in traffic.

A new gray-bubble immediately appears, not so surprising this time.

Clearly, "L" has been waiting.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Lo siento.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
About what?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Should have asked more about sis

Softening, Girlie seems touched by this small glimpse of sincerity.

A hint of a smile forms in the left corner of her mouth.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
It's okay.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Are you a lot alike?

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Not really.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

I'm proud of u 4 gosling

(...)

**going*

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
It wasn't easy.
(TEXT)
But I'm glad I did.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

U r extraordinary

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
I'm glad you think so.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Tell me u are wet

In the drafting section, Girlie composes a long text with rapid fire:

"Can you please use real words? U=You. R=Are. K=Okay. There's a difference between your and you're; their, they're and there; its and it's! And what is up with your punctuation?! You are not fucking twelve, you're a grown-ass man. You're the fucking face of a huge fucking company, please fucking text like one!"

After a beat, Girlie deletes the entire message and drafts:

"Yeah. I'm wet. I'm so wet, Daddy. Thinking of you."

She sends.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Yeah. I'm wet. I'm so wet, Daddy.
Thinking of you.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Omg throbbing again

(...)

Send pic

Girlie locks her phone.

BACK TO SCENE

Girlie sits in silence, the wheels in her brain turning, turning, turning.

HUUUUUUUMMMMMMMMM - sings the rubber on asphalt.

Looking up, Girlie studies Clark who seems completely lost in thought - his eyes on the dark road ahead, his thumbs gently TAPPING on the steering wheel again.

Taking off her leather jacket, Girlie drapes it over her lap.

With her eyes on Clark, Girlie unbuttons and unzips her jeans, the act completely covered by her jacket.

Then, shielded in shadow, Girlie carefully lifts her hips and slides down her jeans just enough to barely open her legs under the cover of black leather.

Her eyes still darting to Clark now and again, Girlie unlocks her phone, opens her camera, turns the flash on and puts her phone between her legs.

The act proves enormously sexy, greatly amplified by the thrill and danger of potentially getting caught.

Lifting her hips again, Girlie pulls her jeans back up.

Clark takes a sip of soda, none the wiser.

Girlie has taken three photos of her smoothly shaved "pink."

She flips through the three, each significantly blurred under the tent of her black, leather jacket.

She chooses the least blurry photo, yet, after trying out a few filters, doesn't seem to be satisfied.

Girlie deletes all three images and, as a last resort, opens - "All Photos."

Scrolling through her albums, Girlie lands on a series of boob-selfies she's previously taken in the privacy of her own apartment.

One image showcases Girlie's bare chested reflection in her bathroom mirror.

Selecting the photo, Girlie takes to editing.

GIRLIE'S POV ON HER PHONE

Girlie ZOOMS IN on her soft, young tits, cropping the photo.

She chooses a filter which darkens the image a bit (to make it appear as if it was taken in the back of a cab) then sends the photo to "L."

Within an instant-

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
(...)

REVERSE ON GIRLIE

A junkie impatient for her next fix, Girlie waits for a reply, her eyes wide with desperation.

GIRLIE'S POV ON HER PHONE

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
(...)

OMG, darling

(...)

U are so naughty

(...)

Did you let your driver watch you?

The screen suddenly goes dark as Girlie locks her phone.

BACK TO SCENE

Swallowing hard again, Girlie chokes back a wave of emotion, a direct and highly stubborn refusal to cry.

Her chest pants up and down, but she doesn't make a sound.

Finally, the wave of emotion passes as Girlie's face hardens with her signature, militant resolve.

CLARK (O.S.)
So... what else did your sister do?
Besides tie you up?

Lifting her chin, Girlie faces Clark without the slightest trace of weakness.

GIRLIE

(simply)

Oh... I don't know... She really did her best.

CLARK

Eleven years... that's a big difference.

GIRLIE

Yeah, but she was still a kid... She was only seventeen when I went to live with her.

CLARK

You lived with her?

GIRLIE

I was six.

CLARK

Can't imagine any Oklahoma judge sayin' that was all right.

GIRLIE

No. No one said it was all right. But that's what happened.

CLARK

You live in the armpit? With your sister?

GIRLIE

We moved to Woodward, actually. About twenty minutes away. Into her boyfriend's house.

CLARK

Boyfriend?

GIRLIE

She had boyfriends back then.

CLARK

Why'd you go live with your sister? Your daddy do somethin'? Somethin' he shouldn't have done?

GIRLIE

No... it was never like that.

CLARK

What was it like?

GIRLIE

(after a thoughtful beat)

He-uh... It's interesting... My father,
he... he actually *never* touched me. He
just... never touched me.

CLARK

Not ever?

GIRLIE

It's actually an easy thing to do, not
touch someone.

CLARK

Not one hug? Not once?

GIRLIE

It didn't have to be a hug. Pat on the
back would have been nice.

Clark nods.

He seems to greatly understand.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

(a thoughtful beat)

But... the day we left... I remember my
sister was getting in the car. She jumped
in her car and my father was sitting on
the porch. And just before I opened the
door, the door to the front seat... I
turned around and I looked at him. And he
looked at me. And then he... he got up
and he walked over to me...

She stares at the small, dark TV screen in front of her.

There, the reflection of Girlie's present self, sitting
in a cab, begins to morph into-

EXT. DREAMLIKE VOID. OKLAHOMA FRONT YARD - DAY (MEMORY)

-YOUNG GIRLIE, 6, in the distance, getting into an old,
blue Buick.

GIRLIE'S FATHER'S POV

Standing from a porch chair, her father moves toward the
Buick, Young Girlie's back to him.

Though the camera is undeniably tracking her father's
POV, we should never see even the slightest glimpse of
what this man looks like.

Dressed in shabby, green-faded overalls and a "Hands Across America," hand-me-down t-shirt, Young Girlie's straggly hair hosts countless "rats' nests," indicating this little girl hasn't had her hair brushed in months.

Moving across the backyard, her father approaches Young Girlie.

GIRLIE (V.O.)
...and he reached out...

The little girl turns as if having been called to by her father, her lips stained with bright red Kool-Aid, a few loose strands of hair dangling - a pathetic reflection of her future, New York City self.

GIRLIE (V.O.)
...and he shook my hand.

In slow motion, Young Girlie reaches out her hand and moves her arm up and down, as if accepting a hand shake from her father.

Young Girlie glances up, LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO CAMERA.

This entire scene should act as a haunting mirror-image of what we saw at the Mandarin Oriental when "L" crossed the room and handed Girlie his business card.

GIRLIE (V.O.)
I'd never shaken anyone's hand before, I
was six...

Young Girlie allows her Kool-Aid stained lips (stained well outside the natural lines of her mouth) to curl up in a very shy smirk.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT

Girlie purses her red painted lips, crisply applied perfectly within the natural lines of her mouth.

GIRLIE
But I knew what it meant.

CLARK
(after a beat)
What he look like? Your pop?

GIRLIE
Oh... He was a cowboy.

CLARK

Never met a cowboy before.

GIRLIE

You'll know it when you see it.

CLARK

What? 'Cause of the hat?

GIRLIE

The hat and... other things.

CLARK

What things?

GIRLIE

You'll know it when you see it.

CLARK

He have an accent?

GIRLIE

Oh, yeah.

(with a thick, Oklahoma
accent)

A real, real good'n.

CLARK

Huh.

(after a beat)

Gonna put that on my list. You know,
before I die. Number twenty two: Meet a
mother fuckin' cowboy.

GIRLIE

What else is on your list?

CLARK

Already done most of it.

GIRLIE

Like what?

CLARK

Like, I-uh... I learned how to scuba dive
last year. Got my license, my-uh
certification or whatnot. Took a trip to
Nassau. Sat on the edge of a boat and -
they make you fall backward, right? You
fall back in the water, and, once you
find yourself upright again, you start to
let the air outta your sails. And down,
down, down you go... I mean, I didn't go
too far.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

Don't have the trainin' for the crazy stuff - shipwrecks and whatnot. But I did swim around this-uh, this mountain of coral, what with all these little fuckin' clown fish and angel fish and barracuda and sponges and snapper and grouper.

(after a beat)

Saw a blue whale even. Yeah. A big ass blue whale passed right by us, not too far away, just swimmin' along like it was nothin'. Fuckin' poetry, that shit.

GIRLIE

Wow.

CLARK

Yeah, wow. That was a big fuckin' WOW! But... I don't know if I'll do it again.

GIRLIE

Why not?

CLARK

Takes a lotta guts to breathe under water. That's the biggest challenge. Tellin' your brain that it's okay to allow your body to do this thing it wasn't fuckin' made to do. Had to take ten minutes just to breathe calmly, you know, in and out, in and out. Tellin' myself I wasn't gonna die. Tellin' myself I could always surface if shit went down. Wasn't afraid to see a shark, wasn't afraid to be left alone, was just... mostly afraid of breathin'. In and out. In and out. That's some scary shit right there. Findin' yourself afraid to breathe.

GIRLIE

(a thoughtful beat)

Always liked sharks. Did you see one?

CLARK

Nah. But I tell everyone I did.

(telling the story)

Great White. Thirteen feet long. Two, three tons. Swims around me, lookin' for lunch. Until I look that fucker in the eye and give him the middle finger. Just like that, shark swims away. He knew what's what. *Fuck, I love that story.*

GIRLIE

What's on your list that you haven't done?

CLARK

(a thoughtful beat)

I do wanna go to Japan one day. Heard a lot about it. Heard about how, in that culture, if you are drunk or if you are a foreigner, you're forgiven for makin' an ass of yourself. And if you are *both* drunk and a foreigner, all the more mercy is extended your way. Which is great for me, 'cause, I love gettin' shit-faced in a new city.

(a pause)

They also got these-uh, these vendin' machines with used bloomers in 'em.

GIRLIE

Bloomers?

CLARK

Panties!

GIRLIE

Come on, man, we went over this!

CLARK

Well, I tried to call 'em somethin' else, and you didn't know what the fuck I was talkin' about!

(teasing, very loudly)

They got used girls' panties!

GIRLIE

(teasing back)

Noooooo!

CLARK

Panties in vending machines! Least that's what I heard. And I gotta see that shit.

GIRLIE

They can't really be used.

CLARK

I don't give a fuck either way. It'll be mind over matter on that one.

Girlie cannot help but laugh.

CLARK (CONT'D)

What about you, huh? What's on your list?

GIRLIE

Oh... I don't know.

CLARK

Come on. Talk to me.

GIRLIE

Well, I... I guess... I have always wanted to learn how to play chess.

CLARK

Yeah?

GIRLIE

Yeah. I think I'd be good at it.

CLARK

Bet you would.

SLOW ZOOM IN ON GIRLIE

The following monologue is delivered almost directly into the camera, as a confession or admission.

GIRLIE

(laced with a sad longing)

I also... I want to learn how to swing dance... Like get tossed around and stuff. It looks like a lot of fun... I-uh... I've been thinking about having an herb garden in my window... and actually remember to use it when I'm cooking... I want to be a freaky birdwatcher in Central Park that knows about all the birds. Someone that can recognize their calls... I want to learn how to play the ukulele, and not be afraid to sing... even though I can't really sing... I want to see virgin rainforest before it disappears... some place in Brazil, maybe... I want to hablo español perfectamente and go to Oaxaca during Noche de Rábanos and eat all the things... I want to know Paris and London and Rome and Berlin and Barcelona like the back of my hands, and, yes... I want to stand at the edge of a fucking cliff in Greece... and BASE jump off that mother fucker.

CLARK (O.S.)

(after a beat)

What else?

GIRLIE

(with a laugh)

What do you mean, what else? Dude, I've told you so much shit.

BACK TO SCENE

Clark laughs back.

CLARK

What? Time for me to ante up?

GIRLIE

Damn straight.

CLARK

How many chips you got on the table?

GIRLIE

Two. We're tied, remember? Two to two.

CLARK

And you raise me one?

GIRLIE

And it better be a good one.

CLARK

I give you a good one... you'll match me?

GIRLIE

I'm not gonna let you win, that's for damn sure.

CLARK

All right, all right, I can hang.

Clark sincerely takes a moment to think, but nothing comes.

GIRLIE

And it has to be something personal, not one of your little anecdotes.

CLARK

Well, fuck, I don't know.

Clark stares out the windshield.

CLARK'S POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD

The white lines in the dark asphalt - the separation of the lanes - guide the cab onward around a curve.

BACK TO SCENE

CLARK (CONT'D)

Wanna know how I met my first wife?

Clark chuckles at the memory, something he clearly hasn't thought of in a long time.

CLARK (CONT'D)

She threw up in my cab.

GIRLIE

(a laugh)

Seriously?

CLARK

She was clubbin' with her girlfriends. Ladies' night or some shit. They were all in these tight dresses, and high heels, and smelled like flowers and booze and sweat. Fuck. I was in Heaven. All these pretty ladies, crammed in my cab, sittin' on each other's laps, talkin' so loud, laughin' and screamin' out the window, askin' me to turn up the music like some disco ball was gonna drop from a fuckin' moon-roof. And, I gotta be honest - My cock was so hard, just poudin' in my panties, 'cause odds were, I was gettin' lucky that night. And if I wasn't lucky, I'd have plenty of good material to rub one out later, you know?

GIRLIE

Right.

CLARK

And then, out of nowhere, blondie in the back doubles over and empties out her stomach. Which wasn't holdin' much, I am thankful to report.

GIRLIE

What happened?

CLARK

Not much you can do. I drop 'em off, light the "Off Duty," get back to the garage, hose down the cab - and there it was. Her purse right there on the floor.

(a beat)

Next day, she calls the company, gives an address.

(MORE)

CLARK (CONT'D)

And me, bein' the *gentleman* that I am, I offer to drop that shit off myself, and-uh... Didn't have to jerk off after payin' her a visit, I can tell you that.

Sincerely needing to know, Girlie perches on the backseat and leans her head against the plexiglass.

GIRLIE

Why did you marry her?

(a beat)

Why did she marry you?

CLARK

(softening)

Ah... she was a doll. Dumb as shit, but still... she was a sweetheart.

(a beat)

Used to play pranks on her. You know, hide behind the couch and jump out, put sugar in the salt shaker, dumb shit like that. And... she'd always laugh about it. You know, she'd *choose* to laugh about it. Like... when somethin' happens and you gotta choice. That choice to get pissed off or the choice to laugh it off. And... she'd laugh. She'd *choose* to laugh every time.

GIRLIE

She ever get you?

CLARK

What? A prank?

GIRLIE

Yeah.

Recalling the memory for the first time in years-

CLARK

(a chuckle)

She did once. She-uh... she poured cold water on me when I was in the shower. A bucket of ice water - Niagara Falls - right down on top of me. And I had that same choice, you know, that choice whether to get *pissed* off or to *laugh* it off.

GIRLIE

What did you choose?

Clark grins, his gaze softly focused on the Interstate ahead, but his mind elsewhere.

CLARK

I laughed my fuckin' ass off. Chased her 'round the house in my birthday suit. She was screamin' like a little girl, like we were playin' tag or some shit... Finally caught her in the kitchen...

(a thoughtful pause)

That was a good day.

GIRLIE

I bet she's a lot smarter than you give her credit for.

No reply.

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

You miss her?

CLOSE UP ON CLARK

Clark weighs his feelings very carefully.

CLARK

I guess I do sometimes.

(a beat)

Yeah... She was a good girl. Like a summer day, you know? Not too complicated. Just... a beer and a bag of chips... and we were set.

(after a beat)

Three to two. You gonna match me or you gonna pussy out?

BACK TO SCENE

GIRLIE

No, I'm not a pussy.

CLARK

Better be a good one, too.

GIRLIE

It will be.

CLARK

That last one's a tough act to follow.

GIRLIE

Yeah, you surprised me there.

CLARK

Surprised myself! I don't talk about my
shit!

GIRLIE

You think I talk about *my* shit?!

CLARK

So, there you go. That's what's on the
table.

As if to cheers, Clark lifts his diet soda can.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Let's talk about shit. Let's talk about
all the shit!

GIRLIE

Yeah, I'll think of a good one.

CLARK

You better. And make it about your daddy.

GIRLIE

(a chuckle)

Which one?

CLARK

You pick.

GIRLIE

Fuck.

CLARK

Come on. There's gotta be at least one
more thing you haven't told me. Something
you are just *dyin'* to say out loud.

Girlie sits back again, thinking.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Take your time. Not like I'm goin'
nowhere.

As Girlie sinks into the seat, she looks out the window
again, looking very lonely in the shadows, her backpack
her only company.

The light pollution of New York City has grown outside
the windows.

EXT. INTERSTATE 495 - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

TRACKING WITH THE CAB - the lights of Manhattan shimmering closely in the background - we round a bend and disappear into the darkness of the Queens Midtown Tunnel, a passageway just under the flowing East River.

These two souls have literally just gone underwater.

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

This claustrophobic tube - covered wall to ceiling in off-white tiling - bathes the cab in that same sickening yellow cloud of toxic light pollution.

The HUUUUUUUMMMMM of rubber kissing asphalt echoes in the tunnel, nauseatingly.

Girlie notices that a few of the tiles covering the inside of the tunnel have fallen.

Perfectly imperfect.

Like her nails.

Like Clark's dandruff.

There, in the yellowed dim, Girlie impulsively flips over her phone and unlocks it.

ECU OF PHONE

L

(TEXT)
Had to go
(TEXT)
Twins up

CLOSE UP OF GIRLIE

Her face brightens at the mention of the twins, a very genuine, maternal impulse.

SUPERIMPOSED: GIRLIE'S TEXTS SCREEN-RIGHT, "L'S TEXTS SCREEN-LEFT.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Today 12:35 AM
No worries. Kids come first.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Lo siento. 4 being an ass

(...)

sober again. lots of water :)

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Old school smiley. Classic. :)
(TEXT)
How are the twins?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Got one down. One to go

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Who's still up?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Marlon had a bad dream

Her bottom lip slightly pouts, true empathy.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Poor baby.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

We've been looking for monsters under the bed. in the closet ion the kitchen

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
You find any?

ECU OF PHONE

L
(TEXT)
(...)
(MORE)

L (CONT'D)

*Yes. Lots. And the ones we find we stab
with a sword and they go away*

GIRLIE

(TEXT)

The light up sword?

L

(TEXT)

(...)

Yup

GIRLIE

(TEXT)

What color is it set to?

L

(TEXT)

(...)

Green

GIRLIE

(TEXT)

A perfect color for killing monsters.

L

(TEXT)

(...)

Exactly

(...)

sorry should go

REVERSE ON GIRLIE

Girlie looks like an anxious kid coming to the edge of a very high diving board just before taking a brave leap.

GIRLIE

(TEXT)

One last thing?

L

(TEXT)

(...)

K

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Did it bother you?
(TEXT)
That I said the "L" word?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

No

She doesn't buy it.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
It seemed to bother you.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Surprised me but did bother me

(...)

**didn't*

Still not assured-

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Okay. Good.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

I care more than u think

(...)

never felt this way

(...)

Your important

ECU OF THE PHONE

Girlie types:

"But what does that mean? I don't know what that means."

But she deletes it.

Then, Girlie types:

"Your? You'RE a fucking idiot sometimes."

She deletes that.

Instead she writes, **"Yeah?"**

She sends.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Yeah?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Si. You are muy importante
(...)
you are muy bonita

There's a slight hesitation before Girlie composes and sends-

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
I'm glad you think so.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Lo siento, my princess, m Marlon needs me

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Go.
(TEXT)
Go kill all the monsters.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

I will

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
You really are a good daddy.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

I try.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
You succeed.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Hey.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Yeah?

L
(TEXT)
(...)

I love you too

ECU OF GIRLIE

Girlie sits in shock, that last gray-bubble reflected in her eyes.

She draws a soft INHALE.

TEXT MESSAGES CONTINUE FRAMING HER FACE:

L (CONT'D)
(TEXT)
(...)

Talk soon?

Not knowing what else to do, Girlie replies-

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Talk soon.

L
(TEXT)
(...)

Gn

Girlie lingers a moment more.

Slowly, but surely, she finally types, "Goodnight."
She sends.

GIRLIE
(TEXT)
Goodnight.

Girlie locks her phone just as-

EXT. EAST 42ND STREET AND 1ST AVENUE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

-the cab emerges from the bowls of the Queens Midtown Tunnel into the bright bustle of Midtown Manhattan.

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

As they head south on 1st Avenue, then west on 37th Street - every color, across the spectrum, gleefully bursts into the cab, dancing and flirting and teasing away the shadows.

The NOISE outside has unapologetically swelled as they pass A GROUP OF TATTOOED MALE TEENAGERS loudly LAUGHING, pinching and hitting one another as they skip down the street.

Every other human - from police officers to punk teens - in this ride has been *male*.

Girlie is the only woman in this entire story, imprisoned in a world of men.

A stop light turns from green to red, causing the cab to come to a complete stop.

Girlie buries her phone in her backpack.

Clark's eyes beckon in the rear-view-

CLARK
Got a few more minutes, if you still wanna play for the win.

A bit rattled, Girlie sits in silence.

CLARK (CONT'D)
What's left? What haven't you told me?

Clark waits patiently as Girlie wrestles with something.

Finally, the red light turns green and the two are moving again.

GIRLIE
(after a beat)
Last night... Red-wolf was working.

CLARK
(amused, barely audible)
Red-Wolf.

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

The glaring lights of Manhattan have demystified the details of this beauty, offering a vulnerability unlike we've ever seen in Girlie.

GIRLIE
She was working... and so... my sister and I, we got drunk. We got really drunk. We sat outside her trailer, and... She has these little chili pepper lights - like Christmas lights or something - draped all around this, this porch-covering. And... we sat there, in these old beach chairs, and just... drank and drank.

Though he has to pay attention to the road, Clark is clearly right there with her.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
And... it was incredible, because... after all this time of not talking... there was never a pause.

CLARK
You talk about the bathtub?

GIRLIE
(with a laugh)
We did! I brought it up and she just... laughed. She laughed so hard, tears streaming down her face. She didn't apologize or anything. It was amazing.

CLARK
What else you talk about?

GIRLIE
Everything. We talked about the perms our mom used to give us, sitting on a stool in the kitchen, with this old, pink towel draped over our shoulders...

(MORE)

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

That smell... that *perm* smell... it'd linger for *days*.

CLARK

What else?

GIRLIE

We talked about... the shitty rug in our living room... the antlers on the wall, the TV antenna... *everything*.

(a beat)

After our mom left... my sister started doing these, these rain dances in the front yard. At least... that's what she called them. They weren't real rain dances, they weren't ceremonial or choreographed or anything. Basically... she would take off her shoes and just... dance her ass off... expecting it to rain.

Girlie swallows, hard.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

When she and I moved to Woodward... she invited me to do them. For years the two of us would take off our shoes, wipe mud across our cheeks like war paint, and... dance around our yard... asking the sky to change.

CLARK

Did it?

CLOSE UP ON GIRLIE

GIRLIE

No. It never did. But that didn't keep us from *dancing*.

(after a beat)

And there I am again, suddenly, in Oklahoma, sitting outside this random trailer and getting drunk with my sister. And my brain is just exploding, because... once and for all, I know for certain that's it all real. I didn't make this shit up. It actually happened. My sister's the proof. I have the proof right there in front of me, sitting in this flamingo beach chair, drinking Merlot and finishing my sentences.

(a beat)

And... these chili pepper lights... I know they sound stupid...

(MORE)

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

but they were really beautiful. Just this string of red and green and yellow and blue, all around us. And there were crickets. I'd almost forgotten what crickets sounded like, but there they were. And they were so loud. Like this... like a wall of sound. But a *good* sound. A sound you want to listen to... And... my sister opens another bottle. And we start talking about that day... the day she took me away. And I told my side of the story. And she told *her* side.

EXT. 37TH AND 5TH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Coming upon 5th Avenue, a stop light turns from green to red, forcing the cab to halt.

Within the intersection, the shadows of countless NONDESCRIPT NEW YORKERS race in both directions.

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

With extreme empathy, Clark turns around, engaging again in a real human connection with Girlie.

CLARK

What did she tell ya?

The hurried shadows of NEW YORKERS cross in front and behind the cab, the modern world with its lights and sound and movement very much encroaching on this sacred, hiding place.

EXTREME CLOSE UP OF GIRLIE

GIRLIE

She told me that my father *was* on the porch that day. She told me that we passed him on our way to her car. And then... she got in the car, and then, I got in the car. And then... we drove away.

(a beat)

He *didn't* shake my hand that day. I created the memory. That memory... it isn't real. I made the whole thing up in my mind somehow... But, when I think back on it, it doesn't make any sense, because... in my mind, I can see it so clearly... even the feel of his hand... I remember thinking it felt like sandpaper.

(MORE)

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

(a pause)

I can remember the taste of fried okra and catfish and ramen noodles. I remember the feel of my mother's fingernails when she'd rub the back of my neck. I remember my father's breath - the smell of chew, mixed with coffee, mixed with hamburger. I can remember every detail of that place... but not the moment I left it.

(a beat)

And if that moment isn't real... the moment my father finally touched me... I don't know what is.

BACK TO SCENE

CLARK

(quietly)

Ones and zeros.

GIRLIE

(quietly back)

Yeah. Fuckin'-A. Ones and zeros.

Clark weights his words carefully with a soft EXHALE.

CLARK

(quietly)

I got a story kinda like that... About my pop. That moment when all the shit comes into focus. But-uh... that's a whole other cab ride, you know?

GIRLIE

I know.

The two GAZE at one another sharing a deep understanding, without words.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

We're tied again. Three to three.

CLARK

Three-all. Nice.

SILENCE.

Breaking their gaze, Girlie looks out the window again.

EXT. 37TH AND 5TH, MANHATTAN - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

From outside, the reflection of stationary lights from Fifth Ave shine across Girlie's face through the glass.

There's a hint of what resembles strings of colorful lights.

The reflections grow brighter until-

EXT. DREAMLIKE VOID. OKLAHOMA TRAILER - NIGHT (MEMORY)

Against a dark night, the bright haze of yellow, blue, green and red twinkle like shining stars in strings of festive lights, shaped like chili peppers.

The lights dim again, bringing us back to-

EXT. 37TH AND 5TH, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

-mere reflections upon Girlie's face.

The red stoplight turns green, allowing the yellow cab to cross Fifth Avenue.

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Still gazing out the window-

GIRLIE

(after a beat)

We did a rain dance last night. My sister and I.

CLARK

Yeah?

GIRLIE

Drunk off our asses, we took off our shoes and just started dancing around her trailer.

CLARK

Did it rain?

GIRLIE

That's just the thing... Two weeks ago, when I flew to Oklahoma...

Her eyes gloss over as she fights back tears, her chest expanding with delicate, quickening PANTS - INHALE, EXHALE, INHALE, EXHALE.

With that same, stubborn resiliency, Girlie attempts to swallow back this ocean wave of emotion.

Yet, this time, her body refuses to obey, screaming, "If you do not let me cry, my heart is going to explode!"

All goes SILENT, as if the air has been sucked out of the scene again.

There in the quiet, a gentle RINGING begins, like the ringing in one's ear.

RIIIIIIINNNNNNNNNNG.

Until, finally, Girlie allows but one, small tear to dance down her cheek.

The RINGING stops for one more breath of SILENCE.

Then-

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
...I was *pregnant*.

Clark simply nods his head.

CLARK
(simply)
What'd your "daddy" have to say about that?

GIRLIE
I never told him... I never told anyone.

CLARK
(carefully)
You get rid of the baby?

GIRLIE
No...

A few more tears just barely escape Girlie's eyes, carving a small, thin salt stain down each cheek.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
It got rid of *me*... First day in Oklahoma, I started bleeding.
(a beat)
My sister didn't know. I just told her I was having a bad period. Like a really shitty period... She let me sleep a lot. Gave me a heating pad and ice cream.

(a pause)
But... after seven days, when I just kept bleeding... I had to hide the tampons. Pretend it was just a regular period that ended...

(MORE)

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

I had to get up and go out and meet all her friends and eat barbecue and drink beer and go to a Thunder game... feeling like *shit*.

(a beat)

I mean... I wasn't going to keep it. I'd already made up my mind that I wasn't going to keep it. And I wasn't going to tell anyone. And then... when it happened, when it just happened on its own... I was so relieved. I'd never been so relieved in my life... I still don't know what to do with that.

Clark gently turns right on 9th Ave, heading north.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

My sister had no idea, but - And I know this sounds so fucking stupid, but - Last night, when we were dancing... in my mind... I really did beg the sky to rain down on me.

The glow of passing lights outside the window begin to smear into what resembles a living Monet painting, stunningly surreal.

As we press closer to the glass of the taxi cab-

INT./EXT. OKLAHOMA TRAILER - NIGHT (MEMORY)

-we peer out the dirt covered window of a small trailer, the outside laced with chili pepper lights, to witness the awe and beauty of two FIGURES off in the distance.

Two WOMEN.

GIRLIE (V.O.)

To *clean* me...

Through a torrential downpour of what resembles gray and blue water color, these two women dance in slow motion in the middle of a green field of tall grass, shrouded in the cover of night.

GIRLIE (V.O.)

To *wash* it all away...

UTTER SILENCE.

One of the women - *Girlie* - lifts her hands and raises her head to the sky, as if being baptized by the rain.

Pulling away from the glass of the trailer window-

INT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT

-Girlie pulls her face from the taxi window, large pools of tears welling in her eyes.

GIRLIE (V.O.)

...All of it, the whole fucking thing - his fucking business card, my fucking e-mail, that fucking dinner at the fucking Ace Hotel - every word we ever whispered - I asked the rain to take it all away...

(a pause)

And then... this morning, when I woke up... I wasn't bleeding anymore. After two weeks... it finally stopped.

CLARK

Rain dance worked.

GIRLIE

For the first time.

With one laugh through free flowing tears, Girlie finally allows the flood gates to open, the salt stains upon her cheeks now healthy, necessary streams.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

Four to three.

CLARK

(softly)

Shit, I fold. Can't beat that. That's for sure.

GIRLIE

I win?

CLARK

You win. That's right. You win.

Leaning her head back, Girlie lets out a very soft EXHALE.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN AND BEYOND - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Lifting a thousand feet above, we watch this small speck of yellow - this tiny taxi heading North on 9th - become just one of the thousands of vehicles that race along the streets of Manhattan, each holding their own stories, their own secrets.

This was but one.

Moving back down again from macro to micro-

INT./EXT. NYC YELLOW CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Coming upon 44th and 9th, Clark watches Girlie silently wipe the tears from her eyes in the rear-view.

CLARK

Sorry, sweetie, this-uh... this you up here?

Immediately, pulling herself together-

GIRLIE

Yeah, the-uh, the blue awning. Right up there on the right.

Pulling up to the curb, Clark puts the taxi in "P," as Girlie pulls a wallet from her backpack.

GIRLIE (CONT'D)

I don't have any cash. Sorry.

CLARK

No one ever does.

She pulls out a credit card.

GIRLIE

I'll leave you a big tip though.

CLARK

(good humored)

Yeah, my advice don't come free.

She swipes her card prompting the little screen in the back to spring to life again, gifting Girlie the option to leave a ten, fifteen or twenty percent tip.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You gonna need a receipt?

GIRLIE

Nah, I'm good.

With that, Clark pulls a small lever at the left of his feet, which POPS open the trunk.

He jumps out of the cab and SLAM!

Behind her, the trunk lifts open as Clark rescues her rolling bag.

Unbeknownst to Clark, Girlie presses an optional "tip" button which reads, "**OTHER AMOUNTS.**"

EXT. 44TH AND 9TH - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

One sturdy, black ankle boot plants onto the trampled-black-gum speckled, brown-stained sidewalk.

Then, another boot plants strongly, as Girlie assuredly lifts herself from the yellow taxi cab.

She shuts the back door.

SLAM!

The trunk still ajar, Clark places the rolling luggage carefully next to Girlie.

The two stand, facing one another for the very first time, granting a new perspective.

Clark is much taller than Girlie.

And stronger.

And broader.

And handsome.

A man.

A real man.

There's a strange comfort in that, somehow.

GIRLIE

So...

CLARK

So.

Her backpack hanging limply from one delicate shoulder, Girlie looks far more frail than the powerful young woman we saw marching from the baggage claim not long ago.

CLARK (CONT'D)

(after a beat)

You gonna be all right?

GIRLIE
(simply)
I don't know.

CLARK
Listen... Your brain... it's just confused right now. It's in a panic, 'cause it ain't used to breathin' underwater. It's gonna try to tell you that you're in way over your head, that this is *it* for you, no gettin' out, you're done, end of story... But you just... just keep on breathin', all right? No matter how far down you go... you just keep on breathin'. 'Cause someone like you, you are not a shipwreck. You're gonna be all right. You're gonna find your way. Gonna swim yourself back up again... back to all that life and color... Might even see a blue whale.

Girlie forces a vibrant smile through forming tears.

GIRLIE
I hope so...

After a pause, Girlie reaches out a hand and gently places it on Clark's shoulder.

Then, without really thinking, Girlie very affectionately, very maternally, dusts the small flecks of dandruff from Clark's cotton t-shirt.

The act is sweet and soft and surprisingly sexy.

Clark stands stunned by the tender touch of such a remarkable young woman.

Having successfully groomed Clark's broad shoulders-

GIRLIE (CONT'D)
(with utmost sincerity)
Thank you.

CLARK
(sincerely back)
You are most welcome.

They share a moment of quiet, neither knowing how to say goodbye.

GIRLIE
Have a good night.

CLARK

You, too.

Taking her rolling bag, Girlie begins to walk away.

Yet, Clark calls after her.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Mikey.

Girlie stops, turning to him once more.

GIRLIE

What?

The two stand, their feet planted a distance away from one another, though they seem only inches apart.

CLARK

If I were honest, I... I always felt like a *Mikey*. Not a *Vinnie*. Not a *Clark*. If it were up to me... *Mikey's* what I'd choose.

Deeply touched by this, Girlie's tears melt away with a grateful grin.

GIRLIE

That makes it four to four.

CLARK

We're tied?

GIRLIE

We are tied.

CLARK

I have met my match.

GIRLIE

(a chuckle)

You play a good game.

CLARK

You, too.

They smile at one another in another suspended moment of stillness.

Then-

CLARK (CONT'D)

You, uh... you live alone?

GIRLIE
(with a gentle grin)
You're not getting any candy.

With a playful shrug-

CLARK
Can't blame a guy for tryin'.

GIRLIE
(sweetly)
Goodnight, Mikey.

Clark watches Girlie head toward her building, not looking back, her luggage trailing behind her reinstated New York strut.

CLARK
Yeah, you take care of yourself, girlie.

With that, Clark slams the trunk tightly shut.

WHAM!

BLACKOUT.

CREDITS.