

ZADDY

Written by
Sarah Ramos

Based on

ZADDY
An Audible Original
By Sarah Ramos

3.6.24

We PAN PAST medals, trophies, and photos of ELLIE and MOMMY smiling big at gymnastics competitions to find --

MOMMY (25) caking blush onto 6-year-old ELLIE's made up face.

MOMMY
You're gonna win.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - GYMNASTICS COMPETITIONS (VARIOUS)

ELLIE (9), in a sparkly leotard, stares at us. She breaks into a bright smile. Sprints into her FLOOR ROUTINE.

MOMMY (V.O.)
My shining star is going all the way to the top.

ELLIE (13), new leotard, spins and bounces into the splits. She wears a brace on her knee.

MOMMY (V.O.)
When you're my age, we're gonna be living large on an island, drinking piña coladas all day long.

ELLIE (16) bounces out of the splits into a flip series. Blisters on her hand burst.

MOMMY (V.O.)
Never give up.

ELLIE (19) shakily lands a back handspring. Her heels bleed through bandages. Ellie sprints, ducks, and catapults --

MOMMY (V.O.)
Let every setback fuel you.

ELLIE (22) flips through the air. Spiraling downward fast, until she LANDS ON HER NECK with a VIOLENT THUD.

MOMMY (V.O.)
The only way to fail is to stop trying.

CUT TO:

A BRIGHT LIGHT FLASHES on the pretty, expressionless face of ELLIE NOONE (now 25, pronounced New-own).

FLASH. She turns profile. FLASH to A 3D IMAGING SCREEN --

Her HEAD ROTATES. Round lips. Rosy cheeks. The color inverts.

DR. KRIVITSKY (O.C.)
Here we see deep layers of sun
damage.

BLUE DOTS and MEASUREMENTS label her features. 1 MM, 2 MM, 68 DEGREES. A CURSOR adjusts their placement. We PULL OUT to --

INT. BEVERLY HILLS CENTER FOR COSMETIC SURGERY - MORNING

REAL ELLIE, hiding internal panic, as DR. KRIVITSKY (ageless, plastic surgery face) points out her FLAWS.

DR. KRIVITSKY
Your nose is a tad broad. Your
jowls are asymmetrical. You clearly
sleep on your left side. But you're
most rapidly aging under your eyes.
See these big, dark, sunken
circles? Here, you look 25. Here?
Mid-thirties.

He adjusts A MAP of RED LINES on Ellie's 3D image --

DR. KRIVITSKY (CONT'D)
I'd fill those in. Shave that down.
Sculpt these. Pull this up. Give
you a perfect, untouched look.

REVEAL the photo of PERFECT ELLIE. Real Ellie is transfixed.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS CENTER FOR COSMETIC SURGERY - RECEPTION

A NURSE with a SMOKEY EYE slides Ellie an ESTIMATE. Botox, Juviderm, Rhinoplasty, Blepharoplasty, Brow Lift, Fat Transfer, etc. \$113,000. Ellie winces.

ELLIE
... I was selected for a free
consultation. Does it come with any
treatment discount?

HOT NURSE
Our least expensive treatment is
our Platelet Rich Plasma Micro-
Needling Vampire Facial.
(off Ellie's blank look)
We drill holes in your face and
inject them with your own blood.
It's the best.

She points to the menu with disdain. \$1500/30mins. *Yikes.*

INT. GO BARRE - STUDIO - AFTERNOON

A club remix blasts as we DOLLY PAST women's Spandex-covered, quivering ASSES AND THIGHS.

ELLIE (O.S.)
Tuck, tuck, tuck. Tuck, squeeze!
Tuck, hold!

CLOSE ON gritted teeth. White knuckles. Sweat dripping down cleavage.

FIND ELLIE, tucking, holding, swiveling. Working the room.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
This rhomboid sequence is inspired
by the beautiful backless wedding
dress Jas just picked out!

JAS (20s) loves the attention. Next to her at the barre, RACHEL (30s) SHAKES VIOLENTLY. Ellie adjusts her posture.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Let's listen to our bodies and
lower our feet completely, Rach.
Postpartum recovery is a marathon,
not a sprint.

Rachel rests. Ellie smiles. Until she hears a SCOFF from --

JESS WEISBERG (19, waif) in an impossibly contorted position.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Even those of us who haven't just
had a baby can afford to ease up.
So our traps and knees don't
overcompensate.

Ellie adjusts Jess, who shrugs her off. Leans back further.

JESS
I like to work it to the max.

OTHER WOMEN lean back, mimicking Jess. Ellie hides her scowl.

INT. GO BARRE - RECEPTION

ELLIE

Best class ever, ladies! If you liked it, don't forget to give me five stars.

Ellie, at the computer, applauds as the women exit. Jess refills a trendy water bottle. Rachel approaches, emotional.

RACHEL

Thanks again. I'm really gonna miss this. And not *just* because it's helping me lose the baby weight.

ELLIE

Where are you going?!

RACHEL

Oh, back to my couch. Coming here's the only time I get for myself to feel like a person. But this was the last class on my gift package, and with Baby, \$35 is too steep.

JESS

The best way to shed is intermittent fasting. Trust me, I way overdid it last summer vaca. So for three weeks, I skipped breakfast and lunch, had a smoothie for dins and *bam*.

Jess shows off her body. Rachel compares it to her own.

ELLIE

Rach, I think you look great. But are you sure this was the last class in your package? It says here you have three more left.

Rachel's face lights up, forgetting Jess.

RACHEL

Really? Oh, thank God. I'll see you next week!

As Jess and Rachel exit, Ellie selects "ADD 3 CLASSES" to Rachel's online profile and SWIPES HER OWN CREDIT CARD.

INT. GO BARRE - LOCKER ROOM

ON A MIRROR as Ellie applies concealer under her eyes.

ELLIE (O.C.)

I want to succeed so I can help
women, not sell them another
dangerous quick fix.

On a bedazzled door plaque: *CARRIE ELAINE LAUREN, SHE.E.O. --
Certified Go Barre Franchise Owner*

The door opens. Out walks JESS, who smiles smugly.

INT. GO BARRE - OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Ellie is pitching CARRIE ELAINE LAUREN (40s, hot, crop top).

ELLIE

This isn't just a job to me. I lost
my mom to extreme dieting.

CARRIE ELAINE

I'm so sorry.

ELLIE

If I'm hired to teach Go Barre's
7AM class, I promise to help those
powerful women look good *safely*,
with patience and integrity.

CARRIE ELAINE

Impressive. You've truly gone above
and beyond this past year and your
rating reflects that. The good news
is that you absolutely earned this.

Ellie's face brightens. Her heart sings. Then, realizing --

ELLIE

What's the bad news?

Carrie Elaine sighs. As she begins to speak, we CUT TO --

INT/EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Ellie storms in. MORGAN (29, cute, been in the same sweats
for weeks), is on the couch watching TV with Corona and weed.

She beelines to the bathroom. Pees with the door open as --

ELLIE

She's giving Jess the promotion!
Even though I've been there longer
and I work harder!

(MORE)

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Because Jess's stupid dad is some
stupid realtor who *owns* the stupid
building!

MORGAN
Seriously? But you deserve it!

ELLIE
I *need* it! The 7AMers are *elite*. If
just one of them tagged me in a
single post, I'd have clients
banging down my door. Meanwhile,
Jess probably already knows them.
She's from *Brentwood*.

MORGAN
And you've been working toward this
all year.

ELLIE
She's 19 and never had a job in her
life. I've been busting my ass
since I was 3. I'm 25! I can't wait
another twenty years to succeed!

Ellie flushes. But her pee and paper just BURBLE. She groans.
Looks out at --

Morgan, ROLLING A JOINT. She sighs. Plunges the toilet.

MORGAN
That's so unfair. This world is
bullshit. You know my self-tape I
spent all week on? Turns out they
had an offer out the whole time.

ELLIE
No!

MORGAN
To Deacon Phillippe. Nepo Baby!

ELLIE
No!!!

Ellie washes her hands. Starts picking up Morgan's trash.

MORGAN
... No one watches my tapes. Not my
agent, not my manager, not even the
casting people who *asked me to make*
them. I just got another one due
tomorrow and it's like, why bother?

Morgan offers his joint to Ellie. She shakes her head.

ELLIE

How many of those have you smoked?

MORGAN

You're counting my joints now?

ELLIE

No, I just thought, maybe you should read it before you pass on it. It might be a good opportunity.

MORGAN

I'm not gonna read a script and watch a show and come up with a character and memorize scenes and do my hair and set up the ring light and watch my own performance and decide the best take for something no one is gonna watch.

BEAT.

ELLIE

Did you work on your short film today?

MORGAN

I'll work on it tonight... Unless you wanna get drunk and watch *The Bachelor* with me.

ELLIE

I don't know. I think I need...

She opens a window, letting in AMBULANCE SIRENS & CONSTRUCTION SOUNDS. She takes in her VIEW --

Unhoused people's tents. A construction site. A dog shits on their lawn. The owner leaves it.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I need...

PING. Ellie grabs her phone to see --

A text from BAD BITCH HARPER: *Wanna go to paradise?*

ELLIE (CONT'D)

... I need to get out of here.

INT. ESCALADE - PCH

ON AN IPHONE VIDEO of HARPER HINES (24, walking, talking Instagram Filter thanks to filler) --

HARPER

Hey ho's. Smash that tip button for an invite to my next Filler Party. You can get gorgie lips like mine for free thanks to our gorgie surgeons in training. You're welcome! And please do consider hiring Hot Girl Parties to plan your next event, from bachelorettes to kids' birthdays. K cut.

PULL BACK to find Ellie filming in the back seat. Harper grabs the phone and uploads the video to social.

ELLIE

Kids' birthdays?

HARPER

Damien's son is turning six. I'm planning an elaborate Brentwood blowout. Budget? \$15K, bitch.

ELLIE

His wife still doesn't know?

Harper holds out her arm and they take sexy selfies.

HARPER

He's about to leave her. And take me to the Ritz Carlton Anguilla to celebrate. I told you, if you want to win at life, you need a Zaddy.

INT/EXT. YACHT - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

DAMIEN SHARP (60s, expensive suit) stands at the entrance, arms open, wedding ring, welcoming Ellie and Harper.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Harper Hines defines "Zaddy" as a wealthy older man who won't let his age or marital status stop him from fucking your IUD out of place.

INT. YACHT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Damien and Harper have sex on a sink.

DAMIEN
Is this too rough for you, baby?

Harper nods, playing "sexy baby." He loves it.

RAPID MONTAGE OF RICH ZADDIES

- LENNY KRAVITZ rides a horse on his Brazilian Farm Compound. DWAYNE JOHNSON and MARK WAHLBERG lift barbells.
- JEFF BEZOS slaps LAUREN SANCHEZ's ass. ELON MUSK and GRIMES attend the Met Gala. TOM GIRARDI watches ERIKA JAYNE perform.
- JARED LETO climbs the Empire State Building. JEFF BEZOS launches into space.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Sure, Zaddies can be ridiculous.
Narcissistic. Criminal, even. But
we let them. Because we need them.

- ELON MUSK tells Bob Iger "Go fuck yourself" on a talk show. LEO DICAPRIO parties shirtless with models on a yacht.
- Musk is *Time's* Person of the Year. Leo lectures about the danger of fossil fuels.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Something that could take you
decades, Zaddy can accomplish with
a single text.

BACK TO THE MALIBU YACHT

We WHIP PAN through the party, catching snippets of ZADDIES hitting on hot, young women.

ZADDY 1
-- Larry Gagosian is looking for an
assistant. I'll text him your
Insta.

ZADDY 2
-- Why don't you and your friends
stay at my house in Fiji?

ZADDY 3
-- Never slum it in the ER! Let me
get your granddad into Cedars VIP --

WE FIND Ellie, following Harper's gaze to --

A SEXY OLDER MAN. Hotter and better-dressed than the others.

HARPER

Zaddy jackpot alert. Three o'clock.

ELLIE

I have a boyfriend?

HARPER

That's not a relationship, it's a pity party.

(off Ellie's look)

Oh, come on. You're too ambitious for him and you know it.

ELLIE

Even if I *was* single, I prefer working my way to the top. The old fashioned way?

HARPER

How's that going for you?

Before Ellie can reply, Damien whisks Harper away --

DAMIEN

You have to meet Ravi, he's in town from Dubai!

Harper moushes "sorry!" Ellie rolls her eyes. Pulls out her phone. Until she hears a voice behind her --

SEXY OLDER MAN

Are you waiting for somebody or is it gonna be me and you tonight?

Ellie turns. The sexy older man is even hotter up close.

ELLIE

An actual pickup line? Really?

SEXY OLDER MAN

I know, so stupid. It's just, something's wrong with my phone... It doesn't have your number in it.

ELLIE

My turn. Yes, it *did* hurt. When the hot guy turned out to be corny as fuck.

SEXY OLDER MAN

Okay, savage. I surrender, I just hate parties like this and needed an excuse to talk to you.

ELLIE

What a dump, right?

SEXY OLDER MAN

Oh, the ship's great. But the people... somehow, despite having every opportunity and resource at their disposal, they're --

ELLIE

-- weird and full of shit?

SEXY OLDER MAN

I was gonna say boring, but sure.

ELLIE

Aren't you one of them?

SEXY OLDER MAN

No way.

ELLIE

Bullshit.

SEXY OLDER MAN

I didn't go to college at all, let alone an Ivy. I'm not incapable of buying clothes that fit. And I'm not cheating on my wife. Because I'm not married.

ELLIE

Then why do you have no game?

SEXY OLDER MAN

How's this for a groundbreaking, original line. How was your day?

ELLIE

Total shit.

SEXY OLDER MAN

Total? Not total! What happened?

His gaze is intense. Beckoning. Ellie gives in, confessing --

ELLIE

Well, to sound bitter, you know, just the crushing realization that hard work and talent will never get me as far as having rich parents.

He appreciates her honesty. Considers this. Then --

SEXY OLDER MAN
Depends what you do.

ELLIE
Well, a wealthy, anorexic teenager just got *my* promotion because *her* dad owns the Go Barre Silverlake building. But what am I saying? I should be grateful, because I'll probably get to temp for her whenever she faints from hunger.

SEXY OLDER MAN
You're dark.

ELLIE
Pitch black.

SEXY OLDER MAN
I'm sorry you're not being taken as seriously as you deserve to be.

God, that felt good to hear. He extends his hand.

SEXY OLDER MAN (CONT'D)
Zack Shaw.

ELLIE
Ellie Noone.

She slides her palm into his. It feels good too. Really good.

INT/EXT. YACHT - DECK - NIGHT

Ellie and Zack look out at the stars.

ZACK
What do you *want* to do?

ELLIE
Oh, no. I'm not confessing my deepest desires to you under the stars.

ZACK
Would you rather be inside talking about the S&P 500?

ELLIE
It's stupid.

ZACK
I doubt it.

She sizes him up. Then --

ELLIE

I want to start a fitness franchise. One that's affordable and actually about health. Because wellness should be accessible to everyone.

ZACK

I love it. You absolutely should.

ELLIE

Trying.

Ellie spots a BUTTERFLY resting nearby. She stands, gracefully, to look at it. She spins as it FLIES AWAY.

ZACK

You were a ballerina, weren't you?

ELLIE

Gymnast.

ZACK

My ex was a gymnast.

ELLIE

You have a type?

ZACK

I hope not. But you move your body like a dream.

Ellie bursts out laughing.

ELLIE

Are you always this corny?

ZACK

I'm usually quite cynical.

A charged BEAT as his eyes say, *you bring it out in me.*

ELLIE

Well, if you like that, you should see my floor routine. It was to "Soak Up The Sun" by Sheryl Crow. Very sophisticated.

ZACK

I can't live another moment without it.

ELLIE
(sarcastic)
Great, let me warm up.

Zack stands. Takes Ellie's hand. She laughs, follows him to --

INT. YACHT - PIANO ROOM

Zack moves chairs to clear a performance space.

ELLIE
I wasn't serious...

ZACK
You're not backing out, are you?

ELLIE
I haven't done it in years. I can't even do most of it anymore thanks to injuries.

ZACK
So, do what you can. Half speed.
Whatever.

ELLIE
Are we even allowed to be in here?

ZACK
Are they going to arrest us for doing gymnastics?

Zack sits at the piano. Pulls up sheet music on his phone.
PLAYS the song.

Ellie blushes. He smiles encouragingly. After a BEAT --

She performs. Slow and gentle. A little silly. But her natural talent and emotion shine. At the end --

ELLIE
I think I can do this flip, if you spot me.

He walks to her. She places his hand on her lower back.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Hold me here. Don't let go.

Slowly, gently, she bends backward over it. Flips. Faces him.

They stare into each other's eyes. It's romantic. Then --

ELLIE (CONT'D)
I have a boyfriend.

Zack smiles, amused.

ZACK
Okay.

ELLIE
Couldn't remember if we talked
about that.

ZACK
Nope.

ELLIE
We live together. On the east side.
Which I should probably call a
long, expensive car to get back to.

ZACK
What if I told you I could get you
there in twenty minutes?

As she realizes what he must mean --

ELLIE
You cannot be serious. No way in
hell.

INT/EXT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Red brake lights. Bumper-to-bumper freeway traffic. But we're
soaring high above it because --

Zack is piloting the helicopter. It'd be sexy if Ellie wasn't
so scared. Okay, it's still sexy.

He PEELS left. Ellie SCREAMS. Glares at Zack. He laughs.

He VEERS right. She FALLS into him, faces close. Rolls her
eyes. *Ridiculous*. But she can't help but be secretly wowed.

They touch down on a ROOFTOP. Her hair flies. They shout over
the noise --

ELLIE
Thanks for not killing me!

ZACK
Anytime!

He grins. She steps off the chopper like a modern princess.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT/EARLY MORNING

Ellie tiptoes in to find --

Morgan, PASSED OUT, on the couch. More beer bottles, weed detritus and junk food strewn around.

She sighs. Turns off the TV. *Home sweet home.*

EXT. GO BARRE - PARKING LOT - DAWN

Jess bops to POP MUSIC as she gets out of her Tesla.

She dances toward the studio, living the dream. Until --

She FEELS EYES ON HER.

She stops. Scans the parking lot. But it's empty.

Jess shakes it off. Not noticing --

A LARGE MALE FIGURE duck behind a concrete column.

Jess walks through the lot toward the studio door. Until --

The figure steps out from behind the column into Jess's view.

He's shrouded in SHADOWS. Just a HULKING SILHOUETTE.

Jess stops. Scared.

JESS

Hello?

Jess looks from the figure to --

The Go Barre door, a few feet to the right.

The figure takes something out of his pocket.

She looks down at her KEYCHAIN. Grips a PINK PEPPER SPRAY.

The figure MOVES TOWARD Jess, FAST.

Jess turns and DOUBLES BACK to her Tesla.

He SPRINTS AFTER HER.

Jess fumbles with the car door. DROPS THE PEPPER SPRAY.

She kneels, frantically scrambling for it as --

The figure closes in.

Jess RAISES THE SPRAY --

JESS (CONT'D)
Back off, asshole!

But he's FASTER. SPLASHES her with LIQUID.

Jess CLUTCHES HER FACE.

As the figure darts off into the city streets --

Jess's skin MELTS. Her clothes DISINTEGRATE. She SCREAMS.

INT. GO BARRE - STUDIO - THE NEXT DAY

PULL OUT from CCTV FOOTAGE of the previous scene to find DETECTIVE HELLER (50s, chip on her shoulder) staring across a folding table at Ellie, SHOCKED and DISGUSTED.

DETECTIVE HELLER
Colorless, odorless sulphuric acid
is used in wastewater processing
and drain cleaners. It's so
powerful, an attacker doesn't even
need to use much force.
Unfortunately, you can get it
anywhere.

Heller slides over an 8x10 of what's left of Jess's face.
Ellie shield her eyes and gags.

ELLIE
I thought you said she was alive!?

DETECTIVE HELLER
She is. Acid didn't get past her
epidermis, cartilage and a few
pieces of skeleton. I hear her
brain and throat are almost
completely unscathed. "A miracle,"
they're saying. You know anyone
who'd want to maim her like that?

Ellie, processing these horrors, shakes her head.

DETECTIVE HELLER (CONT'D)
Where were you early this morning?

ELLIE
Home. With my boyfriend.

Heller watches her. *Does she know it's only half true?*

DETECTIVE HELLER

Heard she got a promotion you were up for. How'd you feel about that?

ELLIE

... Happy for her.

DETECTIVE HELLER

Really? She was younger than you and you've been working here longer.

ELLIE

I didn't really notice.

DETECTIVE HELLER

Then you're better than me. Took me seven years longer than it should've to get this job. Seven years. Four times, Chief promoted a guy less experienced and qualified than me. "Connections." They got the title and pay bump. I got to do all their work, cause they didn't know how. I wasn't happy for a single one of 'em.

Heller laughs. Ellie softens.

ELLIE

Maybe I was a little jealous. But I just wanted to talk shit behind her back. Not burn her face off.

INT. GO BARRE - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

Ellie emerges, Heller close behind. Condolence bouquets line the front desk. Carrie Elaine looks up at Ellie, desperate.

CARRIE ELAINE

I need you to teach 7AM.

Ellie gasps. Then she notices Heller watching.

EXT. GO BARRE - PARKING LOT - DAWN

Ellie raises the security grate to reveal the bouquets are now wilted.

Ellie unlocks the front door. Then stops. FEELS EYES ON HER.

She scans the parking lot. Empty, except for --

A LARGE MALE FIGURE looming by her car.

ELLIE
Hey!

The figure stares. Ellie's heart pounds. Then --
He turns. Exits the lot. Disappears behind a corner.
Ellie steels herself. FOLLOWS. As she nears exit --
Headlights BLIND Ellie. She shields her eyes as --
The figure peels away. She squints after them, glimpsing --
His OLD WHITE RUSTED VAN. *Creepy.*

INT. GO BARRE - STUDIO

Ellie teaches her new students.

ELLIE
Bring your right knee up, up, up!

The students look around, confused.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Sorry! Left knee! Left knee, sorry!
(to a student)
Nice tuck, Molly!

A short brunette with bangs, smiles politely.

STUDENT
It's Mallory.

Another short brunette with bangs interjects, annoyed --

STUDENT 2
I'm Molly.

ELLIE
Right, Mallory! Sorry, Molly...

As Ellie turns, Mallory and Molly snicker at each other.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ellie SWIPES between almost identical photos of MOLLY and MALLORY, memorizing their faces.

ELLIE
Mallory. Molly. Molly. Mallory.

INT. GO BARRE - RECEPTION - MORNING

Ellie stares at students' SHOES as they enter, matching each pair (Uggs, Nikes, Onitsuka Tigers, etc.) with a name --

ELLIE (V.O.)
Molly, Juliet, Julia, Cassie, Beth,
Mallory --

MEN'S BLACK COMBAT BOOTS enter.

Ellie gazes up BLACK JEANS, covering POWERFUL THIGHS. A HAPPY TRAIL creeps up RIPPED ABS beneath a BLACK TEE.

ZACK SHAW removes his aviator shades.

ZACK
I live on the Westside, but I
thought "fuck sleep, I gotta take
her class."

The students WHISPER. They watch Ellie. *How will she respond?*

ELLIE
(cold, professional)
Good morning, sir. Did you sign up
online?

His eyes question her. Hers say, "Go with it."

ZACK
Shoot. Didn't know I had to.

ELLIE
Of course you do. Let me check if
we even have room.
(computer shows 12 open
slots)
Lucky you. We have a cancellation.
Where are your grippy socks?
They're required.

ZACK
Sorry. Never done this before. I'm
kind of a virgin.

The women giggle. Ellie surveils Zack.

ELLIE

You'll have to purchase some. Along with some proper attire.

Zack follows her to the retail rack. When he's close enough that no one else can hear --

ZACK

Only if you'll come to my house Saturday. I'm having people over.

ELLIE

Gosh, it's a little early for flirty invitations from a man twice my age. I believe I mentioned I have a boyfriend?

ZACK

Bring him. Bring your friend Harper. Bring anyone. Just come.

She's flattered, but hides it.

ELLIE

Deal. *If* you put this on --

Ellie hands him a CROPPED PEACH HOODIE AND LEGGINGS SET BEDAZZLED with the words "BARRE BITCH."

He smirks. *Game on.*

INT. GO BARRE - STUDIO - MONTAGE

SLO MO as Zack ENTERS, in spandex showing off his PECS, ABS, THIGHS, ASS, and HUGE PACKAGE. The women practically gawk.

Ellie curls her finger. Zack obeys.

The class WARMS UP aerobics-style. Leg lifts. Body twists.

Smiles. Laughter. THIGHS, ASSES, BOOBS bounce. Sweat drips.

They're in backwards table top. Bodies swiveling. Zack throws his head back, making upside down eye contact with Ellie.

ELLIE

Faster!

Pulling away from the barre, exercise balls between legs.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Harder!

Spread-eagle on tiptoes, squatting up an inch, down an inch.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Deeper!

On their knees, pelvises thrusting, watching Zack's PACKAGE BOUNCE and ASS CLENCH every time Ellie shouts --

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Tuck! Tuck! Tuck!

The class pants as Ellie and Zack EYE FUCK. Until --

Zack can't take it anymore. He pushes Ellie against the wall and KISSES HER. The students WATCH.

He LICKS and BITES down her neck and chest, until he gets to her sports bra, which he RIPS APART WITH HIS TEETH as we --

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SATURDAY

Ellie, sweaty, masturbates with Morgan sleeping next to her.

ELLIE'S FANTASY: Zack LIFTS her onto the barre, her back streaking against the foggy mirror.

Ellie crawls to the foot of the bed. Her HEAD BOBS as Morgan groggily moans.

ELLIE'S FANTASY: The students WATCH Zack thrust into her. She digs her nails into his ass.

Morgan CRIES OUT and SHUDDERS. BEAT, then --

MORGAN
Where did that come from?

She shrugs. Wipes her mouth. Snuggles up next to him.

MORGAN (CONT'D)
Let's stay in bed and watch
Vanderpump all day.

ELLIE
Actually, we got invited to a party
this afternoon.

MORGAN
Whose party?

INT/EXT. MORGAN'S CAR - PACIFIC PALISADES

Ellie's and Harper's heads are out the window as Morgan drives his old Prius past MANSIONS and PORSCHEs up to a MIDCENTURY STUNNER with VALET WORKERS outside.

HARPER

I heard he sold the feds some algorithm and never has to work again. His furniture was built with wood from Thomas Jefferson's yacht.

ELLIE

Thomas Jefferson had a yacht?

As Morgan bypasses the valet, parking on the CURB --

MORGAN

I'm not paying for valet. There's a spot right here!

Ellie steps out. We float through the immaculate yard into --

INT/EXT. ZACK'S HOUSE - PACIFIC PALISADES

A modern Slim Aarons photo. Incredible city view. Striped umbrellas. Caviar bar. Martinis. Pizzas baked to order.

Zack, Damien, and more Zaddies chat, SHIRTLESS. Surrounded by hot models in designer bikinis.

Harper sprint-straddles into Damien. Zack beelines to --

ZACK

You must be Morgan. I've heard so much about you.

His tan hand dwarfs Morgan's pale one.

MORGAN

How do you two know each other again?

ZACK

Ellie toned my inner thighs yesterday. They're still burning.

MORGAN

You took her barre class?

ZACK

You don't? Best teacher in LA.

MORGAN
... I've been busy.

ZACK
How's the short film going? I love
short films.

Ellie raises her eyebrows. Morgan forces a smile.

MORGAN
Great.

Zack whisks Ellie outside, grinning --

ZACK
Can I ask you a personal question?
Beer or wine?

Ellie laughs. Morgan watches, left out. Mimics quietly --

MORGAN
"I love short films."

EXT. ZACK'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

Zack leads Ellie toward a group of Zaddies and models.

ELLIE

ZACK
What, you thought I was a luddite?
Some old guy who accidentally turns
on his phone flashlight?

ELLIE
I'm impressed. I don't even know
what a cookie is. And I still click
"accept all."

They reach the crew. Zack slaps his friend's back.

ZACK
Just don't get Ted and me debating
the ethics of data stewardship.

ZACK (CONT'D)
They depend on life cycle management!

TECH GUY

The men laugh. Ellie smiles, charmed and intrigued.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

Morgan snoops, nursing a drink. He hears VOICES. Peeks through a crack in a nearby door at --

Harper and Damien, half-dressed, in a guest room.

HARPER

I found the cutest traveling petting zoo. Aspen's gonna love it.

Damien shushes her. Kisses her neck. She pulls back.

HARPER (CONT'D)

I texted you about it.

DAMIEN

About that... Erin wants to plan the party herself.

Harper side eyes him.

DAMIEN (CONT'D)

I'm talking to her soon. Promise.

She pulls away. Stands. Puts her top back on.

HARPER

No. I don't do "soon."

DAMIEN

Harp, cut me a break! Her mom just had a stroke. I already booked our Anguilla trip. And referred Scott Taub to Hot Girl Parties for his company retreat, which is a 100K account.

Harper softens. Returns to him, he pulls her top back off.

Morgan grimaces. Continues on to ZACK'S BEDROOM.

CUT TO:

THE POOL. Men circle Ellie. Their Rolexes glint in the sun.

ELLIE

So did you all, like, grow up rich?

They laugh.

REAL ESTATE HEIR

Is that a crime?

HEDGE FUND MANAGER

Did my dad's name open the door for me? Sure. But I still had to do the work. In some ways, that's harder.

PHARMA FOUNDER

Seriously, why is it cool to hate rich people now?

ELLIE

Maybe because you spend it on stuff like that.

Ellie nods to an ornate WIND SPINNER SCULPTURE by the window.

ZACK

That's by a very important artist. Whose name I can't recall at the moment.

Everyone laughs at Zack.

REAL ESTATE HEIR

Pretty boy is self-made. Does that make him better than us?

ZACK

Better looking.

CUT TO:

ZACK'S BATHROOM. Morgan's eyes WIDEN at a counter stocked with HIGH TECH DEVICES. An acne wand, facial steamer, infusion machine, LED face mask.

He opens a medicine cabinet. Grabs his phone and FILMS --

La Mer, pill organizers, beakers labeled "hyaluronic, lactic, salicylic, glycolic," SYRINGES, and BOTTLES of TESTOSTERONE CYPIONATE, HUMAN GROWTH HORMONE and OZEMPIC.

BACK TO:

THE POOL.

REAL ESTATE HEIR

Would you like our money more if we invested it in you?

HEDGE FUND MANAGER

He told us about your biz plan. My portfolio always has room for the next Equinox. The SoulCycle founders sold for \$90mil each.

ZACK

I told them you're not a Wall
Street shill. You're like me. An
explorer. An adventurer.

HEDGE FUND MANAGER

A "nomad" who hates sleeves.

ELLIE

Nomad? Where were you before here?

ZACK

Copenhagen, Prague, Tokyo,
everywhere. Never wanted to stay in
one place too long. Until now.

Ellie stares at Zack. Until she sees, behind him --
Morgan, at a window, mouthing, "Let's go."

ELLIE

Would you excuse me for a moment?

EXT. ZACK'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Morgan shows Ellie the videos he took on his phone.

ELLIE

You snooped!?

MORGAN

I got lost! This whole place feels
like a Bond villain's lair. His
bathroom smells like a hospital. Or
an evil scientist's laboratory.

ELLIE

He's into skincare. So what?

MORGAN

Hello, it's like, what are you
hiding? Are you that insecure about
your micropenis?

She doesn't correct him. He opens the Prius door.

ELLIE

But we just got here.

MORGAN

How long do you want to hang out
with those old right-wing
douchebags?

ELLIE

They're fiscally conservative! It's not like they stormed the Capitol.

He can't believe she's serious.

MORGAN

That dude is bad news, Ellie. Some pathologically insecure, aging one-percenter with a fetish for women half his age? Gross.

(off Ellie's silence)

I'd expect this from Harper but not you. You're supposed to have standards.

ELLIE

Yeah, well, my standards haven't gotten me very far, have they?

Morgan searches her. *Seriously?* She shrugs. *Guess so.*

He slams his door, feeling betrayed. Peels off. Ellie, frustrated, watches him go.

Then, she notices as he DRIVES PAST --

An OLD WHITE RUSTED VAN. Out of place in the Palisades.

Is it the same one from the studio? Ellie squints.

Someone's at the wheel, but we can't see their face.

She brushes it off. Turns and heads back into paradise.

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Morgan, drunk, scrolling his phone.

He glances up across the bar, to SEE --

A SUPER HOT BRUNETTE looking at him from THE POOL TABLE.

BRUNETTE

Wanna play?

He raises his eyebrows. Shrugs. *Why not?*

He gets up. Stands across the table from her.

She bends over. Lines the balls up. He notices her CLEAVAGE. Looks away, respectfully.

She shoots, sending BALLS FLYING. One shoots directly into a pocket in front of Morgan's groin.

He mock flinches. She laughs, handing him her cue.

BRUNETTE (CONT'D)
Your turn.

INT. GO BARRE - STUDIO - MORNING

POP MUSIC BLASTS. Women contort themselves in ab exercises.

ELLIE
Tuck, squeeze! Tuck, hold!

A TEXT CHIMES on the speakers, pausing the music. The women grimace, annoyed. Ellie runs to silence her phone as --

SIRI
Someone with a 323 area code says:
"Fucked ur BF last night."

PING. Another TEXT appears. A video.

Shocked, Ellie hits PLAY. SEX MOANS BLAST over --

A DIVE BAR BATHROOM. Behind the brunette's face and bouncing boobs, we can see MORGAN THRUSTING into her.

BRUNETTE ON VIDEO MORGAN ON VIDEO
Morgan! Morgan! Morgan! Oh fuck, I'm gonna come...

IN CLASS, Ellie drops the phone. In tears. Her students stare at her, shocked.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT

Ellie and Harper eat ice cream and mope.

ELLIE
I got cheated on by an *actor*. An
aspiring, male actor.

HARPER
I got dumped by a *sixty-five year old man. Via Text.*

ELLIE
I helped him with his self-tapes!

HARPER

I was gonna treat his kids like
they were my own!

ELLIE

Why did we think we deserved to be
treated like that?

HARPER

The real question is, what are we
gonna do about it?

BEAT, as they think. THEN, they both lunge for their phones.

HARPER (CONT'D)

Fuck it, I'm getting revenge lips.
Show Damien what he's missing.

ON ELLIE'S PHONE as she texts "Maybe: Zack Shaw" --

Your favorite barre instructor is now single...

INT/EXT. SAN VICENTE BUNGALOWS - NIGHT - WEEKS LATER

A valet in a 1960's style uniform pulls back a curtain.

Ellie drops her phone into a PLASTIC BOX. An EMPLOYEE files
it away. She passes a sign --

NO PHOTOGRAPHY OR VIDEOGRAPHY, NO SOCIAL MEDIA, NO GREETING
ANYONE YOU DO NOT ALREADY KNOW

A fountain trickles. A seafood tower glistens. The sun sets.

ZACK SHAW smiles at us across the table. It's perfect.

ZACK

How have you been since you and
Morgan broke up?

ELLIE

You know he claims she threw
herself at him?

ZACK

Nothing aches like a broken heart.

ELLIE

(changing the subject)
I'm just happy to be single. Being
absolutely selfish.

Ellie swallows an oyster, putting on a sexy show. THEN, A DRUNK EUROPEAN MAN slaps Zack on the back, interrupting --

DRUNK MAN
Chad Skovgaard!? It's been ages.

ZACK
Oh... uh... Sorry, bud. You've got me confused with someone else.

DRUNK EUROPEAN MAN
(laughs)
Fuck you. You're Chad Skovgaard.
Anders Novotny. Prague!

ZACK
Must be a handsome guy, but it's not me, man.

DRUNK EUROPEAN MAN
No, I never forget a face. Your chin's a little different.

Zack STANDS, towering over the man, who looks up, confused.

DRUNK EUROPEAN MAN (CONT'D)
And you're taller than I remember.

The man turns to Ellie, like he recognizes her --

DRUNK EUROPEAN MAN (CONT'D)
And you. I know you. I like the dark hair.

Zack eyes a waiter, who hurries over to guide the man away --

WAITER
Is there a problem?

ZACK
Like I said, wrong guy. Guess I just have one of those faces.

The man stumbles off, confused. Zack drops his smile. Gestures to the guy's TEVAS.

ZACK (CONT'D)
What more can you expect from an adult man wearing velcro?

Ellie laughs, too hard. Leans in, accentuating her cleavage.

ELLIE

I guess when you look as good as you do, everyone wants a piece.

ZACK

Stop trying to be what I want. You don't know what I want.

She freezes, embarrassed. His intensity emboldens her.

ELLIE

What, are you the only fifty year old man in LA not into fucking twenty-five year olds?

He grins.

ZACK

Forty-seven. And fine. You're right. I want you. But not like this. Sure, we could fuck and never see each other again. But I don't want to be a rebound. Some story you tell at parties. Your... what do you call them now? Not a sugar daddy...

ELLIE

I believe the word you're looking for is "Zaddy."

ZACK

Yes. I don't want to be some disposable Zaddy. I want more. I want to know the real you. Your dreams, your secrets, your scars you're scared will never heal.

He places his hand on hers.

ZACK (CONT'D)

I've been hurt, too. By my first love. Still stings like it was yesterday.

ELLIE

Morgan and I had issues. This is good. More time to focus on work. Let every setback fuel you.

ZACK

It's not just the breakup, is it?

Ellie feels like he can see through her. She can't hide.

ELLIE

You want the real me? Fine. Every morning I wake up and bust my ass and try to make today the day that changes everything, gets me back on track, finally makes good on my potential. My mom always said that, when I was her age, I was gonna be somebody. Well, I'm her age. And I'm not even close. And the truth is it's probably never gonna happen.

Her eyes are tearful. He leans in, compassionate, entranced.

ZACK

Yes, it is.

ELLIE

I'm trying. I just didn't realize that, to get anyone to listen to you, you have to be this aspirational, unattainable person who flaunts your perfect skin and body and disposable income to a million followers who secretly hate you for it.

BEAT.

ZACK

If you stop caring so much about what other people think, you'll have everything you've ever wanted and more.

She leans in. Searches his eyes. He's so confident.

Their lips meet. He inhales. It's everything.

Their lips part. Foreheads touch. They breathe.

ELLIE

Let's just take it slow.

INT/EXT. ZACK'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - NIGHT

Ellie SCREAMS IN PLEASURE, head hanging over Zack's balcony railing as he FINGERS HER before a panoramic city view.

Ellie writhes on the floor as Zack EATS HER OUT.

Ellie rides Zack in his bed, covered in rose petals, candles everywhere. It looks like a shrine. He MOANS.

Zack opens a closet, revealing SHELVES OF VIBRATORS, in descending height.

Ellie bites her lip. Eyes -- A FOOT LONG DILDO.

But Zack walks past it. Selects -- The TINIEST BULLET.

He kneels before Ellie, like he's worshiping at an altar.

ON ZACK'S THUMB. He CLICKS the vibrator ON.

Ellie clutches the sheets.

Click. Click.

Ellie THRASHES. Contorts her face.

Click. Click. Click.

Ellie is SPEAKING IN TONGUES. Just as she's about to COME --

SMASH TO:

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

WATER GUSHES onto Zack's six pack as they shower together.

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

WHIPPED CREAM SPRAYS into their mouths from the can.

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

MILKY SERUM SQUIRTS onto Ellie's face. Zack sets a beaker down. They wear decadent bathrobes.

As he elaborately dabs and pats various products onto her --

ELLIE

As long as I can remember, she was
always binging, purging, laxatives,
whatever. But this was different.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MOMMY'S HOUSE - VARIOUS (FLASHBACK)

FLASHES of MEMORIES. A CEILING FAN spins. The THERMOSTAT reads 40 degrees. The bedspread is SOAKING WET.

ELLIE (V.O.)

The room was freezing, but she was drenched in sweat. She'd filled her tub with ice, but never made it in. The cops couldn't figure it out, until they found this illegal diet pill she'd ordered online. DNP.

PUSH IN on manicured nails on a YELLOWED hand, limp on a pink math mat, next to DRIED VOMIT and a bath tub FILLED WITH ICE.

Amidst beauty products we FIND a red BOTTLE labeled DNP, with an illustration of a six pack promising "LOSE THE WEIGHT!"

ELLIE (V.O.)

DNP was originally developed in WWI as an explosive. Today, it's used in pesticides. But it has a magical side effect: weight loss. Basically lights your metabolism on fire. The only issue is that, if you take too much, it kills you. Even a tiny amount causes hyperthermia and cardiac arrest.

ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE. WWI bombs exploding. Vintage diet ads. Crops are sprayed with chemicals.

BACK TO THE SERUMS, Ellie and Zack gaze at each other.

ELLIE

It heats up your insides until your heart stops. They said her death was quick but felt slow. She burned alive from the inside out.

Zack kisses away Ellie's tears.

ZACK

I'm so sorry. I know exactly how you feel.

ELLIE

You do? What's your big tragedy, you haven't slept with enough women?

ZACK

People think I'm some stone cold success who only cares about money and my body count. But the truth is, wealth means nothing if you have no one to share it with. I have everything but the one thing that matters. Love. Real love. Love for who I really am.

ELLIE

Who are you?

ZACK

A failure.

ELLIE

How can a self-made billionaire be a failure?

ZACK

I never met my dad. This is all I had of him.

Zack motions to a FRAMED PHOTO of a MAN hiking.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. YOUNG ZACK'S HOUSE (FLASHBACK)

The same photo is inside a SCANNER, lasers flashing.

On a COMPUTER SCREEN, PIXELS form Zack's dad's FACE. Digital coordinates cover his features, creating a MAP.

ZACK (V.O.)

-- I broke it into coordinates to search the internet for a match.

Fingers type on a keyboard, beside a European energy drink.

On the SCREEN, the code receives the alert: NO MATCHES. NO MATCHES. NO MATCHES.

ZACK (V.O.)

But I never found him. I found something else.

A YOUNG MAN's eyes flit back and forth, READING THE CODE.

INT/EXT. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (FLASHBACK)

From behind, we see Young Zack in a hoodie, sitting opposite FBI AGENTS in suits. An agent slides us a manilla envelope.

ZACK (V.O.)

A new kind of search engine that could help solve other man hunts.

The envelope opens. Young Zack's eyes BULGE. The agents nod.

IN THE BATHROOM -- a tear falls down Zack's cheek.

ZACK

I'm not the success people think I am.

ELLIE

No. You're better.

Ellie kisses his tears away.

CUT TO:

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE (MONTAGE)

BLOOD spins in a machine. Needles hammer into skin.

Zack, face covered in blood, paints blood onto Ellie's face.

She holds out her phone for a pic. He grabs it. They laugh.

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN (MONTAGE)

Zack and Ellie mix and blend their own VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS, pouring them into pill capsules and organizers.

INT. SALON (MONTAGE)

Zack sits with Ellie as a STYLIST places foils in her hair.

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE (MONTAGE)

Ellie, blonder, unboxes The Row's sold out MARGAUX BAG.

Her jaw drops. She searches for the price tag. Zack laughs.

He slides it onto her shoulder. They gaze into the mirror.

Damn, she looks good. Different. But good.

EXT. ZACK'S HOUSE - DECK WITH SICKENING VIEW (MONTAGE)

Zack films Ellie teaching barre in a bikini. She's part laughing at herself, part giving in and enjoying it.

ELLIE
Tuck, tuck, tuck, tuck!

INT/EXT. GO BARRE (MONTAGE)

A RECEPTIONIST mans the phone, which is ringing off the hook.

RECEPTIONIST
I'm so sorry. 7AM is fully booked through the rest of the week.

Chic women stream in, competing for Ellie's attention --

CHIC WOMEN
I've been telling everyone your class is a sexual awakening. / You changed my life. / I love you.

Outside, more women WAIT ON THE CURB. The receptionist hangs a sign -- "AT CAPACITY." The waiting women GROAN and CRY.

INT. GO BARRE - STUDIO (MONTAGE)

ELLIE'S PHONE is plugged into the speakers as she teaches. It lights up with texts from MORGAN SNAKE EMOJI.

Congrats on all the hype. I miss you. Can we talk?

But it's on silent. She rolls her eyes. Deletes it.

INT/EXT. EMPTY STOREFRONT - SILVERLAKE (MONTAGE)

Ellie BEAMS, spinning around a dingy room with her Margaux.

The MANAGER hands over a LEASE. Ellie excitedly signs.

END MONTAGE.

INT/EXT. ZACK'S G-WAGON - BIG SUR COASTLINE - DAY

Zack drives. Ellie tries to DJ. She groans.

ELLIE
There's no service! Stupid nature!

ZACK

This may be before your time, but
did you know music existed before
streaming? On these crazy things
called CDs.

He opens the glove, pulls out a CD. She grabs it.

ELLIE

Oh my God. My mom loved Maroon 5.
So 2000s.

"HARDER TO BREATHE" plays. Zack sings along UN-IRONICALLY --

ZACK

*How dare you say that my behavior's
unacceptable / So condescending,
unnecessarily critical / I have the
tendency of getting very physical /
So watch your step cause if I do
you'll need a miracle...*

Ellie laughs. Turns the volume down.

ELLIE

How do you know this so well?

ZACK

Are you kidding? It's Maroon 5!

He twists the volume back up.

ZACK (CONT'D)

*Does it kill / Does it burn / Is it
painful to learn / That it's me
that has all the control..*

Curious, Ellie digs through his CDs. Pauses, realizing --

ELLIE

Wait... are these all Maroon 5?

ZACK

Duh! They're my jam!

ELLIE

Wow. I didn't know I had a huge
Maroon 5 Stan on my hands.

But he doesn't laugh.

ZACK

*Does it thrill / Does it sting /
When you feel what I bring / And
you wish that you had me to hold.*

ELLIE

How old were you when this came out?

ZACK

In 2002? Twenty-five. Same as you.

ELLIE

Please help me understand why you have the music taste of a millennial teenage girl. Do you love the tattoos, the pop rock flavor... what?!

ZACK

What's not to love? It's Levine, baby!

(rocking out)

Is there anyone out there 'cause it's getting harder and harder to breathe...

Ellie bites her lip. Awkward.

INT/EXT. THE ELLIE METHOD - STRIP MALL - NIGHT

We PAN PAST half-painted walls to find Ellie, inspecting LIGHT SOCKET WIRING and talking on speakerphone --

HARPER (O.S.)

What did you expect? An ultra-wealthy forty-five year old in peak physical condition has to have some flaws. Just pray an Adam Levine obsession is the worst of them.

ELLIE'S PHONE buzzes. She frowns. Reading DMs from --

JessWeisberg24: I know who hurt me.

HARPER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Um, hello, I'm talking?

JessWeisberg24: So do you.

ELLIE

Sorry, I'm getting creepy messages. From someone named Jess Weisberg.

JessWeisberg24: It's going to happen again.

HARPER (O.S.)
It's probably some jealous loser
trolling you. Just block them. I
gotta go ice my lips again.

"..." appears as *JessWeisberg24* types.

Ellie's heart pounds. She clicks BLOCKS THIS USER. The messages disappear. *Phew.*

But Ellie can't help but feel like --

Someone is watching her, right now. She closes the blinds.

INT. REPUBLIQUE - NIGHT

A tiny spoon cracks creme brûlée. Ellie, Zack and Harper are at dinner. Harper, lips ALARMINGLY PUFFY, holds back tears --

HARPER
-- I'm in line to drown my sorrows by paying \$74 for a candle, and I hear his voice. So I turn. And he's with *them*. Aspen, Skye, Erin, the whole family. I sprint to the Nordstrom bathroom. I can't let him see me like *this*. And I know it's pathetic, but this morning, I texted him. Just to say, "Hey, did you recommend me for the Taub retreat yet?" Because sorry, I need the money. And it went through green! He blocked me!

ELLIE
I'm sorry, babe. His loss.

ZACK
At least you don't have to deal with his psoriasis anymore. Or that ghastly necklace. Really, what did you see in the guy anyway?

HARPER
His necklace *is* really ugly.

Ellie smiles at Zack. He kisses her forehead. She leans in.

HARPER (CONT'D)
See, why can't that be me and him?

Harper grabs her phone. Snaps a photo. Zack stiffens.

ZACK
Did you just take a photo of us?

HARPER
(reviewing her work)
Uh huh. So cute! I hate you both.

ZACK
Delete it, please. I'm begging you.

Ellie and Harper laugh.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Really. No one needs to see that.

HARPER
Stop, you look so hot.

ELLIE
Lemme see.
(Harper shows her)
Okay, we do look hot.

HARPER
If you saw me across the room, I
just might...

The girls laugh. Zack is not amused.

HARPER (CONT'D)
Are you really not gonna look at
it?

ZACK
I don't want to look at it. I want
you to delete it. Now.

Harper laughs awkwardly. *Is he for real?*

HARPER
I won't post it. It's just for us.

ZACK
Do I have to do it for you?

Harper side eyes Ellie. *Is he serious?*

HARPER
Chill, bro.

ELLIE
Yeah, it's not a big deal.

BEAT. Zack GRABS the phone out of Harper's hand. He deletes it. Flings the phone back, into her creme brûlée. Harper jumps, cleaning her phone. Ellie is speechless. Harper hardens. Leans into Zack. Coldly --

HARPER

You think you can treat me like
that because you're hot and rich?
Well, no matter how much Viagra you
snort, you'll never get your youth
back. And it's not like anyone
knows who you are, anyway.

ZACK

I'd like to keep it that way.

Harper exits.

ELLIE

Harper, wait!

Ellie turns to Zack.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Um, what the fuck was that?

INT/EXT. ZACK'S G-WAGON - (MOVING) - NIGHT

Zack drives through the Palisades. Ellie is furious.

ZACK

I tried to set a boundary and she
completely ignored it!

ELLIE

It's just a photo!

ZACK

No, it's not. It's data. A
geometric map of your face leading
anyone who knows how to read it
directly to every account you've
ever uploaded "just a photo" to,
gaining them access to *more* data,
From government records to, oh, I
don't know, your home address and
location?

ELLIE

Zack, people post pictures of
themselves every day.

ZACK

Not when they have resources other
people would kill for. Not that I'd
expect Harper to understand that.

ELLIE

She's an *influencer*! Posting photos
is her *job*! Until she gets Hot Girl
Parties off the ground, which
Damien was *supposed* to help her
with!

ZACK

*"I can't succeed without my rich
sugar daddy, wah!"*

ELLIE

She's going through a breakup!

ZACK

I'm sorry her boyfriend went back
to his wife.

ELLIE

He said he was gonna leave her.

ZACK

And she believed him?!

ELLIE

You know, that's my best friend
you're talking about.

He pulls into the driveway and turns off the car.

ZACK

And what am I? Did you hear what
she said to me?

ELLIE

You threw a phone at her!

ZACK

She's insufferable! Another LA
transplant who talks a big game but
can't do anything without a married
man's bank account. And her *lips*. I
mean, her face is her moneymaker
but that's where she cheapens out? Is
she *that* stupid?

BEAT. He looks at his phone, so casually cruel. Ellie SNAPS --

ELLIE

You know, you may think she's just some desperate slut with bad lip injections who fucks rich married guys for money and doesn't actually have what it takes to make it in LA. But she's not. She's my friend, okay? You have no right to judge her. It's her face. It's her life. She can do whatever the fuck she wants.

Ellie slams the door. Storms into the house.

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We FOLLOW Ellie inside, fuming. After a beat --

Zack enters. Head hung low. Puppy dog eyes.

ZACK

You're right. I was way out of line. I'm sorry.
(off her blank stare)
I'm embarrassed.

ELLIE

Good. You should be.

ZACK

There's no excuse.

ELLIE

No, there isn't.

He breathes in deeply. This is hard --

ZACK

I want you to know... When I feel insecure, I lash out. And I hate myself for it.

He DIGS his fists into his eye sockets. Through ANGRY TEARS --

ZACK (CONT'D)

I fucking hate myself!

He hits himself HARD. Ellie JUMPS. Grabs his hands.

ELLIE

Stop it! Stop it!

He breathes jaggedly. She waits. Watches. Searches him.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Why were you feeling so insecure?

He starts to speak but stops himself, tormented. Then --

ZACK
I want to be honest with you,
but... I'm scared you'll judge me.

ELLIE
I won't. I promise.

ZACK
I can't believe I'm saying this.
I've never told anyone before. The
reason I didn't want her to take my
picture is... I... I...

Ellie braces herself.

ZACK (CONT'D)
I got Botox.

She blinks. He exhales.

ELLIE
That's it?! Are you kidding?
Everyone in LA has Botox!

ZACK
With guys, it's different. There's
more of a stigma around it.

He blushes. Calm. Gentle. She eyes his motionless forehead.

ELLIE
A little Brotox never hurt anyone.
If it makes you happy, that's all
that matters.

ZACK
You're not judging me?

ELLIE
Of course not.

ZACK
You don't have any plastic surgery.

ELLIE
... I did get a free consultation
once.

ZACK

But you're so young and beautiful.

ELLIE

I was just curious... Besides, why do you care what I think? I'm just another common gold digger, like Harper.

ZACK

You? You achieved your success all by yourself.

ELLIE

If anything, you're holding me back.

He smiles. Pulls her toward him. Caresses her.

ZACK

This is why you're the only one allowed to know my secrets. You're a good friend. I'm sorry I'm an idiot. I'll make it up to her.

She smells him. Traces the outline of his growing hard-on.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Right after I make it up to you...

As he slides his hand up her skirt, Ellie GASPS IN PLEASURE.

INT/EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - COFFEE SHOP - DAY

ECU -- ESPRESSO SQUIRTS out of a machine.

SQUARE MACHINE -- Ellie pays \$25 for two coffees.

She carries the coffees to Harper, who looks radiant.

ELLIE

My treat. I'm so embarrassed about the other night.

HARPER

Please, water under the creme brûlée. Older guys don't like having their photo taken. I get it.

They cross the street to the STRIP MALL PARKING LOT.

ELLIE

It's okay if you're mad. He
shouldn't have talked to you like
that.

HARPER

Ditto, bitch. We were both wrong.

ELLIE

(surprised)

Harp, thanks. That means a lot.

HARPER

Of course, babe. You're my ride or
die. Plus you're right. He's *super*
generous.

Harper smiles deviously. Ellie looks her over, INSPECTING.

ELLIE

Okay, what did he buy you?? That
Telfar? Those huggies?

HARPER

Nope. Guess again.

She blows Ellie a kiss. Feeling herself. Ellie's jaw drops --

ELLIE

Oh my god, your lips! I just
thought the allergic reaction went
down, but --

HARPER

-- He dissolved my ratchet-ass shit
and replaced it with stunning,
primo filler by Dr. Saul
motherfucking Krivitsky. Can you
believe?

Ellie is clearly a bit jealous. But she recovers.

ELLIE

Wow, you look perfect.

HARPER

Right? I'm pretty sure Damien's
jerking it to my stories from his
finsta.

ELLIE

Notice anything different about *me*?

Harper squints. Ellie points behind her to the corner storefront, its exterior painted PINK.

Harper SCREAMS, tackling Ellie in a jumping hug.

INT. THE ELLIE METHOD - MOMENTS LATER

They barrel inside. Harper FILMS. Ellie POSES.

HARPER

Arch your back! Pout! Give me
fitness entrepreneur goddess!

She adjusts Ellie's hair. Turns on self-timer and poses too.

We scroll through HARPER'S CAMERA ROLL. THUMBNAILS of different faces, poses, attitudes.

The two women lay side by side, ZOOMING, FILTERING, FAVING. BEAUTIFYING good shots and CACKLING at unflattering ones.

HARPER (CONT'D)

We just need to take a second to
acknowledge how far you've come.

Harper opens a PHOTOS FOLDER. Scrolls through time to SELFIES of Ellie wearing a NECK BRACE.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You've overcome injury, loss,
nepotism, and, even more tragic,
that time you got curly bangs.

She PULLS UP old pics of Ellie's terrible hair. They LAUGH.

HARPER (CONT'D)

You never gave up. Your mom would
be so fucking proud of you.

Ellie's eyes well with happy tears. Then --

ELLIE

I don't know if this would be up to
her standards...

HARPER

Fuck yeah it would. Because it's
just the beginning! How are you and
Zack celebrating?

ELLIE

Zack's being old and wants to stay
in alone tonight. But I have a
surprise...

INT/EXT. ZACK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ellie, giddy, checks her reflection in a window. She adjusts her ELABORATE LINGERIE and cinches her TRENCH COAT over it.

ZACK'S SECURITY FEED. Ellie unlocks a SIDE GATE. She KNEELS OUT OF FRAME --

On her hands and knees, Ellie CRAWLS into the backyard.

She PEEKS inside the kitchen window. But it's empty.

She slinks to the living room window. He's not there.

She eyes the office window. Hears MAROON 5 emanating from it.

Ellie chuckles. Crawls toward the office.

She stands. Hides behind the wall. Readyng herself.

Three... two... one! Ellie peers inside, to SEE --

Zack at his desk, STARING at a TV SCREEN, showing --

GRAINY FOOTAGE. Voyeuristic. Romantic. ZOOMING IN on a YOUNG BLONDE's head. Her nose. Butterfly decal nails. CLEAVAGE.

Ellie squints. *Is he watching porn?*

BACK TO THE FOOTAGE. CLOSE on the blonde's nameplate necklace: VANESSA. She dips out of frame. The camera ZOOMS OUT to reveal it's filming a GYMNASTICS PERFORMANCE.

Zack watches intently. Ellie looks down and notices --

HE'S BARE ASSED, STROKING HIMSELF. Pants around his ankles.

She GASPS. Covers her mouth.

FOOTAGE. The camera cuts to a bedroom window. The blonde shimmies out of her panties.

Zack strokes himself, harder, faster. Ellie can't look away.

FOOTAGE. A guy's there, too. Tall, letterman jacket. He unhooks her bra.

Turns her to face the window. PAN UP SLOWLY toward her face --

Revealing the chin, lips, nose and eyes of -- **ELLIE NOONE**.

Zack MOANS in ECSTASY.

Ellie ducks behind a wall. Hyperventilating. Calms herself.

She kneels down, not realizing her coat is CAUGHT ON --

ZACK'S GOLD WIND SPINNER. It's about to crash down onto her.

ZACK'S SECURITY FEED. Ellie scrambles to right the sculpture. Struggles to untangle her jacket. Kneels back down.

Ellie starts CRAWLING. But the music CUTS OUT.

She freezes. SILENCE except for her POUNDING heart.

There's nowhere to hide. The door OPENS. FOOTSTEPS approach.

HIS SHADOW overtakes her. Ellie turns to face him.

ELLIE

Who is she?

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON Zack's laptop. Paused on the woman's face.

ELLIE

It's like looking in a mirror.

ZACK

Not exactly.

ELLIE

Excuse me?

ZACK

Of course there's a resemblance.
But obviously you're older. Her
nose is slimmer. Your under eyes --

ELLIE

You mean she's prettier?

ZACK

No. Sorry. Analyzing people's faces
is literally my job.

ELLIE

Is this why you're with me? Because
I look like her?

ZACK

I know it looks bad. I'm embarrassed. But part of me is glad you know. I don't want to hide anything from you.

ELLIE

So, yes.

ZACK

Of course that's what attracted me to you *at first!*

ELLIE

What even is this? Am I just a consolation prize for some high school ex?

Ellie stands to go. He grabs her wrist. She wrenches it away.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Is the music part of it? Does Maroon Five *turn you on*?

ZACK

No! It was just on!

ELLIE

Sure.

ZACK

Anything I say right now will sound like a lie!

ELLIE

Is that because it is?

ZACK

You don't understand. Vanessa was my first love. She broke me.

ELLIE

So this is *her* fault?

ZACK

Kind of, yeah!

ELLIE

Really? How?

ZACK

She cheated on me --

ELLIE

So what!?

ZACK

You weren't so forgiving of Morgan.

ELLIE

It's been decades!

ZACK

It's not just the cheating --

ELLIE

What then?

ZACK

After all that --

ELLIE

Just say it!

ZACK

She killed herself.

Ellie is taken off guard. Zack's voice quivers.

ZACK (CONT'D)

She was all I had. Then she was gone. You of all people should know what that feels like.

She does. Despite herself, she softens.

ZACK (CONT'D)

It's the anniversary of her death. That night... we'd had a fight. I stopped by to check on her. But it was too late. I can still feel her cold body in my hands.

ELLIE

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

ZACK

It's not an excuse.

ELLIE

Why didn't you tell me?

ZACK

Grief is strange.

ELLIE

That was you grieving?

ZACK

Should I run from it, like you? Let her memory crush me while I pretend she didn't exist?

ELLIE

Is there some requirement for all billionaires to have some secret fucked up sexual fetish?

He's angry. But sees she's wounded. Regrets --

ZACK

It won't happen again.

ELLIE

Why should I believe you?

ZACK

Because I thought she was the one. But she wasn't. You are.

Ellie is torn. Touched. And creeped out.

Zack drags the video to his trash folder. Empties it.

ZACK (CONT'D)

There. Ancient history. You can go through my phone. Anything. Just give me a chance. Don't go.

She wants to stay. Or, she almost does...

ELLIE

I'm gonna stay at my place tonight.

ZACK

Don't punish me for one mistake.

ELLIE

I'm not. I just need to focus on opening my studio right now.

He swallows his pain. Nods.

ZACK

Of course. Good luck.

INT/EXT. THE ELLIE METHOD - NIGHT

Ellie watches a YouTube video, "How to Wire Sconces." Not noticing --

The old white rusted van parks outside at the curb.

The large male figure exits the van. Slinks in the shadows.

Ellie carefully WIRES SCONCES per the video instructions.

CLOSE ON -- An outdoor security camera. A gloved hand covers it with a piece of tape.

Inside, Ellie hangs the sconce. Admires her handiwork. Then --
TAP. TAP.

Ellie flinches. Turns to the window. SEES --

A MAN wearing a jumpsuit, gloves, and a PLAIN WHITE MASK.

Ellie gasps. Scared but trying to stay in control.

ELLIE
No, thank you!

The Masked Man just stands there and stares.

BEAT. Ellie spirals. *Is he homeless?*

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Do you need me to, like, order you
some food?

The Masked Man SPEAKS. But Ellie can't hear him.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
What?

He beckons to Ellie. Slowly, nervously, she moves closer.

MASKED MAN
Don't... be... scared...

His voice is SLOW, MECHANICAL and SCARY. It comes through a VOICE BOX MACHINE hooked up to his throat.

ELLIE
I think you should leave.

MASKED MAN
... Ellie...

ELLIE
How do you know my name?! I'm
calling the police.

Ellie pulls out her phone and DIALS. After a beat, he retreats. She watches him get into his VAN.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
There's a man outside my building,
in a mask. A jumpsuit. With a
creepy van. His license plate is --

But the van PEELS around the corner before Ellie can read it.

INT/EXT. ELLIE'S SUBARU - SUNSET BOULEVARD - MORNING

Ellie sits in traffic. The sky is foggy. She coughs.

Twitches her nose. Cranes her neck to see ahead --

COP CARS. And a big red FIRE TRUCK. LIGHTS FLASHING.

Right outside her strip mall.

That's not fog. It's SMOKE.

She flings open her door. SPRINTS down Sunset. Past rubberneckers filming on their phones.

She SLAMS into a FIREFIGHTER, who blocks her path.

ELLIE
That's my studio!

The Ellie Method is ENGULFED BY FLAMES.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

CLOSE on a toilet handle. Ellie presses it, but the pee and paper in the toilet bowl won't flush.

REVERSE on Ellie, face puffy and red. She SCREAMS.

Grabs a PLUNGER. Takes her anger out on the toilet. Then --

There's a KNOCK. Ellie washes her hands. Opens the door.

It's DETECTIVE HELLER, looking grim.

CUT TO:

Heller noses around as she chats with Ellie, who sips tea.

DETECTIVE HELLER
You said you wired the lights
yourself late last night?
(Ellie nods)
Kinda risky, isn't it?

ELLIE
I followed the video exactly. It
should've worked.

Heller holds up Ellie's Margaux by her finger.

DETECTIVE HELLER
Nice bag.

ELLIE
It was a gift.

DETECTIVE HELLER
Pricey for someone your age.

ELLIE
He's not.

DETECTIVE HELLER
Birthday present? Anniversary?

ELLIE
Just because, I guess.

DETECTIVE HELLER
I heard you have a new flame. Well-
connected. Type who helps you shoot
right up the ladder... Didn't peg
you for that kinda girl.

ELLIE
I'm not. You saw my studio. Lucky
me.

DETECTIVE HELLER
Why didn't you hire someone?

ELLIE
I run a small business. I'm on a
budget.

Heller raises her eyebrow.

DETECTIVE HELLER
It's a cute story. Scrappy gal
bested by electrical fire. Thank
God she's got good insurance.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE HELLER (CONT'D)
Maybe she'll actually come out of
the fire better than she went in.

ELLIE
Yeah, I'm much better off. Why are
you even investigating a fire? Did
you just miss me?

DETECTIVE HELLER
Too bad the story doesn't fit. We
found gasoline residue on the
floor. Except for this one area,
which, funny enough, was shaped
conspicuously like an exit pathway.

ELLIE
So you're saying it was *arson*.
(Heller nods)
It was that guy. The guy in the
creepy mask. He was there last
night. I told the police.

HELLER
That's right, you did call. Thing
is, most people would remember
seeing a masked man in Silverlake,
right? No one does. And you know
what's weirder? We checked the
security footage. It went out right
before you called 911.

ELLIE
I'm telling you, he was there. I
think he's been following me.
That's your suspect, he did it.

Ellie is adamant. Heller is inscrutable.

HELLER
We'll look into it.
(then)
Will you be making an appearance at
Jess's funeral?

Ellie flinches. *Jess's what?*

HELLER (CONT'D)
You didn't hear?

ELLIE
I thought she was supposed to make
a full recovery.

HELLER

Apparently, she didn't want to live if it meant looking like that. Jess Weisberg slit her wrists last night.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

CLOSE ON a pre-attack image of Jess, framed with flowers.

A WOMAN IN BLACK stares at Ellie as she ENTERS.

Ellie smiles politely. The woman turns. Whispers to MR. WEISBERG (60s). His face turns from sadness to ANGER.

Ellie turns away awkwardly to see --

Detective Heller in the corner, watching.

Eyes down, Ellie walks to the bathroom line, where she physically BUMPS INTO Carrie Elaine, her old boss.

ELLIE

I'm so sorry.

Carrie Elaine steadies her.

CARRIE ELAINE

Ellie. You came. How are you?

ELLIE

(holding back tears)

Okay.

CARRIE ELAINE

I can see that you're not.

Carrie Elaine hugs Ellie tightly. *She needed that.*

CARRIE ELAINE (CONT'D)

Look, I know you had ambitions. But if you need to, you can always come back and work for me. We've got some great new girls.

She gestures to some painfully hot 19 YEAR OLDS. Ellie hides a grimace. Carrie Elaine brushes her hair.

CARRIE ELAINE (CONT'D)

You look so tired. Some people just aren't cut out to be their own boss.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ellie lays on the floor wearing under eye cooling patches.

PING. Her phone alights with a text from BAD BITCH HARPER --

Wanna go to a fancy party?

Ellie replies -- *Look like shit. Hate everything. No.*

BAD BITCH HARPER -- *Come on. We need this.*

Ellie peels the patches off her under eyes. *Ugh.*

INT/EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

Ellie and Harper drink free champagne. Harper scans the room.

ELLIE

The landlord wants me to keep paying rent, but I have no money because my insurance company says they're still "investigating." So I guess I have no choice but to go crawling back to Carrie Elaine.

HARPER

I wasted the entire twenty-fourth year of my life making some old motherfucker feel sexy and powerful. Now, he can't even send a single text referring me to Scott Taub even though he *offered to* in the first place? He cheats and lies and I suffer the consequences.

The girls down another drink.

HARPER (CONT'D)

The truth is, we played the game. We failed. Were the rules rigged against us? Absolutely. Does that change anything? Fuck no.

Harper's eyes light up.

ELLIE

Who do you even know here?

Ellie follows Harper's gaze through the crowd. LANDING ON --

DAMIEN and HIS WIFE schmoozing with other BUSINESSMEN.

Harper grabs another champagne and storms over to him. Ellie follows, unable to look away.

HARPER

Damien. I know it must be so weird seeing me, since in your mind, I no longer exist. But I'm not like your hard-ons. I don't just go away because your wife shows up.

Harper THROWS HER DRINK IN HIS FACE. His wife's jaw drops. Ellie masks her own shock.

Harper links arms with Ellie, leads her through the GAWKING CROWD. Harper smiles and waves. Ellie is self-conscious.

EXT. YACHT - NIGHT

Outside, Harper cackles, exhilarated. Ellie processes.

ELLIE

Harp, they're never gonna let us in here again...

HARPER

Good! Who cares?

ELLIE

I know you're hurting, but what's going on? What was that?

HARPER

That is what it feels like when we have nothing left to lose.

Ellie frowns. Looks out at the ocean.

ELLIE

... What if I don't want to have nothing to lose?

EXT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ellie trudges to her doorstep, where she FINDS --

A beautifully wrapped box on the doorstep. With a note --

Let me make it up to you, Z.

Ellie unwraps it to find a KEY, engraved *8448 Melrose Place*.

EXT. 8448 MELROSE PLACE - DAY

Ellie approaches Zack, who stands in front of A TREE-LINED BRICK PATH, leading to an empty storefront.

ZACK

I can't believe it. You should be celebrating, not mourning.

ELLIE

What do you want, Zack?

ZACK

Wouldn't this be a nice place for a fitness studio?

ELLIE

Sure, if it wasn't the Chloé store.

He raises his eyebrows. Leading her to notice --

The storefront is UNDER CONSTRUCTION. Tarps, ladders and a WINDOW SIGN: **LEMTHD, COMING SOON.**

Her eyes water, stunned. Her face comes back to life. But --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

You bought out Chloé? That must have cost a fortune.

ZACK

You're worth it.

ELLIE

I can't accept it.

ZACK

Please. It means more to you than the money does to me.

She notices he's holding a folder, also labeled "LEMTHD."

ELLIE

What's that?

ZACK

What me and the boys are willing to invest to get you back on your feet. Better than on your feet. Miles ahead of where you were.

ELLIE

You just changed the name?

ZACK
 Research shows losing the vowels
 tracks better.

ELLIE
 I can't get into business with you
 and your friends, Zack.

ZACK
 You don't have to. No strings
 attached, I swear. Just look at it,
 okay? Because it's done. It's
 already yours. Use it or don't. Up
 to you.

(then)
 And if you need any help at all,
 with insurance or your landlord or
 anything, my guys specialize in
 cutting right through the red tape.

God, that's exactly what she needs.

Ellie looks from the studio to Zack and back again.

BEAT. *Fuck it, what does she have to lose?*

She throws her arms around him. We SPIN AROUND THEM as we --

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. LEMTHD - LATER

Ellie and Harper hugging in front of the nearly finished LEMTHD. Harper is happy for her, but clearly a tad jealous.

HARPER
 Congrats, babe. This is major.

ELLIE
 You know what's even more major? I
 want you to plan the grand opening.

Tears spring to Harper's eyes. She fans her face, overjoyed --

HARPER
 It's gonna be a rager, bitch!

INT. LEMTHD - DAY

We FOLLOW Ellie as she shows the nearly finished studio to ZACK'S FRIENDS.

An assistant hold up two flooring samples. They look almost exactly the same. Ellie points to the left and right.

ELLIE

This says "workout," but this says "way of life."

Ellie shows off a detailed design painted on a wooden barre.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

This decorative barre just makes me happy, which most gyms neglect.

Ellie displays TRAYS of Glossier and Chanel.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And our amenities have that "wow factor" that inspires people to post photos and market our brand. Until we can launch our own skincare line, of course.

Ellie passes out mock-up tear sheets of the "LESKN" line. Zack enters, wielding his iPad --

ZACK

I have website mock-ups!

The suits and Ellie crowd the iPad. Her face falls, aghast --

ELLIE

Forty-five dollars *per* class?! That's more than Go Barre. That's what *Tracy Anderson* charges.

REAL ESTATE HEIR

Don't we want to beat Go Barre?

PHARMA FOUNDER

We are Tracy Anderson.

HEDGE FUND MANAGER

Scale, scale, scale.

ELLIE

Right, but... \$45 is not accessible for everyone. That was the whole point.

ZACK

Well, uh... I guess we could delay the opening, which might lose us the piece in The Times, but I guess press isn't the only way to build hype --

She feels their nerves, their pressure. Can't bear it --

ELLIE

It's fine. Never mind.

Ellie breathes in and out, calming herself. She decides --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Once this location is successful, I'll open an accessible one. You have to do well to do good, right?

The front door swings open dramatically, revealing Harper.

HARPER

Guess who just RSVP'd for the opening?

Harper runs to Ellie's side, brandishing her phone.

ELLIE

Stop. Is this real?

HARPER

One hundred goddamn percent.

After a beat of disbelief, the girls jump and scream --

ELLIE

KATE HUDSON IS COMING!

HARPER (CONT'D)

KATE HUDSON IS COMING!

*

CUT TO:

A CAMERA FLASHES. AND FLASHES. AND FLASHES. And we see --

CLOSE UPS of cheekbones. White teeth. Glossy hair. Ellie poses. Planks. Holds the barre. Jumps in the re-done studio.

JIA TOLENTINO (30s, cool) takes notes.

JIA

How did you manage to bounce back from the fire so quickly?

ELLIE

You just have to let every setback fuel you, you know?

Ellie looks dreamily out the window to SEE --
MORGAN. Standing outside, holding a cheap bouquet.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Would you excuse me for a sec?

Jia WATCHES through the window as Ellie exits --

MORGAN
I've tried texting. And calling.

ELLIE
I know.

MORGAN
This place is... wow.

He hands her the flowers. She notices his button down shirt, groomed hair.

ELLIE
You look good.

MORGAN
Thanks. Yeah, I'm sober. 121 days.
Ever since, you know. Look, there's
a lot to say, so I'm just gonna --

Morgan pulls out a slip of paper and reads, shakily --

MORGAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I took you for granted. I
was selfish, judgmental, and
dishonest. I've realized the reason
I couldn't love you right was
because I didn't even love myself.
And I'm learning to do that now. I
got a sponsor. I've been
journaling. Driving for DoorDash.
Taking acting class again. It's not
much, but it's a start. And it's
all because of you.

Ellie is touched. Then --

MORGAN (CONT'D)
-- I did a lot of things wrong.
Especially that night. But I can't
change the past. I can only tell
the truth: I was set up.

Her face falls. Morgan holds up his phone, open to an ESCORT PROFILE of the stacked brunette.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

"Stacy" is an escort, at this, like, private, high end escort service. Juliet Claire Events. It costs two grand per date. Which I could never afford. And even if I could, not just anyone can order a hookup. You have to have an account with them, which you can't get unless you know someone. I think Zack set me up.

Ellie's caught off guard. Does she believe him?

ELLIE

That's your *apology*? Some conspiracy about a mysterious escort service?

(then)

How'd you even find this place if it's so top secret?

MORGAN

That girl you used to work with DM'd me. Jess Weisberg.

ELLIE

... Jess Weisberg is dead.

Morgan is shocked. Ellie, flustered, feels Jia watching. Before Morgan can respond --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Look, congratulations, I guess. But I don't have time for this. I'm kinda in the middle of something.

She opens the Ellie Method door as --

MORGAN

Ellie, I'm worried about you.

Ellie gives him a death glare.

ELLIE

Don't be. You're the one making amends. I'm good.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

CLOSE ON a bag of "Smooth Move" tea steeping. Ellie pours POWDERS into PILL CAPSULES as she talks on speakerphone.

ELLIE
I'm great. I'm amazing.

HARPER
Still haven't shit, huh?

ELLIE
Not in four days. I've been so
stressed about the opening. But I'm
adding magnesium and zinc to my
supplement recipe. Tonight's the
night. It has to be.

HARPER
God bless, babe. I still have to
do, like, fifty gift bags. I'm
think I'm actually gonna turn my
phone off to focus up.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - VARIOUS - NIGHT

ELLIE'S PHONE, above her pants, around her ankles. She's on
the toilet, UNBLOCKING JessWeisberg24.

CLOSE on Ellie's face as she looks up to the heavens --

ELLIE
Thank you God...

ECU -- She presses the toilet handle. But --

The MOUNTAIN OF SHIT in the toilet WON'T FLUSH.

ON ELLIE. Disgusted, frustrated, exhausted --

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Fuck you, toilet!!!

She slams the lid. Lights candles. Sets her phone down.

Runs the shower. Lets hot water rain onto her. Not seeing --

Her phone light up with messages --

JessWeisberg24: Be careful.

JessWeisberg24: Zack Shaw is dangerous.

JessWeisberg24: He's not who he says he is.

Ellie shuts the water off. Towels dry, exits, and --

Lets out a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM.

A MAN IS SILHOUETTED IN HER DOORWAY. He steps forward --
It's ZACK, holding a box of roses. Ellie catches her breath.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
You scared me!

ZACK
I'm sorry! Just wanted to surprise
you. How was the interview?

She goes to him. Smells the roses. As Zack notices --
Morgan's wilted BOUQUET, sitting on her desk.
She distracts him with a kiss.

ELLIE
I still can't believe I'm getting a
Times profile. Thanks to you.

He smiles. Pulls away.

ZACK
I gotta wiz.

As he DISAPPEARS behind the bathroom door --
She shoves Morgan's flowers into the trash. Replaces them
with Zack's roses. Better. Tosses on a sweater. He reenters.

ELLIE
I'm so tired. Will you hate me if
we just watch TV til I pass out?

ZACK
Sure. Whatever you need.

Ellie dives into bed. Turns on the TV. Zack sits next to her.

ZACK (CONT'D)
I love driving roses across town
for a girlfriend too exhausted to
stay awake for me.

Wait... what?

ELLIE
If you minded, why didn't you just
say so?

ZACK

It would've been nicer to be honest with you. But then again, you're not nice. You're a liar.

He's calm. Patronizing.

ELLIE

Excuse me?

ZACK

Don't play dumb. You've been having sex with your ex-boyfriend behind my back.

ELLIE

... No, I haven't.

She tries to sit up. He holds her down.

ZACK

You sincerely think I can't see those flowers you tried to hide? You think the journalist I connected you with didn't tell me he showed up?

ELLIE

Okay, yes, he brought me flowers, but that's it. I told him to leave.

Zack isn't mad. He's disappointed.

ZACK

He was here, Ellie. I saw his shit in the toilet.

Ellie GASPS. Embarrassed, she laughs --

ELLIE

That's not his.

HIS HAND FLIES TO HER MOUTH. *Okay, now he's mad.* But his voice stays calm. Didactic --

ZACK

Please, for your own dignity, do not act like that's your shit. We both know exactly whose it is. Now, tell me whose shit is in the toilet.

Slowly, he removes his hand. After a loaded beat --

ELLIE
It's mine. I swear.

ZACK
OH MY GOD!!! You genuinely think
you can convince me that's your
shit in the toilet? And you think
I'm stupid enough to believe you!?

ELLIE
Zack. You're scaring me.

ZACK
Now I'm the bad guy for holding you
accountable? Don't embarrass
yourself more than you already
have.

Her EYES DART to his clenching knuckles. Bulging veins.

SHE FLINGS herself up. He lunges for her. But she slips away,
sprints into the bathroom, slams the door.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She TURNS THE LOCK, trembling. The knob RATTLES.

ZACK
Let me in!

It RATTLES. And RATTLES. She holds back sobs.

ELLIE
I think you should leave.

ZACK
Not until you admit it's his shit.

ELLIE
But it isn't.

ZACK
Okay. Then prove it. Do it again.

ELLIE
I can't!

Zack slams his fist against the door.

ZACK

I know you can't! Because it's his.
Women can't take shits that big.
It's not possible.

ELLIE

Yes, we can!

Zack's energy shifts. He's in *pain*.

ZACK

Please, Ellie, just do the right
thing. Tell me the truth. I won't
be mad at you. I promise. Please.

BEAT. Ellie wipes her tears. Looks in the mirror. Considerers.

ELLIE

You promise?

ZACK

I promise. Just don't lie to me.

BEAT. She listens closely. *Is he crying?*

ELLIE

You're right. It was his shit.

She waits for a reply.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Are you happy now?

BEAT. Ellie breathes. Shakily unlocks the door. Opens it.

Zack LUNGES for her. She winces.

But he wraps her in a hug. Crying all over her.

ZACK

Why did you lie to me, butterfly?

ELLIE

I... didn't want to upset you.

ZACK

Did you two...?

ELLIE

No! You were right. After he showed
up, Morgan wanted more. He followed
me here. But I told him no.

ZACK
I was so scared.

Zack pulls her into bed. He sobs softly. Ellie comforts him.

ELLIE
It's okay.

ZACK
Do you still love me?

ELLIE
I love you.

ZACK
You promise?

ELLIE
I promise.

Zack takes her hand. Places it on his crotch.

Ellie HESITATES. The last thing she wants to do. But --
He's watching her. Insecure. Desperate for reassurance.
Ellie forces a coy smile. Shimmies to the bottom of the bed.
Unbuttons his pants. Pulls them off. Drops them on the floor.
Her head drops out of frame. Zack's eyes roll back.

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Zack sleeps peacefully with his arms around Ellie.

Her eyes are wide open.

Slowly, gently, she slides out of bed. Reaches down for --
HIS PANTS. Takes out HIS PHONE. The screen is locked.
She tiptoes to Zack. Holds the phone inches from his face.
He STIRS. She snatches back the phone. Holds her breath.
But Zack snores. Eyes closed.

His screen is OPEN.

She swipes through his photos. Just Ellie. A couple dick
pics. Screenshots of Maroon 5 stuff. *Ugh.*

She opens his texts. The only conversation is with her. *WTF?*
She opens his contacts. Searches for any name she recognizes.
Nothing. THEN --

Ellie eyes Morgan's bouquet in the trash. *Remembers.*
She scrolls Zack's contacts to find --
"Juliet Claire Events."

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

She turns on the faucet. Presses "call." After a ring --

JULIET CLAIRE EVENTS (O.S.)
Good morning, Mr. Henderson. How
may we serve you today?

... *Mr. Henderson?*

ELLIE
Yes, hi. This is... Mr. Henderson's
new assistant. I'm planning an
event for Mr. Henderson and some of
his friends next weekend.

JULIET CLAIRE EVENTS (O.S.)
Of course. Are you thinking about
his usual girls or would like to
try some of our newbies?

Ellie grimaces. *Ew!*

ELLIE
The usuals. Would Stacy be
available?

JULIET CLAIRE EVENTS (O.S.)
Stacy loves Mr. Henderson and his
friends.

ELLIE
Could you make a note that Mr.
Henderson would prefer to be
addressed by his first name?

JULIET CLAIRE EVENTS (O.S.)
Of course. We'll instruct the girls
to refer to him as "Brett."

Ellie scribbles down the name "Brett Henderson."

ELLIE
Perfect, I'll be in touch.

She turns off the faucet. Hangs up. Opens the door to find --

INT. ELLIE'S APARTMENT

Zack, AWAKE, looking around the bed.

Ellie flits out, his phone behind her back.

ZACK
Have you seen my phone?

She climbs onto him, hiding his phone. Kisses him. Pretends to spot the phone and pick it up.

ELLIE
It's right here, silly.

He looks at her. *Does he know?*

ZACK
Thanks, butterfly. Breakfast?

ELLIE
I wish. Busy day today.

ZACK
What's on the docket?

ELLIE
Fitting, workout, facial, spray tan, nails, run through...

ZACK
Need any help?

ELLIE
You've already done so much for me.
I think it's important I do this part on my own, you know?

ZACK
You're the star.

Ellie grabs her keys. Smiles at him. Runs out the door. Once it shuts, she drops the fake smile.

INT. MORGAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON a laptop, GOOGLING "ZACK SHAW." Ellie hovers behind Morgan, on her phone, looking at --

Photos of generic white men. A musician, a hockey player, a history professor, a physical therapist. None of our guy.

MORGAN

Send me a photo. I'll reverse image search him.

ELLIE

(realizing)

I don't have any.

MORGAN

How long have you been with this guy?

ELLIE

He doesn't take photos. It's a facial recognition thing! Try Brett Henderson.

ON ELLIE'S PHONE. An unanswered DM sent to JessWeisberg24 -- "Who is Brett Henderson?"

ELLIE (CONT'D)

They haven't even opened my DM.

She waits. And waits. Types -- "You still there?" Nothing.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Something's wrong. They're not responding anymore.

Ellie scrolls through the accounts JessWeisberg24 follows.

Ellie, Harper, Morgan, Go Barre... and someone named @MACKENZIELEWIS4REAL. With the bio --

"Funtastic! Gymnastics Coach in sunny Phoenix, Arizona."

Ellie scrolls through their boring posts until --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Holy shit. Check this out.

There's an old high school yearbook photo of VANESSA, looking like Ellie, but better. The caption --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

"I still miss you every day. Seems like only yesterday you were doodling 'Mrs. Vanessa Henderson' in all your notebooks. If you were alive, I know you and Brett would still be madly in love today. 'She will be loved' is on repeat in your honor." That's it!

(checks her Maps app)

It's five hours to Phoenix. If we go now, I can be back for the opening tomorrow morning.

Morgan looks at her like she's crazy.

MORGAN

Ellie, what are you talking about? You need to go to the police right now.

ELLIE

They're not gonna believe me!

MORGAN

You can't go to Phoenix.

ELLIE

I have to find out what Zack's hiding!

MORGAN

And you definitely can't go to the opening. This is crazy!

ELLIE

I can't not show up to the thing I've worked my entire life for!

MORGAN

This is bigger than LEMTHD!

ELLIE

I am LEMTHD!

The insanity of Ellie's statement hangs in the air. Then --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

If I don't show, Zack will know something's up.

Morgan feels for her. But --

MORGAN

Look, if you don't want to go to the cops, I can't help you. I have a service commitment at my meeting. I bring the cupcakes to celebrate people's birthdays.

Morgan packs a thing of CUPCAKES and CANDLES into a bag.

ELLIE

Can't you get someone to cover for you?

MORGAN

No. The truth is, I talked to my sponsor... He doesn't think being around you is good for me.

Ouch. She swallows the insult. Follows Morgan out the door.

POV -- From a car window, parked far away, we watch Morgan walk Ellie to her car. They hug.

ELLIE

You should tell your sponsor that I wish my life was all birthdays and cupcakes. But it's work.

MORGAN

Life is what you make it. I love you, Ellie. Good luck.

Morgan kisses Ellie on the forehead.

ANGLE ON -- ZACK, in his G-Wagon, watching from afar.

INT/EXT. ELLIE'S SUBARU - FREEWAY - AFTERNOON

Ellie's hair flies in the wind, as she talks on speakerphone.

DETECTIVE HELLER (O.C.)

We picked up your masked man with the van. He had some very interesting things to say.

ELLIE

Like what? Did he confess?

DETECTIVE HELLER (O.C.)

Why don't you come down to the station and talk to him yourself?

ELLIE

My schedule's a little busy right now...

DETECTIVE HELLER (O.C.)

Look, we can't hold him much longer. And actually, we've got a few more questions for you, too. Why don't you pencil us in and swing by in an hour? Where are you right now anyway?

Ellie passes a highway sign that says "WELCOME TO ARIZONA!"

ELLIE

Shoot, Detective Heller? It's breaking -- chhh -- I can't hear --

She hangs up. DIALS Harper instead. Which goes straight to --

HARPER'S VOICEMAIL

It's Harper, bitch. [beep]

INT. HARPER'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON Harper's phone on DO NOT DISTURB. PULL BACK to find Harper watching TV and filling pink "Ellie Method" gift bags.

INT/EXT. MORGAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Morgan gets in. Sets cupcakes down. Puts on a podcast.

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE (V.O.)

... Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship...

He looks behind him as he REVERSES. Not noticing --

The dark figure LAYING IN THE BACK SEAT.

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE (V.O.)

If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough.

He turns off the car, glances in the rearview mirror.

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE (V.O.)

Worship your body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly.

(MORE)

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And when time and age start
showing, you will die a million
deaths before they finally grieve
you...

A GLOVED HAND reaches from the back. Pins Morgan to his seat.
Morgan's eyes bulge as another GLOVED HAND wields A SYRINGE --
And JAMS it into Morgan's neck, knocking him out cold.

EXT. SUBURBAN STRIP MALL - PHOENIX, ARIZONA - AFTERNOON

Ellie pulls into a parking spot. Looks up at the sign for
FUNTASTIC! GYMNASTICS PHOENIX.

Inside, MOMS watch their DAUGHTERS tumble and flip.
Ellie gets out. Approaches the gym. Then --
Her phone BUZZES. Call from ZADDY. She swipes to answer --

ELLIE
Hey, hottie.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT/EXT. ZACK'S G-WAGON - AFTERNOON

Zack drives and chats on speaker. Cheerful.

ZACK
How's my girl doing?

ELLIE
Getting shit done.

A MOM and DAUGHTER exit the gym, CHATTING loudly.

ZACK
Who's that?

ELLIE
Harper. Just got to the nail salon.

ZACK
Mani pedis? Aren't you two cute?

Zack pulls to a stop.

ELLIE
I'm being rude, so I gotta go, k?
Love you.

ZACK
Love you more.

They hang up. Ellie shakes off the call.

Zack looks out his window, at --

HARPER, FRAMED BY HER APARTMENT WINDOW.

INT/EXT. FUNTASTIC! GYMNASTICS CENTER - PHOENIX - AFTERNOON

Ellie joins the back of a group of MOMS watching --

MACKENZIE LEWIS (30s), coaching a group of tween girls.

JANE (12) does a back handspring. The group claps politely.

MACKENZIE
Nice work, Janie!

Next up is COURTNEY (12). Her MOM (lots of plastic surgery) fixes her hair, whispers in her ear, before --

Courtney SPRINTS, FLIPS, TWISTS, BACK FLIPS, and TUCKS.

The group enthusiastically applauds and cheers. Wow!

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)
Really amazing, Courtney! That's practice, girls!

Jane frowns. She steps back up to the mount.

JANE
I'm gonna go again.

MACKENZIE
Not with that ankle, you're not.

JANE
It's better! I can do it.

They face off. Mackenzie turns to the rest of the group.

MACKENZIE
See ya tomorrow, everyone!

The moms and kids disperse. Mackenzie leads Jane toward Ellie, not seeing her. She dips behind the bleachers.

JANE

It's been forever. All I did was a stupid back handspring! It's humiliating!

MACKENZIE

Just because Courtney does something doesn't mean you have to.

JANE

Yeah, if I wanna win, I have to do something *better*.

MACKENZIE

You are more important than winning.

JANE

Ugh, I hate you!!!

Jane stomps away. Mackenzie sighs. Then, spots Ellie, and --

GASPS. Drops her tumbler. Like she's seen a ghost.

ELLIE

Sorry, didn't mean to scare you!

MACKENZIE

No, I just thought you were someone else.

Ellie can't help herself --

ELLIE

Your daughter's right. If she stops too long, she'll fall behind, won't be able to catch up, and there goes the Olympics. I know it sounds bad, but trust me, I learned the hard way.

Mackenzie bristles.

MACKENZIE

Can I help you with something?

ELLIE

... I'm... scouting gyms for my daughter.

MACKENZIE

Well, we don't make stars here. We just have fun.

ELLIE

But that one girl was great.

MACKENZIE

Oh, her mom's saving up to move her to *Elite* in Vegas within the year. I can't wait. That much ambition makes you miserable. Drives you cuckoo.

Ellie is baffled. Almost offended.

ELLIE

Don't blame ambition for not being good enough to realize it.

Mackenzie is definitely offended.

MACKENZIE

I hope your daughter has more fun in gymnastics than you did.

Now Ellie is definitely offended, too.

ELLIE

I had plenty of fun.

MACKENZIE

Uh huh.

ELLIE

I did. Tons. Like...
(can't think of anything)
I made my floor song "Soak Up The Sun." Because it was my mom's favorite song. She loved watching me perform.

MACKENZIE

Right. Well, good luck finding a gym for your daughter. Or, hey, maybe just dance with her.

Mackenzie smiles at Ellie politely. Turns to go --

ELLIE

Wait. I'm sorry. There is something else I wanted to talk to you about.
(then)
Brett Henderson.

Mackenzie freezes.

INT/EXT. HARPER'S APARTMENT - EVENING

CLOSE ON the blade of a scissor curling ribbon.

Harper finishes a party bag. Lays back, exhausted. Grabs her phone. She turns off "Do Not Disturb" to see --

"5 missed calls, 58 texts from 'bestie.'"

Before she can respond -- the doorbell rings. Harper stops.

Leaves her phone, heads to the door, carrying her scissors.

As she OPENS the door, to find ZACK STANDING THERE --

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNTASTIC! GYMNASTICS - ROOF - EVENING

Mackenzie pours glasses of Kirkland wine. They sit on folding chairs, overlooking the parking lot.

MACKENZIE

How is Brett?

ELLIE

Why do you ask?

MACKENZIE

I don't mean to put you on the spot. He's just been off the grid for so long. I didn't know if he'd changed his name, or... was even still alive.

ELLIE

Well, I came because I wanted to ask... is there a chance that Brett may have... killed Vanessa?

MACKENZIE

No. That's impossible.

Ellie treads carefully.

ELLIE

I didn't think so either at first. But, you know, his difficult childhood with his dad... And he's the one who found her.

MACKENZIE

What do you mean he "found" her?
Brett was in the hospital that
night.

ELLIE

The hospital? Why was he in the
hospital?

MACKENZIE

The acid attack.

Ellie's blood runs cold.

MACKENZIE (CONT'D)

Some psycho threw acid in his face
and almost killed him. Totally
fucking random.

ELLIE

That's horrible.

MACKENZIE

You don't know the half of it. It
wasn't just that Brett was hot.
Which he was. But he was kind. I
had such bad acne freshman year. My
boyfriend from summer camp dumped
me. I wanted to die. Brett told me
I was beautiful. He dropped me off
at camp and pretended we were
together, because he knew it would
make the guys be nice to me. And it
did. I cleaned up that summer, zits
and all.

ELLIE

If Brett didn't find Vanessa, who
did?

Mackenzie darkens.

MACKENZIE

Eugene Beake. Her tutor. I never
liked him. He was such a creep. I
swear he was obsessed with her.

ELLIE

Eugene Beake found her?

MACKENZIE

Probably because he was trying to
peep through her window in the
first place.

ELLIE

Do you think Eugene Beake could've killed her?

Mackenzie snorts, then darkens.

MACKENZIE

No way. Way too scrawny and pathetic. He couldn't have taken her if he tried.

Off Ellie, still processing. *Who the fuck is Eugene Beake?*

INT/EXT. ELLIE'S CAR - HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Ellie drives, wired, eyes bloodshot, phone on speaker --

MORGAN'S VOICEMAIL

Hey, you've reached Morgan. I'm probably out doing something really cool so leave a message.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Ellie fills up her tank. Notices -- A G-WAGON pull into the lot and park behind a LARGE TRUCK.

Ellie kneels, peers under the truck. SEES --

MEN'S BLACK COMBAT BOOTS, heading toward her.

Ellie frantically removes the gas nozzle. Dives into her car.

INT/EXT. ELLIE'S CAR - ROAD - NIGHT

Ellie PEELS AWAY. Turns LEFT out of the station.

BEAT. In her rearview -- The G-Wagon TURNS LEFT behind her.

Ellie hangs RIGHT. Watches the G-WAGON follow.

She ACCELERATES, her speedometer RISING.

She looks ahead as she approaches an intersection. The stoplight turns red. *Shit.*

She comes to a stop, lets a few cars pass. Then --

Ellie looks around. There's no other cars. EXCEPT FOR --

The G-Wagon coming up behind her, almost there.

Ellie FLOORS IT into the intersection.

A CAR HORN BLARES. Ellie looks RIGHT to see --

Another car SPEEDING STRAIGHT TOWARD HER.

Ellie TURNS HER WHEEL. SPINS through the intersection.

The CAR SWERVES, just missing her. Its driver screams and flips her the bird as it passes.

Ellie careens to a stop. Catches her breath as --

The G-Wagon pulls up next to her. Her heart pounds.

The driver exits his car and walks to Ellie's window. But --

It's not Zack. This guy is more bookish.

SUBMISSIVE GUY

You okay, sweetheart? You took off

like a bat out of hell!

(Ellie nods politely)

You dropped this back at the
station.

He holds out Ellie's CREDIT CARD.

ELLIE

Oh. Thank you.

She takes it. Drives away. He watches. Mutters --

SUBMISSIVE GUY

You're welcome, bitch.

EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT

A huge CLAW dangles Morgan's old Prius through the air, loading it into the E-Z CRUSHER and FLATTENING it.

Zack hands the OPERATOR a wad of hundreds.

INT/EXT. ELLIE'S CAR - SIDE OF THE ROAD - MORNING

Ellie sleeps. Her phone alarm JOLTS HER AWAKE --

SIRI

*"The Ellie Method Opening you did it!!!" is in two hours, 37 minutes.
Traffic is moderate. Leave now."*

She pulls back onto the road.

EXT. HARPER'S APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Ellie sprints through the courtyard. Bangs on the door.

After a beat, Harper appears, no makeup, hair in a bun.

ELLIE
Harp, thank God.

Ellie hugs her. Harper doesn't hug back.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
Why aren't you ready? The
opening's, like, now!

Ellie moves to enter but Harper blocks her way.

HARPER
I'm not going.

ELLIE
What? Did you get my messages?

HARPER
I sure did. Zack hand-delivered it
himself.

Harper pulls out her phone and presses play on --

ELLIE'S VOICE RECORDING
... *she's just some desperate slut
with bad lip injections who fucks
rich married guys for money and
doesn't actually have what it takes
to make it in LA...*

Ellie blinks, stunned, confused.

HARPER
Did you say that about me?

ELLIE
No! Of course not.

HARPER
So that's not your voice?

Ellie searches her mind. As she remembers --

ELLIE

I was defending you! Trust me, that asshole is trying to make me sound crazy. But *he's* the crazy one. You know that, right?

HARPER

I know you're both full Tom and Shiv, Will and Jada, *Phantom Thread* psychos.

Ellie looks behind Harper, noticing an open SUITCASE.

ELLIE

What's going on?

HARPER

I'm going home.

ELLIE

Are you insane? You can't leave now. We have the opening. This is everything we've been working toward! It's gonna change our lives!

HARPER

No thanks. I'm not like you. My work isn't my entire life. I'm not happy, okay? If you ever stopped thinking about yourself for five seconds, you would've noticed that. I went *Fatal Attraction* on a senior citizen. The solution to that isn't working harder.

ELLIE

Sorry I'm trying to actually do something with my life that matters.

HARPER

I don't even know who you are anymore. And you know what's even sadder? I don't think you do either.

ELLIE

So that's it? You're just giving up before the most important moment of my entire life?

HARPER

Call it what you want, Ellie.
Because whatever you're doing? I
tried it. And it *sucks*.

ELLIE

What am I supposed to do?

HARPER

If I were you, I'd get the fuck out
of L.A. as soon as possible.

INT/EXT. RITE AID - BATHROOM

Ellie brushes her teeth. Dry shampoos her hair. Conceals her
under eyes. Redials --

MORGAN'S VOICEMAIL

Hey, you've reached Morgan. I'm
probably out doing something really
cool so leave a message.

BUZZ. She lunges for her phone.

But it's just a Twitter/X notification. A rando says --
@EllieNoone You're disgusting.

She frowns. Looks in the mirror. *This will have to do.*

EXT. LEMTHD - COURTYARD - MELROSE PLACE

Ellie carries a comical amount of gift bags up to BALLOON
COLUMNS, FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS, and GRAND OPENING sign.

But the place is completely empty. *Weird.*

BUZZ. Another Twitter/X rando: *@Ellienoone eat shit, cunt.*

ELLIE

Fuck you, too.

Ellie looks up. Spots KATE HUDSON at the valet --

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Wait! Where are you going?

Kate Hudson freezes. Looks for an excuse. Grabs her stomach.

KATE HUDSON

Oh... I have endometriosis. Bye!

Ellie watches her sprint into her Lexus. *Huh?*

BUZZ. Ellie groans. Finally opens Twitter/X to --
A GLAMOUR SHOT OF ELLIE planking. Posted by The NY Times.
ELLIE'S FEED. Scrolling past the photo OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
The scroll comes to a stop. Allowing us to read --

HOW FITFLUENCER ELLIE NOONE SCAMMED L.A.'S ELITE

She clicks the link. Her eyes scan the words --

Social Climber. Insurance Scam. Murder Suspect.

Ellie looks toward LEMTHD.

FIGURES wait inside. She squints, bringing them INTO FOCUS.
They're COPS. Detective Heller plus BACK-UP.

ELLIE

Shit.

A COP spots Ellie. Points. Heller steps out, runs toward her.

DETECTIVE HELLER
Miss Noone!

Ellie DROPS the gift bags. She takes off SPRINTING.

Past Balmain. She bulldozes a guy holding Alfred Coffee.

Ellie looks back to see --

Detective Heller and her team SPRINTING AFTER HER.

Ellie darts down AN ALLEY.

The cops follow.

Ellie's foot catches on pavement. She SKIDS TO THE GROUND.

She pulls herself up. The cops are CLOSING IN.

What's the point of running now? Then --

THE BUSTED WHITE VAN SCREECHES UP TO THE END OF THE ALLEY.

The Masked Man throws open its door. Beckons to Ellie.

Ellie looks to the cops. Then back at the Masked Man.

Fuck it. Ellie sprints to the van, Heller inches behind.

She slams the door and the van peels away!

INT/EXT. VAN - LA STREETS - DAY

The masked man drives as Ellie takes in his setup --

A makeshift bed, hot plate, and CRAZY WALL of research. Ellie notes the skin on his neck is splotchy with burn scars.

ELLIE

You're Brett Henderson, aren't you?

He nods. Takes off his mask, revealing --

His face and scalp are are ACID BURNED. He's missing an ear.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

BRETT

(electronic voice box)

Don't be... Make him... pay.

She surveys THE CRAZY WALL. Next to articles about facial recognition software --

ELLIE

You've been tracking him...

Are PRINTED SCREENSHOTS of Ellie's old SELFIES from various social platforms. And STATS: birthday, phone number, address.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

And he's been tracking me, with his algorithm...

Brett nods. Ellie spots a PHOTO of EUGENE BEAKE.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

But who the fuck is Eugene Beake?

BRETT

You... don't... know?

There are MORE PHOTOS of him. One where his NOSE IS BANDAGED, FACE SWOLLEN AND BRUISED. His eyes can barely open.

THE NEXT PHOTO. The swelling is gone. His nose is STRAIGHT.

IMAGES show Eugene's acne scars lighten then disappear.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PLASTIC SURGEON'S OFFICE - VARIOUS (FLASHBACKS)

LASERS burn skin off of Eugene's face. FAT is suctioned out of his nostrils. Tools HARVEST hair follicles from the back of his head and transplant them at his recessed hairline.

BRETT (V.O.)
Eugene... Zack...

Metal tools CUT, PEEL BACK and HOLD OPEN his chin. A tool wedges in CHIN and JAW IMPLANTS. Jiggles them, finding proper placement. It's sewn up with NEEDLE & THREAD.

BRETT (V.O.)
Same monster... Different skin
suit.

Doctors BREAK his FEMURS. Insert lengthening rods. Place implants in his THIGHS. SUCTION FAT out of his BELLY. Slice open his ASS CRACK.

Wedge silicone into his TESTICLES. Slide an INFLATABLE TUBE into his PENIS SHAFT and DEPOSIT FAT around it for GIRTH.

INT. ZACK'S HOUSE - VARIOUS (FLASHBACKS)

Eugene injects a syringe into his ass.

ELLIE (V.O.)
Why? What does he want?

Eugene does shirtless pull-ups. He's a superhuman machine.

BRETT (V.O.)
Her... back...

Eugene pops a handful of PILLS. Looks in the mirror --

MATCH CUT TO:

ZACK, ALL BUT HIS EYES CONCEALED BY A MOTORCYCLE HELMET.

He idles at a light. Looks ahead to reveal --

THE VAN, A FEW CARS AHEAD, TURNS INTO A PARKING GARAGE.

INT/EXT. VAN - PARKING GARAGE

Brett parks. Takes out a MANILA ENVELOPE.

ELLIE

He killed her, didn't he? Because she wouldn't be with him. And he got away with it.

BRETT

Until now...

Brett points to a sign on the garage -- FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATIONS, LOS ANGELES.

ELLIE

Why are you doing this? You could be living your life, you could be safe, happy.

BRETT

Not until... he takes... his last breath --

THE WINDSHIELD CRACKS. BRETT CLUTCHES HIS THROAT. GASPS.

BLOOD SPURTS OUT between his fingers. Ellie SCREAMS as --

A SECOND BULLET PIERCES BRETT'S FOREHEAD. Brains splatter. Windshield glass RAINS DOWN. His head DROPS ONTO THE HORN.

Ellie's EARS RING. She looks up to see --

ZACK IN A MOTORCYCLE HELMET HOLDING A GUN.

She struggles to unbuckle her seatbelt. But --

Zack tosses his bike. Flings open the van door. Climbs over Brett's body.

Ellie unbuckles herself. Opens the car door. But Zack --

GRABS Ellie's head. SMASHES it into the glove compartment.

EVERYTHING GOES DARK.

MOMENTS OF HAZY LUCIDITY BETWEEN UNCONSCIOUSNESS

A private plane staircase unfolds.

Wheelchair wheels roll down a wooden pier.

Adam Levine smiles at us from a poster hanging behind --

A creepy stone SCULPTURE of Zack's face.

Dr. Krivitsky peers down at us, working away with scalpels.

24/7 E! NEWS coverage plays on a TV screen. A reporter stands outside Zack's mansion. Or what's left of it, anyway --

TV REPORTER (V.O.)
Romance gone wrong may be the
motive behind a deadly home
explosion in the Pacific Palisades.
Police say a man was likely killed
by an ex-girlfriend in the house
right behind me.

A vital signs monitor beep, beep, beeps.

An IV drip, drip, drips.

INT. ROOM - DAY

Ellie BLINKS AWAKE. Her face is covered in BANDAGES.

She pushes herself up to her elbows. Ow.

She looks from her semi-hospital bed to her surroundings --

Floor-to-ceiling windows show off the GLITTERING OCEAN.

The sculpture of Zack's face stares at us from a hallway.

ON THE TV --

TV REPORTER
The victim has been identified as
tech developer and philanthropist
Zack Shaw. The suspect was
disgraced fitness entrepreneur
Ellie Noone. Pieces of her body
have also been found inside the
home, where sheriffs say that a bad
breakup led her to kill him, and
then herself.

Ellie pulls herself out of bed. Shakily walks to the TV --

TV REPORTER (CONT'D)
Ryan Murphy is already eyeing Emma
Roberts to play Noone in a Netflix
limited series about the damaged,
mentally ill young woman driven by
a bottomless pit of greed to ruin a
philanthropist's life.

Ellie is shocked, confused, overwhelmed.

Zack enters. Tan, shirtless, glistening with sweat.

ZACK
Oh, good. You're awake.

Ellie recoils. Her head RINGS. Her face THROBS.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Easy, butterfly. You're still
recovering.

He mutes the TV.

ELLIE
Whose bodies did they find?

ZACK
Will you lighten up? Morgan and
Brett served a higher purpose, just
like they always wanted. They
brought us back together.

Ellie is gutted. He reaches for her. She fights him off.

ELLIE
You're sick.

ZACK
The *world* is sick. You and I are
its victims.

ELLIE
No, you're the sickness. You have
the power to fix it, but you won't.
I wanted to make it a better place.

Zack laughs.

ZACK
With "wellness that's accessible"?
You gave up on that pretty easily.

ELLIE
I didn't give up. You have to do
well to do good. I wasn't there
yet. As soon as I was rich, I was
going to make things right! Once I
was successful, I was going to pay
it forward! Unlike you.

ZACK
*"I was going to, I was going to, I
was going to."* Then why didn't you?

ELLIE

You can't change anything in this world unless you're wealthy and powerful!

ZACK

Wrong. You didn't do it because you're just like everyone else. You want to be hot and rich and live the good life. Don't feel bad about it. Accessibility doesn't sell anyway.

ELLIE

Everyone deserves access to --

ZACK

Blah, blah, blah. Do you really think anyone wants to hear a hot woman talk about inner beauty?

ELLIE

This has nothing to do with how I look.

ZACK

Everything is about how you look! You just don't get that because you've never been ugly! Nothing I did mattered when I was ugly. Not my heart. Not my intelligence. Not even my money. No matter what I did, she'd always choose him!

ELLIE

Maybe she felt more connected to a nice guy than a murderer.

ZACK

You're right. She had a deep, heart-opening connection to his square jaw and big, fucking muscles!

ELLIE

You lied to me. You and Vanessa were never together.

ZACK

I worshipped the ground she walked on. I treated her like a princess.

ELLIE

You were her tutor, you creep!

ZACK

You sound just like them. Everyone who made Vanessa think she couldn't be with *Ugly Eugene* even though we were in love!

ELLIE

You don't kill the people you love.

ZACK

PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES.

ELLIE

You were confused. She was nice to you and you thought that meant she was in love. And how could you know? You hated yourself so much.

ZACK

Says the woman who's with me now.

ELLIE

You tricked me. You lured me in.

ZACK

Would you have been lured in by Eugene Beake? No. I accept that. So you know what I did? I fixed it. And guess what? It worked! People treat me better. Women who wouldn't look at me now give me "fuck me" eyes. I can have anyone and anything I want.

ELLIE

Why don't you just kill me and get it over with?

ZACK

Why would I want to kill you after everything I did to get you back? You're my greatest accomplishment.

He sits her in front of a vanity. Reaches for her face. She flinches. He grabs her, impatient. PELLS OFF her BANDAGES.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Will you stop being so dramatic?
Look.

She looks at her reflection, MOVED. EMOTIONAL.

No acid burns. Despite minor bruising, her nose is WHITLED THIN and UPTURNED. UNDER EYES FILLED. She looks like VANESSA.

Not *kind of* like Vanessa. *Exactly* like her.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Krivitsky outdid himself.

Ellie looks at Zack's reflection behind her in the mirror.

ELLIE
My consultation wasn't free. You
paid for it.

ZACK
Of course I did. Did you really
think you'd won a contest?

Ellie can't help but admire herself. She's STUNNING. But --

ELLIE
... It's not me.

ZACK
Sure, it is. You saw the news.
Ellie Noone is dead. Ellie Noone
was just another failed gymnast who
hated her mom and wished she was
somebody else. Well, now you are.
This is everything you wanted and
more. You don't have to work a day
in your life. You don't have to
prove your worth. You're already
perfect, Vanessa.

Ellie freezes. Turns to look Zack's mania in the eye.

ZACK (CONT'D)
I did this for you, butterfly. Look
at us. We have Money. Beauty. Love!

Zack KISSES the sculpture of his face. Heads outside, showing off the spectacular view.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Who has this view?

Ellie picks up the statue. *Not too heavy. But heavy enough.*

ZACK (CONT'D)
No one but us.

Ellie hides the statue behind her back. Walks toward Zack.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Look what I did for you, Vanessa.

Zack shows off his perfect body parts one by one.

ZACK (CONT'D)
Look at my calves. Look at my
biceps. Look at my abs. Look at my
ass. Look at my face. Look at my
dick!

He RIPS OFF his swim trunks, showing off his perfect penis.

ZACK (CONT'D)
I'm a handsome, attractive, good-
looking God!

As Zack looks skyward, proud --

ELLIE CHARGES AT HIM, BRANDISHING THE STATUE --

COLLIDING WITH HIS FACE. BLOOD SPURTS as he topples backward,
toward the ocean, eyes locked with Ellie --

ELLIE
But you're fucking ugly inside.

UNDERWATER, his head SLAMS ONTO A ROCK. The sculpture sinks.

ON THE DECK, Ellie stares at his motionless body. *Is he dead?*

She doesn't wait to find out.

She runs through the villa. Flings open the door to find --

EXT. ISLAND

She's at the end of a long wooden pier. Surrounded by ocean.

The pier leads to an ISLAND, maybe half a mile away. Empty
except for palm trees and, in the distance --

A BOAT IDLING AT THE DOCK. Uniformed MEN unload supplies.

ELLIE
Help!

But they don't hear her. She's too far away.

Ellie staggers down the pier, hot wood burning her bare feet.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. OCEAN

Air bubbles drift from Zack's mouth to the water's surface.

ELLIE runs, sweat matting her hair to her forehead.

BENEATH THE OCEAN, ZACK'S EYES OPEN.

ELLIE reaches sand, catching her breath and calling out --

ELLIE

Help!

But they still can't hear her.

ZACK PULLS HIMSELF ONTO THE DECK, soaked in water and blood.

ELLIE staggers up to the workers unloading cargo.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

HELP ME!

Shocked, the workers confer in another language. WORKER 1 runs to Ellie's side. WORKER 2 hurriedly exits.

ELLIE (CONT'D)

Get me out of here. Now!

WORKER 1

Cargo boat, miss. Not for sailing.

ZACK, WET, BLOODY, AND NAKED, TAKES OFF IN A GOLF CART.

ELLIE

I don't care. Hide me. Please!

Worker 2 returns with a WHEELCHAIR and a glass of water.

WORKER 2

No problem. Please, sit. Please,
drink.

Ellie sits. Gulps the glass of water. Worker 2 begins wheeling Ellie onto the boat's loading ramp.

ZACK -- MOTORS DOWN THE PIER.

ELLIE

If anyone asks, you didn't see me.

As Worker 2 reaches the boat entrance --

HE TURNS THE WHEELCHAIR AROUND. Rolls her back down the ramp--

Onto the dock WHERE ZACK'S GOLF CART IS PULLING UP.

Ellie panics. She stands, but her legs BUCKLE.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
No, no, no, no, no --

Ellie's HEAD LOLLS. She looks from her EMPTY WATER GLASS to --

Worker 1, who calls out --

WORKER 1
Mr. Eugene, she wanted our boat.

ZACK
She's still getting used to things.

Ellie stares at the workers with fear.

ELLIE
Who are you?

ZACK
Kyle and Shane, our butlers.

ELLIE
Where are the other guests? Where
is everyone?

ZACK
This isn't a hotel. It's an island.
Our island.

The men carry her from the wheelchair to the golf cart.

ZACK (CONT'D)
The mainland is hours away.
Anything we want will be brought to
us. We never have to leave
paradise.

Zack drives Ellie back to their villa, past ocean waves,
schools of jumping fish, and palm trees. He softly sings --

ZACK (CONT'D)
*When it gets cold outside and you
got nobody to love / you'll
understand what I mean when I say
there's no way we're gonna give up
/ And like a little girl cries in
the face of a monster that lives in
her dreams / is there anyone out
there 'cause it's getting harder
and harder to breathe.*

It dawns on Ellie that she's never leaving this island. She SCREAMS.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPER: SIX MONTHS LATER

ELLIE (V.O.)
I wasted my whole life trying to be
the best. Because you taught me
that if I was at the top, I would
be happy. Safe. Loved. Free.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Ellie opens a Tiffany box on an oceanside dinner table --
It's a diamond nameplate necklace that reads VANESSA.

ZACK
Happy birthday, butterfly.

Ellie smiles. She and Zack kiss.

ELLIE (V.O.)
I hated anyone who didn't have to
strive and work and achieve. Who
felt good for no reason.

A BUTLER drives up on a golf cart, hauling PACKAGES.

ELLIE
I may have ordered myself a few
presents too...

Zack laughs and rolls his eyes.

INT. OVERWATER VILLA

Ellie wears her necklace as she and Zack have sex.

ZACK
Oh God, Vanessa...

ELLIE (V.O.)
But I'm not that person anymore.
I've learned a lot.

INT. OVERWATER VILLA

Ellie goes through her designer boxes while Zack snores.

ELLIE (V.O.)

True success isn't having what you want. It's wanting what you have.

INT. OVERWATER VILLA - KITCHEN

Ellie carefully mixes powders together. Pours them into pill capsules and slots the pills into an organizer.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Even though life doesn't look exactly how I thought it should, I'm where I'm supposed to be.

INT. OVERWATER VILLA - NIGHT

Zack still snores. Ellie scrolls Instagram. Smiling at --

PHOTOS of Harper posing with her hot, age appropriate boyfriend. Planning Philly weddings. Grieving Ellie's death.

INT. OVERWATER VILLA - MORNING

Ellie lays in bed, a birthday cupcake next to her, watching -- Zack do his routine. Washes, serums, and pills.

He kisses Ellie's forehead. Exits.

Ellie grabs the cupcake and heads outside.

ELLIE (V.O.)

I have everything I need.

EXT. OVERWATER VILLA - DECK

Ellie lights a candle on a cupcake. Closes her eyes.

ELLIE (V.O.)

Thanks to you.

Blows it out. On her phone, she hits PLAY on --

"SOAK UP THE SUN" by Sheryl Crow. The song plays over --

INT. GYM

Zack does a pull-up, shirtless and sweaty. *Really sweaty.*

He's struggling. Panting. Can't make it to the top.

He walks to the AC. 69 degrees. He turns it down to LOW.

He grabs ICE from a bucket on a tray table. Rubs it on his chest.

He reaches toward a fan nearby. Turns it up to HIGH.

Heads back to the bar. Grabs on. Pulls.

The slowest pull-up imaginable. He's shaking. Pouring sweat.

The bar is DRENCHED. His fingers slip.

He SMASHES to the ground. Groans. VOMITS on the floor.

But outside the window, there's nothing but peaceful sea.

He looks at the table. There's his phone. The ice bucket.

He crawls toward it. Slowly, painfully, exhaustedly.

The table feels so high up. He can't reach.

He smacks its leg, knocking the ice bucket to the ground.

He dunks his face into it. CRIES into the ice.

Zack is burning alive from the inside out.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. OVERWATER VILLA - DECK

Ellie takes the final bite of her cupcake. We FOLLOW her to a TRASH CAN. She opens it, revealing --

A BOTTLE OF DNP. With an illustration of a six pack promising "LOSE THE WEIGHT!"

The same bottle her mom used.

Ellie tosses the cupcake wrapper in. Closes the lid. And --

Dances like nobody's watching, like she's living the dream.

After all, she kind of is... isn't she?