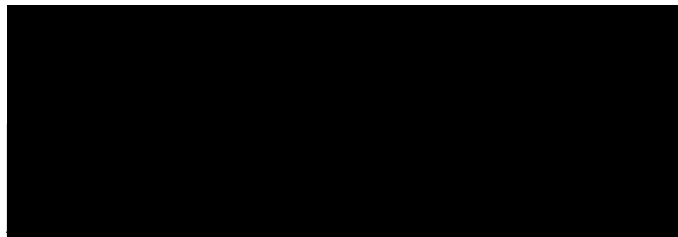


# STATES OF GRACE

Audrey Bramlett

TC 660H  
Plan II Honors Program  
The University of Texas at Austin

May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020



Cindy McCreery  
Department of Radio-Television-Film  
Supervising Professor

**Stuart Kelban**

Digitally signed by Stuart Kelban  
Date: 2020.05.13 14:36:24 -05'00'

---

Stuart Kelban  
Department of Radio-Television-Film  
Second Reader

## Introduction

The following treatise will dissect the fictional narrative feature screenplay, *States of Grace*, that I completed under the supervision of Cindy McCreery and Stuart Kelban as my senior thesis project. First, I will give a brief description of the story's plot; then, I will describe my writing process in creating this screenplay over the past year. Following the writing process, I will delve into the strongest influences on characters, tone, humor, and other elements of my script, and then discuss the most important themes that the story focuses on.

*States of Grace* tells the story of mothers and daughters. It centers around the lives of Grace, her mother Camille, and Camille's mother Lena, as they navigate the challenges of caretaking, grieving in the aftermath of loss, and forgiving one another. Grace is a senior social work major who, while desperately well-intentioned, is naive and selfish in ways that hurt the people around her; Camille is her loving but tired mother, whose years of grief and frustration have led to a short fuse; and Lena is Grace's grandmother, an optimistic-to-a-fault widow who is suffering from deteriorating physical health and can no longer live on her own. When Camille moves to have Lena put in an assisted living facility, Grace refuses to allow it, opting to take Lena in to live in her apartment in New York with her instead. Her ensuing experience caring for her grandma yields medical emergencies, threatened future plans, and life-altering revelations for all three women.

## Writing Process

As a relatively inexperienced screenwriter, I was fortunate to learn from my supervisors' methodologies in constructing feature film scripts. When I started working on my thesis project, they helped me break down the process into logical steps, beginning with idea generation and discussion. This stage bore the skeletons of characters and the critical themes that I wanted my story to address, and allowed me to come up with a basic premise for the story. I then wrote my first treatment, which was followed by a Minute-by-Minute plan. The Minute-by-Minute required me to structure my story to fit into a format that loosely defines the structure of thousands of beloved narrative films in a variety of genres, tying specific moments to a timeline so that scenes could properly build on each other and best engage readers or viewers. Reworking my idea into this format was one of the most difficult stages of the writing process for me, because it exposed the gaps in my original conception of what the story needed – for example, I hadn't thought about the importance of a specific incident that motivates a character to go from passive to active with their internal problem, or a false ending in which a character achieves what they originally believed to be their goal, but is unsatisfied because they had subconsciously developed a new goal. This stage was critical, because it required that I think about the components of great stories and find ways to emulate those in my own.

After completing a simple Minute-by-Minute plan and then a more fleshed-out one, I moved on to the scene outline step. My first detailed scene outline came more naturally to me than I expected, because in my prior efforts to adapt my story to better fit into a minute-by-minute template (dilemma, crossing threshold from the ordinary world, new goal formation, lowest point, and so on), I had unknowingly generated a very detailed first version in my head. However, working on flow challenged me find creative ways to accomplish everything that I

wanted to in a natural and entertaining way: to uncover secrets realistically, to depict a character's evolution subtly, to keep the stakes high enough that readers would continue to engage. At this stage, my supervisors began to give me more detailed feedback, challenging some of the weaknesses in the story. Were certain characters unrealistically faultless? Was I giving due importance to the setting? Was every scene I'd planned serving an important enough purpose to take up real estate? I did a few rounds of revisions on my scene outline, addressing feedback from my supervisors and a few peers and gradually adding to it until it was thorough enough to begin really writing.

Before writing Act I, I found and read the screenplays of several of my favorite films – Destin Daniel Cretton's *Short Term 12*, Greta Gerwig's *Lady Bird*, Bo Burnham's *Eighth Grade*, and Pete Docter's *Inside Out*, among others. Coincidentally, the majority of the screenplays that I read were also directed by their authors when made into movies, which likely influenced certain elements of their script writing and thus inadvertently influenced mine as well. I was surprised by certain things that were included in the scripts I read – for example, at one point in *Lady Bird*, Gerwig reveals that Christine's father Larry and her brother are interviewing for the same job. In the scene description, she writes, "Larry watches him go, feeling how you'd be feeling at that moment." I was unsure of exactly when it was useful to include sentiments like this, but I ultimately tried to match the balance of articulating my "vision" and leaving leeway to the director that I observed in the variety of scripts I read. While the barring (for the most part) of first-person narration could be a frustrating challenge when characters had thoughts and motivations that were difficult to write into dialogue or action, it more often felt like a helpful limitation to me; I wouldn't want to have to make constant decisions about whether something

should be revealed through action or through narration, so I preferred telling the story with that restriction.

I wrote Act I in just a few days, trying to get words on paper. There were a lot of technical problems with my script, as I still didn't completely understand a lot of the formatting and rules of screenwriting, and I struggled especially with scene transitions – writing my own script made me realize how rarely I notice the ways that writers or directors move from one scene to another naturally. I lacked understanding about how much direction it was appropriate to give actors in the scene descriptions and parentheticals, and had to eliminate a lot of superfluous descriptions of action and tone when revising the first act. Additionally, I had trouble really establishing my characters – I tried at first to remedy this by describing them more fully in scene descriptions, but really needed to develop them better through action.

After making suggested additions and modifications to Act I, I wrote the rest of my first draft. I worked mostly in chronological order, but skipped around occasionally within acts when doing so combatted writer's block. All in all, completing the draft took a lot longer than expected, partially because I often found myself putting it off. Whereas I sometimes procrastinate work because I don't enjoy doing it, I actually really liked working on my script; however, I cared more about how creative, interesting, and quality the screenplay turned out than I did about the quality of most of the rest of my schoolwork (that I was already used to and thus knew how to be successful on). Because I wanted to love it, and was thinking about the purpose of the project as creating something I was proud of rather than achieving a certain grade, I was anxious that I had to be perfectly “in the zone” every time I worked on it. I ultimately deterred myself from writing as much as I should have been, which is one of my biggest regrets of the

writing process, as it's safe to assume that my final product could have been even better had I finished a full draft earlier.

When I did finish my first draft, I did not like it very much – it felt slower than I wanted it to, and different than I'd imagined. I had spent so much time reading it and thinking about it, and I hoped that taking a break from it for a while would freshen up my perspective, so I did not revisit it for a few weeks while I waited for feedback. When I did get feedback, I felt hopeful that it would help me get to a much better point with my story. I essentially added an entirely new secondary plot line, to add length and momentum; I incorporated more scenes that developed characters who weren't robust enough in the first draft; I raised the stakes for what the main characters had to lose. My Act III needed a stronger resolution and reconciliation, so I built that out further. I then elicited feedback on this draft, revising it further, and repeating.

I ended up with the final version of *States of Grace* that is attached below. It doesn't really feel complete to me, as it seems wrong to put something away knowing that it could still be improved upon, but it has come a long way from the first scene outline and rough draft. One of the sentiments I felt most often when revising was that I wished I could write the script again from the beginning knowing what I knew now, rather than trying to alter what was unsatisfactory into something different. I also wished that I'd written a script for "practice" in the fall semester when I was planning and scene outlining, so that I could have gleaned more key insights from the process before working on my final project. I plan to write another screenplay with the knowledge that I have now, so that knowledge will not simply go to waste. While my script does not achieve anywhere near the depth or skill of the screenplays that I read in preparation for writing it, my hope is that anyone who reads it does connect and resonate with at least some part of the story, and detects a slight semblance of promise in it and me.

## Primary Influences

Most of the elements of my story were influenced both by those in great films that I actively tried to emulate, and by personal experiences and relationships. The film that had the greatest influence on the tone, themes, and humor in my script was Greta Gerwig's *Lady Bird*.

### Lady Bird

A coming-of-age story about an angsty 17-year-old high school senior in Sacramento, *Lady Bird*'s depiction of the trying relationship between Christine McPherson and her mother served as a key influence on my script. Film critic Stephanie Zacharek described it as "the slow crawl toward a truce with the parent who drives you crazy"; in developing the evolution of Grace and her mother's relationship and writing dialogue between the two of them, I focused on the key words *slow* and *crazy*. Gerwig's film balances its focus between the things actually happening and the way that those things influence Christine and her mother's relationship, and I tried to recreate that balance when writing *States of Grace*.

In her review of *Lady Bird*, Sheila O'Malley applauded Gerwig's understanding that "one of the most important parts of growing up is learning to think about people other than yourself," and expressed agreement with her argument that "love and paying attention are essentially the same thing"<sup>2</sup>. Christine was nearly always thinking about herself, and the few glimpses into her understanding of what it meant to be "a good person" revealed her obvious short-sightedness in

---

<sup>1</sup> Zacharek, Stephanie. "Lady Bird: The Pains of Being Pure at Heart." *TIME Magazine*, vol. 190, no. 20, Nov. 2017, p. 65. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=126019087&site=ehost-live.

<sup>2</sup> O'MALLEY, SHEILA. "Lady Bird." *Film Comment*, vol. 53, no. 6, Nov. 2017, pp. 71–72. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=125914963&site=ehost-live.

that regard (e.g., “I wish I could live through something” being her takeaway from *The Grapes of Wrath*, or her blanket “Don’t be a Republican” retort in response to her best friend Julie’s expression of concern about terrorism in New York). Her self-centeredness was such a constant that the simple act of calling her mom and saying “thank you” was a great stride and a powerful closing moment. I wanted this idea about attention and love to play a significant role in my story, and in some ways I wrote Grace as a slightly older version of Christine, one who has made progress towards at least understanding the value of selflessness but still struggles to achieve it or even to go about trying to (more on this in the discussion of theme).

Various ideas about money (and not having enough of it) also heavily influence Gerwig’s *Lady Bird*, and inspired Grace’s naiveté regarding money, albeit a different kind. Readers are meant to understand that Grace grew up in an affluent suburban family, never having to go without anything she needed or badly wanted. Throughout the story, her parents support her financially, providing her with an expensive New York University education and her own apartment in the city, and encouraging her to focus on her studies instead of requiring her to work to pay the bills (like her boyfriend Arjun does). The fact that she receives potentially unlimited financial support from her parents is intended to detract from the value of Grace’s generosity in giving away hats to Trinity or cash to Arjun, because readers know that being generous doesn’t put any true strain on her. Additionally, her willingness to pursue a low-paying career path and seeming disregard for financial gain are not a reflection of pure altruism, but rather are the result of her lacking understanding of what life is like when you must struggle to make ends meet, and her reliance on the security blanket that she knows her parents will always provide.

The wry sense of humor that Gerwig weaves throughout *Lady Bird* also served as inspiration for the comedic elements in *States of Grace*; I wanted the audience to laugh at my protagonist, but gently, not scornfully. Grace and her friends' discussion of rare, expensive wines while they gather to lament the working conditions of immigrants, or her unconcerned expectation that her diabetic grandmother will adapt her diet of Pop Tarts and frozen chicken nuggets, parallel similarly naïve and tone-deaf behaviors that Christine regularly displays. In addition, Grace and Camille's exchanges, in which inoffensive but misinterpreted statements regularly escalate into full-blown arguments, mirror similar exchanges between Christine and her mother – exchanges that are funny mostly because we all have memories of getting caught in some version of them.

### Personal Influences

My writing ended up drawing more influence from personal experiences and relationships than I would have expected it to. From my natural reaction to experiencing the death of a loved one, to my relationship with both of my parents, to my motivations in my relationships and professional pursuits, I frequently defaulted to basing my writing on reality when creativity was not getting the job done. In some ways, I think this made for characters and a story that were deeper and more convincing than they otherwise would have been; however, I also think that it limited my ability to be bold and creative. Especially in the initial stages of drafting, when certain characters that I was writing for were based on real people, I didn't want to assign any words or actions to them that I didn't feel accurately fit with the exact person I knew. In this way, I wasted the ability to make my characters as interesting and exciting as possible. While I gave myself more freedom to depart from these influences in my rounds of

revisions, I would have been better off loosening direct character-to-person ties from the beginning.

## Theme

Throughout most of my writing process, the plot of the story was secondary to the theme and emotions that I wanted to convey in it. I decided on a basic storyline only after determining a handful of thematic elements that I wanted to explore, and created certain scenes and even characters explicitly to service those thematic elements. At the completion of my first draft, I realized that I found my plot rather boring and monotonous, which had to be addressed in my several rounds of revisions and is still, in my opinion, one of the primary weaknesses of the script – my hope, however, is that what the story lacks in riveting action it mostly compensates for in resonant themes.

### Mother-Daughter Tensions

The mother-daughter relationship is a unique and often difficult one, riddled with complexities and generally prone to affecting a number of other relationships. I wanted to delve into this relationship in my script, and so all of my most important characters were defined by their roles as mothers and/or daughters: Grace, Camille, Lena, Trinity, and Aliyah. I attempted to use these characters to depict a handful of what I consider to be the most intriguing and relatable dynamics of mother-daughter relationships.

My interest in depicting these dynamics, and my ability to do so in a way that was (hopefully) honest and accurate, came from experiences that I had visiting home during winter and summer breaks from college, though my often-tense relationship with my own mother dated back far before then. When I was in middle school and especially high school, my mother and I fought frequently, usually about small things, but often enough that it was a big problem. All-knowing at age 18, I attributed most of our disagreements to her being unreasonable or

insensitive or just moody, and when I left for college, the distance served us well, and our relationship improved. When I went home in December for the holidays for almost a month, I started to pay more attention to interactions between my family members than I had before.

Interactions between my mom and my younger sister were the most striking to me. My sister and I are extremely similar, from our physical appearances and voices to our mannerisms and vocabularies to our interests and personalities. Although she is three years younger than me, I sometimes glance at a photograph or hear a voice in a video and think that it's me for a moment before I realize it's her. When I came home over that break, multiple arguments broke out between my mom and my sister that left me appalled at my sister's behavior – her tone, or her biting words, or her misguided perspective. But even as I condemned her behavior, our similarities forced me to recognize myself in her; it was almost like I was watching a movie of myself from the years prior, and it led to a new understanding of my role in what had felt like constant turmoil between my mom and I. It also informed my understanding of my mother's short fuse, which, while still counter-productive, now felt a lot more merited.

I think what kept me from recognizing those things sooner was how close I was to them, and how habitual they were. Often after fights, my mother and I would apologize to each other, and generally, I would feel as if things were resolved, and believe that I'd let go of whatever particular argument we'd been swept up in that time. What I realized, observing her with my sister, was that before I'd left for college, there was no such thing as a clean slate between us. We had grown into a habit of expecting the worst of each other, and couldn't hit reset on that until I was really gone. This is a dynamic that is familiar to many women, and that I tried to convey when writing scenes between Grace and Camille.

## Differing Approaches to Grief

Part of the hope of this story is that petty mother-daughter abuse, originating in trivial frustrations and strengthened by habit until it feels irreversible, can and will be outgrown and overcome by love. For this reason, I didn't want the conflict between Camille and Lena to mirror that between Grace and Camille – there needed to be a more substantial reason and a deeper-rooted pain deterring Camille from wanting to bring Lena in to live with her. This is where a very personal idea, and one that I hadn't seen portrayed in film in a way that's resonated with me, came into play, revolving around the rift caused by differences in how people grieve and react to loss.

In the aftermath of her husband's death, Lena wanted to proceed by "staying strong" – talking about the loss and the man she loved, looking for silver linings, and thinking about it through the lens of wanting to move forward how *he* would have wanted her to. Alternatively, Camille wanted to let his death be exactly what it was to her – an unimaginable nightmare, and a fluke that no amount of "processing" could make okay. She did not want to meddle with the pain she felt by channeling it towards good or putting a positive spin on it, because she felt that doing so would be an ingenuine attempt to pervert a tragedy into something else, thus discrediting the severity of the loss.

These two reactions to loss are highly incompatible with one another. In my own personal experience grieving the loss of a loved one, being naturally much more inclined towards the latter (Camille's), I found myself completely infuriated by people who adopted the former. The phrase "You are so strong" made my blood curl, and I rationalized to myself that people who behaved that way must not have even cared much about the loss, or that they were delusional. When a mother opts for one and her daughter the other, it sets the stage for profound

misunderstanding, resentment, and loneliness. That rift is at the heart of Camille and Lena's relationship.

I can easily think of a number of films in which a parent has the second reaction (let's call it the "Shut Down" reaction) to a loss, and audiences see the negative consequences that it has on their loved ones, particularly their children, who are trying to move forward; from *Interiors* (1978) to *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* (1993) to *Manchester by the Sea* (2016), there are countless depictions of what feels like harmful over-indulgence in grief after a loss. We're harder-pressed to think of films depicting the opposite narrative, and one closer to my own experience, in which a parent or loved one has the first reaction (i.e., the "Stay Strong" reaction) and that reaction harms and isolates their child. Through the tense relationship between Lena and Camille, I hoped to convey this narrative in a realistic and meaningful way, even decades after the loss occurred.

### Self-Centeredness and Naiveté in Young People

A third theme that I chose to explore was the unwitting self-centeredness and naivete of young people, even, or especially, those with dreams to change the world. As was mentioned previously, Grace's character was intended to share many similarities with who I imagine *Lady Bird*'s Christine would be as a senior in college. Grace knows more than Christine in the sense that she recognizes the value of selflessness and service to others, and she wants to spend her life pursuing those things. She gets tripped up, however, because her desire to be a hero or a savior outweighs her genuine concern for the people that she serves.

Grace's web of relationships was the perfect means for playing this theme out – with Lena and especially with Camille, the women she did not get to choose to have in her life, her

behavior is often characterized by impatience, forgetfulness, and a lack of empathy. Conversely, with Trinity, her self-selected mentee and a symbol of service and social impact, Grace is kind and selfless, and takes initiative to serve. While her relationship with Trinity has value and indicates that she is capable of caring for others, her treatment of the rest of her loved ones shows how much room she has to grow in true selflessness, as opposed to self-interested altruism. I hope that readers will find themselves thinking about the difference between wanting to come across as servant-hearted and actually living that out; I think this idea is especially pertinent to wide-eyed, inspired college students who have big ideas about making the world better, but who in reality only have experience taking care of themselves.

## Final Notes

The worst thing about college is that you only get to do it once. My older brother and I, both business students, have had numerous conversations about how many times we would have to redo four years at UT, never majoring in the same thing or participating in the same extracurricular activities twice, before we could have done everything that we wanted to do here; we usually agree that it's a minimum of five or six times. Among all the things I'm sad to have missed out on doing, majoring in RTF and studying screenwriting is near the top of the list. I have and will continue to see film as one of the most powerful and meaningful parts of life, and am so lucky that I got to engage with it in thesis project.

Because of the (understandable) requirement that students write a thesis about something they've completed a substantial amount of coursework in, I feared for most of college that I would be doomed to writing some boring research paper about marketing tactics, trying to meet the bare minimum requirements so that I could check it off and graduate. Instead, I got to do something that's been a dream of mine, something that I was excited about and that activated parts of my brain I didn't often get to access in my business classes. It wouldn't have been possible without my advisors, Cindy McCreery and Stuart Kelban -- firstly because Dr. Reddick wouldn't have approved it without their supervision, but secondly and much more importantly because I would have been hopeless without their guidance and insights. They took a chance on me even though they didn't have a good reason to, and they shared their expertise with immense patience, thoughtfulness, and sincerity. I am exceptionally grateful to them for helping me through this experience and steering me towards a final product that isn't completely terrible.

It's no masterpiece, and I aim to write something better in the future, but I'm proud of the progress it's made. If you've somehow made it this far: I hope you enjoy *States of Grace*.

STATES OF GRACE

written by  
Audrey Bramlett

FADE IN:

INT - LIBRARY. NYU - EARLY AFTERNOON

GRACE, a wide-eyed, messy-haired 22-year-old, and her boyfriend ARJUN, handsome and relaxed-looking, sit facing each other in two armchairs pushed together. Grace types on her laptop, and Arjun reads from a textbook. He occasionally tosses a goldfish into her mouth.

Grace's alarm goes off in the silent library, but it's buried in a crevice. She fumbles around for it.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
Jesus. I have to go, can you get these?

Grace gestures at the goldfish littering the floor. People stare, annoyed. Arjun smiles and nods. Grace kisses him and rushes out.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Grace pushes the elevator button a bunch of times, and waits, tapping her foot. She's impatient.

She takes the stairs instead.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

BEGIN SEQUENCE

-- The apartment is messy and gross. The lights and TV were left on. Loud music plays from next door.

-- Grace opens the freezer and picks a box of frozen chicken nuggets from a pile of frozen meals. She sticks it in the microwave.

-- Grace scans her closet, then grabs her dirty laundry hamper and digs a shirt out.

-- Grace sprays dry shampoo in her hair and rubs it in. She makes a critical face at the mirror, then leaves.

-- Grace sits at a barstool, wolfs down her chicken nuggets. She scrolls through her phone as she eats.

-- Grace stops next to a box by the door. She picks up and considers a box of cards, a sticker pad, then grabs a MadLibs book and leaves.

INT - REC CENTER - LATE AFTERNOON

Grace walks into Boys and Girls Club, scans for two girls (TRINITY and COURTNEY, 7 or 8) and spots them in a corner playing Jenga. She sneaks up and puts her hands over Courtney's eyes from behind.

TRINITY  
Miss Gracie! Look, I'm winning!

The two girls hug on either side of Grace.

GRACE  
(holding out the  
book)  
Look what I brought... MadLibs!  
Remember these?

The girls cheer. Grace sits down on top of a small blue table.

GRACE  
(flipping through  
pages)  
Let's pick one! Should we do the  
slumber party? Or the one about  
vacations?

COURTNEY  
Can we do it in the bean bag  
room?!

GRACE  
We *must* do it in the beanbag  
room.

INT - CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A room filled with giant multi-colored bean bags to sit on and inspirational posters covering the walls. Grace is plopped down in a bean bag, with Trinity and Courtney curled up in one opposite of her.

GRACE  
Now we need another adjective,  
the describing kind of word.

Trinity and Courtney struggle to think of something.

GRACE  
Like... slimy, or, weird, or,  
crunchy.

TRINITY AND COURTNEY  
(giggling)  
Slimy!

GRACE  
Okay, and then one more noun,  
person or place or thing. Like  
ketchup, or the mall, or a  
unicorn.

TRINITY  
A unicorn!

GRACE  
No, goofball, pick a new word  
that I didn't already say!

COURTNEY  
Um... a dragon?

GRACE  
Perfect, a dragon. Do you guys  
wanna hear it finished?

The girls squeal with excitement. Grace sits up straight.

GRACE  
(reading)  
A vacation is when you take a  
trip to some **smelly** place with  
your **shiny** family. Usually you  
go to some place that is near a  
**booger** or up on a **cowboy hat**. A  
good vacation place is one where  
you can ride **turtles** or go  
hunting for **cookies**. I like to  
spend my time **skateboarding** or  
**pooping**.

Trinity and Courtney explode with laughter. Grace laughs  
too, and beams at her success.

EXT - BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Grace sits with Trinity in the corner of the basketball  
court, writing their names in chalk. It's cold, and they  
are huddled together. Trinity reaches up and touches  
Grace's beanie.

TRINITY  
I like this hat.

Grace smiles and takes the hat off. She puts it on  
Trinity's head and then pulls it over her eyes.

GRACE  
Oh no! Where did Trinity go?

TRINITY  
I'm right here!

GRACE  
It looks good on you. Do you  
want to keep it?

TRINITY  
Really? I can?

GRACE  
Of course, I want you to!

Trinity hugs Grace tightly, and pats the hat with both of her hands.

EXT - NYC STREETS - MORNING

Grace walks to the train station. She loves New York, and her life.

INT - TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Grace settles into a window seat, then pulls out "War and Peace" and starts to read.

INT - BUS STATION - LATE MORNING

Grace gets off the train and waits at the bus stop. She texts her dad.

On Grace's screen, a text to her dad: **ETA 11:43**

Another text: **see you soon old man ♥**

EXT - BUS STATION - CHESTERBROOK, PA. LATE MORNING

Chesterbrook is about what you'd expect of a mid-size Philadelphia suburb. It checks the boxes -- chain restaurants, movie theaters, an upscale shopping mall -- and it even has an artsy book store and an avant-garde Japanese tapas bar, mostly so people can say it has character.

Grace scans the parking lot for her dad's gray Infiniti. She spots it and runs over, opening the door. When she ducks her head in, she sees her mom, CAMILLE (50s), with a neat bun and tired, sunken eyes.

GRACE

Oh. Hey! I thought Dad was  
picking me up.

CAMILLE

Mm, I'm happy to see you too,  
Grace.

GRACE

No, I'm not -  
(exhales, then inhales)  
I'm sorry. I just expected dad  
because you're in his car.  
What's up, how are you?

CAMILLE

Fine.

Grace waits for more. Camille stares straight ahead.

GRACE

Seriously?

CAMILLE

What?

Grace rolls her eyes, turns the radio way up. Camille turns  
it partially back down. They drive home in silence.

INT - GRACE'S FAMILY HOME - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace flings the door open, stands in the doorway like a  
war hero. The house is large and extremely clean, mostly  
decorated with framed, professionally-taken family photos.  
It looks hardly lived-in.

GRACE

Dad?

She steps past the entryway, and sees LENA, late 70's,  
dressed elegantly but slow-moving, sitting in the front  
room. Grace rushes to embrace her.

LENA

Oh, I missed you Sweet Pea.

Lena holds Grace's face out in front of her and smiles.

LENA (CONT'D)

It's so good to just look at  
you.

GRACE  
Happy birthday! I missed you  
too, Nona. I always miss you.

Camille, annoyed, turns and walks to the kitchen. Grace's dad MARK, 50s, tall and scrawny with a boyish quality, opens his arms for a hug. Grace hugs him and kisses his cheek.

GRACE  
Hi Dad.  
(looking at Lena)  
I thought we were gonna eat at  
your house?

LENA  
Yes, well, the heater has been  
acting up, and your dad called  
someone to come fix it but they  
haven't yet, so we just decided  
to do it here.

GRACE  
Got it.

Grace glances after Camille, then looks back at her dad.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
I was expecting *you* at the bus  
stop.

Mark looks in Camille's direction, piecing together the situation. He looks back at Grace, gesturing towards Camille.

MARK  
Is she...?

Grace half shrugs.

MARK (CONT'D)  
(sighing)  
Oh boy.  
(after a pause)  
Let's go eat.

INT - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Pork chops and vegetables on everyone's plates. It's quiet aside from the sounds of silverware clinking against glass. Lena's hands are shaky and she is struggling to be able to cut her meat, but no one notices yet. Camille takes a gulp of her wine. Grace follows suit.

LENA

The pears are really good. Do you think you could bring some over with the rest of the groceries next week?

CAMILLE

If you put it on the list.

More silverware clinking, everyone focusing on their plates. Now Mark takes a drink of his wine. After more struggle, Lena gives up and puts her silverware down.

LENA

So Grace, can you tell me more about social work? Why you like it?

MARK

It's because she wants to be poor.

Grace smacks her dad's arm, suppresses a smile.

GRACE

Yeah, well there's a lot of regulation with foster care, so as students we don't actually get to spend very much time with the people that we're going to be working with, but I've gotten to volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club the last four years, and that's kinda how I started to love helping out with kids like that. Hold on.

Grace pulls out her phone and unlocks it, going to her photos. She scrolls to an album of Boys and Girls Club and hands it to Lena.

GRACE

Those are some of my girls. Anyways, it'll definitely be a step up, like at group homes, in terms of what kids have gone through and are dealing with, but really what it comes down to is that these kids don't have a family. And I do, and I'm so lucky but it's not fair, and it makes me want to do something about it, you know? I can be their family.

Lena beams with pride at Grace and hands her phone back to her. Camille looks annoyed, bites her tongue.

LENA

Well, I think that's wonderful.  
They'll be lucky to have you.  
I'm really proud that you want  
to do something so good.

GRACE

Thank you, Nona.

Camille puts her silverware down and stares at Lena angrily.

CAMILLE

Do you not like pork chops  
anymore or something? Am I  
supposed to make you something  
else?

LENA

Sorry, no, it's really good. I  
was just... sorry. I like it.

Lena picks up her silverware again and works hard to cut her pork chop, but now her nerves make her hands shake even more. Mark and Camille finally notice that she can't cut it. Camille reaches her hand out to stop her.

CAMILLE

Okay, wait-

It's too late. Lena pushes down too hard and her arm slips. The knife slides across the plate and her elbow knocks her glass of wine down.

Mark jumps up and leaves the room to get paper towels. Camille stands up and runs her hands through her hair, trying to stay calm. Lena fumbles with her napkin, futilely rubbing the stain even though it's already soaked into the tablecloth. Grace doesn't move.

CAMILLE

Why didn't you just ask for  
help?

LENA

I thought I could get it.

Mark comes back in with paper towels. He gently slides Lena's chair back and wipes the wine up from the floor. Camille starts moving everyone's plates to the serving cart that's next to the table.

CAMILLE  
(to Grace)  
Can you help?

GRACE  
Oops.

Grace helps her mom move everything from the table. Once all the dishes are on the cart, Camille yanks the tablecloth towards her aggressively and bunches it up, then leaves the room. Lena sits helplessly.

INT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Mark washes dishes in the sink, and Lena sits on a stool next to him drying. Camille covers leftovers with foil and moves them to the fridge. Grace is visible from over the counter on the couch, halfheartedly watching the basketball game on the TV. She stands up and walks towards her parents room.

INT - CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Grace flips on the light and turns to her mom's stack drawers. She trifles through the middle drawer, holds up a couple of beanies, then puts one back and shuts the drawer. The beanie she put back bunches up and keeps the drawer from closing, but she doesn't notice. She leaves the light on and walks out.

INT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Camille, Mark and Lena continue to clean up the kitchen. Grace enters and holds up the beanie to her mom.

GRACE  
Hey, is it fine if I take this  
back with me?

CAMILLE  
What happened to yours?

GRACE  
I gave it to a girl at Boys and  
Girls club. I knew we had extras  
here.

CAMILLE  
"We" don't have extras, I have  
extras. And I have extras  
because I like to have more than  
one to choose from.

Grace doesn't respond. Camille sighs.

CAMILLE  
Okay, yeah, I guess take it.

GRACE  
(sing-songy)  
Thank you.

Grace turns to her dad.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
Okay, can you take me now? I  
wanna make the 2:45.

Mark nods and picks the keys up off the counter. Grace  
walks to Lena and gives her a hug.

GRACE  
Happy birthday again, Nona, I'm  
so glad I could come!

LENA  
I love you so much. When am I  
going to see you again?

GRACE  
Hopefully soon, I promise! Love  
you too!

Grace gives her mom a quick side hug.

GRACE  
Thanks for lunch. Love you.

CAMILLE  
You too.

Grace follows her dad to the garage. Camille stares at the  
plate and trash left at Grace's place at the table. She  
walks to the table and collects it up angrily.

Dissolve:

INT - NYC TRAIN STATION - EARLY EVENING

Arjun leans against the wall, waiting for Grace. He sees  
her walking towards him and smiles.

ARJUN  
How was it?

GRACE  
It was fine. My mom was being  
dumb.

ARJUN  
I'm sorry.

They start walking towards the exit.

GRACE  
It's fine. Comes with the  
territory. What's for dinner?

ARJUN  
Samosa. And they want to play  
Life, if you have time.

Grace beams, grabs Arjun's hand and pulls him up as she  
skips up the steps.

INT - ARJUN'S FAMILY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Grace and Arjun sit with Arjun's family (his two parents,  
50s, his grandmother PATI, 70s, and his sister SANYA, 16)  
finishing a game of Life, half-empty plates of samosa  
scattered around the floor and table. They each concentrate  
on counting their money.

SANYA  
One million six hundred  
thousand, folks.

GRACE  
Geez, again?

ARJUN  
Well you might be rich but  
you're probably very unhappy.

SANYA  
(shrugging)  
Don't hate the player.

Grace squeezes Pati's hand.

GRACE  
Maybe next time, huh?

Pati smiles and pats Grace's hand. Arjun cleans up the  
game.

ARJUN  
Alright, I have to be up at 5  
tomorrow. You ready?

He pulls Grace up from the couch and they walk, arms around  
each other, to his room.

INT - ARJUN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grace plops onto Arjun's bed. He pulls a shirt out his drawer and changes.

GRACE

You're so lucky that you get to have Pati around all the time. Even in Chesterbrook I barely ever saw my Nona, because my Mom has some weird vendetta against her. Interesting that she resents me for not being *her* best friend, even though she barely even talks to her own mom.

Arjun gets his toothbrush out.

ARJUN

Was it at least good to spend time with your Nona today?

GRACE

Yeah, I mean, it's always good. I just think we could've actually been really close if my mom had let her be around more.

ARJUN

She can't stop you *now* though, right? Maybe you can now.

GRACE

Well yeah, but I'm a lot farther away now so it's different.

Arjun sits on the bed next to her, brushing his teeth. She curls up with her head in his lap.

INT - CAMILLE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Camille cuts onions on a cutting board. There is a "Diabetes Cookbook & Meal Plan" open on the counter, a casserole and a separate pan of grilled chicken cooling on the stove, and a set of 7 Tupperware containers on the island, already partially filled with vegetables. Mark enters the kitchen in his pajamas, reaching into the pan and popping a piece of chicken in his mouth.

MARK

How much longer are you gonna be up?

CAMILLE  
I don't know, hour or so.

MARK  
Don't you have to go in at six tomorrow?

CAMILLE  
Yeah.

MARK  
You can't keep doing this, babe. We can just get her those pre-made meals from Gateway.

CAMILLE  
She doesn't like those pre-made meals.

MARK  
Then I'll pick something fresh up on my way home from work. It's just for a couple more weeks, anyways. You don't have time for this.

CAMILLE  
There's nothing fast enough that's healthy. And we're not committing to Dayspring till we see it.

MARK  
Honey, it's the best rated in the state. You said you were waiting for a spot there, now we have one.

CAMILLE  
I'm just saying that we should see it first.

Mark sighs and kisses Camille's forehead.

MARK  
I'm just saying that you need to take care of yourself.

Mark waits for Camille to respond, but she just sets the knife down and puts the onions in a pan on the stove. He turns and leaves the kitchen.

Camille turns the stove on to cook the onions and grabs a pad of sticky notes. She starts to label them "Monday, Tuesday..." and sticks them on the Tupperware lids.

INT - ARJUN'S ROOM - MORNING

Grace wakes up to the sound of her phone buzzing. She sees that it's 9:36 a.m., and that Camille is calling.

GRACE

Hello?

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Hey. You said you were gonna text us when you got back last night.

GRACE

Shoot, sorry. I'm good.

Grace gets out of bed and walks to the restroom, starts to brush her hair.

CAMILLE

When you do that then we have to worry all night. Why do you say you'll text if you know you're not gonna text?

Camille is in her bathroom, putting on makeup.

GRACE

Well first of all, I didn't know that I wasn't going to, I *forgot*, and second of all, if you actually worried all night that something happened to me you probably should have called me sooner because by now enough time has passed that my body could already be disposed of.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

That's nice. Good apology.

Grace takes a deep breath. She walks to the closet and surveys Arjun's t-shirts for one to wear. She's picky.

CAMILLE (O.S., CONT'D)

So. What are you doing, do you have a busy day?

GRACE

Well I'm at home right now, I just got up a little bit ago. Arjun has a 6-6 shift so I'll probably just go see Trinity at home and then work on stuff most of the day. And then I'm going to Laney's tonight, there's this new documentary about working conditions for Immokalee farmers in Florida. It's like modern-day slavery, it's horrible. Anyways, Laney is an intern at the studio that produced it so they're letting her do an early screening.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Oh... fun.

GRACE

Yeah, I'm excited. What are you doing today?

Camille stands in her closet, looks through her tops for something to wear.

CAMILLE

Uh, we have church at 11 and the Manzkes are coming over for lunch. And then your dad and I are going to look at some assisted living facilities, so I think there's -

GRACE

(interrupting)

For who?

CAMILLE

For Nona.

Grace stops looking at shirts and stands still.

GRACE

Wait, what? She wants to move?

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Well, yeah. It's been a long time coming, ever since she stopped being able to drive. Me and Dad are having to go over there all the time, fix stuff, buy her things, all of it. You saw her at dinner. She just shouldn't be living alone.

GRACE

Oh, so you want her to move.

CAMILLE

This isn't sustainable, Grace.

GRACE

Are you serious, just because she can't cut steak you're putting her in a *home*? Does she even know?

Grace opens her laptop and Googles "assisted living in chesterbrook," holding the phone between her face and her shoulder. She scrolls through the results.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Obviously she *knows*. You'd know too, if you actually paid attention or ever asked us how things were going with her.

GRACE

Okay. Well at least *I'm* not DUMPING my own mother off with a bunch of money-grabbing strangers just because I don't want to make time to do her a few favors.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

You don't even buy her a birthday present, but you want to pretend that you'd do all this if you were me?

GRACE

I *would* do it! I'd take her in. I'd sleep on the pull out and she could have my bedroom.

Camille takes a long, deep breath, and pauses a few moments.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

This conversation is silly.  
We're going to find a good place  
for her, and she's helping us  
choose. I mean, you can even  
help us choose if you want.

GRACE

I don't have time to come back  
again this week, I'm really  
busy.

CAMILLE

So too busy to make a trip home,  
but not too busy to assume all  
responsibility for another  
person?

GRACE

Those are obviously not the same  
thing.

CAMILLE

Well you're right about that.  
I'll talk to you when you've  
calmed down, okay?

Grace clicks on the "Dayspring" website, squinting  
cynically at her screen. She slams her laptop shut.

INT - TRINITY'S APARTMENT - LATE MORNING

Grace and Trinity lay sprawled out on the floor of the  
apartment entryway facing each other, each drawing on a  
sheet of paper. A pile of crayons sits between them.  
Trinity puts her crayon down, smiles at her drawing, and  
slides it toward Grace.

GRACE

Already done?

Trinity nods happily. Grace picks up the paper and sits up,  
pulling Trinity onto her lap. She holds the drawing out in  
front of them.

GRACE

Tell me what's going on here.

TRINITY

(pointing)

That's my mama, and that's me.  
And that's my kids, that me and  
her will take care of together.  
And that's our puppy.

GRACE

Wow. What kind of puppy?

Trinity's mom ALIYAH, early 30s, opens the door and enters from the bedroom. She looks tired, but put-together. Trinity bounces up and runs to hug her mom.

ALIYAH

Sorry I wasn't up. I got off at 3 last night.

GRACE

Yeah, it's no problem. We were just drawing.

ALIYAH

(to Trinity)

Did you give her the hat?

Trinity shakes her head, which is still pushed up against her mother's stomach. Aliyah gently grabs her face with both hands, looking at her sternly. Trinity squirms away. Aliyah sighs, walking back into the bedroom. After a moment, she emerges with Grace's beanie and drops it next to her.

ALIYAH

She has a hat. She just chose not to wear it to school that day.

GRACE

Oh, I didn't mean... I wasn't even thinking about that, she just liked it.

ALIYAH

Are you allowed to be doing that? Giving her stuff?

GRACE

It wasn't part of... I don't know.

ALIYAH

Well don't.

GRACE

Yeah. I'm sorry.

ALIYAH

Okay. You want breakfast?

GRACE  
I actually have to go, I'm  
supposed to call my parents in a  
minute. Thank you, though.

ALIYAH  
Alright.  
(to Trinity)  
Say bye.

Trinity hugs Grace, who ruffles her hair.

GRACE  
See ya, kiddo. Bye Aliyah.

Grace steps backward out of the door and it swings shut.  
She looks down at the beanie in her hands, clenching her  
fists around it in frustration, and sighs.

EXT - NURSING HOME PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Camille, Mark and Lena walk towards the entrance of a  
nursing home. It's cold and gray outside.

MARK  
Grace asked me to call her so  
she could see too. She said you  
told her she could help us  
decide.

Camille rolls her eyes and shakes her head. Mark is  
confused, and his phone rings for Grace.

LENA  
Oh, great! Can I talk to her?

Mark passes off the phone to Lena. It rings for a few  
moments. Finally Grace answers from her computer, but is  
getting ready in the bathroom so she's only partially in  
view. Lena is confused, squinting at the screen.

GRACE  
Hi Nona!

LENA  
(shouting)  
Grace! Can you see me?

Grace is startled, and turns her volume down.

GRACE  
I can see you Nona, you're good!

LENA  
Oh. Okay. I'm glad you're  
joining us, honey.

GRACE  
I know, me too! How are you  
doing?

LENA  
Good! I'm good. I feel fine. How  
are you?

GRACE  
I feel... like these people  
better really impress me. I'm  
not going to let them pawn you  
off to just anyone.

LENA  
Oh.

Lena bristles uncomfortably. Mark gestures at the phone.

MARK  
Can I...?

He takes the phone from Lena and looks at Grace sternly.

MARK  
We're about to go in, so I'm  
gonna mute you. I'll reverse the  
camera so you can see  
everything.

INT - NURSING HOME - AFTERNOON

A young woman in scrubs walks in front of Camille, Mark,  
and Lena, stopping to point things out. The facility is  
clean and well-decorated, but it feels stuffy, not homey.

The group stops outside of a closed door.

WOMAN  
And this is our most popular  
class. We can sneak in there for  
a minute so you all can get a  
feel. It gets really lively,  
people love it.

The woman opens the door. Inside, there is a band  
consisting of several over-enthusiastic thirty-year-old men  
in fedoras and skinny jeans. They look like they play  
mostly at middle school church camps. A few elderly people  
sit in wheelchairs or normal chairs, holding instruments -

tambourines, harmonicas, recorders. They make dissonant noise, and the band tries to sing loud enough to cover it up. Mark, Camille, and Lena stare in dismay, while the tour guide taps her foot and sways fervently. Grace watches from the phone held up by Mark, horrified.

EXT - NURSING HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The tour guide stands in the doorway, waving goodbye. The door swings closed, and Mark takes Grace off mute.

CAMILLE  
What do we think?

No one says anything at first. Camille looks at expectantly at Mark. He shrugs, nods.

CAMILLE  
I thought the food looked good,  
and it was really clean, and -

LENA  
Sure. I think it would be fine.

GRACE  
Are you kidding? Nooo, that is  
not happening.

LENA  
It's okay, honey. It's fine.

Camille takes the phone from Mark's hand and looks at Grace angrily.

CAMILLE  
I don't know *what* you're worked  
up about, but it's one of the  
best rated Assisted Living  
facilities in the state. We're  
lucky that there's even an  
opening.

Grace, on the screen, raises her hands in disbelief.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
Seriously? This place?

CAMILLE  
(whispering)  
It's not your decision, Grace.

They stare each other down for a moment. Grace's face suddenly clears up, because she's figured out how to win.

GRACE  
(loudly)  
Nona, listen. I want you to live  
with *me*. I have a bed for you,  
and plenty of room for -

CAMILLE  
Grace.

GRACE  
- whatever stuff you want to  
bring with you, and it's the  
perfect chance for us to spend  
more time together like we never  
got to when I was younger! And  
you love New York!

Lena is taken completely by surprise, excited for a moment.  
She shakes it off, knowing better than to get her hopes up.

LENA  
Oh, Grace, I don't know if  
that's such a good idea. I don't  
want to get in your way or be a  
bother, and I'm not sure what  
your mom -

GRACE  
I promise that you could never  
be a bother to me, Nona. And you  
can get to know Arjun and my  
friends, and teach me how to  
cook, and it'll be so much  
better than a stupid retirement  
home. Please, it'll be so much  
fun, I promise.

Camille is shaking her head in disbelief.

LENA  
I don't know... we'll have to  
move everything and then if you  
change your mind we'll have to  
do it all over again and I don't  
want to put that stress on you,  
or your parents, and you don't  
even have a car to come -

GRACE  
I can't believe it, roommates!

Lena can't help but smile, shaking her head. Mark is now  
holding the phone, and is extremely uncomfortable at being  
in the middle of what's unfolding.

LENA  
I don't know.  
(after a pause)  
It *would* be fun.

GRACE  
I'll have to talk to my parents later to get the details figured out, but we'll bring Arjun's dad's car to pick you up. Ah, I am SO excited. I'm at the subway now, so I have to go, I'm going to lose service, but I'll call you when I figure everything out, okay? Love you!

Grace hangs up. Lena can't tell. She talks to the phone.

LENA  
Oh, the Face Time is acting up.  
I love you too sweet pea, so much!

INT - LANEY'S APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - EVENING

Grace taps two knuckles against an apartment door and waits. The door opens and LANEY (22, with short hair and unkempt eyebrows, wearing a shirt that says "RESIST") beams at Grace, then raises her glass of wine and extends her other arm in a side hug. Grace hugs her back and steps inside, where a couple more friends (EILA, MEG) drink wine and chat around the counter.

GRACE  
Sorry I'm late! Weird family stuff going on.

Grace's friends look at her sympathetically, and Laney grabs an empty glass and starts pouring her some wine.

LANEY  
Mm. Try this.

Grace takes a sip and raises her eyebrows, nodding.

GRACE  
It's good, what is it?

LANEY

It's a Syrah. My dad's ex-girlfriend from college has a few hectares in Croatia, they only make 12 cases of this stuff a year. And they've been completely organic since like, the 70's.

GRACE

Wow. Thank you.

MEG

What happened?

GRACE

Well, there's a lot of context that I won't go into, but my parents are trying to put my grandma in a home, pretty much because my mom doesn't like her and doesn't wanna have to do stuff for her, and I just think it's really messed up to do that to your own family, you know?

Grace's friends shake their heads disapprovingly, agreeing with her.

MEG

Ugh, that's awful. My parents did the same thing to my grandpa a few years ago, it's like... barbaric.

GRACE

(nodding)

Yeah, so, I actually decided that I'm gonna let her move in with me. I don't want her in some stuffy facility.

LANEY

Oh my gosh, that's amazing. Does she have like, health problems and stuff?

GRACE

Yeah, kind of. I mean, it's not gonna be easy, but it's obviously gonna be worth it.

EILA

Wow. That is so great of you.

GRACE  
No, oh my gosh, not at all. I'm  
just trying to do my part.

LANEY  
How fun. Well, she's always  
invited to movie night.

EILA  
Cheers to that. And to Grace.

The girls raise their glasses, Grace beaming bashfully.

INT - MARK'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Mark and Camille are driving, listening to a podcast.  
Camille is typing a message on her phone. Mark's phone  
buzzes. Camille picks up the phone and sees that it's a  
message from Grace.

CAMILLE  
It's Grace.

MARK  
Oh.

CAMILLE  
What does she want?

MARK  
I don't know, I haven't seen the  
message.

CAMILLE  
Probably came to her senses and  
expects us to break it to my  
mom.

Camille types in the password to open the phone. Mark  
watches her anxiously from the corner of his eye. She reads  
from the screen:

CAMILLE (O.S.)  
Arjun's dad said we could use  
his car after 3 on Saturday. Are  
you still good to help her pack  
her stuff up and then we can  
come around 5:30.

Camille shakes her head disdainfully.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)  
I can't believe she's going through with this. You know she's just doing it to piss me off, right?

MARK  
I'm sorry, honey.

CAMILLE  
And she's going to make *us* pack my mom's things for her? We're going to do all that?

MARK  
Well, if you don't have time, that's okay, she technically didn't ask you to -

CAMILLE  
Well you shouldn't either!

Camille looks at him angrily, waiting. Mark raises his hand in a half shrug, starts to say something. He decides against it.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)  
This is why she always texts *you* for everything. You just do whatever she wants, no questions asked.

MARK  
Well... wouldn't we have had to pack up your mom's stuff anyway, if we had put her in Dayspring?

CAMILLE  
That's not the point.

MARK  
Okay.

They drive in silence.

EXT - LENA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Grace knocks on Lena's door, Arjun checking the mailbox while they wait. Mark opens the door.

MARK  
Hey honey. Hi Arjun, how're ya doing?

Grace hugs her dad. Arjun shakes Mark's hand.

ARJUN

Good, good. Easy drive. How's  
the packing coming?

INT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Arjun, Grace and Mark are in the living room, where there are 6 beaten-up boxes without lids, their contents spilling over. Grace kneels next to the boxes, picking through things.

MARK

That's everything she wants to bring. There's a couple more that we're gonna put in storage and everything else we're giving to Goodwill. Your mom's getting the U-haul.

GRACE

Where's Nona?

MARK

In her bedroom, I think.  
Probably making sure she got everything.

Grace looks down the hall.

INT - LENA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lena is sitting on the bed, staring at the wall.

GRACE

Did you get everything?

LENA

Yes, I think so.

Grace pauses.

GRACE

So... are you ready to go?

LENA

Yes. I just... I can't believe  
I'm leaving this house. I've  
lived here for 52 years.

Grace sits down next to Lena and puts her hand on top of hers.

LENA

Your grandpa and I moved here right after your mom was born. I wanted to leave after he died... everything just reminded us... and your mom was so sad all the time, I thought it would help us move on, start fresh. But she said she would never forgive me if I made us leave. So we stayed.

Lena pauses for a moment, concentrated on tugging on a loose string curling off the mattress.

LENA

But she was still sad all the time.

Grace puts her hand on her grandmother's face.

GRACE

I know it's been hard. But I think it will be good to have a fresh start now, away from all of that.

Lena tries to smile. Grace stands up and holds her hand out to help Lena up, bouncing impatiently.

INT - LENA'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As Lena gives Arjun a hug, Camille walks in through the front door, carrying the U-Haul keys.

CAMILLE

Hi.

GRACE

Hey.

It's tense. Grace kneels down next to the boxes and looks at the items inside. She picks up an Ella Fitzgerald record, turns it over. Reaches into the box again and pulls out a tiny, dusty kaleidoscope, holds it up to her eye. She shakes her head, beams at Nona.

GRACE

You are just so cool. This is so cool.

Camille rolls her eyes and walks to the kitchen.

EXT - LENA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

All six boxes are stuffed in the back of the car, and everyone is standing behind it. Arjun closes the trunk. Lena still looks like she's lost in her head.

MARK

Is there anything else you guys need?

Arjun shakes his head.

ARJUN

Should be good. Are you sure you don't want our help with the rest of the stuff?

MARK

It's alright. We're gonna do one more load today and then finish the rest after church tomorrow.

Mark nods at Camille.

ARJUN

Alright, well, thanks for all the help.

MARK

Course. Thanks for driving.

Mark turns to Lena, moves to embrace her.

LENA

Thank you for everything.

MARK

We're gonna miss having you close.

They pull away, and Lena turns to Camille to hug her. Lena looks at her daughter.

LENA

Me too.

Camille is holding a lamp. She gestures awkwardly at Lena with it, using it as an excuse not to hug her.

CAMILLE

I'll see you soon, I'm sure.

Lena nods, disappointed.

INT - CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Arjun is driving, Grace in the passenger seat fiddling with the music. Lena is set up across the backseat with special pillows and positioning to curb her back pain.

GRACE

I think I know just what we need.

Grace plays *She's Leaving Home* by the Beatles. Looks back and smiles at Lena, waiting for approval. Lena smiles faintly. Grace turns back around, satisfied, and grabs Arjun's hand. She rests her eyes. Lena looks out the window for a few moments. She tries not to, but begins to cry.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT LOBBY - EVENING

Arjun, Grace and Lena wait in front of the elevator, holding boxes. Grace looks nervous, and taps her foot. It's taking forever.

GRACE

Sorry, this is so annoying. It's normally faster.

Arjun looks at Grace skeptically. She avoids eye contact.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The living room is messy and crowded, with the pull-out couch filling up most of the room and piles of Grace's things on top of it and around it.

GRACE

Sorry, I just moved my stuff in here but I'll clean it up tomorrow! My- sorry, your room is over here.

They walk to Grace's room and set their boxes down.

ARJUN

I'll go grab some more.

He leaves the room.

GRACE

I know you're tired. Do you need help with anything?

LENA

No, I've got it. Thank you. For taking me in.

Grace grabs both of Lena's hands.

GRACE  
This is going to be good.

LENA  
I know. It is.

GRACE  
Okay, I'll be in later to use  
the bathroom, but I'll make sure  
not to wake you. And just let me  
know if you end up needing  
anything.

LENA  
Okay.

Lena pulls a nightgown and cosmetics bag out from one of  
the boxes.

GRACE  
Goodnight, Nona. I love you.

LENA  
I love you. Good night.

INT - GRACE'S KITCHEN - LATE MORNING

Grace sits in a ball on a kitchen chair, scrolling through  
her phone. She eats a pop tart.

LENA (O.S.)  
Good morning, sweet pea.

Grace looks up and smiles.

GRACE  
Good morning roomie! Sleep good  
and everything?

LENA  
Yes, not bad.  
(She makes a face)  
What are you eating?

GRACE  
Oh, it's a birthday cake Pop  
Tart. But I have other stuff  
too! Lemme see.

Grace pops up from her chair and opens the pantry. Pickings  
are sparse: Lucky Charms cereal, several boxes of poptarts,  
a bag of cheddar popcorn, and a bag of marshmallows. Grace

turns and opens the fridge and freezer doors at the same time. In the fridge, there are condiments, cookie dough and a leftover pizza. In the freezer, a huge assortment of frozen meals.

GRACE

Hmm. Do you like Eggo waffles?  
Or lucky charms? Without milk  
though... Or leftover pizza? I  
read an article that it's  
actually a healthier breakfast  
for you than most cereals.

Lena laughs and shakes her head.

LENA

Well certainly healthier than  
the kinds of cereals you're  
eating.

Lena reaches into the freezer and surveys some of the meals: frozen buffalo chicken wings; frozen mystery pot pie; frozen corn dog with fries.

LENA (CONT'D)

My goodness! This is what you've  
been eating for FOUR YEARS? Are  
you trying to die before I do?

GRACE

I'm not a good cook!

LENA

Can't you make yourself an  
omelet?

Grace shrugs, not confident.

LENA

Spaghetti?

Grace closes her eyes, pretending to brace herself in fear.

LENA

A SALAD?

Grace laughs.

GRACE

But who really wants to eat a  
salad?

Lena stares at Grace, suppressing a smile, trying not to seem amused.

LENA  
I have a lot to teach you.

GRACE  
Deal.

They shake hands.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
But for now, I'm thinking pizza.

Grace pulls the pizza box out of the fridge and Lena sinks into a kitchen chair, shaking her head, laughing.

INT — LENA'S HOUSE — EARLY AFTERNOON

Camille picks up the last box in the kitchen and gives it to Mark.

MARK  
So just the study left?

CAMILLE  
Yeah, but I'll do it. You can just take that one out and leave the truck for me.

MARK  
(confused)  
No, I'll help once I load this.

Mark exits the back door with the box, and Camille walks slowly towards the closed door at the end of the hallway. She stands still in front of it for a moment, takes a deep breath, and opens the door. The room is filled with her late father's things — photographs, maps, baseball cards, stacks of books and papers. She leans forward, appearing nauseous.

When she hears the back door swing shut behind Mark as he re-enters, Camille quickly kneels down next to the desk and opens the bottom drawer, transferring papers and knick knacks into an empty box. Mark steps into the room.

MARK  
Where should I start?

Camille shrugs, not looking up from the desk drawer. Mark opens one of the cupboards mounted on the wall and starts to take items from it. He pulls a dusty black case out of the cupboard and opens it.

MARK  
You guys had a telescope?

Camille jolts up.

CAMILLE  
Don't touch that.

MARK  
(raising his  
hands)  
I'm sorry, Cam, I... was this  
one of the things you guys did  
together?

Camille blinks at him, then turns back to the desk and continues moving its contents into the box. Mark nods dejectedly, then turns back to the cupboard.

It's silent for a few moments while they work.

MARK  
So how do you want to decide  
what stuff we're gonna keep and  
what we're gonna take to-

CAMILLE  
Can I just finish? By myself?

Mark puts his hands on the credenza and leans forward in frustration. He doesn't say anything at first.

MARK  
Yeah.

Mark pushes off from against the credenza and quickly exits the room and then the house. Camille sighs, out of relief and sadness.

INT — GRACE'S LIVING ROOM — LATE AFTERNOON

Grace and Lena sit facing the T.V. in the living room, Grace's feet propped on the coffee table, the empty pizza box next to them, watching the end of *If I Stay*. When the screen fades to black, Grace looks at Lena expectantly.

GRACE  
Okay, I know it's corny but  
sometimes you want corny. And  
you have to admit he is so cute.

LENA  
Skinny jeans? That's your crush?

GRACE  
(pretending to be  
offended)  
Hey! He's cute! And musically  
talented!

LENA  
(smirking)  
Hmm. Try Richard Beymer.

GRACE  
Come again?

LENA  
Richard Beymer? Tony?

GRACE  
Tony...

LENA  
West Side Story? You're kidding  
me!

GRACE  
That came out like 50 years ago.

LENA  
More than that. What's your  
point?

Grace laughs, then types West Side Story in to the TV's  
search box. It's available on demand.

GRACE  
You wanna watch it?

LENA  
You're about to forget alllll  
about skinny jeans.

Dissolve to:

INT — GRACE'S LIVING ROOM — EARLY EVENING

Grace and Lena are sitting in the same spots on the couch,  
but both are wiping tears from their eyes as they watch the  
parking lot clear out in the final scene of *West Side  
Story*.

GRACE  
Geez.

LENA  
I know.

Grace shakes her head and sighs. She pulls her phone out and is surprised to see how late it is.

GRACE  
It's seven already. I feel so...  
drained.

LENA  
So who would you pick, Tony or  
Skinny Jeans?

GRACE  
Well I try to avoid getting  
involved with gang members, but  
if you put that part aside...

LENA  
(beaming)  
Perfect. My work is done.

Grace laughs and stands up, stretching.

GRACE  
I have a lot to finish before  
class tomorrow. You're a bad  
influence.

LENA  
(sing-songy)  
Sorry.

Grace gets her laptop out of her bag and settles in at the kitchen table. Lena stands up slowly and starts to clean up the living room.

INT - CLASSROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace sits with fifteen or so peers, listening intently to her young, snappy professor, DR. PATIL. The notebook on Grace's desk is filled with scribbled notes.

DR. PATIL  
Okay, that's it. Don't forget,  
the next time I see you all of  
your thesis fieldwork is due.  
I'm not accepting any new  
interviews that you haven't  
turned in by the 28th.

Grace looks at her watch, calculating. She pulls out her phone, typing a text.

On Grace's screen, a text to her mom: **Need to do that interview I asked you about. Do you have time tonight?**

DR. PATIL

Grace?

Grace looks up, surprised.

GRACE

Yeah?

DR. PATIL

Consent form?

Grace sighs loudly, leaning back in her chair.

GRACE

Shit. I'm sorry.

DR. PATIL

Again?

GRACE

I saw her mom yesterday, I was supposed to get it from her, but then... she was kind of in a bad mood, and I felt weird to ask.

DR. PATIL

The IRB's not gonna approve it unless you give them five weeks. Do you have enough material to complete your thesis without this?

GRACE

I'm going straight to club from here and I'll ask her to bring it to pick-up. That's still six weeks.

DR. PATIL

Don't drop the ball on this, Grace.

GRACE

I know. I'm sorry. I'll get it in.

Grace crams her notebook into her backpack and leaves.

INT - REC CENTER - LATE AFTERNOON

Grace and Trinity sit facing each other from opposite sides of a desk. Grace holds a sheet of paper close to her chest.

GRACE  
What's after Kentucky?

TRINITY  
Ko... Kuh...

GRACE  
No, it's the next letter.

Trinity squints, quickly mouthing through the alphabet.

TRINITY  
L.

GRACE  
Right.  
(singing the tune)  
Kansas, Kentucky, L...

TRINITY  
Louisiana!

GRACE  
Yes! You got it! That's almost  
half the letters, you're a  
superstar!

Trinity flips her hair like a princess, gloating.

GRACE  
Okay, there's a lot of M's.  
Let's do four at a time. Maine,  
Maryland, Massachusetts,  
Michigan.

TRINITY  
Maine, Mass...achets, Michigan.

GRACE  
Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts,  
Michigan.

Trinity wrinkles her nose.

TRINITY  
Can we stop now?

GRACE  
We can take a break.

Trinity grabs the paper from Grace's hands and throws it  
aside. Grace shakes her head, smiling.

TRINITY  
My mom said I can get a new  
dress for the recital.

GRACE  
No way! You're gonna look so  
beautiful. You'll have to take  
pictures so I can see.

Trinity picks up the paper and stares at it. She fiddles  
with a corner.

TRINITY  
Every kid gets 2 tickets.

GRACE  
Oh yeah? Who's your mom gonna  
bring?

TRINITY  
She said that you could come.

GRACE  
Oh, that's GREAT!  
(grabbing Trinity's hands)  
I'm gonna cheer realllly loud,  
you know. So loud you might get  
embarrassed.

TRINITY  
(laughing)  
No, you can't!

GRACE  
Oh, you'll see. You will see.

TRINITY  
What if I mess up? Then I bet  
you won't cheer for me.

GRACE  
Hey! No. There's no talking  
about messing up. That is not  
gonna happen.

TRINITY  
How do you know?

GRACE  
Just trust me. I know.

Trinity stares at Grace sheepishly for a moment, then  
throws her arms around her neck. Grace hugs her back  
tightly, smiling.

EXT — REC CENTER — EARLY EVENING

Parents pick up their kids. They gesture to a smiling woman with a clip board, who checks off names as kids go. Grace and Trinity play a clapping hand game while they wait. Aliyah approaches, calling Trinity's name.

ALIYAH

Come on, baby, time to go.

Grace and Trinity stand up. Grace brushes her hands off on her jeans, looks nervous.

GRACE

Do you have that...?

ALIYAH

Yeah, I've got it. You're not doing anything other than what you've told me, right? There was a section on images and recordings?

GRACE

Yeah, that's just the template form, but I'm not using any pictures or recordings of her. Only what we talked about.

Aliyah hesitates for a moment, her face stern, then nods and hands Grace the form.

GRACE

Thank you!

Aliyah grabs Trinity's hand and they start to walk away. Grace watches. As they walk away, Aliyah's face softens, and she sweeps Trinity off the ground and carries her like a baby, smiling while Trinity shrieks with laughter.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

Grace nervously organizes her things: a sheet with typed questions, a notepad of scratch paper, a phone set up to record audio, two pens, her computer. She sees her mom calling her, and answers on her computer.

GRACE

Hey!

CAMILLE

Hey.

GRACE  
Did you have a good day today?

CAMILLE  
Yes.

Tension hangs in the air. Grace is still nervous, Camille moody.

GRACE  
Cool. Okay. So, did you read what I sent you?

CAMILLE  
Yes.

GRACE  
Great. So since my thesis is about the effects on children of a single-parent household, I already have a lot of interviews about households that only have one parent from infancy or from early childhood, but I wanted to get a perspective of someone who... uh, who shifted to a single parent household later in adolescence.

CAMILLE  
I know. I read what you sent me.

GRACE  
Sorry, yeah, you said that, sorry. Okay. Well I guess we can just start, then.

CAMILLE  
Okay.

GRACE  
Alright. So, first, what was your father's full name?

CAMILLE  
William Lawrence Pearce.

Grace types Camille's response as she speaks.

GRACE  
What was his occupation?

CAMILLE  
Professor.

GRACE

And how old was he when he died?

Camille swallows.

CAMILLE

Forty-three.

GRACE

So how old were you?

CAMILLE

Sixteen.

GRACE

Okay, and what was your relationship like with your father at the time that he died?

CAMILLE

(emotionless)

Good.

Grace waits. Camille doesn't expand.

GRACE

Okay. Um... Is there anything else you want me to put for that?

CAMILLE

No, that's fine.

GRACE

Okay. That's okay. Was it only his income, or was Nona making money too?

CAMILLE

She worked. As a teacher.

GRACE

Okay, so do you remember how responsibilities were split? Who cooked, who drove you around, who cleaned, you know?

CAMILLE

It was evenly split, they both did things.

GRACE

Well, okay. Can you just tell me some of the things your dad did?

Camille has a series of short flashbacks: her dad making her laugh while he cooked with a funny hat on, teaching her how to use the telescope, the two walking a dog. She snaps out of it, shakes her head slowly. It's silent for a few moments.

GRACE (O.S.)

Mom?

CAMILLE

(frustrated)

I don't know, a lot!

Grace takes her hands off the keyboard, waits for a moment.

GRACE

I'm sorry. Are you okay?

CAMILLE

(scoffs)

You only care because you need something.

GRACE

Mom, you know that's not true. I know this is-

CAMILLE

(cutting her off)

It *is* true. It's the only time you call, and it's the only time you care. You probably don't have enough material without this.

GRACE

Actually I do, I just wanted it to be included. But if you're gonna make it impossible, then there's really no need.

CAMILLE

Great.

Grace sighs, opens her mouth to say something and then closes it. She opens her mouth again. Camille presses end call, and Grace hears the phone beep.

Grace shakes her head, shuts her laptop aggressively.

INT — CAMILLE'S LIVING ROOM — MOMENTS LATER

Camille sits alone on the couch, blinking back tears. Mark opens the bedroom door and looks out at her.

MARK  
Did something happen?

Camille stands up abruptly and walks upstairs. Mark rubs his head, exasperated.

INT - CAMILLE'S ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

Camille stands in front of a stack of boxes filled with the telescope, books, and other items she took from her dad's office. She opens the telescope case, runs her fingers across the frame. Even that's too much. She slams the case shut and turns away, leaning against the boxes, steadying her breathing.

INT - GRACE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Grace sits at the barstool, eating a bowl of ice cream and playing Solitaire on her laptop. She turns around when she hears Lena walk out of the bedroom.

GRACE  
Hey! I put a wrap in the fridge  
for you. Arjun likes them.  
Better than a Hot Pocket, right?

Lena stops behind Grace, squinting at her screen.

LENA  
You're playing Solitaire without  
cards?

GRACE  
No, I mean, these are cards,  
they're just...

She gestures at the screen, and then laughs as Lena shakes her head.

LENA  
I have real cards, if you'd like  
to use them.

GRACE  
You like Solitaire?

Lena shrugs.

LENA  
It's fine. Have you played  
Pinochle?

GRACE  
Never heard of it.

LENA  
(gesturing to the  
computer)  
What, they don't have it on the  
machine?

Grace laughs.

GRACE  
Can you teach me?

LENA  
(beaming)  
You want to learn? It's easy.  
Let me get my cards, we can play  
right here.

Grace smiles, closes her laptop and clears the mess off the  
kitchen table.

INT - GRACE'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Cards and a score sheet cover the table. Grace bites her  
lip, smiling, spreading a set of cards across the table.  
She leans back, looking pleased with herself. Lena  
immediately sticks a trump card on top of Grace's pile and  
does a little victory dance.

GRACE  
Damn it!

Grace picks up the marker and adds tallies to Lena's side  
of the score sheet. It's a beatdown.

GRACE  
That's a hundred. You're lucky I  
*suck*.

LENA  
Everybody starts somewhere!

GRACE  
That was fun. You should train  
me. I'll be your apprentice.  
Until one day I beat you and  
then retire immediately.

LENA  
I'll teach you everything I  
know.

GRACE  
I'll clear my schedule.

They clean up the cards.

GRACE

I have to work on my thesis, but  
if you want to watch TV, I can  
work at my desk in the bedroom.

LENA

Oh yes, use your desk. Don't  
worry about me.

Grace smiles and kisses Lena's cheek.

INT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lena sits on the couch, squinting at a TV remote in her hand with another four more on the table in front of her. She is confused. She starts pushing buttons to try to figure it out.

INT - GRACE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grace sits at her desk, working on her thesis on her laptop. She pauses every few moments to think about what she's writing and chews on her lip, then resumes.

INT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lena is still on the couch, pushing different buttons on different remotes and seeing different error messages and confusing screens, getting increasingly frustrated. After a few more moments, she finally presses the right thing and the TV comes on. A provocative "Grey's Anatomy" scene is playing, and she looks disturbed and quickly clicks through channels. Once she reaches the Andy Griffith show, she starts turning up the volume -- a lot.

INT - GRACE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As Grace is typing, she suddenly hears the TV volume slowly turning up until she can clearly hear exactly what's happening in the Andy Griffith show. She stops typing, looks amused. Pulls out her headphones and turns on classical music. She can still hear every word. She tries to keep typing, but can't concentrate. Hears a shriek (clearly from the TV), laughs, shakes her head. She closes her laptop and pulls out her phone, where she sees a text from Arjun: **Just finished my shift. Coming over**

INT - GRACE'S LIVING ROOM - LATE AT NIGHT

Grace opens the door to her apartment quietly, and Arjun is waiting there, wearing scrubs. She puts a finger to her lips.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
She's sleeping.

Arjun kisses her. They walk to the couch.

ARJUN  
You're like a mom now.

GRACE  
Ew.

Arjun sits on the couch and Grace lays her head in his lap.  
He plays with her hair.

ARJUN  
Are you leaving her alone when  
you're at BC this weekend?

GRACE  
Well...

Grace sits up and turns around to face Arjun.

GRACE  
(cont'd)  
Actually, I was wondering if you  
could stay here tomorrow night.  
My dad's coming to get her  
Saturday morning so it shouldn't  
be too much of a hassle, and I  
can go over the meds and  
everything with you? Is that  
okay?

ARJUN  
(nodding)  
Sure.

Grace bounces up and throws her arms around, covering his  
face with quick kisses. Arjun shakes his head, laughing.

GRACE  
(sing-songy)  
Thank youuuuu!

ARJUN  
Is she racist?

Grace smacks his arm.

GRACE  
No! Geez, are you?

ARJUN  
I'm kidding!

He makes a face at her like he's not actually kidding.

ARJUN  
(cont'd)  
Why isn't your dad just getting  
her tomorrow?

GRACE  
Well, he's not getting her  
because I'm gone, he's getting  
her because Saturday's the  
anniversary of her husband's  
death. My mom's dad, that was in  
the car accident when she was in  
high school.

ARJUN  
Yeah, I remember. That's sad.

GRACE  
Yeah. She likes to be with  
family on that day. Usually me  
and her just watch sad movies  
together for most of the day, I  
think 'cause it makes her less  
embarrassed to cry. And my mom  
doesn't like to get out of bed,  
so my dad sticks with her and I  
stick with Nona. I feel bad that  
I'll be gone but it was too late  
to reschedule my tour.

Arjun nods. Grace shifts.

GRACE  
Okay, so she can usually just  
read or watch T.V. during the  
day, like when you're in class,  
but then maybe you could hang  
out with her in the evening? I  
was thinking you could cook with  
her, she doesn't like standing  
for a really long time because  
of her back but I think she'd  
like that.

ARJUN  
Okay, yeah.

GRACE

And she has meds for her back and her diabetes, she's not really forgetful but you can just ask when she's going to bed if she took them and if she has everything she needs. But she always does.

ARJUN

Is that all?

GRACE

Yeah, I think so. I'll text you if I think of anything else.

ARJUN

When's your train?

GRACE

9:40, I think.

ARJUN

I'll walk with you in the morning, if you want. Lab's cancelled tomorrow.

GRACE

Yes please.

She kisses him.

EXT - NYC STREETS - LATE MORNING

Grace and Arjun walk to the subway station, hand in hand, coffees in their other hands. She leans against the side railing when they get to the station entrance. She's jumpy.

ARJUN

Should I be saying good luck?

GRACE

I mean, no. It's just a tour, I don't think they're evaluating me at all.

ARJUN

You're nervous.

Grace looks at the ground, contemplating.

GRACE

Nervous that I'll like it too much and I won't get in, maybe.

ARJUN  
You'll get in.

Grace smiles and stands up straight.

GRACE  
I know you think that. I'm good.  
Thanks for getting up with me.

ARJUN  
I love you.

GRACE  
I love you too. Have fun with  
Nona. She'll probably tell you  
to call her Lena, but that's  
weird. Call her Nona.

Grace and Arjun kiss quickly, and Grace runs down the stairs.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Arjun enters the apartment, holding a full bag of groceries. Lena sits at the kitchen table with tea and a Pop-Tart, reading. She looks up at Arjun.

LENA  
Are you on babysitting duty?

ARJUN  
Oh, come on.

LENA  
What's all that?

Arjun smiles, raising his eyebrows at Lena, and slides into the chair next to her. He starts to pull items out of the bag and put them on the table: vegetables, meat, rice. Lena is pleasantly surprised.

LENA  
Real food... I was starting to  
wonder if you guys had that  
here.

ARJUN  
(gesturing at her  
Pop-Tart)  
You being converted?

LENA  
Something like that.

Lena pulls open a bag of carrots and snacks on one.

LENA

I've been meaning to ask Grace to take me to the store. I don't think I could do all that by myself.

ARJUN

Do you want to go now?

LENA

Well it's alright, honey, you were just there. I can wait till she comes back.

ARJUN

I don't mind. She doesn't really like going to the store, so I usually just grab stuff for her when I'm there.

LENA

No one *likes* going to the store.

ARJUN

Sure, but she's got her volunteering, and... lots going on. So this way works. You don't like going to the store?

LENA

Well, I didn't use to. It's a nice change of scenery, now.

Arjun extends his hand.

ARJUN

Let's go!

Lena looks at him quizzically.

LENA

You sure?

Arjun nods affirmingly.

LENA

Well. You're sweet.

ARJUN  
(winks)  
Glad you think so. I told Grace  
you'd like me more than her by  
the time she gets back.

Lena takes his hand and slowly pulls herself up.

INT — GROCERY STORE — AFTERNOON

Lena and Arjun stand in the produce section, Arjun  
carefully mulling over the avocados. Lena watches him  
fondly.

LENA  
So what are you studying?

Arjun looks up at her.

ARJUN  
Medicine. Well, pre-med, for  
now. But eventually medicine.

LENA  
That's nice. Expensive, I hear,  
these days.

ARJUN  
(laughing)  
Yeah, it's, uh... it's a lot of  
money. And I really only want to  
do it so I can work at my aunt's  
practice, which is mostly pro-  
bono. So that doesn't help.

LENA  
Why there, then?

Arjun decides on an avocado, bags it, and hands it to Lena,  
who puts it in the cart. He pushes the cart forward  
slightly and the two walk towards the fruit.

ARJUN  
She mostly treats single  
mothers. My grandmother raised  
my father and my aunt alone, and  
she died when they were  
teenagers because she had  
mesothelioma and couldn't afford  
treatment.

They stop next to a mountain of fruit while Arjun assembles  
a bag.

ARJUN (CONT'D)

So my aunt went to medical school and opened this practice, and it's really overrun now, she's having to turn women away because there aren't enough physicians to see them all. So I need to be there, and help her. For my father, and for his mother.

Lena sees the first bag of fruit filling up and tears a second one off, flapping it so that it opens and offering it to Arjun.

LENA

That's very admirable. You must have a lot of grit.

Arjun tenderly places the first bag of fruit in the cart and turns to face Lena, taking the second bag from her. He smiles modestly.

ARJUN

You know, I don't always, on the bad days. I almost quit after the first time I took the MCAT. Scored in the 35th percentile. I was so embarrassed. But when I told Grace, she spent all her nannying money to enroll me in an MCAT prep class. Got me to stick it out.

LENA

Wow.

Arjun starts to fill the second bag with fruit.

ARJUN

Yeah... yeah, I know. God knows *what* I'd be doing if she didn't love me. Nothing good.

LENA

What a nice story.

ARJUN

Yeah. She makes for those.

Arjun smiles, placing the second bag in the cart.

INT - TRAIN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace sits alone in the train, reading *Catcher in the Rye*. Her stop, Commonwealth Ave for Boston College, is announced, and she gets off. When she gets above ground, a bunch of text messages from her grandmother come in at once:

**Tried a chocolate pop-tart. NOT THAT BAD! WHO KNEW?!**

**Text me when you are safe in Boston. I LOVE YOU!**

**ARE YOU THERE YET?**

**Your boyfriend showed me where you are from his PHONE. I DID NOT KNOW YOU GUYS COULD DO THAT!**

Grace laughs and shakes her head. Types: **I love you too! I'm here and I'm good! My tour starts soon! (With emojis)**

A response from grandma: **WHAT are those??!!?!?**

Grace switches from her messages to maps and walks towards Boston College.

INT - BOSTON COLLEGE PRESENTATION ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace and a few other students sit in a beautiful room with glass windows around a chestnut table. There are multiple presentation easels set up. One just says "Top Social Work Master's Program in the U.S." The other has photos and descriptions. Two women, one young and one much older, casually elegant, speak to the room. Grace is enthralled, glued to every word they say.

WOMAN #1

... I actually was in and out of group homes from the time my mom got arrested, when I was 10, until I was 16. I was so, so angry and hurt and I took it out on everyone who was willing to take a chance on me. Until I had this caseworker, at Abbott House, that just... got it. Dr. Mara. She got me. I've known since then that I needed to do this, and now I'm one semester away from graduating and this program has empowered me to be a Dr. Mara for kids that are like me, to know that I can do that.

Grace tries to subtly wipe tears from the corners of her eyes with her thumbs. She badly wants to be here.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT ELEVATOR - EARLY AFTERNOON

Lena and Mark stand in the elevator. Lena is dolled up, with a dress, hat and a face full of makeup. She looks like she is focused on seeming composed. Mark holds her small overnight bag. They're not talking.

They reach the bottom and step out to go to the car.

LENA

Thank you for picking me up. I don't like to be alone today.

MARK

Sure, happy to. I'm sorry Grace is gone.

LENA

Oh, that's okay. I'm glad to be with Camille.

Mark helps Lena into the car and closes the door for her. She waits as he walks around to the driver's side door and gets in. He starts the car.

LENA

I think it's good for her and I to be with each other today.

Mark stares straight ahead, starts backing the car up.

LENA

(cont'd)

Right? She would have sent you to bring me if I hadn't asked first?

MARK

Yep. Yes.

It's silent for a few moments. Lena sighs.

LENA

No. I don't think so.

More silence. Lena straightens up, clears her throat.

LENA

(cont'd)

We're never really alone together. You and me, I mean.

Mark laughs nervously. He doesn't know what to say.

LENA

Maybe... if you could just tell me what I'm doing wrong... then I'll know. And then I can hopefully do better for her.

MARK

Um, I, uh... I'm not sure what you mean. By that. Nothing's wrong?

LENA

You know I love her, don't you, and that I really try my hardest, really? Can't you tell that? Does she not think so?

MARK

I don't think I should... I don't...

Lena waits for him to finish, but he doesn't.

LENA

It might make it better for you too, you know? I mean, what if we could all have a nice time together.

Mark just shakes his head.

MARK

I'm sorry, Lena. I really am. I don't think I'm supposed to be part of this.

Lena nods, breathes deeply. They drive on.

INT - CAMILLE AND MARK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Mark opens the door. He and Lena enter the home, and Lena takes off her hat and hangs it on a rack. Lena walks towards the bedroom.

INT - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lena pushes the door open and enters the room. Camille lays curled up on her side on the bed, blinking at the wall. Lena goes to sit in a chair next to the dresser. It feels too far away. She hesitates, then stands up, walks to the bed and sits down on the corner.

LENA

Hi, baby.

Camille doesn't react. Lena tentatively puts her hand on Camille's leg.

LENA

(cont'd)

You are so strong, my girl.

Camille bristles, inhales.

LENA

So strong.

Silence.

LENA

I hope...

She trails off for a moment.

LENA

I know that you're in a lot of pain, and that you always will be, but you know that's not what he would want us to be focusing on.

Camille closes her eyes, breathing hard.

CAMILLE

(quietly, her  
voice trembling)

Stop.

LENA

Remember all those wonderful things people said about him? And how beautiful the service was, and the college donating in his name, it was so beauti-

CAMILLE

Stop.

LENA

No, I don't want to upset you, I'm sorry. I just mean, there was so much good that-

CAMILLE

Stop! Can you fucking stop!  
STOP!

Lena is shocked, stands up from the bed.

CAMILLE

You always say the same shit,  
about all the good, and I can  
never decide what's more fucked  
up, if you're just saying it  
even though you know how stupid  
it is, or if you actually choose  
to believe that.

LENA

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Cam.  
It's not supposed to make sense  
to us now, but I know that one  
day -

Camille jolts up.

CAMILLE

YOU DON'T KNOW *ANYTHING*! You  
don't know anything.

LENA

(starting to cry)  
What did I do, why are you doing  
this?

CAMILLE

It was a FLUKE! I CAN'T BELIEVE  
YOU WANT TO SPEND YOUR WHOLE  
LIFE ACTING LIKE IT WASN'T A  
FUCKING FLUKE! *HOW DO YOU NOT*  
GET IT?

LENA

I didn't... I'm not the first  
person who ever believed that  
things happen for a reason, even  
if we don't understand that  
reason.

CAMILLE

You are so *impossible* for acting  
like this was part of a plan. It  
wasn't, and it's not. It was  
just a fluke. There's no greater  
meaning.

LENA

I thought I was supposed to be  
strong, find the silver lining.  
And help you to.

CAMILLE

And you always say *strong*, like we did something to be proud of, but all that means is that our life got ruined, and we didn't kill ourselves.

LENA

I never knew what you wanted from me, Camille. I just didn't want you to feel alone.

CAMILLE

I *WAS ALONE*! Do you know how alone you left me? I was the only one still crying for him a week later. I was the only one in so much pain that I couldn't just blab with strangers at the funeral about all the good times. If it wasn't us then who was it gonna be? You went looking for a silver lining and you left me alone.

LENA

I just wanted to help you.

CAMILLE

I can't stand you. Get away from me.

LENA

This isn't my fault Camille, don't-

CAMILLE

Get away from me.

LENA

-you know what it's been like for me with-

CAMILLE

(slow, biting)

Get away.

Lena becomes incomprehensible through her tears. Mark is standing in the doorway. He walks to Lena and gently pulls her out of the room, shutting the door behind him. He wraps his arms around her as she sobs, looking deeply sad but not surprised. When the door shuts, Camille immediately begins to weep, holding her hands over her mouth, trying not to make any noise.

INT - GRACE'S ROOM - EVENING.

Arjun and Grace sit on the bed, facing each other. She is excited, talking with her hands, and he is listening attentively.

GRACE

And, it turns out one of the presenters was actually *in* foster care herself, and she was just talking about how her case worker changed her whole life and was the reason she ended up there. I literally started crying while she was talking because it was so powerful.

ARJUN

When do you find out?

GRACE

Everywhere that I applied sends acceptances last week of March. So next few days, probably.

ARJUN

You're lucky I like you enough to move to a worse version of New York.

GRACE

(smiling)

I guess I am.

(pauses)

Nona couldn't come if I did Boston, though, cause she's still gonna go to her doctor in Chesterbrook and it's way too far for my dad to have to do the drive every three months. So that would be a whole thing we'd have to deal with.

ARJUN

Don't worry about that stuff. We'll figure it out.

Grace leans forward and kisses him. He kisses her back. After a moment, he leans back against the wall and she slides onto his lap. They start to make out. After a few seconds, they hear the apartment door open.

MARK (O.S)  
(muffled)  
I'm sorry for... I'm sorry.  
You'll be okay here?

LENA (O.S)  
(muffled)  
I'm sorry too. Yes, good to go,  
thank you.

They hear the door close. Grace and Arjun look at each other.

GRACE  
Damn it.

Arjun closes his eyes and jokingly puckers his lips.

GRACE  
Stay here. I'll just go say hi  
and try to get her to watch TV  
or something.

She climbs off the bed and leaves the room.

INT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lena is in the kitchen, pouring herself a glass of water.  
Grace walks toward her.

GRACE  
Hi!

Grace wraps her arm around Lena's shoulder and gives her a squeeze. Lena touches Grace's cheek.

LENA  
Hi sweet pea.

GRACE  
How was your day, how's my mom?

LENA  
It was... hard. I'm tired. But  
it is what it is.

GRACE  
I'm so sorry that I had to miss  
it, but it's been on my mind all  
weekend. Have you eaten? Are you  
just gonna relax now, watch a  
movie or something?

LENA  
No, I've already just been  
sitting around all day. Can we  
play pinochle? Continue your  
training?

Grace hesitates. Lena looks at her expectantly.

GRACE  
Uh... yes. Yeah, we can. I can  
get the cards.

LENA  
I have them, they're in my bag.

GRACE  
Oh. Okay, well Arjun's actually  
here, but he's working on  
something so I'm sure he'll come  
say hi later. I'll just let him  
know we're playing.

Grace walks back into the room, and Arjun smiles at her,  
starting to slide over.

GRACE  
Nope, no dice.

ARJUN  
Oh.  
(pauses)  
I never thought I'd get  
cockblocked by your grandma.

Arjun stands up to come back out with Grace, but she holds  
her arm out to stop him.

GRACE  
Stay here, I'm just gonna lose  
on purpose. It won't take long.

ARJUN  
Are you sure?  
(joking)  
She and I are homies now, so...

GRACE  
Yeah, I'll be back in a few  
minutes.

INT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Grace and Lena count their cards up. Grace finishes  
counting and watches Lena. She holds the dry erase marker

to tally the scores, tapping it against the table eagerly. Lena looks up when she finishes counting, and Grace fakes disappointment.

GRACE

Man, that gets you to 150,  
doesn't it?

LENA

Yep.

Grace shakes her head, then adds Lena's points to her total so the score reads 60-150.

LENA

I must not be a very good  
teacher.

Grace starts cleaning up the cards.

GRACE

Oh no, Nona, I'm just having an  
off night.

LENA

So we're done?

Grace stops cleaning for a moment, looks uncomfortable.

GRACE

Oh. Are we not?

LENA

No, no, that's fine.

Lena knows what's happening. Grace resumes picking the cards up, then puts the stack down next to Lena's hands and pats it awkwardly.

GRACE

Okay. I'm gonna...

She gestures towards her room. Lena nods silently. Grace walks quickly to her room, disappearing from view. Lena remains at the table, dismayed, fiddling with the deck of cards.

EXT. - STREET - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace and Arjun walk back from class together, listening to music with a headphone splitter. They get to the apartment and walk into the lobby. Grace pulls the headphones out of her ears and lets them hit the floor, opens the door to the

mail hallway and walks to her box. Arjun waits, messing with the music.

GRACE (O.S.)

Fuck.

Arjun looks up and sees her holding two envelopes. He picks up her headphones and walks to her, seeing the letters.

ARJUN

Oh, you said that like it was a rejection letter.

GRACE

I don't want to know.

ARJUN

I don't think you mean that.

Grace shoves the envelopes out at him.

GRACE

You do it.

He starts to take them and she lets go immediately, almost dropping them.

ARJUN

Woah. You sure?

GRACE

Yes, hurry up.

ARJUN

Which one first?

GRACE

I don't care!

Arjun opens the Columbia envelope and pulls the letter out. Grace watches his face at first, then closes her eyes. He sees a rejection and grimaces, grabs her hand. Her eyes open.

GRACE

No?

Arjun kisses her head.

ARJUN

I'm sorry, babe.

She shakes her head and hands, shaking it off.

GRACE  
It's fine. B.C. now.

She holds her fists clenched to her sides, closes her eyes. Arjun opens the second envelope, scans the letter. It's taking too long. She opens her eyes and leans over and reads along with him. She sees it first, squints. She takes the letter from his hands and reads closer.

GRACE  
Deferred. Pending completion of my thesis.

ARJUN  
That's pretty good, right?

GRACE  
I mean, it's pretty shitty to not know until May. But I do feel really good about my thesis.

ARJUN  
That's good, then!

GRACE  
It's... probably good enough. I hope it's good enough.

ARJUN  
I'm proud of you.

They stand there for a moment, hugging.

ARJUN  
That's the best program in the country, Grace! That's crazy!

He pulls back, looks her in the eyes.

ARJUN  
It's amazing.

GRACE  
Thank you.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Arjun flings the door open, Grace standing next to him. Lena is on the couch, reading a book.

LENA  
(not looking up)  
How was your day?

GRACE  
I just got rejected from  
Columbia.

LENA  
(genuinely  
shocked)  
Oh, no, really?

ARJUN  
She *also* got deferred by the top  
ranked program. They're gonna  
let her in once they read her  
thesis.

Grace laughs. Lena stands up.

LENA  
Oh, that's *wonderful*!

GRACE  
Thanks, Nona.

ARJUN  
And, on top of that, she's  
already in to NYU. Since last  
semester.

LENA  
You're just marvelous, Grace,  
you really are.

GRACE  
I'm not going to NYU. Their  
program is barely ranked.

Lena clicks her tongue.

LENA  
I don't know about all the  
rankings, but at least they're  
smart enough to try and hold on  
to you. Those other schools must  
not know *what* they're doing.

GRACE  
Well no, they're just really  
good programs, so it's hard to  
get in.

LENA

But I've seen how hard you work,  
how much you care... They're  
foolish. You're better off  
without them.

Grace rolls her eyes.

GRACE

Not foolish, just the best in  
the country.

She pauses. Lena looks down.

GRACE (CONT'D)

It's fine. I just have to make  
sure my thesis is perfect. It'll  
be fine.

Grace drops her backpack aggressively and gets a PopTart  
out of the pantry. As she does, Arjun walks over to Lena  
and puts his arm around her shoulder.

ARJUN

(whispering)

I'm with you. They're dumb.

Lena smiles and pats his hand. Grace walks to the door.

GRACE

I'm going to get Trinity.  
Randolph has a half day today so  
I said I'd take her till her mom  
gets off.

Arjun's arm is still around Lena, which Grace looks thrown  
by.

GRACE

Are you coming?

ARJUN

Am I?

Grace just looks at him, not saying anything. He gets it,  
and squeezes Lena in a side hug before taking his arm off  
her. Grace opens the door and holds it open from the  
hallway.

ARJUN

I'll see you later, Nona.

GRACE

Bye Nona.

Lena stands alone again in the apartment. The door swings shut before she can say goodbye.

INT - COFFEE SHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Grace, Arjun, and Trinity are in a booth at a coffee shop, hot chocolate and half-eaten pastries on the table in front of them. Grace and Arjun are watching Trinity attentively as she sings.

TRINITY  
Utah, Vermont, Virginia,  
Washington, West Virginia,  
Wisconsin, Wyooooo-ming!

Grace applauds and Arjun erupts into theatrical cheers, whisper-shouting.

ARJUN  
Ladies and gentlemen, Trinity  
James!!!

Trinity beams, delighted with herself.

ARJUN  
Alright, let me try.  
(pretending to concentrate)  
Aaaaaaa...rizona?

Trinity giggles and shakes her head.

ARJUN  
Aaaaaaa...laska?

TRINITY  
No!!

ARJUN  
Aaaaaaa...rgentina?

Trinity erupts with laughter.

TRINITY  
Alabama!

ARJUN  
Ugh, Alabama, of *course*! Why are  
you laughing, you don't think  
I'm good at this?

TRINITY  
You're not!!

ARJUN  
Well. Maybe you know more states  
than me, but I bet I know  
more... colors than you.

TRINITY  
Nuh-uh!!!

ARJUN  
Oh yeah? You know how to play  
Concentration?

GRACE  
(gesturing to  
Trinity)  
It's the one with your hands  
like this, and the three claps  
in between.

Trinity nods eagerly. They start slow.

ARJUN  
I'll start, Then you. Category  
is, Colors. Red.

TRINITY  
Orange.

ARJUN  
Pink.

TRINITY  
Blue.

As they play, Aliyah enters the coffee shop, scanning for  
Grace and Trinity. None of them see her.

ARJUN  
Yellow.

TRINITY  
Purple.

Aliyah reaches their table.

ALIYAH  
Who are you?

Grace, Trinity and Arjun stop clapping and see Aliyah.  
Trinity jumps up to hug her. Arjun stands.

TRINITY  
Mama!

ALIYAH  
Hi, Ms. James. I'm Arjun, I'm  
Grace's boyfriend.

He extends his hand to shake hers, and she ignores it.

ALIYAH  
What the hell, Grace?

Grace is confused.

GRACE  
Sorry... um... did you text me?

ALIYAH  
Did that form I signed say  
something about you bringing my  
child around random guys?

GRACE  
Oh, no, it's... I'm sorry, he's  
not random, we've been together  
for three years. I've told  
Trinity about him before, she's  
been wanting to meet him.

ALIYAH  
If you didn't have time to spend  
with her without your boyfriend,  
I could've found someone else to  
pick her up.

GRACE  
I'm sorry, it wasn't that, I...

ARJUN  
Ms. James, it's my fault. I went  
to Randolph too, and I knew the  
way from Grace's so I came with  
her, and then I thought a hot  
chocolate sounded good so I  
tagged along. I'm so sorry for  
upsetting you.

ALIYAH  
You went to Randolph?

ARJUN  
Yeah, I lived in Hunts Point  
till I was 16. Drake Street.

ALIYAH  
Mm. We're on Bryant.  
(sighing, then to Trinity)  
You have fun?

Trinity nods.

GRACE  
She showed us that she has the whole song down now. I can't believe the next time I see it she'll be on stage.

ALIYAH  
Yeah. I've got your ticket at home.

Grace nods. Aliyah pulls a few dollars from her purse.

ALIYAH  
Was it just the hot chocolate, or is the food hers?

GRACE  
No, food's ours.

Aliyah puts the cash down on the table and grabs Trinity's hand.

ALIYAH  
Alright, thanks. I'll see you.

GRACE  
Bye. I'm sorry!

Aliyah and Trinity leave. Grace rests her head on the table. Arjun smiles gently, ruffling her hair.

INT - GRACE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

The sun is setting outside of Grace's bedroom window. She is typing on her laptop, and has classical music playing loudly to (mostly) drown out the sound of Lena's TV show.

She jumps when her alarm goes off, her screen showing: **PINOCHLE TRAINING!!!** She silences the alarm, sighs, and rubs her eyes. She looks at the door, then turns back around and turns her phone face down and keeps typing. After a few moments, Lena opens the door.

LENA  
It's game time!

Grace squeezes her eyes shut, bites her lip. She waits a moment to turn around, but then inhales, shuts her laptop and stands up.

LENA  
Your music is way too loud.

Grace snickers.

GRACE  
Mhmm.

She turns off the light as she leaves the room.

INT - KITCHEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Grace and Lena sit at the table, playing cards in silence, a picked-at plate of hummus and pita chips next to them. Lena clears her throat.

LENA  
So, I don't know when you were planning on going to the store next, but I was wondering if you could get a couple of things for me. I can give you money, of course. It's just some things I could cook without having to stand up much.

GRACE  
Yeah, you can put whatever on the list. But I'm probably not gonna go for a couple of weeks at least, so you could try a delivery service. They're usually free for the first few times.

LENA  
A food delivery service?

GRACE  
Well, yeah, like, groceries specifically.

LENA  
Oh. I guess I didn't realize they had those. Can you explain how they work?

GRACE  
Yeah, I'll send you a link.

LENA

Oh, you don't have to do that, I just meant, you can tell me how it, kind of, goes.

GRACE

No I know, I just think it'll be easier with a link. They're like, designed to help you understand, so they can do better than me.

Lena looks defeated, slowly nods. It's silent. Grace starts to feel bad. She puts her cards down on the table.

GRACE

Okay, I'm sorry. I'll just get them for you.

LENA

It's alright, honey. I don't need you to do that.

GRACE

Are you sure?

It's quiet.

GRACE

Thank you, I'm sorry, I just have a big deadline for my thesis coming up so I'm stressed and since it's free I just thought that-

LENA

It's okay.

They sit still. It's uncomfortable.

GRACE

Thanks.

Lena stares forward for a moment, then stands up quickly, taking the plate to the sink and turning on the faucet.

INT - LIBRARY - MID-MORNING

Grace and Arjun are doing schoolwork at a coffee shop. Grace's phone buzzes repeatedly. She picks it up and scans the text, rolls her eyes. Arjun looks at her questioningly.

GRACE

It's Nona. She's *still* trying to figure out how to make her Amazon Prime account. It's not hard.

Her phone buzzes again. Grace groans.

GRACE

Honestly, it would've been easier for me to just get the stuff she needs then try to spoon feed her this.

ARJUN

Do you wanna go to the store on our way home?

GRACE

No!

Arjun raises his hands up in mock-surrender.

GRACE

Sorry. I just... She's just being so...

Grace gestures in frustration, not sure what she's trying to say.

GRACE

I don't know. I feel like I'm already sacrificing so much just to do what I do for her now, and it's like she thinks it's not enough, like she's mad at me for not spending *more* time. And she knows that she would be in a home if it weren't for me, so you'd think she wouldn't be so quick to get mad.

ARJUN

Yeah. That's frustrating.

GRACE

It's whatever.

ARJUN

Do you think this gives you kind of a new appreciation for your mom? Like, how much it takes out of you to really take care of another person?

GRACE

What do you mean? I only have to take care of Nona because *she* refused to.

ARJUN

Well, I just mean... in a more general sense. Like, you're responsible for a person and they expect a lot of you but it's just an expectation, it's not even like they notice you planning their life around them.

GRACE

Like me, you're saying?

ARJUN

Well yeah, like having a kid.

Grace thinks about this for the first time. She looks like she wants to give a rebuttal, but can't think of one.

GRACE

I guess so. I mean, it's different, but... I guess.

ARJUN

Maybe you should call her. Say, you know, thank you, since now you know that means something. Maybe she knows something that'll help. Besides, you know she'll be on your side.

GRACE

I'm not making this a sides thing.

ARJUN

Up to you.

INT - GRACE'S LIVING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Grace sits on the couch, fiddling with her phone, trying to decide whether or not to call her mom. Arjun is sitting in an armchair, reading. After a few moments of hesitation, she dials.

CAMILLE (O.S)

(anxiously)

What's wrong, do you need something?

Grace rolls her eyes.

GRACE

I just wanted to talk. You're the one who tells me I should call more.

It's quiet for a moment.

CAMILLE (O.S)

Okay. I'm sorry. I just wasn't expecting it.

GRACE

It's fine.

Another long pause.

CAMILLE (O.S)

So, how's everything going?

GRACE

Good. My thesis defense is tomorrow. I'm really happy with it, it changed a lot from what I was originally thinking it would be, but I feel like it really captures the complexities of single parenthood on all the involved parties-

Grace catches herself getting carried away by her excitement, then remembers that she's talking to her mom. She never does that when she's talking to her mom. She stops herself.

GRACE

Anyways, I like what it is now and... yeah. I'm happy with it.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

That's great. I'm glad for you.

GRACE

Thanks.

CAMILLE

Do you think I could read it?

GRACE

Really? You'd want to?

CAMILLE

Yes.

GRACE

I didn't... uh, I couldn't use that interview we did. Since it got cut short and stuff.

CAMILLE

I know. I just want to read it.

GRACE

Okay. Sure, I can send it to you.

Grace opens her laptop as they talk and attaches the document to an email, which she sends to her mom.

CAMILLE

Good. What else? How's Arjun?

GRACE

He's good. We're going to Carmine's tomorrow night to celebrate being done. And he just found a doctor that he can scribe for next year if we move to Boston.

CAMILLE (O.S)

Oh. That's nice. Is he preferring to do Boston too?

GRACE

Well, I don't think he cares. But he's obviously wanting for me to get my top choice.

CAMILLE (O.S)

Oh. Okay. How's Nona?

GRACE

She's napping.

CAMILLE (O.S)

Well, just in general.

Grace hesitates.

GRACE

Not bad. Well... yeah. It's been alright.

CAMILLE (O.S)

(after a pause)

So... More difficult than you thought? Like how I told you?

GRACE  
(defensively)  
I mean, no. It comes naturally.  
I think I'm more competent than  
you assume I am.

Arjun looks up from his book at Grace. She doesn't turn her head.

CAMILLE (O.S)  
Then why just alright?

GRACE  
It's good. It's really good.

A long pause.

CAMILLE (O.S)  
Okay.

GRACE  
Okay, well, I have to go, we're  
going out.

CAMILLE (O.S)  
You're going out?

GRACE  
Yeah, for Meg's birthday. But  
I'll see you in a couple weeks,  
right? I sent Dad all the info  
for graduation.

CAMILLE (O.S.)  
I know. He forwarded it to me.

GRACE  
Okay. Love you.

CAMILLE (O.S.)  
Love you too.

Grace hangs up the phone. Arjun is still looking at her,  
but she pretends not to notice.

INT - NYU CONFERENCE ROOM - MID-MORNING

Grace stands in a pantsuit in front of a projector screen  
that shows a Conclusion slide from her thesis. A small  
committee of faculty watches her present.

GRACE

So while the conversation usually centers around the effects of single parenthood on the child's behavior, their development, their academic performance - the single parents, particularly mothers, are overlooked.

INT - CAMILLE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Camille sits in her bed, glasses on and computer in lap, with Grace's thesis document pulled up. She reads the last paragraph.

GRACE (CONT'D, O.S.)

More often than not, these mothers are facing their own set of challenges: grief, anxiety, fatigue, self-doubt; but many, remarkably, have found a path to overcome them. And in particular, those who demonstrate three characteristics - strength, confidence, and resilience - are most successful in finding that path, and in raising children whose lives are as full, stable, and happy as children in two-parent households.

Camille leans back against the headboard, thinking about this. She highlights the passage in the document.

INT - NYU CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

The faculty committee, including Dr. Patil, applaud. Grace approaches the desk and shakes their hands, beaming.

INT - GRACE'S BATHROOM - EVENING

Grace turns on the light in the bathroom and sees a sticky note on the mirror - "**PICK UP INSULIN - CVS 20 UNIVERSITY PLAZA**". She sticks it back on the mirror and starts to put on makeup, getting ready to go out. Someone knocks on the door.

GRACE

Come in.

Lena opens the door.

GRACE  
Oh, hi. Good nap?

LENA  
Yeah. I slept later than I meant  
to. I don't think I'll be able  
to go to bed until late now.

GRACE  
You're a cool grandma, you don't  
have a bedtime.

Lena forces a smile.

LENA  
I guess so. Oh, did you see my  
note? Would you be able to pick  
that up sometime in the next  
couple of days?

GRACE  
Yep, I'll get it.

LENA  
Thank you.

GRACE  
Yup.

LENA  
Are you busy?

GRACE  
I'm just getting ready to go  
out.

Lena doesn't say anything. Grace stops primping, looks at  
her.

GRACE  
Do you need something?

LENA  
(voice cracking)  
I'm just having a really hard  
time.

GRACE  
What's wrong?

Lena puts the toilet seat down and sits on it.

LENA

I know you know things haven't been easy with your Mom and me.

GRACE

I know, Nona, I'm sorry that she's been so... difficult. I don't understand her.

LENA

I feel alone and I know she does too and I can't see why she can't let us have each other.

GRACE

Through all of it you've been so strong, though. I admire so much how strong you are.

LENA

I don't know how to take that compliment anymore.

GRACE

What do you mean?

LENA

Nothing. I... nothing.

Grace sits down on the edge of the tub and scratches Lena's back, not saying anything.

LENA (CONT'D)

It just feels like it's too late for me to fix everything now. But nothing else feels worth my time.

GRACE

That makes sense.

(after a pause)

I'm sure there's a reason that things are this way, even though it feels like it doesn't make sense. And I hope you know I love you and that I'd do anything for you and I'm so glad that it's played out so that you can be here in New York with me.

Lena is frustrated by this.

LENA

I love you too, Grace, I'm just not sure that that all makes up for... I'd like to think my daughter and my granddaughter could both love me.

Grace takes her hand off Lena's back, wounded.

GRACE

I'm sorry. I was just trying to find a silver lining, I guess.

Lena is shaken by this. She leans back against the wall slowly, nodding.

EXT - GRADUATION CEREMONY - MID-MORNING

A sea of blue graduation caps, with Grace's and Arjun's families in the audience. Grace is onstage delivering a speech.

GRACE

We bend the world to our will until it tells us what we want to know. We may not have all the answers, but we've found some of the galaxies' most well-hidden secrets fueled by nothing more than a desire to know what was previously unknown. The cure for polio. The path to the moon. And pizza.

Grace smiles with tears in her eyes.

GRACE (CONT'D)

So please, I urge you, search on. But not just for the cure to Alzheimer's or the plan to eradicate homelessness in America. Search for empathy. Search for generosity. Search for kindness. Search for a way to make interactions with the people who are serving you meaningful. Search for a way to make your friends happy. Search for a way to be the best person you can be.

The audience is inspired. Everyone applauds heartily.

EXT - COURTYARD - LATE MORNING

Grace, Arjun, and her family are in the NYU courtyard among a sea of graduates. Grace and Arjun pose for a photo, and their parents snap away with their cameras.

ARJUN'S MOM

Would you like me to take a photo of you all?

CAMILLE

Oh, yes, please, that would be great!

Camille passes her camera to Arjun's dad and turns to get in the photo. Mark stands to Grace's left, and Lena to her right. Camille stops in front of Grace and starts tucking her hair behind her ear, fixing her stolls. Grace swats her hand away.

GRACE

Mom!

CAMILLE

You want your hair to be messed up?

GRACE

Just leave it!

Camille moves away from Grace and stands to the left, next to Mark. There's another family close by on the left side, getting in the frame. Arjun's mom tries to shift, then waves her hand at Camille.

ARJUN'S MOM

(whispering)

Those people are in it or else it's really off center. You should switch to the other side.

Camille hesitates, then switches sides. Lena, Grace, and Mark hold each other close and look friendly, but Camille stands stiff next to Lena, not wanting to hug against her. Lena tries to pull Camille in tighter, but it just ends up being uncomfortable.

INT - MARK'S CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON.

Arjun, Lena, and Grace sit in the back row of the car, with Mark driving and Camille in the passenger's seat. Arjun sits in the middle and talks to Lena. Grace is looking at her phone.

ARJUN

What would you major in now, if you could pick anything?

LENA

Well, I'd probably just do English again, and I probably wouldn't have to read the same book twice if I did. Not that I would mind reading them all twice.

Grace opens a text from Eila: **I GOT IN!!!!!!** Her jaw drops slightly, and she covers her mouth with her hand. She moves her phone so that Arjun can see. He scans it.

LENA

What's that?

Grace shoots Arjun a look.

GRACE

Just a funny ad.

Arjun is confused, but doesn't say anything. The car rolls to a stop in front of Grace's apartment.

MARK

Should I park or are you guys good?

ARJUN

Yeah, I got her.

Arjun grabs his backpack, and he and Grace climb out on Grace's side.

ARJUN

Why'd you-

GRACE

Babe, this is huge! She submitted her thesis way before me because her defense was the first weekend, but Dr. Prentice said mine performed the best. I think I'm gonna get in.

ARJUN

That's amazing, Grace.

Arjun grabs her face and kisses her. She is bouncing with excitement.

GRACE

Okay, don't say anything. I told you, if we go to Boston she can't come with us, and I don't want to deal with that yet.

They walk around to Lena's side, and Arjun opens the door, tenderly helping Lena out of the car.

ARJUN

Alright, I'm gonna go drop off these books and go home. I'll be over around eight?

GRACE

Cool. Love you.

INT - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Grace and Lena stand waiting for the elevator. Grace is tense and excited, texting rapidly.

LENA

Hey, Grace?

Grace doesn't look up from her phone.

GRACE

Yeah?

LENA

Did you have a chance to pick up my insulin yet?

GRACE

Oh, crap, sorry. I'll get it today.

LENA

Okay, could you? I don't want to bother you, but I'm completely out now.

GRACE

Yeah, I'll do it.

LENA

Thank you.

The elevator dings and opens.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Grace is on her laptop on the couch. She's dressed like she's going out. She hears a knock on the door, sets her laptop down and goes to get it. When she opens the door, she holds her finger to her lips.

GRACE  
(whispering)  
She's sleeping again.

Arjun kisses her.

ARJUN  
You ready?

GRACE  
Yeah. I need to get out of here,  
I've been going crazy all day  
trying to figure out apartments  
and tuition and everything.  
Eila's moving in June so she can  
start making connections.

Grace grabs her coat and they exit, closing the door quietly behind them.

INT - STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

The two continue their conversation as they descend the stairs.

ARJUN  
So you decided already, you're  
going?

GRACE  
Well no, I haven't decided  
anything for sure, but it's what  
I've wanted this whole time and  
nothing has really changed about  
that.

Arjun nods.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
Can you tell me where we're  
going for dinner now?

ARJUN  
Nope. You'll see soon!

They exit the staircase and then the lobby into the night.

INT - RESTAURANT - A FEW MOMENTS LATER

Grace and Arjun enter a nice Italian restaurant. Arjun approaches the hostess.

ARJUN  
For Arjun?

The hostess nods and smiles.

HOSTESS  
Sure, follow me.

They follow the hostess to the back of the restaurant. Grace makes wide eyes at Arjun, mouths "**Fancy!**" At the back of the restaurant, the hostess opens the door to a private room. As the door opens, about 10 people jump up.

EVERYONE:  
SURPRISE!

A rainbow banner that reads "Con-Grad-Ulations" hangs across the top of the room, which is decorated with a few balloons.

HOSTESS  
Enjoy.

The hostess leaves. Grace is in shock, her hands covering her mouth. Arjun smiles at her.

ARJUN  
Thought you deserved a  
celebration. Maybe it'll double  
as a send-off.

Grace hugs Arjun tightly, then squeals and starts hugging her friends.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Lena wakes up in Grace's bed, and the apartment is dark. She walks around slowly, turning on the lights, calling out for Grace. She realizes she is alone, sighs, and sinks onto the couch.

INT - RESTAURANT - LATE EVENING

Grace and her friends eat, laugh, and drink wine.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Lena types out a text to Grace: **Did you get insulin? I need it now please.** She presses send.

INT - BAR - SAME TIME

Grace and her friends sit in a big corner booth at a bar, still drinking and talking. Her phone buzzes inside of her bag on the floor, but she doesn't notice.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Grace fumbles with the key for a moment before opening the door. It's dark, with the green kitchen clock reading 4:16 a.m. As she sets her keys and coat down, she hears the sound of Lena gagging.

GRACE

*Fuck.*

She sees a bit of light coming from the bathroom and runs towards it. When she pushes the cracked door open, she sees Lena bent over the toilet. She looks at the mirror and sees the sticky note about the insulin still there.

GRACE

*Fuck.*

Lena gags again, but nothing comes out. She has a little bit of vomit dried on her shoulder. Grace plugs her phone, which is dead, into the charger on the counter. She then sits down next to Lena, grabbing her hands.

GRACE

(panicked)

I'm so sorry, Nona, I'm so sorry. What do I do, what do you need? I'm so sorry.

Lena doesn't say anything for a moment. She is confused.

GRACE

Nona? What do I do?

LENA

Grace?

GRACE

Yes, I'm sorry, are you okay?  
What happened?

LENA

I don't... What's going on?

Grace is nearly shaking with panic, her breathing short and choppy. She stands up and sees her phone turning back on. She picks it up and waits, pained, for everything to load.

GRACE  
Come on come on come on come  
on...

When it loads, Grace opens the call app, calls Arjun and puts it on speaker. The cord is too short for her to sit next to Lena, and she looks torn. As it rings, she sinks onto the floor and scratches her grandma's back.

ARJUN (O.S)  
(waking up)  
Hello?

Grace jumps up and picks up the phone.

GRACE  
(frantic)  
Something's wrong, I need you to bring your dad's car here and take us to the hospital, I don't know what's going on, please hurry, please.

Grace starts to cry.

ARJUN (O.S)  
Shit, I'm coming, are you okay?  
Are you hurt?

GRACE  
(through tears)  
No, it's Nona, I didn't get her medicine, she's throwing up and she doesn't know what I'm saying, just hurry, please.

INT - LENA'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Grace and Lena are in the lobby of Grace's apartment, Grace pacing back and forth and Lena sitting in Grace's rolling desk chair. They both look scared. Arjun's headlights shine into the window, then quickly turn off. Grace gets behind the chair, ready to push, and Arjun pulls open the door from outside.

ARJUN  
It's gonna be okay.

They rush the chair to the side of the car and help Lena into the passenger seat. Grace shoves the chair back inside the lobby while Arjun starts the car, and then gets in the back seat. Arjun starts to drive.

ARJUN  
Did you call the hospital? And  
your mom?

GRACE  
Yeah, they know we're coming.  
They said they'll have a  
wheelchair at the emergency  
entrance.

ARJUN  
Did you call your mom?

Grace shakes her head, covers her face with her hands.  
They're stopped at a light and Arjun looks back at her. She  
tries to talk quietly to keep Lena from hearing.

GRACE  
She's won't know what to do  
either, she's just gonna be a  
bitch and say I told you so.  
I'll tell her later, it's just  
not going to help right now.

Arjun turns back around to keep driving. He looks  
conflicted.

LENA  
(quietly)  
It's okay. I don't think she's  
going to care.

They keep driving in silence.

INT - HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Lena, hooked up to an IV, rests in a hospital bed. Grace  
stares at the wall, her head on Arjun's shoulder, dejected.  
A doctor knocks on the door briefly before entering. Grace  
perks up and stands. The doctor extends his hand, and Grace  
shakes it.

GRACE  
Is everything okay? The nurses  
barely said anything, I don't  
have diabetes and I don't know  
how any of this stuff works, are  
there going to be-

DOCTOR

Everything is just fine. She was experiencing Hyperglycemia, which just means that her blood sugar got too high. You said she didn't have her insulin on time?

GRACE

Yeah, I, um, I don't know her schedule exactly, she always does it fine herself, but I hadn't picked up her insulin when she asked me to, so I'm not sure how long she went without.

DOCTOR

Her blood sugar should be normal now, and if she rests and gets back on track it shouldn't affect anything. Different people react differently to these kinds of things. This was on the extreme end. You should make sure that it doesn't happen again.

Grace looks at the floor.

GRACE

I know. I'm sorry.

DOCTOR

Alright. Shouldn't need anything more from here, but let me know if you do.

The doctor leaves the room. Grace sits back down, leans her head against the wall behind her, and closes her eyes. After a few moments, Arjun stands up and leaves the room.

EXT - HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Arjun leans against the brick hospital exterior, dialing a number on his phone. He holds it up to his ear. It goes to voicemail.

ARJUN

Hey, Mrs. Pressler. I'm glad I didn't wake you. Everything's good, so don't worry, but we're at the hospital right now, because Nona had some blood sugar problems. Her insulin didn't get picked up in time, and she had a hyperglycemic episode, but that sounds worse than it is, she's just resting now and the doctor said she's good to go. Neither of them wanted me to call you, but I just thought you would want to know. But don't worry. Okay. That's all. I'll talk to you soon, probably. Bye.

He hangs up.

INT - HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace and Arjun stand in the doorway of the room, Grace holding Lena's paperwork and some medications. Lena is shaking the doctor's hand warmly.

LENA

Thank you, really.

DOCTOR

Sure, sure. I don't want to see you again, though.

LENA

I'll do my best.

Lena and the doctor walk towards the doorway, and Grace and Arjun step out of the way. Lena and the doctor exit, and the doctor waves as he heads in the opposite direction. Arjun and Grace walk slowly behind Lena towards the exit.

INT - CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Lena, Arjun, and Grace sit in the car in silence. Lena closes her eyes. Grace chews on her lip.

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

The door to Grace's apartment opens, and Lena enters. Grace enters behind her, pushing the rolling desk chair, one of its wheels sticking. She walks towards the bedroom to put it back with the desk. Lena sits down on the couch and turns on the TV.

Grace comes back out of the bedroom and steps into the hallway, where Arjun is waiting. He's not looking at her.

GRACE  
I'm sorry.

Arjun sighs.

ARJUN  
I called your mom.

GRACE  
What the hell, Arjun? Why-

ARJUN  
(interjecting)  
Do not - I'm not gonna take that right now.

Grace is taken aback. She nods.

GRACE  
Okay. You're right. I said I'm sorry. I meant it.

Arjun shakes his head, unsure what to say to her.

ARJUN  
How? *How* do you let that happen?

GRACE  
I don't know, I was just stressed trying to figure stuff out with BC, and I lost track of the other stuff I had to do, and...

ARJUN  
Why do you even want to go to BC, Grace?

GRACE  
What do you mean? Why wouldn't I wanna be in the best program if I can get in? You don't wanna go to Boston anymore?

ARJUN  
Why do you wanna be in the best program? The best social work program?

GRACE

Why are you asking weird fucking questions? Because I want to be good at my job. I want to be effective at helping people.

ARJUN

Helping people. Which people, Grace? Because you nearly killed your grandma worrying about helping people.

Grace looks at Arjun sadly, thinking about this. He kisses her cheek.

ARJUN

You gotta figure it out.

Grace watches him walk away.

INT - CAMILLE'S CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON

Camille is on the interstate, driving to New York. She is stressed, mouthing things over and over, practicing what she wants to say. She approaches the Holland Tunnel exit.

INT - CAMILLE'S CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON

Camille parks in Grace's apartment's lot. She turns off the car. She taps her hands on the steering wheel. Then she quickly opens the door and walks briskly into the apartment, presses the elevator button. She taps her foot while she waits. The elevator dings, and she turns around and rushes back to the car, turns it on, and starts to pull away. She is crying, because they didn't want to call her.

INT - GRACE'S KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Grace wakes up, her head buried in her arms on the kitchen table. Lena has just opened the fridge. Grace straightens herself out.

GRACE

Listen.

Lena turns around to look at Grace.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I... I am really, really, really, so sorry about the insulin. I know I messed up and I know it sounds stupid to even say that because it's so obvious that I would have to be an idiot to *not* know that I messed up. And there's not a good reason. I'm just... I'm not used to this yet. And I know this isn't the first thing either. But I promise I'll get better at it. Please forgive me, I'm so sorry.

Lena sits down in the chair across from Grace.

LENA

It's okay, Grace.

She pauses, dreading having to continue.

LENA

I forgive you, I really do. But... I'm not going to stay here anymore. I talked to your dad, and your parents are going to get me a spot in Dayspring.

Grace shakes her head in disbelief.

GRACE

No, no, I'm never gonna forget again. When I say I'll get better I just mean like at-

Lena is trying to talk but Grace talks louder.

GRACE

cooking and hanging out and everything but the medicine was just a fluke-

LENA

Grace.

GRACE

and you don't have to worry and they gave us extra anyways even if you were worried-

LENA

Grace.

Grace shuts her mouth, tries to take a deep breath.

LENA

It's okay, Grace. It's really okay. It's a good place. They will care about me there too. I love you and I believe that you mean the things you're saying but I've already made up my mind so there's no need to say them.

Grace tries to be calm, to feel in control of the situation.

GRACE

What, you think they're going to care about you there in a home more than *I* care about you?

Lena looks at her sadly.

LENA

You don't even talk to me, Grace. They might be paid to talk to me, but at least they'll talk to me.

Grace's eyes fill with tears. She opens her mouth to protest, but she doesn't know what to say.

INT - GRACE'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Grace lays in bed, dejected. Her phone buzzes - it's Camille. Grace hesitates, then answers.

GRACE

Hey.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Hi.

GRACE

She said she talked to Dad, so... you know?

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Yes.

GRACE

About everything?

CAMILLE

Yes.

Grace starts to cry a little, but keeps her composure.

GRACE

You were right. I don't know how to take care of a person. Not even close.

CAMILLE

You know better now than you did before. Most people don't know how to do things they've never had to do.

GRACE

You can just say I told you so.

CAMILLE

I never wanted this, Grace.

GRACE

I know.

It's quiet for a moment.

GRACE

I'm sorry that I didn't call you.

Camille lets out a sigh, almost a gasp, of relief.

CAMILLE

I'm sorry that you didn't want to.

Again, it's quiet.

CAMILLE

Would you try me? The next time you don't want to? See if I surprise you?

GRACE

Yeah. I can do that.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Thank you.

GRACE

You're welcome.

CAMILLE

Is there something I can do for now? To take your mind off it?

GRACE

No. I just wanna lay in bed and cry.

CAMILLE

Yeah. We know where that comes from.

It's quiet for a few moments.

CAMILLE

We'll come by tomorrow to get everything. Dad has off for Memorial Day.

GRACE

Alright. See you then.

Grace hangs up the phone and stares briefly at her background, a picture of her, Lena, and Arjun. She throws it across the room, sulking. She pulls her covers up to her face and curls up sadly, staring at the wall.

EXT - APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATE MORNING

Lena and Grace stand outside the elevator in Grace's hallway, Grace holding a large cardboard box and Lena holding a bag and her coat. They wait.

GRACE

I guess at least at Dayspring you won't have to wait five damn hours every time you want to take the elevator.

Lena laughs.

LENA

That's what really sold me.

The elevator finally comes, and they step in. As it starts to go down, Grace turns to face Lena.

GRACE

I'm so sorry. I really am.

Lena smiles with sincere understanding and tucks Grace's hair behind her ear.

LENA

I know. I love you. You're just growing up.

Grace looks at the ground, nodding.

INT - GRACE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Grace walks into her bedroom and sits on her bed. She sighs, then sees her phone on the floor where she threw it and walks to pick it up. It's dead, and she plugs it in to a charger and turns it on, folding a few scattered items of clothing while she waits for it to come back on.

Once her lock screen pops up, she sits down on her bed and scrolls through the notifications (text messages, social media alerts) and stops abruptly when she sees **Aliyah James - Missed Call & Voicemail**, and a Reminder Notification for **Trinity's Recital**. She looks at the date on her watch, realizes she missed it, and sinks in dismay. She plays the voicemail.

ALIYAH (O.S.)  
You broke her heart, Grace. You know how embarrassing that was for her, after telling all her friends you were coming? What the fuck is wrong with you? I'm done.

Grace slowly lowers the phone from her ear.

INT - CAMILLE'S CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON

Camille drives Lena home. Music plays softly, and Lena rests her eyes. Camille looks over at Lena periodically. After a few moments, we see them pass by Dayspring.

INT - CAMILLE'S CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON

Camille pulls into the driveway of her home and parks. She quickly turns the car off and gets out, then walks around to the trunk and pulls a box out of the back seat. Lena stirs and opens her eyes. She is confused, looking around. Mark opens the door and takes the first box from Camille. Camille walks back and opens the back door to get another box. Lena looks at her with wide eyes, questioning. Camille just nods quickly, pulls another box out and shuts the door.

INT - CAMILLE'S HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Lena and Camille sit close to one another on the floor of the guest bedroom, unloading items from boxes. Camille stops moving. Lena sees that Camille has pulled a picture of her father out of the box. She is grimacing, but continuing to look at it. Camille looks up at Lena, who is smiling sadly, her eyes brimming with tears. Camille draws the photo to her chest and closes her eyes, letting herself begin to cry. She swings her legs around and leans forward

into Lena's lap, wrapping her arms around her, curled up like a child in her mother's embrace. Lena holds her. They cry together on the floor.

INT - TRINITY'S APT HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Grace knocks timidly on the apartment door. After a moment, Aliyah opens the door. She rolls her eyes when she sees Grace, then steps out into the hallway and closes the door behind her. She stares at Grace, waiting for her to say something.

GRACE

Aliyah, I am so, so sorry. My grandmother was in the hospital yesterday and then she decided to move and Arjun and I fought and -

ALIYAH

You *always* have an excuse. For everything. I'm done, Grace. I don't want you in Trinity's life, and I don't want your fucking scientific study of her out there either. You don't care about her. You don't get to have that.

GRACE

I do care about her! I fucking *promise* you that I care about her. No excuses. It's *awful* that I missed, and I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, but I do care about her and I have to earn her trust back. And yours.

ALIYAH

The form you had me sign said I could revoke my consent. I revoke it.

GRACE

(nervously)

I turned my thesis in, it's... it's already over.

ALIYAH

It said I could revoke my consent.

GRACE

Please, the research doesn't even matter, I need to tell Trinity I'm sorry.

ALIYAH

Do you have the form still? A copy of it?

GRACE

I have a scan, on my laptop.

ALIYAH

You need to send me the scan. Today.

GRACE

For what? It's already been submitted.

ALIYAH

There was a number to call.

GRACE

Aliyah, please, I -

ALIYAH

Send me the scan.

Aliyah opens the door, slips back into the apartment and closes the door quickly in Grace's face.

EXT - NYC STREETS - MOMENTS LATER

Grace sits on a bench outside of Trinity's rundown apartment building, rocking back and forth and sobbing. She pulls her phone out, fumbling with it, and calls Camille.

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Hello?

GRACE

(through tears)

I messed everything up. I messed up so bad. I don't know what to do.

CAMILLE

(panicked)

What's wrong? What happened?

GRACE

I missed Trinity's recital and her mom won't let me be in her life anymore and she wants to revoke the study. She's gonna call the IRB and they're gonna make me document their withdrawal and I'm not going to get into B.C. anymore. And Trinity's always going to hate me and not know how sorry I am.

CAMILLE

Oh, Grace...

GRACE

What do I do? Oh, God. Please tell me what to do.

CAMILLE

I... okay. I'm thinking. Let me think.

Grace sniffles, trying to breathe.

CAMILLE

It's a loss for everyone if you can't publish. Including for Trinity's mom. It should be published.

GRACE

Did you read it?

CAMILLE

Of course I read it. It... I thought it was very impactful.

GRACE

Thank you.

CAMILLE

Has Trinity's mom read it?

GRACE

No, I didn't want to bother her with it. She doesn't like me, even before I missed.

CAMILLE

(after a pause)

I think you need to give it to her. Your closing statements, at least. What it all boiled down to. She doesn't have to like you, but maybe she'll want that out there. She earned it.

GRACE

She might not care, though. I don't know.

CAMILLE

I do. I really think so. Give it to her.

INT - NYU LIBRARY - EVENING

Grace stands at the printer, holding a yellow envelope and a handwritten apology letter. She pulls two documents out of the printer: a copy of the IRB form, and the conclusion page of her thesis. She opens a pink highlighter and highlights the "Complaints and Withdrawals" phone number on the IRB form. She then places all three pieces of paper in the envelope, seals it, and walks towards the exit.

INT - TRINITY'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - EVENING

Grace places the yellow envelope in the wall mailbox next to the apartment door. She lifts her hand to knock, then stops herself, and walks back to the staircase.

INT - ARJUN'S FAMILY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Grace sits next to Arjun's Pati on the couch in the living room. The rest of the family sits on the floor around the coffee table, playing cards. Grace holds Pati's hand, and fiddles with the intricate beaded bracelet on her wrist. She looks up at Pati.

GRACE

You make me miss my grandmother.

Pati pats Graces hand.

PATI

When did she die?

GRACE

Oh, no, no she's not... she's still alive. She just doesn't live with me anymore.

Pati smiles.

PATI

Oh, good!

Grace stops to think about this, nodding slowly.

Dissolve to:

INT - GRACE'S APARTMENT LOBBY

Grace walks to the mailboxes, opening her box with a key. She is surprised to see several envelopes. First, she recognizes the yellow envelope she put in Trinity's mailbox. She opens it; the apology letter and the thesis sheet are gone, but the IRB form is folded inside, the pink highlighted phone number still intact. She then pulls a cardstock card out of the envelope: it's an invitation to Trinity's 9th birthday party.

Grace smiles, and clutches the card to her chest. She slides the yellow envelope to the bottom of the pile, revealing a utility bill. She slides this envelope under the pile to see the next envelope -- from Boston College.

She takes a deep breath, then tears open the envelope. She quickly sees that she has been accepted. Her mouth opens slightly in disbelief. She leans back against the mailboxes, processing.

After a moment, she stacks the invitation to Trinity's birthday party on top of the pile, smiling widely.

INT - ARJUN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The next morning, Arjun and Grace lay in Arjun's bed, Arjun reading, Grace fiddling with her phone but not on it.

GRACE

I think I'm gonna go home today.  
To my parents, I mean.

ARJUN

Yeah? What for?

Grace sits up because what she's going to say feels important.

GRACE

Just.. because. You know?

Arjun nods.

ARJUN  
Yeah. I do.

GRACE  
It's nice for it to be an option.

ARJUN  
I think so too.

EXT - NY STREETS - MORNING

Grace is walking to the train station. The streets are busy. She passes by a touristy t-shirt stand and slows her pace, then turns around and walks back. There are purple NYU shirts hanging. She holds the bottom of one, stares for a moment.

EXT - BUS STOP - EARLY AFTERNOON

Grace, holding a tote bag, climbs off the bus and scans the parking lot for her parents' car. When she spots it, she runs to get in. She and her family exchange hugs and hellos.

CAMILLE  
How was it getting here?

GRACE  
Easy. No complaints.

CAMILLE  
That's good.

LENA  
I missed you. I hope you're ready for some Pinochle.

Grace hugs Lena again.

GRACE  
I missed you a lot.

Everyone is contented. Mark turns up the radio slightly.

GRACE  
I have a surprise for you guys.

CAMILLE  
Another? Big day.

Grace pulls out three of the purple NYU shirts from her bag and holds one up for them. They're confused.

CAMILLE  
We have NYU shirts, honey. We  
got them at your orientation.

GRACE  
I wanted you guys to have new  
ones. For grad school.

CAMILLE  
What?

GRACE  
For grad school. I'm gonna stay.

Camille is shocked.

CAMILLE  
I... really? I didn't realize  
you were even considering that.  
What about Boston?

GRACE  
Boston is just a worse version  
of New York.

CAMILLE  
I'm not gonna argue with you  
there.

GRACE  
And... I also don't wanna be  
four hours away from home.

Camille doesn't turn around to look at Grace, but closes  
her eyes and smiles as if she's just won the lottery.

CAMILLE  
Yeah. Yeah, it's far.

MARK  
Go Bobcats!

LENA  
I told you you didn't need 'em.

GRACE  
You might know a few things  
after all.

Grace leans back against the seat, looks out the window at  
her town and then back at her family.

Credits.