

LA LA LAND
by
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Music:

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IRIS FADE IN...

A dark blue sky. A sliver of moon, a swaying palm tree.

Music plays -- lush, sweeping. [TRACK 1: OVERTURE]

Night slowly becomes day -- until we're looking at the same swaying palm tree and a CLOUDLESS MORNING SKY. And now we pan down...

...down...

...until we land on...

EXT. 101 FREEWAY - DAY

...a horrific traffic jam on the 101.

Sun beating down, asphalt shimmering in the heat. A title card:

WINTER

We're close to the gridlock now. Morning rush hour. The blown-out downtown L.A. skyline hovers in the distance.

We DRIFT from car to car. HEAR different people SINGING along to different songs on the radio. Rock segueing to classical, disco to punk.

Finally we settle on one car...

It's one of the most battered in sight. A 1996 Geo Prism. In it is SEBASTIAN, 28, wearing a worn T-shirt and playing Thelonious Monk on his ratty music system. His fingers race across the steering wheel, mimicking Monk's playing. He hums.

SEBASTIAN

Ta-tee-ta-tee-tee-tee-taaaa...

We DRIFT from his car to another, a few lanes down...

An old-generation Prius. 2004. Inside is MIA, 27. She's dolled up in mascara, hair puffed up. An old interview is playing. An actress discussing her craft.

Mia listens intently, soaks up the words. She has a bunch of blank CD's in her side compartment, each labeled: "Gena Rowlands"; "Faye Dunaway"; "Julie Christie".

WE RETURN TO SEBASTIAN. Keeps playing along. Closes his eyes.

BACK TO MIA. Equally lost in what she's listening to. And, slowly...

...we DRIFT out to more CARS. Hear one snippet of audio after another. One driver listens to STOCK MARKET NEWS. Another raps along to a HIP-HOP TRACK. A third practices an ARIA. We move from SPORTS RADIO to STRAVINSKY to FUNK, the sounds from all these radios and CDs and iPods melding...

...and finally morphing...

...into a new, original piece of music... **[TRACK 2: TRAFFIC]**

All at once, one DRIVER after another sings to this same piece of music. As though all the radios were tuned to one frequency. The first DRIVER sings about dodging debts while hoping to make it big. The next about waiting tables between auditions. These are struggling dreamers, eyes on the prize...

A few DRIVERS exit their cars in the standstill. Then a few more. And more... They leap on the car-tops, dancing Jerome Robbins-style, making use of the road and the hot gleam of the automobiles. We're watching a full-fledged musical number. Arms swaying, feet banging, dancers darting, as the MUSIC blasts...

Finally -- the music simmers down. Drivers start returning to their wheels. The traffic lets up, car honks overwhelm the melody, the whirring of engines rises up in volume...

...and we're back to Sebastian and Mia.

He's once again mimicking Monk. She's listening to her interview.

The cars stagger forward. Sebastian's car almost BUMPS into Mia's as he changes lanes. He and she see each other for a second -- before their cars head their separate ways.

With that -- we follow Mia...

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Mia's Prius reaches a studio lot. She enters the PASS gate. Parks. Gets out. Passes the fixtures of the old studio: white-washed 1920's buildings, fake backdrops. Parts of this place haven't changed since the silent era.

She comes to a stop. Gazes around. Takes in the names on the buildings: "Katharine Hepburn." "Rita Hayworth." "Vivien Leigh."

MANAGER (O.S.)

Mia!

Mia turns. And hurries inside the studio's COFFEE SHOP.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mia works. Bright-eyed, a ball of positive energy -- but--

CUSTOMER
This doesn't taste like soy milk.

MIA
Oh. Uh... It is...

CUSTOMER
Can I see the carton?

Mia hands it over. The Customer looks.

CUSTOMER (CONT'D)
I'll just have a black coffee.

Mia nods, gets the coffee, hands it with a smile. Then quickly sneaks a look at a SCRIPT hidden underneath her counter. A few pages, lines highlighted in yellow...

Just then -- a WOMAN walks into the shop. 30 years old, strikingly beautiful -- and all eyes turn immediately to her.

The Manager, the other BARISTAS, the other CUSTOMERS -- all of them can't help but stare. We see one CUSTOMER whisper to another, discreetly pointing as the WOMAN passes by...

WOMAN
Cappuccino, please.

Mia nods. Gets it made pronto. The Manager takes it from her.

MANAGER
On us.

WOMAN
No, I insist.

She pays. Then smiles at Mia and drops a bill in the tip jar. Mia watches as the Woman walks off. Other eyes follow her as well. The Woman slips into one of the studio buildings...

Then -- Mia's phone rings. It reads: "MOM". She presses "IGNORE" and the time pops up on the phone's screen: 4:43.

MIA
Shit.

CUSTOMER #2
Excuse me. Are these pastries gluten-free?

Mia looks at a fellow BARISTA to answer, removes her apron, hurrying out as she tells her Manager--

MIA
I'll make up the time tomorrow...

--then realizes she doesn't have her script, runs back to grab it, hurries on and then -- CRASHES into a table. Coffee spills all over her shirt. The MANAGER glares at her.

MIA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry--

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

Mia runs, shirt stained with coffee. Jumps into her car. Eyes a COAT on her passenger seat.

INT. AUDITION ROOM - DAY

Mia's in that coat, zipped up, looking odd indoors. On her cell--

MIA (CONT'D)

(laughing, big smile on her face)

And I swear to God, she was wrecked. Pure lunacy. Oh God, I know...

(seems to be listening, then,)

No, no, Turner's fine. So you -- are you waiting 'til Denver to tell her...?

(as her smile contracts)

Oh. I see...

(silence; she clenches her jaw...)

No, you're right. I understand.

(...and a tear falls from her eye)

Ok... Ok, I'll talk to you later...

Trying to play it off, she hangs up. Her eyes crumple into a new round of tears. But she restrains herself.

We PULL BACK...to see that Mia's auditioning for a CASTING DIRECTOR and ASSISTANT. And it's clear to us -- there's something about her, a glow in her face. She's good.

ASSISTANT

Great. Could you try it again but--

(the CASTING DIRECTOR whispers in her ear; then, to Mia,)

Never mind. Thanks for coming in.

Beat. Mia manages a smile.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Mia exits. Passes one startlingly beautiful woman after the next. Enters the elevator with two other WOMEN -- rail-thin, legs up to their ribs. Mia looks nothing like them.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Mia enters. Exhausted. Heads to her ROOM...

It's one of those tiny walled-off dens not part of the original design, used to siphon off rent. An Ingrid Bergman poster hangs over the bed. Mia takes off her shoes. A blister on her sole...

WE CUT TO: Mia in the BATHROOM. Just showered, is dressing. The mirror is fogged up. She dabs away some of the fog. Dims the lights. Looks. With the fog in place, her reflection looks like one of those soft-focus old Hollywood close-ups. She smiles...

VOICE (O.S.)

(knocking)

Open up! We're leaving in five.

Mia snaps out of it. Opens. Fog pours out all around TRACY, 26.

TRACY

(mock coughing)

I can't breathe.

MIA

I wanted to give you an entrance.

Tracy laughs, slips in -- as ALEXIS, 27, appears in the hall. Behind her, CAITLIN, 26, already dressed and ready.

ALEXIS

Mia! How'd it go?

MIA

Eh. Who knows...

ALEXIS

I'm sure you were great. Trust me, once it rains, it'll pour.

(knocks on bathroom door)

Tracy, I need to get in.

CAITLIN

You run into Jen?

MIA

(putting on earrings)

Yeah, in the waiting room.

CAITLIN

Seriously? She's everywhere.

ALEXIS

Not a fan?

CAITLIN

No, I love her. I just want her to fail.

Mia laughs. Alexis knocks again, words flying back and forth--

ALEXIS

Trace!

(then, to Mia)

Gavin's coming. I'm making this happen.

MIA

No, thanks.

ALEXIS

He's great.

MIA

He's an actor.

ALEXIS

So are you.

MIA

Exactly.

CAITLIN

(still in her thoughts)

I swear I'll kill her if she gets the Robitussin commercial.

(off Mia's look)

What? It's national.

Tracy finally opens -- ready for the town. Alexis ducks in--

TRACY

What about Ben? For Mia.

MIA

Guys, really -- I'm fine.

ALEXIS (O.S.)

Ten months is not fine!

TRACY

Give him a shot. He'll be there tonight.

CAITLIN

Is Jen coming?

TRACY

Nope. She just called me.

CAITLIN

Thank God.

TRACY

She has to fly to New York for some cough syrup commercial.

Caitlin goes silent. Alexis pops out of the bathroom, made-up--

ALEXIS

Ok -- ready! Let's go!

--and breaks into SONG. [TRACK 3: ROOMMATES]

Alexis leads. The others TRADE lines, hurrying through the apartment and SINGING about painting the town red. The music here is different from the overture or traffic number -- brasher in feel. The music swells, they're out the door, and WE CUT TO...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

...all four strutting down the street. Except their heels are so high and uncomfortable they can barely make it. Their pained, staggered movements timed to the music, as WE CUT TO...

EXT. PARTY - NIGHT

...the party itself, at a hilltop pad. Here the number explodes. Scantily-clad WOMEN dancing. A D.J. picking up the melody. Bob Fosse movements around the pool, champagne glass-clinks inside...

Then, for just a moment, the music QUIETS DOWN -- as Mia retreats into a BATHROOM... She gazes into the mirror, and gets a few VERSES of her own, away from the others' eyes and ears. These, sung in private, belong to a different style: less brash, and far less jovial. Once done, she opens the door, rejoins the party...

...and her expression changes once again, fitting right back in.

It's the big-bang finish now, everyone joining in -- Mia, her roommates, all the partygoers. We see everyone at the party now -- a cross-section of L.A.: MUSICIANS, JOURNALISTS, DESIGNERS and PAINTERS, suit-clad AGENTS who look out of place but don't know it, a tattooed young ROCKER next to a seventy-year-old BOB EVANS TYPE, struggling ASSISTANTS happy to have sneaked invites, old Hollywood, new Hollywood... Everyone dances, everyone sings.

The song concludes with a blast of fireworks. APPLAUSE follows.

WE CUT RIGHT TO: A bit later. Mia and Alexis chat by the pool.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

He's looking at you.

MIA

No, he's not.

ALEXIS

He definitely is.

A handsome GUY comes behind Alexis, wraps his arms around her.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Ah!

The guy -- WILL, her boyfriend -- turns and kisses her "hello".

MIA

Hey Will.

WILL

Hey Mia.

Will turns back to Alexis. They keep kissing, start whispering sweet nothings to one another. Mia is left alone.

Not sure where to go or whom to speak to, she heads to the bar...

MIA

Champagne, please.

At the other end of the bar is a YOUNG MAN -- the one Alexis was talking about. Mia sees him. He's looking at her.

LATER: The young man -- GAVIN -- and Mia are talking.

MIA (CONT'D)

Must be great.

GAVIN

I don't know... Ever screwed up at work?

(Mia nods)

Well, six million people saw my screw-up.

MIA

(a beat)

What, you forgot to wait for the laugh track?

Gavin looks at her.

GAVIN

Ok, you're right, that was douchey.

(then,)

It was probably only five million.

They share a laugh.

INT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia and Gavin make out. Tumble into his bed.

LATER: Gavin is asleep. Mia, cold, spots Gavin's button-down shirt. Slides it on.

She glances at her reflection in a stand-up mirror. Takes a step back, toward the bed, slides in -- when Gavin awakes.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Oh.

MIA

Hey...

He blinks. Looks around. Seems confused. Closes his eyes again.

GAVIN

I gotta get up super early.

MIA

Oh. Well I--

But he's already snoring. Mia, halfway in the bed, gets the hint.

INT. HALLWAY / GAVIN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Minutes later. The door opens. Mia steps out, in her own clothes. Quietly lets the door shut behind her. Reaches into her PURSE -- and can't find what she's looking for. Her lips mouth: "*Shit...*"

She tries the door. It's locked. RINGS THE BELL. No answer. She pulls out her phone...

CUT TO: A cell ringing on a bedside table. Next to it, a set of CAR KEYS. Gavin doesn't wake. Just keeps snoring. Then...

BACK TO: Mia, in the hall, BANGING on the door now. She stops. Still nothing. Defeated, she heads for the stairs...

EXT. GAVIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

She exits. It's about 1:30am. She stands on the street, in her skirt and heels, cleavage exposed. No cabs. She starts walking...

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - NIGHT

Mia is an hour-and-a-half walk from her place. Makeup smeared, hair mussed, she crosses roads and lots, navigates stretches of Fairfax where the sidewalk stops and gives way to shrubbery. A "walk of shame" -- L.A.-style...

We see the city at night, stretched out, no other pedestrians in sight. Mia trudges on, tired and out of sorts...

And then she hears something... Music. A piano, in the distance.

Without being sure why, SHE FOLLOWS THE SOUND. Passes several doors. Then stops. Has found where it's coming from...

She reaches out -- and slowly opens a door...

AND WE CUT RIGHT BACK TO:

EXT. 101 FREEWAY - EARLIER THAT MORNING

The same 101 traffic jam we began the movie with. This time, we're on Sebastian.

As we saw before, he nearly bumps into Mia's car. Turns, then cuts out of traffic. Merges onto a more free-flowing freeway...

INT. RAYO'S - DAY

Sebastian enters a little breakfast spot. The EMPLOYEE gives him a familiar nod and hands him a coffee.

EXT. RAYO'S - MOMENTS LATER

Sebastian sits and gazes across the street -- at a small building with a 30's Deco façade. Sebastian looks at it as he drinks his coffee. Words etched above the door: VAN BEEK STUDIO.

Seconds later, a car pulls over. Two MUSICIANS hop out, carrying amps, and enter the building. Sebastian watches them. Catches a glimpse as the building's door opens -- and then shuts...

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sebastian enters his one-bedroom apartment in the Valley. Has to jostle the door handle to open it, then jostle it again to lock it. Moseys over to a record player, pops on a Monk LP.

We look around. An old Steinway grand piano, posters on the wall: Coltrane, Armstrong, a photo of Wilshire Boulevard in the 50's. Sebastian glances inside his fridge, pulls out a carton of chicken-and-rice with a handwritten note on it: "EAT". Sits at his piano. Plays one key, then another. Slow, careful...

Then he launches into a 100%-perfect rendition of Monk's solo, playing along to the record with virtuoso precision.

He reaches one passage. Stops. Gets up, moves the record back a few bars, starts it again. Sits back down, and plays the same passage over. Dissatisfied, he stops again. Moves the record back a second time, replays the same passage. This time he gets it right.

No one else could tell the difference. But to him, it's crucial.

INT. FLORA MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A SURGING ORCHESTRAL SCORE. Sebastian is seated in an old, dilapidated movie theater, watching *Rebel Without a Cause*. He's overwhelmed -- this is a religious experience for him. We see the screen light up with the sight of Griffith Park...

But then Sebastian notices something. Waits. Then leans over--

SEBASTIAN

Hey. Mind turning your phone off?

A MAN two rows up is texting. He doesn't answer. Keeps texting.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Important conversation, huh?

Still no answer. Sebastian calmly rises to his feet, takes the phone out of the Man's hand and throws it across the theater.

MAN

What the fu--?

Sebastian sits back down in his seat as though nothing had happened.

CUT TO: Sebastian is still in his seat, watching. Behind him, we see the Man enter and point. An EMPLOYEE is at the Man's side.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Sebastian exits, the Employee behind him. A beat.

EMPLOYEE

Dude. Come on.

SEBASTIAN

I know...

EMPLOYEE

See you next week?

A moment. Sebastian smiles, nods.

The Employee heads inside. Sebastian looks around. Walks to his car.

As he drives off, we glimpse fireworks in the sky...

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A Dan Tana's-knockoff bar-and-restaurant. Sebastian steps in and--

BOSS

Please stick to the set list tonight.

SEBASTIAN

These people couldn't tell the difference between "White Christmas" and free jazz.

BOSS

Well I can, so stick to the former. Please.

Sebastian heads to the piano. Looks at the crowd. All old-timers. Starts playing "White Christmas". No one pays attention.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Time has passed. The restaurant's demographic has changed: it's now younger stragglers who've wandered in from nearby parties.

Sebastian looks beyond bored. He finishes a version of "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town". Zero applause.

He begins a new chart: "Let It Snow!" But something seems to come over him. He's restless. Slowly, his playing drifts off -- his fingers charting a melody of their own...

We've heard these notes before...

Then, the door opens and a new straggler steps in.

It's Mia.

This is the music she heard. She sees Sebastian at the piano. Is immediately struck by him and his playing. He doesn't see her...

Mia stands still, watches as Sebastian plays a new melody, a melody that will prove crucial to our movie -- we'll refer to it from now on as Mia and Sebastian's song... [TRACK 4: MEET-CUTE]

It's beautiful -- and Mia is spellbound. No one else here cares.

Suddenly -- all sounds but the music drop out. We're drifting away from reality... *The clutter of patrons chatting, fingers pounding Blackberries, plates and glasses scraping and chairs scuffing -- all give way to a single sound: Sebastian's piano, his playing tender and pure, the notes full of longing and romance...*

Soon, even the walls seem to go slightly darker, as though Sebastian were alone. This is Sebastian as Mia sees him -- and as he would like to see himself... His dream visualized: just him and an old Steinway grand, his thoughts lost in the music -- simple and unadorned...

Sebastian concludes his piece with a jumble of chords, his playing almost free jazz now, as we pull back to reality...

...and see his Boss looking on in scorn.

Sebastian finishes. Silence. Mia looks like the wind has been knocked out of her. The Boss walks up to Sebastian, whispers.

We STAY ON Mia as she watches Sebastian rise with the Boss. We just see the Boss talking to Sebastian, can't hear what is said.

Then, we get closer, -- and realize:

BOSS (CONT'D)
 (keeping his voice down)
 ...every goddamned night -- I'm making a
 change.

Sebastian is silent. But before the Boss can leave, doesn't
 want to have to beg but needs this job--

SEBASTIAN BOSS
 I'll stick to the set list-- Too late.

SEBASTIAN
 I'm the best pianist you can get. You know
 that.

BOSS
 No, I don't know that -- and I got a nice
 kid who's been begging me for this spot.

SEBASTIAN
 He's nice? Can he play?

BOSS
 (a beat, and then, leaning in--)
 Do you think anyone here gives a shit?

With that, the Boss walks off. We linger on Sebastian. Anger
 giving way...to *fear*.

Back to Mia, who didn't hear what was said. As Sebastian
 approaches, wounded, she summons up her courage, her heart in
 her throat, and--

MIA
 Excuse me -- I -- I just have to say:
 that was incredible. I was just -- I
 don't even know how to describe th-- I
 mean, I'm not a music expert so I don't --
 but, your playing, I thought it was just,
 just magical, I just felt, I felt so
 transported and -- I know I probably
 sound weird or something, but -- but --
 ok I'm going to stop talking, but I just
 wanted to tell you how I felt, and I just
 think you were great, and -- yeah...

A moment.

Sebastian looks Mia up and down. Smeared makeup. Cleavage. *L.A.*

SEBASTIAN
 (under his breath)
 Fuck off.

He heads out the door. Slams it shut. Mia is left standing alone.
 She looks like she's just been slapped.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

SPRING

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

The same swaying palm tree from the opening image of our movie.
 The same cloudless sky.

And, as before, we pan down -- to a horrific 101 traffic jam.
 Stuck in it, we spot Mia's PRIUS. Mia inside, reciting lines...

INT. AUDITION ROOMS - DAY

Mia auditions. Pilot season cattle-call -- a series of soul-crushing try-outs. She's pandering to the hilt. Quick glimpses:

MIA
 I don't like the fissure on the GT scan.
 Did you test for achromatopsia?

Then, a second audition--

MIA (CONT'D)
 D.O.A. on 23rd, perp laughing his face off
 at P.D. Damn Miranda Rights.

And finally, a third audition--

MIA (CONT'D)
 This is my classroom. You don't like it,
 the door's to my left.

READER (O.S.)
 (a well-dressed forty-year-old
 WOMAN reading from sides)
 Lady why you be trippin' like that?

MIA
 No, Jamal. You be trippin'.

Beat. Mia looks at the blank-faced AUDITORS. Manages a smile.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sebastian enters his building. Goes to his door. Opens up --
 -- and sees a WOMAN rummaging around his fridge.

SEBASTIAN

You've got to stop breaking into my home.

She looks up. She's 37 quickly going on 50, and dressed like she doesn't care. This is LAURA, Sebastian's older sister.

LAURA

You call this a home?

(holding up a container of food)

I left this two weeks ago. You still haven't touched it?

He shrugs. She rises. Plants a kiss on his cheek. Looks at him.

LAURA (CONT'D)

My God, Seb, you are skeletal.

SEBASTIAN

Helps my fingers stretch across the keys.

LAURA

Uh-huh.

Sebastian grabs two mugs, and--

SEBASTIAN

Coffee?

LAURA

No thanks, I gotta get back to work.

SEBASTIAN

Getting out at all?

LAURA

(jokingly)

Oh, you know me, I'm in the middle of deb season. Now this strange pink thing is called salmon, it's a fish, you zap it for a minute--

SEBASTIAN

There's this bassist I met -- good guy, recently divorced--

LAURA

Not happening.

SEBASTIAN

Seriously? You are allowed to try.

LAURA

Believe it or not I've got a date tonight.

(MORE)

LAURA (CONT'D)
 (he looks at her: *What?*)
 Yeah. Blind date. Shoot me.

SEBASTIAN
 Really?

LAURA
 Favor to a friend. Shoot her too. You're
 all set for Saturday, right?

SEBASTIAN
 Oh -- damn, it's such a shame -- I just
 realized I have a doctor's appointment at--

LAURA
 Right. They want you there at 3 for sound.

SEBASTIAN
 No, no, no. Listen--

LAURA
 You gotta pay rent. Mom and Dad would've said
 the same. Unless you'd rather bartend.

SEBASTIAN
 Oh God...

LAURA
 Well then.

SEBASTIAN
 You didn't meet these people, Laura--

LAURA	SEBASTIAN
Seb--	It's Sebastian.

Beat. They look at each other. She brushes his hair back.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
 You don't need to keep doing this.

LAURA
 Neither do you.

Another beat. Laura heads for the door. As she steps out--

LAURA (CONT'D)
 Love you. Eat your food.

SEBASTIAN
 Love you. I'm changing the locks.

LAURA
(with a smile--)
You can't afford it!

The door shuts. Sebastian stands still for a second. Then goes to the fridge and takes out the grilled salmon Laura brought. Grabs a fork and starts to eat it cold.

EXT. PARTY - DAY

Mia wanders around another party. A BAD 80's COVER BAND plays. Caitlin is eyeing a young woman -- JEN, holding court a few yards off, surrounded by people smiling and laughing at her every word.

CAITLIN
One commercial and she thinks she's Meryl Streep. It wasn't even a beauty product.
(looks at Mia)
I need a drink. Want one?

MIA
Oh -- no, I'm good. Thanks...

Caitlin heads off. Mia continues on, as the music gets louder, more obnoxious. She moves toward the band to get a look...

And then sees him.

Sebastian.

Playing the keys for the band. Dressed up like his bandmates in a bright polyester outfit. And hating every second.

He sees Mia, staring at him in shock. Recognizes the face, but can't quite place it... Then remembers.

Mia can't help but CRACK UP at the sight. *Look at him now.* She then promptly walks off.

ON SEBASTIAN: He's seen her laughter...

EXT. PARTY / INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A set break. Piqued, embarrassed, Sebastian hurries from the keyboard, enters the house, then finally spots Mia and--

SEBASTIAN
What? What's so funny?

She turns around. Shoots him a vindictive smile.

MIA
Nothing. You'd better get back, I think someone requested "Lady in Red".

SEBASTIAN

Uh-huh. At least I'm getting paid to be here.

(beat; looks her outfit up and down)

Actually maybe you are too.

MIA

You know, I have a friend who's looking for a wedding band.

SEBASTIAN

Really? I have a friend who's throwing a bachelor party.

Mia looks at him. Incensed. Starts just walking away, *who needs this?* -- but Sebastian won't let it go:

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

You're an actress, right?

MIA

Blow me.

SEBASTIAN

You must be confused -- I'm not a casting director.

Mia turns, stares at him. Wants to rip his head off now.

MIA

I know you think you're God's gift to music, but something tells me Rachmaninoff never subbed in for Flock of Seagulls.

Sebastian is momentarily at a loss for words -- and even a little surprised. Wasn't expecting such a thorough put-down.

Mia glares at him, satisfied with herself. Sebastian knows he needs to deliver a stinging comeback, searching for the right one--

SEBASTIAN

Well -- the only--

--when a GUY swipes by and PUSHES Mia, loudly chatting with a friend. Instinctively, Sebastian SHOVES the Guy and--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Are you kidding me?

The Guy spins around -- to find Sebastian staring him down.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

(challenging)

What?

A moment. Finally, the Guy slinks off.

Mia looks at Sebastian. Completely surprised. Sebastian catches her look. And just then, suddenly appearing--

BAND-MATE

Second set.

A moment. Sebastian looks at Mia. Mia looks at Sebastian.

Then -- Sebastian returns to the keys, as the band resumes.

BAND'S SINGER

I walked along the avenue...

EXT. PARTY / STREET - NIGHT

The party's over. There's a long line to the VALET. It's taking forever. Sebastian heads straight for the box of keys--

VALET (CONT'D)

Woah, excuse me--

SEBASTIAN

It's ok...

--and starts searching for his keys. Standing way back in line, Mia sees him do this. Mulls it over for a second, sick of being stuck in line, then finally--

MIA

Grab mine, too?

SEBASTIAN

(turns, sees her; beat)

Which one...?

MIA

The Prius.

Sebastian looks at the box. All the keys are Prius keys.

MIA (CONT'D)

The one with the green ribbon.

Beat. Sebastian grabs it. He and Mia walk off.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They trudge up an impossibly steep hill, lined with cars... Mia aims her key fob. Beep -- but no, not her car. Sebastian aims his own keys, also aiming for a beep. Silence. They walk on awkwardly. Noticing the pain Mia seems to be in in her heels--

SEBASTIAN

Those look comfortable.

MIA
(defiant)
They are.
(then almost trips, stubs her toe)
Shit.

She stops. Annoyed. Takes off her shoes. Aims her car fob again.
Sebastian does the same. No beeps.

MIA (CONT'D)
You know you're a dick, right?

Sebastian considers this for a beat. Then shrugs.

SEBASTIAN
So I've been told.

Mia looks at him. Slightly surprised.

They walk for a few more seconds -- then reach the crest of the hill. As though out of the blue, THE CITY SKYLINE APPEARS BELOW THEM. A ribbon of lights, stretching out as far as you can see. It's stunning.

Mia and Sebastian are silent for a moment. Look at each other. Then, shaking his head as he walks on--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I don't know. This city has its moments...
But it makes me defensive.

MIA
Then why do you live here? Shouldn't you be
in Greenwich Village wearing a trench coat?

SEBASTIAN
I was born here.

MIA
So?

SEBASTIAN
So. New York's been done. Everyone goes
there. I want to be L.A.'s Thelonious Monk.

Mia nods off that last line. "Monk". Figures.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
(off her look)
What?

MIA
Nothing. Just -- why don't you sell tapes
while you're at it?

SEBASTIAN
Well we can't all sell lattes.

MIA
We call it barristing, actually.

SEBASTIAN
(was I right?)
Let me guess. Starbucks?

MIA
Nope. Warner Brothers.

SEBASTIAN
Warner Brothers?

MIA
Coffee Bean. But it's on the lot.

SEBASTIAN
That's what I'm talking about. Nothing's
sacred anymore. Would they put a Starbucks
across from the Notre Dame?

MIA
...Not really the same thing.

SEBASTIAN
Why not? It's L.A.'s history. No one even
remembers where they shot *Citizen Kane*.

MIA
Waring and Gower.

Sebastian turns and looks at her. Impressed, but hiding it--

SEBASTIAN
You get my point.

Mia gives him a bemused smile.

MIA
Yeah, I do. You're a dinosaur.

Sebastian looks at her. Part of him can't help but be charmed.

He's about to respond, when -- Mia is hit by a lawn's water-spray.

MIA (CONT'D)
Ah!

Taken aback, she lifts up her shirt to squeeze out the spot
where the spray hit.

A sliver of her stomach is visible for a second. Sebastian notices. Mia sees him looking. He sees that she sees. A beat.

They resume walking. Slower now, their moves tentative... The city lights still sparkling below...

Sebastian opens his mouth, about to say something -- then stops himself.

And then, softly, gently, he says it...

...in SONG. [TRACK 5: DUET]

Speak-singing at first, countering Mia, poking fun at her "type" and the L.A. she seems to represent...

Mia, energized, responds in kind. Pokes holes at Sebastian's pretension... Bit by bit, these two have worked their way into a playfully combative MUSICAL NUMBER...

The solo verses give way to a duet, with Mia and Sebastian countering each other's lyrics. They're still moving up the hill, and soon singing gives way to dancing...

Sebastian moves back down a bit, Mia follows suit. He soft-shoe-taps one pattern with his feet, as though defying her to match it, still prickly. She does, then soft-shoes out her own pattern, which he responds to in turn...

They start finishing each other's patterns, their uneasy walk dissolving into a Fred-and-Ginger-style dance. They work their way up and down the slanted stage that is the street, etched against the lights -- and we realize that...

...these two can really dance together...

The music BUILDS, affection poking its head out -- and with it, real JOY... The dance growing more and more involved, Mia and Sebastian getting CLOSER and CLOSER, until...

...a sound cuts through. It's a CELL PHONE ring.

The dancing stops. The phone rings again. It's Mia's. She looks at the name. Answers. Sebastian sees the screen: "GREG".

MIA (CONT'D)

Hey... Just leaving the party now... K,
see you soon...

She hangs up. Looks at Sebastian. An awkward silence...

Finally -- she presses her fob again. More hastily than before. A BEEP can be heard. They see her Prius.

MIA (CONT'D)

Ah. Great... Well... Do you -- do you want a ride to your car?

SEBASTIAN

Oh, no, that's fine... Thanks...

MIA

...Ok...

Not sure what else to say, she heads to her vehicle. Gets in. Waves.

MIA (CONT'D)

Night.

Sebastian waves back. Mia pulls out, drives off. Fast. Silence...

Sebastian walks on for a bit...then retreats back down the hill. Knows exactly where he's going. Comes to a stop across from the party, and we see his beat-up Geo Prism right there -- right, it seems, where he knew it to be.

He pulls out his keys -- they don't have a clicker after all.

INT. GREG'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia enters. GREG, 31, Ph.D. student and T.A. at UCLA, warm and friendly, is grading papers on the couch. As Mia approaches--

GREG

Hey, babe... How was the audition?

MIA

It was...it was ok.

GREG

How 'bout the party?

MIA

...Same old.

They kiss. He looks down at his papers.

GREG

I'm convinced not a thing I say registers with these kids. Tomorrow I'm going to sub in Dr. Phil for Hegel's dialectic and see if they notice.

(as Mia smiles)

You staying over tonight?

Beat. Mia hesitates. Finally...

MIA

...Sure.

But her thoughts are elsewhere.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The next day. Mia is at work, preparing a latte when...

SEBASTIAN

Hey.

Mia looks shocked. Off her look--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Figured I'd try it if I'm gonna knock it.

MIA

How'd you get on the lot?

SEBASTIAN

They know me here.

Mia looks at him. Laughs.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I worked it out.

She hands him a coffee.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Thanks...

An awkward lull. Sebastian hesitates. Then--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Do you have a break coming up?

Mia considers. Nonchalant--

MIA

I'm off in ten.

Sebastian nods. Smiles. Mia turns away, fixing her apron -- and now we catch, hidden from Sebastian's sight, her own smile...

EXT. COFFEE SHOP / STUDIO LOT - DAY

Mia exits, apron off. She and Sebastian start walking. Mia points to the 40's building they're passing.

MIA (CONT'D)

Isn't it beautiful?

(Sebastian nods)

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)
This whole block was built for Bette
Davis...

MOMENTS LATER: Mia and Sebastian reach the lot's New York street.
Amble down the raised sidewalk...

SEBASTIAN
So how long have...have you and...

MIA
Greg...? Uh -- a little over a month...

She hesitates.

MIA (CONT'D)
He's a good guy. He's doing his Ph.D. at
UCLA.

Sebastian nods. A moment.

They hear SINGING. A SIX-YEAR-OLD GIRL walks by with her PARENTS.

GIRL
...gone forever, Clementine...!

The PARENTS, delighted, clap. Sebastian shrugs. Mia looks.

MIA
What?

SEBASTIAN
Just...she's...a bit off-key. But it's
fine.
(he notices Mia's look: she's
aghast)
I know. I know. You asked.

Mia laughs. Despite herself, she's entertained. They exit the
New York street, pass by a building labeled "LAUREN BACALL"...

MIA
It makes coming to work easier. This place...
(she looks at Sebastian)
I just mean, being around this stuff... I
don't know...

SEBASTIAN
No, I get it. I buy my coffee out of the
way every morning just to catch a glimpse
of a recording studio.
(Mia looks at him again)
Van Beek Studio. Monk recorded there in '46.

MIA

Can I ask you a question? Why Monk...?

They reach the lot's small-town MAIN STREET. Reflecting, slowly--

SEBASTIAN

I don't know... Nobody knew what to do with Monk. He was too choppy, too modal. Yeah, but he made something beautiful.

(then,)

His last recording of "Round Midnight".
It's just piano...

He hums a second of it under his breath. The music in his head...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Hearing that when you're a fourteen-year-old kid... You had no idea the world was that big.

Beat. Mia looks at him.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

That's all I want to do. Make something great. Something of my own. Sure, I'd like to be appreciated -- but there're better ways to get famous. It's just about being a part of that tradition.

(looks at her)

You know?

They reach the end of Main Street, pass by an opened SOUNDSTAGE. A bright red-and-turquoise painted backdrop...

MIA

I remember... This'll sound silly, but...when I was twelve I was in love with this boy named Will...

SEBASTIAN

Love? At twelve?

MIA

Yes. And, I won't go into it, but he broke my heart. And so I'm walking home from school in tears, and I slip into the library across from my house so I can hide out and not have to look at anybody for a few hours. This is Payson, Arizona we're talking about, not a huge collection there, but they've got this section in the back where you can watch movies, so I slide the first one off the return rack. It's *Notorious*.

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)

And Ingrid Bergman -- she -- the look on her face when the guy comes back for her... When she was sure he thought nothing of her, and she realizes how wrong she was... And there's that glow in her eyes...

(beat)

I think my parents would've been happy if I'd just gone to college or something. I'd have been the first in the family. That was stupid of me, wasn't it? I should've gone. I could've. Maybe. Ingrid Bergman didn't...

(another beat)

Five years here and the roles just seem worse and worse. I don't know, I -- I thought I had something big coming...

Silence. Sebastian is unsure what to say now. They pass another opened soundstage, another painted backdrop... Finally--

MIA (CONT'D)

My dad always hoped I'd take over his car dealership...

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, because the world needs more cars.

MIA

Well it doesn't need more actresses.

Sebastian gives her a look. Appreciates that line. They pass a saloon set, left over from some old Western...

SEBASTIAN

Fuck it. Stop compromising.

MIA

What?

SEBASTIAN

Do it your own way. If you don't like the roles out there, write one for yourself.

MIA

I'm not a writer.

SEBASTIAN

Now you're gonna make me cry.

(then,)

Louis Armstrong could have just played the marching-band charts he was given. Instead he made his own music. The rest is history.

Mia takes this in. A moment.

MIA
Can I tell you a secret?
(she leans toward his ear)
I don't love jazz.

Sebastian goes wide-eyed. Comes to an abrupt stop. Then--

SEBASTIAN
Do you need to be anywhere right now?

Mia looks at him. And on that--

INT. LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - DAY

Fingers plucking an upright BASS... Dust catching a CYMBAL...
Hands cradling a SAXOPHONE...

We're in an old-school JAZZ CLUB, Mia and Sebastian seated way
in the back, shrouded in shadow, watching...

He points and whispers to her, as music fills the space,
brimming with romance...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Listen to the bass. Like an old man
slumping down a street. Ba-doom-ba-da-doom.
(the PIANIST on-stage starts)
And now the keys come in... And already
these two guys are talking... It's a
conversation, keys up high, bass down
low... Now the drums, pushing it all
forward... And finally...like an angel...

The SAXOPHONIST starts. "All The Things You Are". It's gorgeous.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Sticking to the melody, then drifting
away... Never just reciting... And now...
(the Saxophonist solos)
You hear it...? It's the same melody, but
a whole new set of notes... It's what the
melody *means* to him... Maybe he lost
someone today -- so he's gonna play
that... Or maybe he fell in love... So he
plays *that*...
(he pauses for a second)
Whatever happened to him today, five
minutes ago, five seconds ago -- *that's*
what he's playing...

He goes silent, as the music grows. Mia is visibly taken. The
Saxophonist takes a step back. The Pianist begins his own solo...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

And the keys player -- now we find out what's going on inside *him*... You see? One after the other, everyone gets their moment... And you put it all together -- each player, each sound -- into one single story. *That's* what it's about...

He's vulnerable. Gone is the pretense, the attitude. He's like a kid, eager to share his passion with the girl by his side...

Mia looks at him. She's moved...

Sebastian turns to her. A current between them. A look in the eyes. A few seconds, as the band swells and plays its final chorus. It's almost as if they're about to kiss...

Then -- the band finishes. Silence. Mia and Sebastian stay still, then turn slightly away, nervous. The moment has passed...

Mia's cell RINGS.

MIA

Hello?...

She strains to hear, but can't. Sees the bathroom.

INT. LADIES' ROOM - LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

MIA (CONT'D)

Hi, sorry... Yes, this is she...

And then -- her eyes go wide. We CUT RIGHT TO:

INT. LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Mia steps out of the bathroom, dazed, the band now in the middle of a new, faster, louder tune. She walks up to Sebastian.

MIA (CONT'D)

(shouting over the music)

I got a call-back!

(before he can say a word)

I know -- that -- that sounds like nothing and it isn't really anything, but at least -- at least it's something and something's better than--

SEBASTIAN

Mia -- stop. It's great.

MIA

Really? You think so...?

SEBASTIAN

Are you kidding? What's it about?

MIA

It's a...a show about...well you'll think it's silly. I teach these...these delinquent kids... High schoolers, and there's this -- this new kid on the block who's always getting into trouble and--

SEBASTIAN

Nice. Sounds like *Rebel Without a Cause*.

MIA

Uh, sure. With commercial breaks.

(then,)

They say it's *Dangerous Minds* meets *The O.C.*

SEBASTIAN

Just throw in a high-speed Chicken Game and you're set.

MIA

Yeah...

Sebastian looks at her. Can tell something.

SEBASTIAN

You've seen *Rebel*, right?

MIA

Well--

SEBASTIAN

No...

MIA

I know. It's just one of those...

SEBASTIAN

You know the Flora? Crenshaw and Adams? They play it every Monday night. Tomorrow I'm playing the first jam session here at 9. Wanna come by and we'll go see *Rebel* together after? Celebrate your call-back?

Mia looks at him. Caught off-guard -- and suddenly giddy at the idea.

Trying to hide her excitement--

MIA

Ok... Why not?

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia stands against the kitchen counter, thoughts on romance. She seems totally out to lunch, can barely hear her name called...

TRACY (O.S.)

Mia...?

Still nothing.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Mia??

(Mia snaps to, turns)

Do you know a safe way to gain a little weight? I'm auditioning for an art movie.

MIA

...I... No... Sorry...

Mia's phone buzzes. She looks down. The name: "GREG". She hesitates, uneasy. Walks past Tracy and Alexis...

ALEXIS

(noticing the worry on Mia's face)

We're getting food later if you want to join us.

MIA

(appreciative)

Oh... Thanks... I -- I'll probably stay in.

...and retreats to her bedroom...

INT. MIA'S "ROOM" - CONTINUOUS

Mia closes her door. Looks at the phone. About to answer it -- then stops herself. Turns her phone off. Beat.

And now, as she quietly gets ready for bed -- letting down her hair, changing into her pajamas -- she drifts into SONG...

Quietly, tenderly, she sings of love. She's conflicted, her memories of the morning and of last night bumping against her own nervousness, against the call from Greg, against the uncertainty of it all. Yet her voice is full of hope, longing, and fragile joy...

This is a daydream of a song, simple and unaffected -- a quiet reverie... [TRACK 6: BALLAD]

As the music resolves, Mia turns off her light...

...and we FADE OUT...

EXT. / INT. AUDITION BUILDING - DAY

A Burbank building. As Mia approaches the door, another cell ring. It's her MOM. This time, Mia is happy to get the call:

MIA (CONT'D)

Hi, Mom!

MOM (O.S.)

Hi, sweetie. How are you?

MIA

Great, actually: I got a call-back on a pilot!

MOM (O.S.)

Oh my God! You're going to be on TV??

MIA

Well -- it's not picked up yet.

MOM (O.S.)

Not picked up?

MIA

First they make the pilot, then if they like the pilot it goes on TV.

MOM (O.S.)

And you're in the pilot?

MIA

Well, no, I have a call-back.

MOM (O.S.)

I see... Didn't you audition for a TV thing last week?

MIA

It's another audition.

MOM (O.S.)

I see... So you might get a role in a thing that might one day be put on TV...

MIA

...Well when you put it like that it sounds like a huge accomplishment.

MOM (O.S.)

No, I don't mean that, it's so exciting. What channel? ABC? NBC?

MIA

Oxygen.

MOM (O.S.)

Oxygen?

MIA

You know what, actually, I have to go. I love you.

She hangs up.

INT. WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mia sits, starts reviewing her script. Looks around her -- the room is filled with ACTRESSES silently MOUTHING THEIR LINES. It's a bizarre sight: a dozen women moving their mouths, with no sounds coming out.

ASSISTANT

Mia Dolan?

INT. AUDITION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mia steps in. The pilot's DIRECTOR is seated at a table, looking in his folder at Mia's head-shot. He looks up at Mia, then looks back at the head-shot. Then back at her.

Silence. The CASTING DIRECTOR nods for Mia to begin.

MIA

Two options. Follow my rules, or follow my rules. Kapish? You want to bully, you'd best be ready to get bullied--

DIRECTOR

Thanks. Perfect.

Mia is taken aback.

MIA

I -- I can do it another way--

DIRECTOR

No, thanks, that was great.

We linger on Mia for a moment, and then--

EXT. PARKING LOT / INT. MIA'S CAR - DAY

Crestfallen, humiliated, Mia hurries to her car.

Sees a voice-mail on her cell. Her hopes suddenly picking back up, she plays it:

MOM (O.S.)
*Your father just helped me find Oxygen on
the guide! So exciting! So will you be
getting health insurance now?*

Hopes promptly dashed, Mia switches her phone off and drives.

Clenches her jaw, tries to keep her spirits up. Glances to the passenger seat -- a program card from the Lighthouse...

Something she can remain upbeat about...

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mia in her room, sorting through her outfits, looking for the perfect dress -- something cooler, more jazz-club-hip than she usually wears. Decides on one she likes, a red one, when--

GREG (O.S.)
Not sure you should wear that to Lucques.

She spins around, startled. Greg is at the doorway. She didn't realize he was here.

GREG (CONT'D)
But we should hurry. My brother landed early.

Mia looks completely confused. Then remembers.

MIA
Right... Got it... I'll -- I'll change...

GREG
He's going to love you, I promise.

Mia closes her door -- and we see her face. She's crushed.

Goes to call Sebastian -- then freezes. Remembers something.

She never got his number...

GREG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(on his phone outside the door)
Josh! Yep, just picking up Mia now. Will
be there in twenty.

We linger on Mia's face...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - NIGHT

Sebastian at the Lighthouse. Jam session is about to start. He stands by the entrance, eyeing the people as they enter.

Waiting for Mia. No sign of her yet...

INT. LUCQUES - NIGHT

Mia, in a green dress, with Greg, his brother JOSH, and Josh's FIANCEE. The restaurant is posh and Josh wears a Brooks Brothers suit: he seems better-off than his brother.

JOSH

That's right -- but now we've got a surround-sound set-up, so it's like--

FIANCEE

It's like being in a movie theater.

JOSH

It's better than going to a theater, really. You know theaters these days --

GREG

Oh, sure--

JOSH

--there're so dirty, and they're either too hot or too cold, and there's always people talking, which is just--

(his phone buzzes)

--just so annoying, I mean you're trying to watch a movie -- one second--

(opens phone)

Hello?...

His Fiancée smiles, looks at Greg and Mia, proud.

FIANCEE

Probably work.

JOSH

Yeah, I'll have to call you back.

(closes and pockets his phone)

So, yeah, we love it.

Awkward silence. Mia hasn't spoken a word.

INT. LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - NIGHT

Sebastian playing piano. Disappointment on his face.

INT. LUCQUES - NIGHT

Some time later. Dessert has just begun.

JOSH (CONT'D)

And, Mia -- you want to be an actress?

(she just nods)

That's cool. Tough field.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Though I guess there's lots of opportunities these days, with the Internet and everything...

GREG

More than that -- it's a new world. I've got two students doing Ph.D.'s on new media. It's fascinating terrain.

JOSH

Yeah, it's a game-changer. In fact, I'd argue we're in the middle of a paradigm shift.

Mia stays quiet, in her own thoughts, the voices fading away.

And then she hears it -- coming from the restaurant speakers, peeking out subtly at first: the melody we now know so well...

Her and Sebastian's song.

She FREEZES. The radio music seems to have morphed into the melody, and the tune stirs something deep within her...

A few seconds pass. And then she can't deny it any longer. It's clear as day to her now. She rises from her seat--

GREG

Mia?

--and -- as the sounds of a FULL ORCHESTRA swoop in --

MIA

I'm sorry...

-- she RUNS out of the restaurant as fast as she can.

EXT. LUCQUES - NIGHT

The MUSIC SWELLS, strings carrying us through and lifting Mia's spirits as she runs down the street in her green dress, for once absolutely sure of herself and of what she's doing...

EXT. FLORA MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

The theater entrance. A sign reading "MONDAY MIDNIGHTS" hangs above, a *Rebel* poster to the right...

INT. FLORA MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Inside the Flora. Sebastian settling into his seat, the show about to begin. He's visibly disappointed that he's alone, but he holds it in...

The curtains go wide, and the lights dim. Projector light cuts through the darkness.

Then, just as the 1957 Warner Brothers logo appears on the screen, Sebastian spots, out of the corner of his eye, a figure in the aisle...

He looks. The figure turns. Looks at him.

It's Mia.

And, caught like a freeze-frame in the projector light, her green dress incandescent, the giant movie screen behind her like a great piece of back-projection, she looks more beautiful than ever right now. A true old-fashioned screen siren.

Sebastian's eyes go wide. He's surprised. And thrilled.

He waves. Mia hurries toward him. Takes the seat next to his, as *Rebel Without a Cause* begins...

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

Half an hour has passed. The movie plays, lights flickering on Mia and Sebastian's darkened faces...

He puts his arm on the armrest, she moves hers nervously...

He scoots to his right, she scoots back...

She edges her elbow onto the armrest, he moves his arm... Then she puts her hand on the edge of the armrest, glances at him...

Inch by inch, their bodies grow closer... Hands approaching, breaths quickening with every movement, hearts POUNDING...

...until finally their hands touch...

And then -- suddenly, just as James Dean and Natalie Wood arrive at Griffith Observatory -- burn marks streak their way across the image. The screen goes blank.

Silence. The lights go on.

Mia and Sebastian turn around. EMPLOYEES are hurrying to the projector booth, AUDIENCE MEMBERS murmuring. Sebastian looks heart-stricken.

He wanted to share this with Mia...

But then she turns to him. Energized.

MIA (CONT'D)
I have an idea.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

A car traveling through the night... Sebastian's car... Up a winding road, stars glittering above it, the lights of Los Angeles glittering below it...

The car is bending around the turns, making its way up to...

...the real Griffith Observatory. There, our MUSIC crests.

Carried along -- by a full-fledged ninety-piece orchestra playing Mia and Sebastian's song -- our two characters get out of the car and *begin to DANCE...* [TRACK 7: PLANETARIUM]

It's a dance that fulfills all the promise in their first duet. From the stunning views of L.A. outside, Mia and Sebastian approach the Observatory. It's closed, but they sneak in...

INT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

No dialogue, all dance. Mia and Sebastian weave their way through the exhibits -- the Tesla coil, the hanging moon...

The music keeps building... Mia and Sebastian drift into the PLANETARIUM. It's darkened, empty. Mia removes her shoes, and the two lovers start moving, making of this theater their own private ballroom -- pirouetting down the aisles, hopping from the tops of the seats, one to the next...

Enchanted and barefoot, Mia turns on the projector. The screen STARTS TO GLOW. Mia and Sebastian spin around, take in the sight. The STARS and PLANETS and GALAXIES writ large...

And then -- Mia's shoes LIFT UP. Float beyond her grasp and up toward the ceiling -- toward the star-filled screen.

She and Sebastian look at each other. Realize. And they too begin to FLOAT...

...RISING from the floor, nothing stopping them...

...SOARING past the views of comets and moons and nebulae. Their eyes wide, their emotions seized, as they HOLD EACH OTHER TIGHT...

And so unspools a gravity-free dance.

Mia and Sebastian SPIN and TWIRL through the planetarium as though they themselves were in outer space, flying through the cosmos. The music carries them higher and higher, and their spirits likewise soar -- JOYOUS, EXUBERANT. And finally...

...the music SOFTENS. The tempo begins to slow. Mia and Sebastian drift back to the floor like feathers eased down by the wind, and slowly work their way to a pair of seats...

There, once again seated like audience members at a movie, they turn and look into each other's eyes...

The music picks back up for the big finish, as the lovers lean in and -- in true movie-movie old-Hollywood big-musical fashion -- LOCK LIPS.

It's their first kiss, and it's a kiss to remember -- full of all the hope and yearning and terror and wonder of love's first blush. A swoon-worthy kiss, with the orchestra soaring and the camera swooping in to catch the embrace in all its glory.

On this triumphant moment...

...we IRIS FADE OUT.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DAY

The same swaying palm tree from the opening image of our movie. The sky is cloudy this time.

We pan down...to the usual 101 traffic jam. There in his Geo Prism is Sebastian. But unlike the other drivers around him, he doesn't look pissed. Instead, he looks genuinely HAPPY...

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mia's scribbling in a notebook. We catch glimpses of her writing. It's dialogue. Character headings, scene headings. Seems to be some kind of a script...

ALEXIS (O.S.)

What's that?

Mia turns. Alexis has wandered in -- PJ's, eating cereal.

MIA

Oh... Nothing.

ALEXIS

Is that a script?

MIA

No, it's a -- well I'm writing a...it's kind of a play. I'm going to put it on myself...

TRACY (O.S.)

(chiming in from her bedroom)

A play? You better give us roles!

MIA

Actually it's a -- it's a one-woman show.

Alexis looks at her for a moment.

ALEXIS

Oh. Cool.

Just then -- we hear HONKING outside. Loud, persistent.

Alexis moves to take a look -- when suddenly the honking takes on a clear rhythm: "DA-DA-DA. DA-DA-DA. DA-DA-DA."

Eyebrow raised, Mia looks out the window -- and sees Sebastian's car at the curb. Her face LIGHTS UP.

EXT. MIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Mia dashes out -- and LEAPS into Sebastian's arms. They KISS -- giddy, emotional, as though they'd been separated for years.

A BURST OF ORCHESTRAL MUSIC as they dive into the car and as a title card pops on the screen:

SUMMER

The car drives off -- and the music carries us through this series of GLIMPSES...

-- Mia and Sebastian strolling past eucalyptus trees and weathered 30's bungalows, Sebastian pointing out hidden details in BUNKER HILL... These are the relics of the L.A. he cherishes...

-- Mia guiding Sebastian through a STUDIO LOT... This time she's showing him the secret corridors, sneaking into the closed soundstages, exploring the hidden nooks and crannies...

-- The two lovers sip coffees outside RAYO'S -- as Sebastian excitedly gestures to VAN BEEK STUDIO across the street...

-- They ride the L.A. SUBWAY, just for fun. It's clean, shiny, and virtually empty...

-- The LA BREA TAR PITS, where Mia acts out a scene from her play for Sebastian... She's in her own world, totally committed -- and Sebastian is smitten...

-- The GETTY. Mia and Sebastian accompanied by Laura now -- who's dressed more nicely than the last time we saw her, more rosiness in her cheeks... As soon as Laura turns, Mia and Sebastian steal a KISS...

-- Neighborhoods of L.A. that look vastly different one to the next... Purple façades, orange façades, murals in Spanish, RAMPART VILLAGE, ECHO PARK -- Mia and Sebastian strolling hand in hand past all the sights...

And, interspersed throughout, we see images of L.A. -- some with Mia and Sebastian, some without -- that cast it as a gorgeous city. Ornate Spanish balconies, red flowers, the PACIFIC...

The orchestral music gives way to just piano, as we catch a glimpse of Mia and Sebastian in bed together... Morning sunlight streams through...

Then we CUT TO Sebastian playing his piano. By his side, Mia sits on the couch, writing her play. Sebastian stops, looks over at her. She keeps furiously writing. He resumes playing. They're both completely at ease...and completely in love...

Finally, the music carries us to...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - DAY

...a Lighthouse JAM SESSION, Sebastian again at the keys, Mia next to the piano, tapping her hand on it. And something else...

She's SINGING. A fun, boisterous SONG about the thrill of new love. A quartet playing to the side, everyone giddy... [TRACK 8: LIGHTHOUSE]

Mia sings a line, Sebastian responds. He plays a line, and she responds. They can't take their eyes away from each other. Sebastian looks at her with all the adoration in the world, grinning and blushing as he comps behind her lyrics...

Finally Mia rises from her seat. Hops down to the floor and starts DANCING. Taps against the floor, circles the tables... The music gaining steam, her movements an outpouring of her happiness...

Sebastian keeps his eyes on her... The crowd is thin, there's hardly anyone here watching -- but Mia and the musicians don't mind at all. They're playing for themselves... It's pure, unadulterated JOY...

A few more VOCALS...and the song comes to an end.

Smiles all around. Blushing, Sebastian kisses Mia and whispers in her ear. She laughs. They reach a table, sit down...

MAN (O.S.)

Excuse me?

...and look up. A YOUNG MAN, 33, is standing next to them. Tall, fierce eyes.

MAN (CONT'D)

Just wanted to say, man -- loved that Cecil Taylor pattern you played. And the way you snuck "Joy Spring" in there on the second A -- fuck.

Sebastian looks at the Man. Taken aback.

SEBASTIAN

You noticed that? "Joy Spring"?

MAN

'Course. I can't listen to the Clifford Brown cut without crying.

Sebastian's wide-eyed. The Man extends his hand.

MAN (CONT'D)

Keith.

SEBASTIAN

Sebastian.

MIA

Mia.

KEITH

I got a combo needs keys, think you could be great for it. Any interest?

SEBASTIAN

What kind of music?

KEITH

Modern-jazz-electronica.

Sebastian's expression suddenly changes.

SEBASTIAN

Ah.

KEITH

(scribbling his number on a napkin)
We just got signed to a label, need a keys player for the long term. Call me whenever and we can see if it's a fit. K?

Sebastian nods. Keith smiles.

KEITH (CONT'D)

By the way -- you got some real drummer's hands when you play. Monk?

Sebastian just shrugs.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Cool, well... Nice meeting you guys.

And with that, he walks off. Sebastian looks at Mia. Slides the napkin into his pocket.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia and Sebastian step in. He wraps his arms around her. They KISS. Gentle, tender. Full of love...

Then they look into each other's eyes. Entranced.

MIA

When are you going to call him...?

SEBASTIAN

Who?

(then realizes who she means)

Oh... Electronica? It's not really what I do...

He closes the door behind him -- has to jostle the handle to lock it.

MIA

Well putting on a play by myself isn't what I do.

SEBASTIAN

But you're gonna blow people away. Me? I'd just look stupid.

MIA

He seemed to speak your language.

SEBASTIAN

I guess. Sort of...

MIA

It wouldn't have to be your life. Just a stepping stone. Play with real musicians, who love jazz -- and get paid to do it.

Sebastian shrugs, considering this. Mia turns. As she heads to the bathroom--

MIA (CONT'D)

Can't be any worse than dinner piano or cover bands, can it?

Sebastian watches her walk off. His eyes drift to his surroundings. Mold on the ceiling. Broken wood-chips. All this seems to suddenly grab him...

MIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (from the bathroom)
 Monk recorded covers, didn't he? And
 Charlie Parker did strings albums.

SEBASTIAN
 Yeah, but they were beautiful...

Another moment. Sebastian looks unsure now... He glances up, catches a glimpse of Mia in the bathroom mirror, brushing her teeth. He seems suddenly taken with the image. Noticing him--

MIA
 What?

Sebastian smiles, shakes his head: *"Nothing."*

Reaches into his pocket. Looks at the napkin. Thinking...

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Sebastian enters. Keith's combo is assembled. There's a DRUMMER, ELECTRIC BASSIST, and TRUMPETER. They're more polished in their looks than Sebastian. Well-groomed beards, tighter jeans.

KEITH
 Sebastian.

Sebastian nods. Seems shy all of a sudden. Nervous.

KEITH (CONT'D)
 This is Malcolm... Burke... Tom...

SEBASTIAN
 Hi...

BURKE
 Hey.

TOM
 How's it going?

They all seem friendly, inviting. Keith gestures -- to an electronic keyboard. Sebastian sees it. Almost winces.

KEITH
 Alright, let's play "Summertime"...

Sebastian hesitates. Then sits down, seriously uneasy. Keith picks up a guitar and starts playing -- *beautifully*.

Sebastian is taken aback. *Maybe this isn't so bad after all...?*

The drums kick in, and Sebastian follows. The music is hot now, old-school jazz -- and it feels great. Everyone's grooving, and Sebastian starts to play out...

Keith takes a 4-bar solo, then cedes way for Sebastian. They trade 4's, each solo more fiery and virtuosic than the last. Sebastian is having a blast now... The tune comes to an end and--

MALCOLM

Holy shit.

KEITH

I told you.

The other MUSICIANS just smile, wowed. Keith looks at them, they nod, and Keith then turns to Sebastian--

KEITH (CONT'D)

Alright, here's the deal. We got our first show in three weeks, nightly gigs in and around L.A. the rest of June. Small venues, clubs, that sort of thing. Then we got a mid-July headline at the Echo. Next, a six-month tour in the fall. Berlin, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Tokyo. Pay split roughly four ways, your cut should round up to a grand per gig, plus per diem while on tour. Name on the bill, the works. How's that sound?

We see Sebastian's face. Almost catatonic.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, that...that...
(trying to play it cool--)
Sounds good.

KEITH

Great.

(to the others)
Alright, let's play one of our own.

He sets aside the guitar and wheels out a TURN-TABLE. Sebastian looks on -- suddenly worried...

Keith LAYS IN A BEAT, and the band begins. Hip-hop-style, drum-machine pops. Then an electronic SYNTH LINE, cutting right in.

Sebastian is caught off-guard. *What is this?* Keith lays in another track: an old standard, broken down into 7/4 chunks. The other players trade off. This is a modern, experimental, just-this-side-of-hip-hop sound...

Sebastian's heart sinks. This is *not* his kind of jazz. He notices Keith look at him.

Finally, he joins in -- slowly, one step at a time. Soft at first, then louder. Still not comfortable -- every one of Keith's drum-machine hits gives him a nervous twitch -- but managing to make do, to hold it in...

A few seconds pass. The music builds. Sebastian starts to really listen. Trying to let go of his presuppositions, to open himself up...

After all, these guys *can play*. This is *good music*. Sebastian breathes out, starts to play more freely. And the music builds, the whole thing swelling and carrying us up to...

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

...the group's first show. They're playing the same piece. Sebastian's at the electronic keyboard on-stage -- still not looking totally at ease...

We're in a small club -- pure underground, with green-and-red lights hanging from the ceiling, psychedelic art on the walls. A world away from Sebastian's normal haunts.

The song finishes. Silence. And then --

-- the crowd roars.

Sebastian is surprised. Isn't used to hearing cheers like that.

The band members take their bows. WE FOLLOW THEM as they head backstage... Then we hear UNISON CLAPPING...

Sebastian looks at the MUSICIANS. He's confused. Keith PUSHES him back on-stage. Big applause. Sebastian sits back at the keys -- and notices a small horde of spectators gazing at him adoringly. The MUSICIANS prepare for their encore.

Sebastian looks back at his keys. And a blush creeps across his face. He can't help it...

INT. CLUB - LATER

Sebastian and Keith nurse beers at the bar. The club is mostly empty now, and Sebastian looks tired -- and satisfied.

KEITH (CONT'D)

The future of the music lies in wedding it to other forms. Bringing new instruments in. New sounds. People think jazz is irrelevant -- and they should. It's become time-machine art.

SEBASTIAN
 (hold on there)
 Well...

KEITH
 Alright, alright, don't get me wrong. No one loves the old greats as much as I do. But it's like a shark. If it doesn't keep moving, it dies. Truth is, nostalgia's the biggest killer of art forms that's ever existed. The proof? Opera.

Sebastian takes this in.

KEITH (CONT'D)
 And, sure, traditionalists will whine -- but you know what? They did the same thing when Kenny Clarke started dropping bombs. If traditionalists had their way, we'd still be playing Dixieland.

Another moment. Sebastian thinks. Sips his beer. And--

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sebastian steps in. The place is dark. In his hand is a check. He sets it down, glances at it. \$991.05.

He heads through the kitchen -- the microwave timer reads 4:47am -- and to the bedroom. Mia is in bed, asleep. Sebastian leans over to kiss her cheek. She opens her eyes.

MIA
 How was it...?

He lays down next to her. Eyes on the ceiling. Thinking...

SEBASTIAN
 You know... It was fun...

MIA
 Yeah?

SEBASTIAN
 Yeah... I mean, it's a means to an end... Come fall we're gonna move out of this hole, I'll tell you that.

MIA
 I can't wait to see you guys...

SEBASTIAN
 Wait 'til the Echo. We'll be better then.

Then, he rolls over, faces Mia...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I don't know, I think maybe...maybe you were right about...opening up a little...

(looks into her eyes)

Is that crazy?

She smiles. Moves closer to him. He wraps her in his arms. Kisses her forehead. She closes her eyes...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I love you.

She holds onto him tighter, like a child clutching her blanket at night.

MIA

I love you...

Sebastian watches her drift off. A few seconds pass. He looks again at the ceiling.

And, finally, he smiles to himself.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Mia rises from bed. It's dawn, and Sebastian is fast asleep.

She quickly slips on clothes, grabs a yogurt, and heads out. Seems excited, eager for the day to begin...

EXT. LA BREA TAR PITS - DAY

She's sitting on the green, bent over a notebook, deep in concentration. Writing her play...

INT. COFFEE-SHOP - DAY

She's at work...

And now, instead of sneaking peeks under the counter while taking orders, she's flipping through L.A. Weekly, circling theaters for rent. We see prices: \$750. \$490. \$210.

She notices the MANAGER pass by. Walks up to him, and softly--

MIA (CONT'D)

Any extra shifts this month?

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The bedside clock: 1:38pm. Sebastian wakes, rings under his eyes. Heads to the bathroom, slides into the shower...

LATER: At the mirror, Sebastian grabs a razor. About to shave. Then he stops. Puts the razor away.

LATER: Sebastian tries to choose an outfit. Normally this would take two seconds. This time he puts on one shirt, then pulls it off and puts on another. Then changes his mind again.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Sebastian, dressed in a third option, is about to head out -- when the door opens. It's Mia, stepping in.

MIA (CONT'D)

Oh. -- Another gig?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah... Gonna be every night 'til the tour.

Mia nods. Remembering the tour. There's a moment of silence...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

D'you crack the finale?

MIA

Almost. Just tweaking the lines.

Sebastian smiles. Gives Mia a kiss.

SEBASTIAN

I'm so proud of you.

She smiles back. A moment between them... Then--

MIA

You're gonna be late.

SEBASTIAN

I'll see you in the morning, ok...?

MIA

(another smile)

Ok. Bye...

They kiss again. He steps out. Mia's alone now. We linger here for a moment.

And then...we FADE OUT.

INT. THE ECHO - NIGHT

Darkness first.

Then MUSIC... A PIANO... [TRACK 9: ECHO]

A single white spotlight SHINES on Sebastian. He's seated at the keys, playing jazz. Soft, delicate, beautiful...

The floor beyond the stage is FILLED with people -- among them Mia, beaming with pride. Sebastian smiles to her. Mia grins right back, heart swelling. This is the Echo, the first headline show for Keith's band -- yet right now, it's as if Mia and Sebastian were the only two people here, echoing the spotlit fantasy when she first watched him play...

Then, suddenly -- a SECOND SPOTLIGHT turns on, illuminating Keith at his turn-table as he lays in a SYNTH. A startling electronic sound...

Then a THIRD SPOTLIGHT -- on the drums, playing a HIP-HOP BEAT. Booming, club-ready. The crowd starts MOVING. Mia's surprised, but joins in, having fun. The music is cool and infectious...

Soon a FOURTH SPOTLIGHT turns on -- electric guitar. Then a FIFTH -- fragmented string samples. With each new element, the music grows more "electro" -- and the crowd gets more enthusiastic.

FULL-FLEDGED CHOREOGRAPHY takes shape, the spectators all in sync. Mia keeps dancing, as Sebastian starts excitedly playing out more -- can't help but let the crowd get to him...

And now -- the lights go CRAZY. It's a full-out LIGHT SHOW, shafts of red, blue, green and orange cutting through the dark. The crowd starts CHEERING, pumping their fists. Sebastian, surprised by the energy and feeding off it, lets his fingers fly across the keys. He's a star. He sees Mia -- and WINKS at her this time. She manages a smile back...

But something is starting to change in her expression...

The crowd's hollers grow more and more frenzied. Scantily-dressed women push their way toward the stage, waving their hands in the air. All eyes are on Sebastian... He launches into a prolonged SOLO -- and starts really showing off now. Bobbing his head, calling out, peacocking. Even spinning around and playing with his back to the keys -- to which the crowd goes wild...

As the mass of people swells and moves, Mia finds herself PUSHED TO THE SIDE, bit by bit, away from the center. Tries to hold her ground, but is edged FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY... Sebastian, deep in his solo, doesn't notice.

With synth lines and drum blasts now popping in every direction, Sebastian RISES to his feet, dancing while playing. Riling the crowd up, owning the moment. This is all for the audience -- and they're loving it.

CAST OFF to the side of the club, away from the lights and in shadow, Mia continues to WATCH...

Sebastian finishes his solo. The full band joins him for the last chorus. He looks around for Mia now -- but doesn't see her.

Turning back to his keys, he plays the climactic bars, adrenaline soaring. The crowd dances out one last BURST OF CRAZED CHOREOGRAPHY -- and the song ends with a BANG.

Massive applause. Sebastian sits back down -- exhilarated.

KEITH

Malcolm Kent on the bass. Burke Lindoff
on the drums. Sebastian Reed on the keys.

BIG applause here. Sebastian BLUSHES. Keith looks at him, smiles.

KEITH (CONT'D)

Tom Hopper on horn. And I'm Keith Barlow.

(more applause; then--)

You know, a wise man once said:

"Relationships are like sharks. If they
don't keep moving, they die." Well, I
think jazz has been a dead shark for
years -- and we're here to change that.

More clapping. Mia listens. Takes it in...

KEITH (CONT'D)

(returning to his turntable)

This one's called Pizza-Bitza.

He starts playing. A new song begins...

INT. THE ECHO - LATER

The show's over. Sebastian makes his way from the stage, toward Mia. His way is continually blocked:

AUDIENCE MEMBER #1

Amazing job, man.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #2

Out of this world.

He nods, smiles at each comment. By the time he finally reaches Mia, he's walking on air.

MIA

Baby!

(hugs him full-force, kisses him)

You were great!

SEBASTIAN

Really...? You liked it?

MIA

Yeah, I mean -- like you said, it's
different. But it was really good.

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)
(an awkward beat, then--)
And the crowd went crazy for it.

Sebastian looks at Mia. He can tell something's off. Can see through her. It's subtle -- but a part of him is hurt...

For a moment, he doesn't say anything. Then--

MIA (CONT'D)
Do you want a ride? I mean, if you're ready to--

SEBASTIAN
Oh thanks, yeah -- I gotta -- I gotta help tear down actually. I can get a ride from Burke.
(pause)
It'll...it'll be a while, so...

Beat. Mia nods. Smiles.

MIA
Ok...

SEBASTIAN
I'm glad you came.

MIA
Of course. See you at home.

She leans in. They kiss again. But there's an uneasiness to it this time... Sebastian eyes Mia once more -- then heads back.

INT. MIA'S CAR - NIGHT

Mia drives alone.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sebastian steps in. It's late. As usual, Mia is already asleep. He heads to the bedroom. Quietly slips into bed.

We linger on his face. Lying there, Mia by his side, his eyes on the ceiling.

A moment, and then...

EXT. PASADENA FLEA MARKET - DAY

A massive FLEA MARKET, rows of bric-a-brac stretching as far as the eye can see. Mia rifles through old outfits -- potential costumes for her play. Laura and Sebastian are by her side.

A few weeks have passed -- Sebastian looks a little different, his clothes in slightly better shape.

LAURA

This one'll look beautiful on-stage. Seb, what do you think?

SEBASTIAN

Looks great.

LAURA

Do you have a date yet?

MIA

Not yet -- I just finished the play, but--

LAURA

Congrats!

MIA

Oh, thanks, who knows if it's any good...

(laughs)

But finding a theater's been tricky... One didn't have running water, a couple just didn't have character, and -- I want one that'll, you know, make this seem sort of real. Which I know it's not, but, you know...

LAURA

Sounds real to me.

Mia smiles. Turns to the nearest stall's VENDOR--

MIA

I'll take the gray one.

(as Sebastian pulls out his wallet)

No, Sebastian, I'll get it--

But Sebastian beats her to it and pays for the outfit.

LAURA

What a gentleman. Mia, what did you do to him?

Mia laughs. Plants a kiss on Sebastian's cheek.

MIA

It's been a long road.

LAURA

The years I tried to teach him.

Sebastian smiles, rolls his eyes.

MIA

Oh, you know, there's a guy at the coffee shop, Laura, I was meaning to tell you. Comes in all the time, pretty sure he's single--

SEBASTIAN

(shaking his head)

Don't bother.

MIA

(laughs)

Ok, ok...

LAURA

Well, actually -- I -- I have some news...

Mia and Sebastian turn.

LAURA (CONT'D)

I'm seeing someone.

SEBASTIAN

(smiling; at last)

Really?

MIA

That's fantastic!

(Laura smiles, blushes)

How long has it been?

LAURA

Three months.

Sebastian looks surprised.

SEBASTIAN

What -- you forgot to tell me?

LAURA

Well I -- I wanted to wait and see how things went. Remember that blind date...?

SEBASTIAN

(thinks, remembers--)

"Shoot me"?

Laura laughs. Nods. Smiling--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

That's great. Seriously. Come here--

(plants a kiss on her cheek;

playfully--)

It's about time.

LAURA

Well -- there's more, actually...
(a beat; and then--)
...We're getting married.

Silence. Shock.

SEBASTIAN

What?

Mia starts to glow. Her surprise giving way to real joy:

MIA

Laura... That's wonderful...

She hugs Laura. Laura seems very grateful.

SEBASTIAN

What are you talking about?

Laura and Mia turn to him. He looks genuinely confused.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Who is this guy?

LAURA

His -- his name's Harry. He's a teacher.

MIA

When's the wedding?

LAURA

I -- uh -- end of August...

MIA

Amazing.

SEBASTIAN

I'm sorry -- am I the only one who thinks
this is crazy?

Laura turns back to him. Beat.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Seven years I tried to push you back on your
feet and nothing -- one blind date later,
you're getting married?

LAURA

People change.

SEBASTIAN

Exactly. People change.

A moment. Sebastian notices Mia's gaze. He looks away--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
How is this any different from last time?

LAURA
It doesn't matter, Seb, I'm in--

SEBASTIAN
My name's Sebastian.

LAURA
Sebastian.

Beat. And then--

LAURA (CONT'D)
I'm in love. That's all that matters.

Sebastian takes this in. Nods. Catches Mia's look again.

SEBASTIAN
Fine. I'm sorry. Just caught me off-guard.
(then, finally--)
Congratulations.

He starts to walk ahead. Mia, lingering, eyes Laura...

On this, we slowly DISSOLVE TO...

EXT. NORTH HOLLYWOOD - DAY

A new day. Mia marches down the street. Stops at one BLACK-BOX THEATER after another. One's worn-down, another's gaudy...

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Sebastian and his band get ready to REHEARSE...

INT. THEATER - DAY

A new THEATER OWNER ushers Mia through his main doors--

THEATER OWNER
What's the play about?

MIA
Oh, it's... It's about Ingrid Bergman... But sort of, half from the point of view of an actress trying to make it today, half from her point of view, and... Yeah... That's it.

THEATER OWNER
Sounds cool.

He opens up -- and it's the perfect theater for Mia. Small. Not glamorous. Not ornate. But just right.

THEATER OWNER (CONT'D)

It's 500 for the week.

MIA

Oh... I -- Ok...

Silence. The Owner senses her discomfort. Finally--

THEATER OWNER

Look, I'm dark August 4th through 12th. I can give you the week for 250 and we see how it goes. Ok?

Mia looks at him, eyes widening. And before we hear another word--

EXT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Giddy, Mia dials her cell as she marches down the street. Then, over loud amp feedback--

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

Hello?

MIA

I found it!... Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

I -- I can't really hear you...

MIA

I said I found it. I found the theater.

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

Oh. That's great.

MIA

You have to see it, it's not fancy but it's perfect, it's got just the right--

A burst of noise on Sebastian's end. Then--

SEBASTIAN (O.S.)

Sorry, I...it's not really a great time... Can we talk later?

MIA

Oh. Ok... Bye.

Click. Mia stands there for a moment.

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Sebastian stands still. Then -- a guilty look comes over him.

KEITH

You coming?

Sebastian turns. Looks at Keith. Then looks back at his phone. A moment passes...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mia at work. Mopping the floor in the back. Her thoughts seem to be adrift, her face rueful. She gazes out the window...

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING / APARTMENT - EVENING

Mia trudges up the stairs, tired. Reaches the door, enters...

...and freezes in place.

The table is decked with food: pasta, salad, cheeses, wine. Sebastian appears. Mia looks at him. Stunned.

SEBASTIAN

I'm sorry.

Moved, Mia embraces him. Her eyes seem on the brink of tears. She and Sebastian hold each other tight. A LONG, HEARTFELT KISS...

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

CLOSE ON: a hand carefully placing a record on a player. A 60's vinyl sound crackles out. Clifford Brown's "Delilah".

Mia and Sebastian are seated at the table. Mia looks at Sebastian. Feeling so much better. He smiles. A moment passes.

MIA

I'm gonna miss you in the fall...

SEBASTIAN

It'll fly by. I'm back in L.A. every two or three weeks. And we'll talk every day.

Mia smiles. Nods. A trumpet solo begins on the record.

MIA

Wait -- don't tell me. I know this...
Clifford Brown.

SEBASTIAN

(he grins)

Nice.

(MORE)

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

(then,)

He had food poisoning the day they recorded this, you know.

MIA

Really?

SEBASTIAN

Some bad taco or something. That's why his delivery is so muted. But when people heard it, they thought, "Ah, what an interesting choice." You believe that?

MIA

(laughing)

Oh God, that's like... This story about, I think it's Laurence Olivier. When he was doing *Hamlet*.

(Sebastian fake-yawns; she laughs--)

He gets on-stage and says "To be or not to be, that is the question" -- and then all of a sudden he freezes 'cause he realizes he's forgotten the rest of the speech.

SEBASTIAN

Are these the nightmares you have now?

MIA

Totally. And he's standing in front of a huge crowd, it's opening night, all the critics are there. And he's completely choking. So he just paces around the stage, hoping to God that it'll come back to him. And finally, after like ten minutes, it comes to him: "Whether 'tis nobler bla-bla-bla". He finishes up, hurries off-stage, thinking his career is over. Next morning the reviews come out: "Genius. Olivier is the first Hamlet who actually thought about the question."

Sebastian laughs. Nods. Makes sense.

Then -- he seems about to say something. Doesn't. Tastes the meal.

SEBASTIAN

It needs salt. No?

MIA

No. It's perfect.

She looks at him for a moment. Then--

MIA (CONT'D)

So...what are you going to do after the tour?

SEBASTIAN

What do you mean...?

MIA

Well, Keith, the band...is it the long haul?

SEBASTIAN

(hesitant)

I'm sorry, I -- I don't really understand the question...

MIA

I didn't mean anything by it.

SEBASTIAN

Yeah... Yeah, it's the long haul.

MIA

Ok.

Sebastian looks at his food, uneasy. Then, a beat later, at Mia.

SEBASTIAN

Why would you ask me that?

MIA

Ask you what?

SEBASTIAN

Just now.

MIA

I don't understand.

SEBASTIAN

Look, can we be honest for a second? I just need to know. Do you hate the music?

MIA

What? I told you I love it.

SEBASTIAN

I can tell when someone's squirming.

MIA

When?

SEBASTIAN

At the Echo.

MIA
I was not squirming.

SEBASTIAN
You were. You looked embarrassed.

MIA
I was not embarrassed.

SEBASTIAN
Now you're lying.

Mia looks at him. Irritated now.

MIA
Don't tell me I'm lying when I'm not.

SEBASTIAN
Ok. So be honest.

MIA
I was not embarrassed. I thought -- I
thought you might be embarrassed.

Sebastian looks at her. Seems in disbelief she'd say that.

MIA (CONT'D)
That's not -- that came out wrong--

SEBASTIAN
Why would I be embarrassed?

MIA
Forget it, it's not--

SEBASTIAN
Why would I be embarrassed?

MIA
I really don't want to talk about this.

SEBASTIAN
Why would I be embarrassed?
(she doesn't answer)
So I guess you do hate it.

MIA
(looking up at him, fed up)
No, I don't, I really don't, I'm just
surprised you love it.

Sebastian glares. Pissed.

MIA (CONT'D)
I thought it was a stepping stone.
(then, adding,)
I mean -- right?

SEBASTIAN
Well I find that kind of funny, since this
was your idea in the first place and--

MIA
--I didn't think it'd turn into--

SEBASTIAN
--don't interrupt me, Mia, this is not a
one-woman show--

MIA
--which was your idea in the first place--

SEBASTIAN
--well you're an actress, someone's gotta
tell you what to do.

Mia looks at him. Incensed. Sebastian seems happy for a second
with his zinger. Then, a second later, his pride vanishes...

Mia takes a moment. Determined now to lay it all out. Before
Sebastian can say another word--

MIA
Your playing used to make me cry.

Beat. Sebastian is silent. Mia hesitates, seems to grow
nervous -- but continues--

MIA (CONT'D)
You were so true to this...this idea...
And now... I don't see that idea anymore.
I just see someone who's begging to be
liked.

She pauses. Realizes the gravity of what she's just said.
Presses on regardless--

MIA (CONT'D)
And you're right -- I said try something
new, but I swear I would've stopped
myself if I thought it'd replace
everything else. You had such a clear
dream, Sebastian. And you know what? I'm
angry at myself, because I might have
screwed that up.

Sebastian stares at her. Stunned by all this. And humiliated...

SEBASTIAN
Sorry to disappoint you.

MIA
No -- don't do that, you know that's not what I mean.

SEBASTIAN
What do you mean? Would you rather it be you on that stage?

The LP finishes. Total silence. It's a loud silence.

MIA
Excuse me?
(Sebastian doesn't respond)
My show's in three weeks, why would I--

SEBASTIAN
--assuming anyone shows up.

Mia looks at him. Matching his anger with her own now--

MIA
Well you know how to bring in the crowds, don't you?
(in a mock voice--)
"Oh, fuck nostalgia, this sampler can jerk you off in 7/4, and did you know if sharks don't keep swimming they die--"
(Sebastian is silent, trying to keep it in, as she keeps going--)
"--and Clifford Brown, Monk, all those fogeys are just pulling us down--"

SEBASTIAN
(emotional, eyes brimming; his embarrassment finally spilling out--)
Fuck you.

Just then -- smoke billows from the kitchen.

A dish still in the oven has started to burn. For a moment, Mia and Sebastian don't even move. Then -- the FIRE ALARM blares. Loud as hell. Snapping back to the present, Sebastian rushes to the kitchen, pulls out the burning pan--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Shit...

He looks -- and sees Mia grabbing her things. Suddenly afraid -- she actually is leaving -- he shouts out over the alarm--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Where are you going??

She doesn't say anything. Pulls out her keys to the place, throws them on the floor, and heads to the door.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
(seeing this, terrified that
she's leaving--)
You are such a fucking hypocrite -- you
told me to take the job, goddamnit--

Mia reaches the door. About to open it except -- there's that damn handle. She jostles it, tries to undo the lock.

MIA
Come on...

SEBASTIAN
When have you done anything? You're paying
to perform. Shouldn't they pay you?

On that she freezes. Looks back at him. Crushed.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
You condescend to me, but I play on a stage
and people have a good time. When have you
done anything that anyone liked??

Mia stares at him. Silent. Tears sting her eyes.

The words have cut right through her.

Stricken, speechless, she turns back to the door. Can't get it to open, reeling, trying to keep calm and not to lose it, needs to get out of here but cannot bring herself to ask for help--

MIA
Come on, come on...

SEBASTIAN
What?

MIA
(mortified, finally speaking
up, with a stammer--)
Help -- help me open the door.

SEBASTIAN
I can't hear you!

MIA
(a cry ripped from her gut)
HELP ME OPEN THE FUCKING DOOR!!!!

Beat. Sebastian -- stunned, has never heard her scream like that.

He finally gets the door open. Mia races out, red-faced, all the pent-up pain spilling out of her -- slams the door shut -- just as the smoke alarm FINALLY STOPS.

Sebastian is alone in his apartment. And it's completely silent.

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mia returns to her place, tears in her eyes. Reaches the door, hears her roommates, swallows in the tears, desperate to hide that she's been crying, and opens up--

TRACY

Mia!

Mia manages a smile. Tries to make it to her room but--

CAITLIN

Quick question -- which do you like better?

Caitlin holds up two head-shots. Virtually identical. Mia tries to squeeze past--

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

(holding one forward)

Do you think this one's too glossy?

MIA

(clenching her teeth, trying
as hard as she can to speak
without crying)

I... Uh... No...

TRACY

(seeing Mia's face--)

Are you ok...?

Alexis, seated to the side, turns and looks. All eyes now on Mia.

MIA

I just... Just lost a contact...
(turning her face, can't hold
in the tears any longer, has
to get to her room now)

Good night...

And, finally, she makes it to her room. CLOSES the door shut behind her, LOCKS it --

-- and then sinks to the floor, crumpling into silent tears.

WE FADE OUT.

EXT. THEATER - DAY

A poster, placed on the front of the theater we saw before. Just text. A title: "SO LONG, INGRID." A name below it: "MIA DOLAN." And a sign plastered above: "OPENING NIGHT."

INT. THEATER - DAY

The empty theater. Dark. Silent. Then -- a light turns on...

Mia steps in. We stay WIDE... She seems small from this vantage point, alone on the stage. A small projector is plugged in, a few tables wheeled out.

Mia takes a moment. Looks at all the empty seats. Takes a deep breath. Nervous...

And then, nodding to herself -- *you can do this* -- she starts setting up...

INT. REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Sebastian sits at the keys. Burke, Malcolm and Tom are here as well.

Sebastian plays a few notes, trying to figure out a melody, just as Keith struts in behind him, breathless--

KEITH

You guys won't believe this.

All heads turn toward Keith.

KEITH (CONT'D)

What's the premier jazz magazine?

BURKE

Down Beat.

KEITH

The other one.

No answer.

BURKE

I think there's only one.

KEITH

Jazziz. And guess who's next issue's cover?

MALCOLM

Holy shit.

KEITH

I just got off the phone with them. They want to shoot us tonight.

Sebastian can't believe it.

And finally, as he fully processes this -- he grins.

BURKE

Why aren't we on *Down Beat*?

INT. THEATER / INT. BACKSTAGE - EVENING

People are starting to shuffle into the theater, passing the poster. We DRIFT BACKSTAGE... Mia watches, waits. A clock reads 6:40. She breathes in. Nervous, and alone...

INT. CAR - EVENING

Sebastian in a car with the band, driving to the location.

MALCOLM

We playing anything?

KEITH

Don't know, we'll see what they say.

Sebastian glances out the window. Something catches his eye. Rayo's, his regular coffee shop...

The car STOPS. Sebastian, wide-eyed, turns. *Really...?*

There, in front of him, is VAN BEEK STUDIO.

KEITH

Here we go.

As Keith and the musicians get out of the car, Sebastian's heart pounds. *Of all the studios...* He stays frozen in place...

KEITH (CONT'D)

Sebastian?

...then snaps to, approaches the doors -- and steps inside.

INT. THEATER - EVENING

We're CLOSE on the stage. Can't see the audience. There's some faint mumbling. Then the lights go dark. Silence...

Projector light. An IMAGE appears on a screen -- a clapboard slate, held up to the camera, with the words: "SELZNICK TEST".

Mia stands in front of the screen, just to the side, dressed in a dazzling white gown. Sapphires sparkling, as the bright-colored projector light runs patterns across her face...

MIA

"She's too tall, her name sounds too German, and her eyebrows are too thick." Those were the first words they said about her in Hollywood.

The slate on the movie screen gives way to a YOUNG WOMAN in a pink halter-top, seated on a couch. We recognize the face...

MIA (CONT'D)

But that same producer hired her anyway. It was May 1939, and this was Ingrid Bergman's first Hollywood screen test.

On the screen, INGRID BERGMAN smiles, looks left, then right. A MAN instructs her, pointing as she pivots around, crosses her legs, moves her arms. She looks nervous, uncertain...

MIA (CONT'D)

She was 24 years old. Didn't speak a word of English. When she was a kid she'd wear her mom's clothes and put on plays in her dad's office. He filmed all her birthdays with a camera he borrowed. By the time she came to L.A. both her parents had died.

(lets this linger; a moment...)

She thought she'd be here for a couple of months at most, thought no one would cast her. Only brought a single suit-case. But two years later she filmed a movie called *Casablanca*. And that was that.

Mia looks at the screen. She's close to it. Ingrid Bergman's face seems to touch hers, the images overlapping...

MIA (CONT'D)

I want to know what she was thinking the day this was shot. Was she scared? Hopeful? Did her clothes itch? Was she in love?

(a pause)

Did she have the slightest idea what was about to happen to her...?

INT. VAN BEEK STUDIO - EVENING

Back to Sebastian, in the studio. You can tell it's the first time he's ever been inside. He's WALKING ON AIR...

Around him -- burnished wood, microphones and instruments that gleam with history. Photos of the musicians who've recorded here. Coleman Hawkins. Charlie Parker. And, yes, Monk.

Crew members scurry as Sebastian drifts through the hallowed halls -- in a trance, absorbing the sheer magnitude of this pl--

CREW MEMBER

You're going to want to be in Room C.
Stylist will fix you up and we'll see you
out here in twenty.

Beat. Sebastian, a bit startled, takes a moment. Then nods.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

We're back to Mia, now in a silk blouse, looking like an old-school movie star. Against the wall, IMAGES from *Notorious* are PROJECTED -- a scene between Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman.

It's light, bouncy, romantic -- with Mia stage left, inhabiting Bergman's role. She utters her lines quickly and with verve--

MIA

Let's not go out for dinner. Let's stay in.

CARY GRANT (ON SCREEN)

We have to eat.

MIA

We can eat here. I'll cook.

CARY GRANT (ON SCREEN)

I thought you didn't like to cook.

MIA

I don't. But I have a chicken in the
icebox and you're eating it.

Laughter in the audience. They're enjoying this. The scene continues, with Mia an effervescent presence on-stage--

CARY GRANT (ON SCREEN)

What about all the washing up afterward?

MIA

We'll eat it with our fingers.

CARY GRANT (ON SCREEN)

Don't we need any plates?

MIA

Yes -- one for you and one for me.

Cary Grant grins. A KISS on the screen. And then--

CARY GRANT (ON SCREEN)

Mind if I have dinner with you tonight?

A big smile crosses Mia's face. Glowing, the light hitting her--

MIA
I'd be delighted.

INT. VAN BEEK STUDIO - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Sebastian reflected in a mirror... A STYLIST is doing his hair. Sebastian looks at his reflection, then down -- at inscriptions on the tabletop: "GILLESPIE". "CB 2/17/53." "BUD POWELL 62"...

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Most of the stage is DARK. Mia is dressed now in the gray outfit we saw at the flea market, shrouded in shadow and backlit. She's silent, restrained -- yet her face throbs with intensity, passion.

This is the coda...

MIA (CONT'D)
Ingrid died today. August 29th, 1982.
Cast out of Hollywood when she dared to
have an affair. Barely ever let back.
They preferred their stars not behave
like real women there. They preferred the
Ingrid in the movies.
(beat)
There was a new crop of stars the day she
died. There's always a new crop. But I
can't get past it... Who needs Ingrid now?
(then, softly, a tear trickling down)
You see...? Here I am crying for a dead
actress I never even knew. That's L.A.

A moment. And finally -- the lights go out. Silence...

And then--

ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE. Lights back on. The theater is a little under half-full.

Mia, eyes red, body tired, smiles -- and bows.

INT. VAN BEEK STUDIO - RECORDING BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

LOUD MUSIC. The band is playing a song -- the musicians styled and ready for their close-ups. A PHOTOGRAPHER grabs shots--

PHOTOGRAPHER
Put a light on the drums... I need more
fill in this corner...

We ZERO IN on Sebastian. His hair sticks out at various angles, an artfully-undone tie hangs from his neck. He plays, as Keith lays in beats, synth lines and sampled tracks...

Then -- Sebastian's eyes start to drift... To the pictures on the walls... The players who recorded here long ago... Clifford Brown... Bill Evans...

In none of those photos is there an electric bass. No turntables, no synthesizers.

We see uneasiness well up in Sebastian's eyes...

He looks down at what he's playing. An electronic keyboard. Glances up at another photo on the wall -- of Monk playing an old Steinway grand piano in the very same room.

Sebastian looks at his undone tie, then up at Keith's turntable, and at the Photographer running around.

And, suddenly, something seems to change in him.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Bass, head up. Piano, look down at the keys.

Sebastian does as told, but his thoughts are drifting...

The Photographer moves in close, SNAPPING shots of just him--

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Piano look up, keep playing. Rest of you guys can drop out.

The others stop playing. Sebastian stops as well. The CLICKS of the photographer's camera loud now.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

No -- piano keep playing.

Sebastian is still. Then he starts to play a single melody on the keys. We recognize it. The first notes of his and Mia's song...

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

Good, now bite your lip like you're concentrating on a solo.

Beat. Sebastian stops. Silence. He stares ahead.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

That was good. Don't stop.

But Sebastian's thought is clear as day: *This isn't me.*

With that, he gets up, turns to Keith and the other musicians--

SEBASTIAN

I gotta go. I'm sorry.

--and walks out of the studio.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Mia's roommates are huddled outside the theater, holding flowers, looking a bit bored. A few audience members step out -- one of them a FORTY-SOMETHING WOMAN. Then Mia exits, and--

CAITLIN

Mia!

TRACY

You were am-aaa-zing!

ALEXIS

Yeah. So much more intimate than Broadway.

Mia smiles. About to respond when -- Caitlin sees someone:

CAITLIN

Oh my God... Mia...

Mia spins around. It's Greg. A YOUNG WOMAN by his side.

GREG

Hey, Mia...

MIA

(stunned)

Greg -- I -- I had no idea you were--

GREG

I don't even know what to say.

MIA

Oh, I know, it's weird and -- experim--

GREG

You were incredible.

MIA

Wh-- You thought so...?

GREG

Really. I loved it.

YOUNG WOMAN

I thought it was beautiful, too.

Mia blushes. Laughs, almost overwhelmed.

GREG

Sorry -- this is Sarah.

MIA
Hi... Thank you...

GREG
I never realized...

A moment of silence. There's a sweetness in Greg's voice, a sincerity to him that really gets to Mia...

MIA
Thank you, Greg...
(she notices the Theater
Owner waiting behind her)
Oh, I should -- I should check in with--

GREG
No problem. It was great seeing you.

Mia smiles. And watches Greg and Sarah walk off, hand in hand...

INT. SEBASTIAN'S CAR / EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Sebastian SPEEDING... Screeches to a stop. He's at Mia's THEATER. Dashes out and runs to the door. It's locked. The theater's closed for the night.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S CAR / EXT. MIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Back in his car. Speeding again... Reaches Mia's apartment building. DARTS out, spots someone exiting, RUSHES in before the front doors close. RACES down the hallway, reaches Mia's door, KNOCKS--

SEBASTIAN
Mia??

Waits. Knocks again. Louder this time. And then -- it opens. Mia stares at him.

For a second, Sebastian is speechless. Just looks at her. Then -- he WRAPS his arms around her--

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry--

--and KISSES her. The kind of kiss that might once have swept her off her feet. But this time...

...she turns her face away. Steps back. Doesn't say a word.

Sebastian looks at her, questioning. But her answer is her gaze: cold, unmoving.

He has no idea what to do now.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

I -- I quit. I quit the group. And -- and I'm sorry I missed the play tonight, but I promise you I'll be the first in line tomor--

MIA

It's over.

SEBASTIAN

...What?

MIA

Another show came in. He gave them my slot.

SEBASTIAN

...How -- how can he do that?

MIA

Not enough people showed up tonight. That's how. So it's over.

Beat. Sebastian looks at her. Mia feels her roommates looking at her as well, from her living room. She steps forward, into the HALLWAY. Closes the door behind her.

SEBASTIAN

Mia...?

A moment passes. And finally--

MIA

I really, really loved you.

Beat. Sebastian is silent now. Knows it's over... There's a hint of a tear in his eye. He clenches his jaw.

Then, Mia looks at him one more time, nods, steps back inside her apartment. The door closes again. Sebastian lingers. Doesn't move. Silence.

Then, music. Soft, melancholy, just piano, as...

...Sebastian walks off. The melody moves with him -- a reprise of the ballad Mia sang in her bedroom...

EXT. MIA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Ever so softly, *Sebastian begins to SING. Just a few bars -- quiet, subtle -- as he glances up at Mia's building, and walks away...* **[TRACK 6: BALLAD REPRISE]**

...PIANO CONTINUES AS WE DISSOLVE TO:

A series of GLIMPSES, as in the beginning of SUMMER:

INT. MIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caitlin and Tracy helping Mia carry boxes out...

MIA'S CAR - DAY

Mia driving, boxes stacked in the back... She passes by the theater that used to play *Rebel*. It's now closed down...

She gets on the 405... Heading out of the city...

INT. MIA'S HOUSE - ARIZONA - NIGHT

Mia steps inside. A small blue-collar home. An older woman -- her MOTHER, 46 -- is at the doorway. Hugs her. Her FATHER, 47, quiet, tired, stands by the hallway.

INT. MIA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mia enters her old bedroom. Slides in a suitcase. Moves a couple of boxes in from the hall. Looks around. Old photos. Old keepsakes. Her old bed, filled with stuffed animals.

She sits down on it. Takes a breath. And, finally, we're...

INT. RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

Laura's wedding. Sebastian plays the piano -- the source, we realize, of the music we've been hearing. As he watches Laura dance with her new HUSBAND -- this woman he has known for so many years as a romantic cynic, now once again full of all the youthful innocence of first love -- his thoughts seem to drift. The music comes to a close and...

MOMENTS LATER: Sebastian with Laura, near the piano...

LAURA
(pointing)
You remember the McKenzies?

SEBASTIAN
Oh God, I didn't see them.

LAURA
Yeah. They kept going, "oh Sebastian's so handsome".

Sebastian smiles. A moment.

SEBASTIAN
You look beautiful.
(beat)
I hope it was ok. I haven't played in weeks.

LAURA

You were great.

(pause)

You're always great when you play.

Sebastian is silent for a second. Then--

SEBASTIAN

So you...you think New York...?

LAURA

I think so. Maybe Boston. I don't know,
it's exciting...

Sebastian smiles again. Some calls from across the room--

LAURA (CONT'D)

Ah I gotta -- in-laws...

(lights up, likes the sound of
that)

Is my...my hair...?

Sebastian, without a word, pulls a strand back. Laura smiles,
kisses him on the cheek. A quiet, tender moment.

Then she hurries off. Sebastian stands there. Watches.

WE FADE OUT.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

RINGING. Sebastian is awoken. Groaning, he rolls over. Lets the
phone ring. It keeps going. Endless... Finally, fed up, he
reaches for it. Answers, his voice hoarse and gruff--

SEBASTIAN

What...?

A WOMAN answers on the other line--

WOMAN (O.S.)

Hi, I'm trying to reach Mia Dolan.

Sebastian is taken aback. He goes to hang up, saying just--

SEBASTIAN

Wrong number.

WOMAN (O.S.)

*--Are you sure? She's not answering her
cell--*

(Sebastian hesitates)

--and I was told I might find her here.

A moment. Annoyed, hurt by the mere mention of Mia's name--

SEBASTIAN
Yeah, well...not anymore.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Ok. If you do talk to her--

SEBASTIAN
I won't.

WOMAN (O.S.)
*--please tell her Holly Sheehan at Brandt
Casting is trying to reach her.*

Sebastian sits up.

SEBASTIAN
"Casting"...?

WOMAN (O.S.)
*Yeah... My boss saw her in a play last
month. She's doing a movie for Paramount
and they want a discovery for the lead.*

Off Sebastian's look -- wide-eyed, and suddenly resolved--

INT. MIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dinner has just finished. Mia's MOTHER gives her a kiss, heads off, as Mia and her FATHER stay behind to do the dishes.

FATHER
You want some more rice?

MIA
I'm ok.

FATHER
You look hungry.

MIA
No, I'm fine...
(looks at him; genuinely)
How are you...?

FATHER
Oh... I'm great. As usual. Same ol'.

Mia smiles. An awkward silence.

MIA
You took down the swing.

FATHER

Your mom made me. It was time.

Mia nods.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I've still got all your old tapes.

MIA

Oh God. Throw those away.

FATHER

Never.

A laugh. They look at one another. Mia turns, serves herself some left-over rice. A moment passes...

Just then -- an odd sound. Loud, persistent HONKING. Steady, keeps going and going.

Mia's FATHER turns, eyebrow raised. Mia looks up, hearing it as well. The HONKING is nearby... Just outside...

Mia's thoughts suddenly sharpen. Ears perk up. The honking continues -- in a rhythm she's heard before: "DA-DA-DA. DA-DA-DA. DA-DA-DA."

Disbelief on her face. *It can't be...* She heads to the nearest window. There, at the corner, smack in the middle of the street, is SEBASTIAN'S CAR.

One NEIGHBOR angrily yells out at him. Another watches. Sebastian looks back and forth -- his eyes scanning for a familiar face...

Then -- he lands on Mia, standing at her window. They lock eyes. And on that--

EXT. MIA'S HOME/SEBASTIAN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Mia and Sebastian stand next to his car. They're mid-argument.

SEBASTIAN

This has nothing to do with me. They could've stopped when you didn't answer your phone, Mia. They could've stopped and forgotten about you but they didn't.

Mia looks at him. Shakes her head. Her words don't come easily. It's painful even seeing him.

MIA

I can't believe you drove all the way...

Sebastian almost smiles. Expects thanks.

MIA (CONT'D)

You can't do that... You can't just barge in here. I'm done. Ok?

Sebastian looks surprised.

SEBASTIAN

That's it?

MIA

Yes.

She turns. Starts to head back to the house.

SEBASTIAN

Five years in L.A...for this?

Mia stops. That gets to her. She turns back to him, pissed--

MIA

What does that even mean? What -- I'm -- I'm not what you hoped I'd be? And ooh, another audition? Well, shit, call the press, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

(gesturing to the street, her house, the neighboring houses)
This is not your life, Mia.

MIA

Apparently it is.

Beat. Sebastian looks at her. Finally--

SEBASTIAN

I told them you'd be there at five-thirty tomorrow. I'll swing by here before I drive back at eight. Either you'll be outside or you won't.

With that, he walks off. Mia is silent -- but then, as he walks--

MIA

How -- how did you find me?

Sebastian stops. Turns. Points.

SEBASTIAN

The house across from the library.

Mia looks. There, sure enough, is the OLD LIBRARY, crouched at the street corner.

The same library that once set her on the path to acting...

Sebastian gets in his car. Starts up. Mia watches the car drive away into the night. Thinks...

EXT. MIA'S STREET - NIGHT/DAY

Wide on the street. All is quiet. Night becomes morning...

EXT. MIA'S HOME - DAY

Sebastian's car pulls over. He sits there. Sips a coffee, a second coffee in the holder. He waits. The time: 7:59.

A moment passes. He taps the wheel. 8:00. Looks at the house. The front door remains closed. No Mia.

He leans back. Seems worried. Closes his eyes, breathes out. It's 8:03. We MOVE CLOSE on him... He breathes in and out again... Eyes still closed...

He opens his eyes. It's 8:11. The front door is still closed.

Resigned, he starts his car up, BEGINS TO PULL AWAY, when--

--BAM! A KNOCK on the opposite window. He jumps. Quickly turns, startled.

It's Mia. She's just arrived at the car from the other side, two just-bought cups of coffee and a bag of pastries in her hands.

A beat. Sebastian smiles. Then OPENS the door for her.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S CAR / EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A highway cutting through the desert. Sebastian drives. Mia looks at him. He looks at her.

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIO LOT - DAY

A cloudy late afternoon. Mia and Sebastian slowly walk through the lot together...

They pass the fake New York street like before, past the murals and posters of classic Hollywood, the old Art Deco ornaments and the big soundstages and backdrops. Neither says a word, they keep their distance -- but Sebastian can't help but smile...

INT. WAITING LOBBY - DAY

Mia and Sebastian are seated. Waiting. Mia looks nervous. Trying to breathe out. Sebastian looks at her.

The DOOR opens. A typical-looking ACTRESS exits. And a CASTING DIRECTOR -- the FORTY-SOMETHING WOMAN we glimpsed exiting the theater after Mia's play -- pokes her head out.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Mia...?

Mia looks at Sebastian. Her heart pounding.

SEBASTIAN

Go...

Mia gathers her nerves. Gets up. Smiles. And steps in.

INT. AUDITION ROOM / INT. LOBBY - DAY

In the room are the CASTING DIRECTOR and a MAN in his early forties. The DIRECTOR.

DIRECTOR

Hi, Mia.

MIA

Hi, I'm... Hi.

CASTING DIRECTOR

I'm glad we found you. Here's the scene.
Take a minute.

She hands Mia SIDES. Mia quickly looks.

MIA

I haven't had a chance to...

DIRECTOR

We just want a gut reaction.

Mia sees "PARIS" in the scene heading.

MIA

Paris?

DIRECTOR

Yup.

MIA

So...the movie would shoot there...?

DIRECTOR

Four-month prep, six-month shoot. We'd
only need you for eight months.

(then--)

That's not a problem, is it?

Mia is silent. They look at her.

MIA

No, I -- of course not.

DIRECTOR

Great. Whenever you're ready.

A moment passes. Mia holds her sides, takes a deep breath -- then goes silent again. It seems she might be unsure what to do, might even be about to choke the audition...

We fear she may botch this completely...

WE CUT TO THE LOBBY -- to Sebastian, hearing Mia's silence. On edge... Worried...

WE RETURN to the AUDITION ROOM... The Director and Casting Director watching Mia, attentive... Everyone waiting...

And then, Mia opens her mouth -- and, with a confident ease...

...gently slides into SONG... [TRACK 10: AUDITION]

Yes, this audition is different than the rest, and the switch to song signals just that. Mia's singing is soft, bittersweet -- and, in all her directness and simplicity, she has never looked or sounded more like a genuine STAR.

In a word, she's spellbinding.

BACK IN THE LOBBY, we glimpse Sebastian. He listens...

...and SMILES.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAY

Mia and Sebastian sit on the grass, the Observatory perched behind them. The clouds have parted, and it's now a gorgeous Los Angeles evening, the sun just beginning to set.

Silence. And then...

SEBASTIAN

When did they say you'll hear...?

MIA

By the end of the week.

SEBASTIAN

...When would they need you in Paris?

MIA

The week after.

She shrugs.

MIA (CONT'D)
But they're auditioning a million other
people, so... You know...

Beat.

MIA (CONT'D)
I've never been to Paris.

SEBASTIAN
Me neither.
(pause)
It's great, you'd really get to know the
city. You'll have to visit Caveau de la
Huchette.

MIA
Caveau de...?

SEBASTIAN
...de la Huchette. It's where Powell played.

Mia laughs again, thinking.

MIA
Well I'm not gonna get the part, so...

A moment. She looks at Sebastian.

MIA (CONT'D)
Anyway, what are -- what are you going to
do...?

SEBASTIAN
Well first I'm gonna visit you. Save up
some money, make it work.

Mia smiles. A few seconds of silence.

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)
Terms of playing -- I don't know... I'm
sick of dinner piano, so...

He goes quiet again. Shrugs. Mia looks down, nods. Then--

MIA
I've never been here during the day. Is
that embarrassing?

Sebastian looks up at the Observatory. Smiles.

A moment passes. Mia thinks. A look of hope.

MIA (CONT'D)
 Caveau de la Huchette... I'll remember
 that.

Sebastian smiles back. Beat.

We CUT TO WIDE. Mia reaches out her hand, holds Sebastian's. We linger here, Mia and Sebastian framed by the white-and-green Observatory, the rest of L.A. stretching out beyond.

And then, ever so slowly...

...we FADE TO BLACK.

FALL

FADE IN ON:

The same palm tree from the opening of our movie, the same cloudless sky.

Only this time it's all painted.

We pull back -- to reveal we're...

EXT. STUDIO LOT - DAY

...on a studio lot, looking at one of the old painted backdrops, of a palm tree and sky. We pan down to -- no, not a traffic jam on the 101, but the studio's entryway. A CAR pulls up. A sleek BMW, the sunlight glinting off its edges.

A WOMAN steps out. We don't see her face.

We FOLLOW her from behind. She walks elegantly, poised. Her long coat settles at her ankles, the wind picks up a strand of her hair.

She makes her way down side-streets we've seen before, past whitewashed buildings from the 1920's. Then she enters a COFFEE SHOP we recognize...

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

All the eyes inside suddenly look the WOMAN's way. She reaches the counter -- and we finally SEE HER FACE:

MIA
 Hi... Iced coffee, please.

MIA looks different. Different haircut, different way of handling herself -- and, more than that, she looks slightly older. There's an ease and a confidence with the way she moves and talks now. Something about her voice and her gestures.

The BARISTA, visibly nervous, hurries to get Mia's order. We recognize this as the shop where Mia used to work. A MAN, appears to be the new MANAGER, gives Mia the coffee--

MANAGER

On us.

MIA

No, no, I insist.

Mia hands over a few dollar bills. Then drops another bill into the tip jar. The Barista smiles.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Mia exits the coffee shop...and heads into the adjacent studio BUILDING. A MAN holds the door open for her.

MAN

Hello, Ms. Dolan.

EXT. / INT. HOME - DAY

Mia pulls into the driveway of a gorgeous Hollywood hills abode -- one of the old ones, ochre walls and red flowers. She makes her way to the door, steps in...

It's bright and airy inside, modern art and Ingrid Bergman movie posters on the walls, a stack of scripts on the nearest table. Mia drops her things, spots someone, goes in to kiss him. A long, tender, loving kiss, as we pull back...

...and see that it's not Sebastian.

It's a MAN we haven't seen before: DAVID, mid-thirties. He looks at Mia. Smiles. They kiss again. And, running over and grabbing Mia's leg, is a THREE-YEAR-OLD GIRL...

CUT TO:

CLOSE on fingers on a piano. They play -- but clumsily, a halting tempo, flubbed notes and no grace or ease.

We pull back, to see a THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY playing the piano. Standing by his side is a WOMAN of about forty, his mother. And, across from the piano, SEBASTIAN. We're in...

INT. MUSIC SHOP - DAY

...a small music shop, filled with instruments, decorated with pictures of Clifford Brown and other jazz giants. Sebastian watches the Boy play.

After a moment, the Boy finishes his piece. Sebastian smiles.

SEBASTIAN
Sounded good there, pal.

The Boy blushes, looks away.

WOMAN
He practices every day.
(to her son--)
You like it?

The Boy, still a bit embarrassed, nods.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
(to Sebastian)
We'll take it.

SEBASTIAN
Great. I'll ring you up.
(and, looking at the Boy)
One trick I learned is to pivot your
palms when you move down the keys. Kind
of like a see-saw.

The Boy tries pivoting his hand. Sebastian smiles again, then heads off.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - EARLY EVENING

Sebastian closes up shop. Arranges some of the instruments in the center of the space, sets up a few rows of chairs. A fellow EMPLOYEE helps out.

EMPLOYEE
Just heard, Jimmy's coming to the
session. Felt bad he couldn't make last
week's.

SEBASTIAN
Cool, and Mick's off work. Should be good.

EXT. MUSIC SHOP - EARLY EVENING

Sebastian steps outside, locks up.

Heads to his car. A Honda Accord. Pulls out, passing for a second by a movie poster plastered on a bus stop which he notices out of the corner of his eye.

We can't see the title, or tell what genre it is, but we can barely catch a glimpse of a face on it. IT'S MIA.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - EVENING

We're now in a modest recording studio in the Valley...

Sebastian hovers next to an ENGINEER over a ProTools console, as an old-fashioned jazz quartet plays out of the speakers.

Sebastian listens, seems in his element...

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Yeah... Yeah, I think this take...
 (the Engineer nods, double-clicks)
 1:52's gonna kill me every time.

ENGINEER

Well... Didn't Art Tatum say there are no wrong notes?

SEBASTIAN

Yeah, well, he was Art Tatum.

The Engineer smiles. Another click of the mouse.

ENGINEER

This'll take longer to mix than the last one. I'm a bit swamped next week, but maybe two weeks you can swing by?

SEBASTIAN

Will do. Thanks a lot, man.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sebastian steps in -- to a far more modest abode than Mia's, though a step up from his earlier place...

He heads to the kitchen. Pulls out some pork cutlets he's been thawing. We see, sitting on the counter, a "HAPPY THANKSGIVING" card with a photo attached: Laura, her HUSBAND, and a FOUR-YEAR-OLD BOY, all gathered on a couch and smiling at the camera.

Sebastian coats the cutlets in breading and sprinkles them with spices, then starts heating up the oven. While it heats, he ducks into his BEDROOM and starts changing clothes.

INT. SEBASTIAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Sebastian eats his meal, in a new shirt and pants. Checks his watch. Then hurries to the door.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - NIGHT

Sebastian steps in, carrying a few boxes. Sets them down, pulls out a table, sets glasses on it along with some napkins, a few bottles of wine, a few bottles of beer, some water and soda.

And, on a separate table, underneath a makeshift sign -- "\$15" -- a stack of CD's.

Simple blue covers, with the name "THE SEBASTIAN REED QUARTET" written on top. Obviously a self-funded affair -- but Sebastian seems proud as he carefully organizes and positions the stack...

He half-closes the blinds, dims the lights, trying to give the whole place more of a mood. Two GUYS enter the shop -- one with a saxophone case, the other an upright bass.

SAXOPHONIST

Hey Seb -- Craig just called, had to work an extra shift so he's running late.

BASSIST

(spotting the drinks on hand)
Oooh, Riesling, well-done. For once.

SEBASTIAN

Is it? I just liked the picture of a leaf.

The Bassist laughs. Sebastian, smiling, rolls one of the store's pianos out front-and-center. Beside it is a drum-set.

BASSIST

I got the wife and kid coming.

SEBASTIAN

That's great. And Paul's got people coming, too.

INT. MUSIC SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens. A MAN with a drumstick bag in hand hurries in. The place has gotten more crowded. Piano, drums, bass set up, a TRUMPETER readying his horn.

Quite a few of the seats are now occupied. Young jazz fans, older players, more passersby trickling in from outside. It's a cool, excited crowd -- with a range of ages and styles. Sebastian nods to the musicians, then addresses the audience:

SEBASTIAN (CONT'D)

Alright, we're gonna get started. For those who haven't been here before, help yourself to drinks. Apparently we've got a Riesling.

He eyes the Bassist, who laughs. Then -- Sebastian plays.

As soon as his fingers hit the keys and he lays into the song, a big grin crosses Sebastian's face. The musicians follow, in a spirited rendition of "Japanese Folk Song", as more people filter in. Sebastian is once again in his element -- playing what he wants, with a small audience nodding along in appreciation.

This then is a version of his old dream: there's the bar (the drinks and cups on the table), the ambience (his photos of Monk and Coltrane on the walls), and the band (himself and his friends -- all very skilled players).

We ZERO IN on Sebastian -- his eyes closed, his fingers gliding as gracefully as ever, his heart in the music.

He's having a blast...

INT. MIA'S HOME - NIGHT

Mia, in a new outfit, crosses the wide living room and grabs her purse and jacket. David is by the door, jacket on as well.

Mia bends back around a sofa, where the GIRL we saw before is seated next to a sixteen-year-old babysitter, CHELSEA.

MIA

Bye, sweetie. You be nice to Chelsea.

GIRL

O-kay...

Mia leans down, kisses the Girl on the forehead.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

David drives, Mia seated beside him. They're on the 101.

MIA

And if we hate it? What do we tell Natalie?

DAVID

We just pretend we didn't see it.

Mia nods. Then sees a big traffic jam up ahead. She looks at the time on the car. 8:06.

MIA

Might not have to pretend.

INT. CAR - LATER

Mia and David are seated. Still not moving. Mia looks at the clock again: 8:27.

DAVID

Do you want to just skip it...? Turn off here and get dinner?

MIA

Where are we...?

DAVID
I don't know... Eagle Rock?

MIA
(shrugs)
Alright...

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Mia and David park the car. Step out. A leafy street. A few open restaurants and bars, a few other closed storefronts. They start walking, arm in arm. All is quiet.

Then -- Mia's ears perk up. She hears something. MUSIC...

She looks around. Doesn't see where it's coming from. Heads to the end of the block, then sees, just up ahead, a few people entering a store. Seems to be where the music is coming from...

She heads over, curious, David following behind. The music grows louder -- a JAZZ COMBO... Mia peeks in through the doorway...

...and sees Sebastian.

She FREEZES. For a prolonged moment, she seems unable to move.

She stares at Sebastian as he plays, his eyes on the keys. Then--

DAVID
(coming up behind her, oblivious)
This looks fun.

David edges past Mia. Sees the drinks. Turns to her, inviting--

DAVID (CONT'D)
Come on...

Mia doesn't know what to say -- and just then, Sebastian looks up to see who the new spectators are...and sees Mia.

Shock. The two LOCK EYES -- and you can tell it's the first time they've seen each other in years.

David heads toward the drinks table, pours two glasses of wine.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Mia?

She turns to him. Wavering, unsure what to do, she starts to follow him as he finds two empty seats...

Sebastian watches her. Mia looks at Sebastian. Tries to look away. He looks away as well. Then looks back. Tries to hold in his feelings. Tries to just focus on his playing.

Mia seems petrified. Doesn't know what she's doing here, or if she should be here at all. Averts her gaze again...

...but can't help but cross Sebastian's eyeline as she makes her way to her seat.

She sits down, clearly in Sebastian's line of sight. She looks down. Still doesn't know what to do. David hands her a drink. Takes a sip of his. Nods toward the band--

DAVID (CONT'D)

They're good.

Mia manages a nod in response. Sebastian watches. His playing growing weaker, more uncertain. The band finishes its tune.

Applause. And then, silence...

Sebastian looks back down at the keys. Time for the next tune. He seems uncertain -- perhaps unsure what to play. He looks at Mia. Takes the sight in. Beat. Then looks at his fellow musicians. Murmurs to them.

Then he turns back to his keys -- and finally starts playing.

A quieter tune, just piano, soft and tender and melancholy. A melody we -- and Mia -- instantly recognize...

It's Mia and Sebastian's song.

Mia looks at Sebastian. He looks at her, then back at his keys. A moment.

He's just playing the piano -- but, gradually, as he plays, his surroundings seem to grow darker... Slowly, very subtly at first, with just shifts in lighting, then a shift in perspective, the interior of the music shop...

...CHANGES.

Gradually, organically. Soon enough, we find ourselves back at the restaurant that night in Winter... Back when Mia laid eyes on Sebastian for the first time...

Within this fantasy-flashback, Sebastian finishes his piece. We stick on Mia, watching him as his Boss talks to him. All is as before, as we remember it... And sure enough, Mia approaches Sebastian as he walks near her, and utters the same words she uttered in real life that night:

MIA

*Excuse me -- I -- I just have to say:
that was incredible.*

(MORE)

MIA (CONT'D)

I was just -- I don't even know how to describe th-- I mean, I'm not a music expert so I don't -- but, your playing, I thought it was just, just magical, I just felt, I felt so transported and -- I know I probably sound weird or something, but -- but -- ok I'm going to stop talking, but I just wanted to tell you how I felt, and I just think you were great, and -- yeah...

Beat. Sebastian looks at her. And--

SEBASTIAN

You're beautiful.

With that, he sweeps her off her feet -- and decks her with a kiss for the ages.

A BURST OF ORCHESTRAL MUSIC -- a lush, full-fledged ninety-piece sound. From here, we FLIT through an alternative-version of all that happened between Mia and Sebastian, with every detour avoided -- as though we were seeing the true old-Hollywood musical rendition of their romance, the romance as it never quite was. The music carries us forward, touching on all the melodies we've heard up until now, as we DISSOLVE from one moment to another... **[TRACK 11: FINALE TBD]**

INT. NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Sebastian and Mia push open the door -- to their new place. It's an unfurnished, shabby one-bedroom -- but it's theirs and theirs alone. They grin and kiss...

INT. LIGHTHOUSE CAFE - NIGHT

Keith approaches Sebastian at the Lighthouse -- but we see Sebastian immediately shake his head. He's not interested...

INT. THEATER - DAY

Sebastian accompanies Mia as she checks out a potential theater. They roam the aisles, she inspects the stage as he inspects the seats...

INT. JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

Mia watches Sebastian perform, her heart swelling...

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Sebastian watches Mia perform while seated at the piano in the orchestra pit for her show, gazing up, his heart swelling as well...

INT. STUDIO SOUNDSTAGE - DAY / NIGHT

Mia and Sebastian walk together outside -- but now that we're outside we realize this isn't the real L.A. they're moving through...

This, in fact, is an L.A. that doesn't exist at all. A painted-backdrop L.A., just like the one we saw Mia pass by when parking on the lot. The old orange groves and the gabled rooftops and the moss-covered bungalows and the ivy-decked lamps, the jacaranda trees and the giant hills and Griffith and the Santa Monica Pier -- all painted, all props, all figments of a studio-backdrop imagination...

We've entered a fully fantastical realm, the realm of the old Hollywood ballets of the 40's and 50's...

The CASTING DIRECTOR corners Mia -- no dialogue, just movements -- and seems to beckon her to audition...

From there, we find ourselves in the AUDITION ROOM -- that is, a studio-soundstage version of it... The DIRECTOR is there, and Mia performs... We don't hear her sing, but the music takes on the melody of her song, carrying us to...

Paris... We chart the journey through old maps and dissolves, the old-Hollywood-movie way... Finally, we find ourselves in the City of Lights itself -- that is to say, the painted-backdrop version of the City of Lights...

The Sacré-Cœur and the Arc de Triomphe and the Eiffel Tower are etched in bright colors, the ornate lampposts and the cobblestones stretching before Mia and Sebastian as they move...

The music carries us through...

...a movie shoot, Mia surrounded by lights and cranes, decked in movie-movie glow...

...a jam session at a crypt-like jazz club... A sign up above: "Caveau de la Huchette"... Sebastian plays, and a few older MUSICIANS approach, gather around him, nodding... This is an old-school kind of club, and these are old-school jazzmen...

Finally, to culminate this passage, in big swaths of color and against a backdrop of the nighttime Parisian skyline, Mia and Sebastian DANCE...

This is the last time we'll ever see them dance, and they seem to recognize that, so graceful and poised are their movements... Remember -- this is a romance more perfect than a real romance could ever be...

We DISSOLVE again -- to a series of BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS, as the orchestra simmers down and PIANO takes over...

We see SHOTS of Mia dolled up like an old-school movie star, and Sebastian as what he always wanted to be -- a true jazz genius, record covers bearing his name and featuring his own music, photos of him in New York, in Tokyo, in Berlin, playing with the greats... These are photos like the ones of jazz legends we first saw decorating his apartment: full of grain, dripping with shadow...

Soon enough, the music picks back up, and we move from photos back to moving imagery... In quick succession, we see the following moments in brief, vivid GLIMPSES:

The wedding...

The honeymoon...

The first home...

Mia's pregnancy...

The birth of the child...

The child's first birthday...

...second birthday...

...third birthday...

...Everything here glows with the warmth of old 16mm home movies... These are memories, fluttering by, grabbed at random -- and yet all concocted, dreamed up out of nothing... The SCORE continuing to build and taking us right up to...

Sebastian and Mia, husband and wife, father and mother, hiring a babysitter because they've decided to go out for a night at the movies... The look here is unaffected, just everyday... The MUSIC quiets slightly, everything goes more natural, as this happily married couple hit the road...

...then find themselves blocked by a traffic jam...then take a side route, winding up in another part of L.A...

...then walk down the street, then hear music -- a makeshift quartet playing somewhere...

...and step into a place that looks just like Sebastian's music shop... They sit down to listen...

And then -- and this is how our imagined montage-musical number ends -- the quartet's PIANIST, who of course is not Sebastian, launches into Mia and Sebastian's melody...

...and Mia and Sebastian look at each other, recognizing it.

The music goes full-circle, back to where it started, as Mia and Sebastian look into each other's eyes, lean in and, softly, but with all the love in the world, KISS.

Gently, we come back down to reality: Sebastian has just finished his piece on the piano. There's some mild clapping.

Beat. Mia looks at Sebastian. Looks away. A moment passes.

DAVID

Do you want to stay for another?

She's silent for a second. Then she looks at David.

MIA

No... We should go.

He nods. They rise from their seats and head for the exit. Just as they reach the door, and as David steps out, Mia turns and looks back at Sebastian. He looks at her.

Their eyes lock.

A hint of a tear in both...

And, ever so subtly, for just a fleeting second, Mia smiles.

It's the kind of smile you could miss if you blinked -- but it's enough to signal to Sebastian that she recognized the melody he played, and that she still remembers it, and still thinks of it to this day...

Then she walks out the door. Sebastian glances at his fellow musicians. Another second passes. And then, he nods, and they launch into a new chart.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It's silent outside. You can't hear the music. Mia and David reach their car. They get in. It pulls out.

Passing by Sebastian's music shop, the car continues on. We stay put, the music shop on one side of the frame, the lights of the car on the other. Those lights growing smaller and smaller, before finally disappearing into the big L.A. night...

IRIS FADE OUT...

THE END