

GLORIA
by
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Vineyard Theater Production Draft
(frozen as of 06/10/15)

Derek Zasky/WME

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DEAN / DEVIN - extra-late 20s, "white"

KENDRA / JENNA - mid-late 20s, "Asian"

ANI / SASHA / CALLIE - early 20s, "white"

GLORIA / NAN - extra-late 30s, "anything really"

MILES / SHAWN / RASHAAD - 20 years old, "black"

LORIN - late 30s, "unclear"

SETTING

The Midtown offices of a national magazine, circa the 2010s.

NOTE

You could toy with masks/facepaint/raceface if you think it'll pay off but I don't know....

ACT ONE

(A cluster of four cubicles.

An upstage cubicle hides MILES, the intern, who wears headphones and does something menial and unseen.

Another cubicle is occupied by ANI, who is in the process of printing something out and preparing for her day.

The other cubicles are empty.

Upstage of the cubicles are offices enclosed in frosted glass. Other offices are implied downstage.

As Miles and Ani work, the Gloria section of Bach's "Mass in B Minor" plays. The rhythm of their working seems to coincide with the music.

At some point, a printer somewhere starts churning, beeps, then stops. ANI notices. She tries to get MILES's attention, but can barely be heard over the music.

ANI

Miles?

(no answer,)

Miles?... Miles?

(pokes her head over the divider,)

Miles!

(MILES notices her, takes off his earphones, and the song cuts out.)

MILES

Yep?

ANI

I think the printer is out of / paper. Could you -

MILES

Oh. No problem.

(MILES gets up and exits to an off-stage supply closet, leaving ANI on-stage working for a bit before her phone rings. She answers.)

ANI

Good morning. Arthur Kimble's office... Yes, one second....

(presses buttons, transferring the call,)

Hey - It's Jonah is on the line... Okay.

(ANI transfers the call as DEAN rushes in with his man-bag, looking generally like a mess. He starts getting situated in his cubicle.)

ANI

It's 10:48.

DEAN

Shut up. I still beat Kendra.

ANI

Are you hungover?

DEAN

What do you think?

ANI

Where were you last night?

DEAN

Gloria's housewarming.

ANI

Wait - You actually went?

DEAN

I thought we were all going! Why didn't you text me back?

ANI

Oh no! I thought we were joking!

DEAN

How would me texting you “are you coming to Gloria’s” be a joke!?

ANI

I totally thought you were texting me as if you were actually at the party but you really weren’t.

DEAN

Why would I ever do that, Ani!?

ANI

I don’t know - it just seems like something you would do! I was never going to go to Gloria’s. She’s an emotional terrorist.

DEAN

Yeah, well, once I showed up last night and realized I was the only idiot who came, I had to drink enough to forget I was there, so, for the record, the way I feel is sort of your fault!

ANI

I’m so sorry! Was it awful?

DEAN

So awful. So so so awful - and *sad* -

ANI

Oh no -

(MILES re-enters with the printer paper.)

DEAN

No one showed up and she’d hired a bartender and everything -

(seeing MILES, pulling himself up, brightly,)

Good morning, Miles!

MILES

Good morning.

DEAN

I’ll come by with something for you to do in just a second.

MILES

Okay, no rush.

DEAN

(whispering to ANI, harshly,)

How early did he get here?

ANI

(whispering,)

He was here when I got here.

DEAN

(still whispering,)

Why would you show up before your supervisors? That is so weird. This is an internship -

ANI

Wait - *No one else* was there?

DEAN

Well no one else from edit. Lydia from photo was there, for like, a minute and the new guy in Copy, but they were smart enough to be on their way to another party. Unless they were lying? Oh my god they were lying!

ANI

How long did you stay?

DEAN

Until the end basically -

ANI

What? Oh no!

DEAN

I didn't know what else to do! I felt so bad. And Gloria totally knew what was happening. She basically hid in her kitchen all night, slicing limes for no reason, while the rest of us sat around making this painful small talk. It was so embarrassing -

ANI

Ugh. Dean. I'm so sorry. But see what she did? She held you hostage - emotionally. You can't let her do that -

DEAN

I felt bad.

ANI

Yeah, well don't. We're grown ups. We're supposed to choose our friends.

DEAN

(brightly again,)

Hey, Miles?

MILES

Yeah?

DEAN

Can you come here for a second?

MILES

(coming here,)

Sure.

DEAN

(giving him money,)

Can you take this and go get a purple Vitamin Water from the vending machines?

MILES

Sure...

(MILES exits.)

ANI

You are the worst.

DEAN

He's our intern.

ANI

You never got anyone Vitamin Water.

DEAN

No, but it was different back then.

ANI

Five years ago?

DEAN

You've only been here a year, Anica, but yes: "back then" internships were real because you actually had to do this thing called "apply for it" and there were no "labor laws" "protecting" you so no one had to give you a "stipend" and the work you did was real because you were basically auditioning for a job. That's how I started. That's how Sasha started before me and Crystal before you.

(MORE)

DEAN (cont'd)

Now all these baby Ivy League fuckers come waltzing in here with their fancy writing professor's recommendations - just looking to pad their stupid resumes - and then we're stuck running some sort of summer camp - literally making up busy work for them to do on top of our actual work because they're too entitled to do anything else and they know they'll just get handed better jobs than ours right after college anyway or start their own internet media platform digital stupid space app dummy stupid thing and make a billion dollars selling it to Facebook. This kid should be getting people Vitamin Waters just for the life experience.

(gesturing to something on her desk,)

Can I borrow your -

ANI

Of course.

(ANI hands DEAN a bottle of headache medicine just as MILES is returning with the Vitamin Water.)

MILES

Here you go.

DEAN

Thanks, Miles. I'll be over in like a second.

MILES

No worries.

(MILES wanders back over to his desk, crossing paths with KENDRA, who struts in with some Starbucks and a shopping bag.)

KENDRA

(to MILES, brightly,)

Morning!

MILES

Good morning.

KENDRA

(noticing MILES at his desk,)

Oh my god look how sweet you are! Already hard at work and it's not even lunch time - You're making us all look bad!

DEAN

Kendra, I think he's just making you look bad.

KENDRA

Dean, what's going on? Why do you look like you've raped yourself?

ANI

He went to Gloria's thing last night.

KENDRA

No! You went!?

ANI

And he stayed the whole time.

KENDRA

What!? Why?!

DEAN

I thought Ani would be there.

KENDRA

I thought you guys were joking - ?

ANI

See?

DEAN

(noticing her shopping bags,)

And I'm sorry - did you actually go shopping instead of coming to work?

KENDRA

First of all, Eleanor is working from home this morning. Secondly, I have been on the clock since I got on the train this morning because, FYI, we live in the age of iPhones and if Eleanor needs to something she e-mails me. Thirdly, I am reporting.

ANI

Reporting what?

KENDRA

I am writing a blogpost on sample sale culture.

DEAN

For us?

KENDRA

I don't know yet. It's on spec.

DEAN

So, in other words, you just went shopping.

KENDRA

Stupid Kara get to leave work all the time to cover some stupid street fair for trans people or some crap -

DEAN

Because she gets actual assignments -

KENDRA

Right, because her boss is the web editor and borderline illiterate and basically out to lunch. Meanwhile, Kara is rewarded for literally being in his visual field and gets a million bylines even though she is a terrible writer. This place is so fucked up. Your whole fate depends on who you wind up working for. I mean, if I - or any of us - had wound up the web assistant or the news assistant or Michael's assistant, we'd be much farther along in our careers right now, but instead we rot away down here in "culture" and everyone forgets about us.

ANI

I feel pretty good about where I am in my career.

KENDRA

Give it a year.

(showing her the blouse,)

Look at this cute blouse I found!

DEAN

That looks exactly like the one you're wearing right now.

KENDRA

No, Dean, you can't borrow it.

(beat, reading something,)

Wait, what is this weird e-mail from Bo?

ANI

I know, I was just reading that.

KENDRA

They got rid of the coffee machine in the snack room!? First they stop reimbursing our cabs, they freeze our raises and now we have to bring our own coffee?

ANI

Don't you already bring your own coffee?

KENDRA

Yes, but what if I need another cup?

DEAN

Then you'll leave in the middle of the day for Starbucks like you always do.

KENDRA

The point is people here are already exploited enough. You'd think they'd garnish a figure off of their ridiculous salaries before they went after our shitty free coffee. Why does it feel like we're on the freaking Titanic?

(A door opens and NAN peeks her head out.
She looks a little miffed - or a little ill - or
both.)

NAN (O.S.)

Dean?

DEAN

Nan - just finishing something up - sorry -
(beat, seeing her,)

Are you okay?

NAN (O.S.)

(a little impatient,)

I'm fine. Can we get started?

DEAN

Yeah, sorry. I'll be right there.

(NAN disappears back into her office, as
DEAN gets up, grabs a notepad.)

DEAN

Fuck / me -

KENDRA

Nice.

ANI

What's happening?

DEAN

Nan is leaving this afternoon for the Edinburgh Book Fair because business made her book an earlier flight because it was cheaper so now I have to reschedule half these meetings before the offices over there close.

(DEAN exits into NAN's office.)

KENDRA

Ani, did Dean just get here?

ANI

Yeah. Like ten minutes before you did.

KENDRA

What a douche. And also, is he, like, going for some sort of record?

ANI

What do you mean?

KENDRA

Isn't this the third time this week he's come in hungover?

(to MILES,)

Miles, I want you to be careful. Too much networking turns you into an alcoholic. Write it down -

ANI

Kendra.

KENDRA

What? I'm imparting professional wisdom, Ani. That is our responsibility as supervisors.

ANI

It's actually just really bitchy.

KENDRA

Come on. I *love* Dean! We *all* love him - He's clearly got all this potential - he's always had it - but what has he actually done with it? Nothing. Because he spends every night out chumming it up with the whole industry at every stupid networky party he can find and every day recovering from the hangover and it's a sad, vicious cycle.

ANI

Gloria's housewarming was not a networky party.

KENDRA

Ani, do you know how long has Gloria been here?

ANI

I don't know.

KENDRA

Like fifteen years. Which means that not only has she sat around in Copy for over a decade losing her mind because no one here has the balls here to tell people they'll never be promoted or to just fire them and put them out of their misery - but Gloria's also had the good fortune of getting to know and watch who knows however many generations of assistants come through here and go on to become some hotshot editor or reporter somewhere else. I'm willing to put money on the fact that Dean thought some of those people would be there and he would get to starfuck until the sun came up. Why do you think he actually stayed the whole time? But he obviously miscalculated. And why? Because Gloria is the office freak and no one can wants to hang with the office freak outside of the office, which Dean would have noticed if he wasn't so desperate and drunk and we all know heavy drinking impairs your judgement, which brings me back to my original point: "Schmoozers become boozers." I just made that up. If Nan had half a brain, she would take away his expense account and put that money towards rehab. And, honestly, for the both of them. That woman's about as big of a lush as he is. The only difference is, somehow, she manages to work through the hangovers. I think I've had a lot of caffeine -

ANI

I just think Dean was being nice.

KENDRA

Yeah, okay.

ANI

And I think it's really inappropriate for you to be saying all this behind his back and in front of our intern -

KENDRA

I'm just concerned, Ani. And I'll say it to his face. And I think it's better Intern hears it here than out on the street. Isn't that right, Intern?

(beat, no answer, turns to look,)

Oh wait, he has his headphones on.

ANI

Good.

MILES

(taking his headphones off,)

What?

KENDRA

Nothing. Actually, can you take this and get me a Luna bar from the vending machines?

(KENDRA gives him some money. MILES goes, just as GLORIA comes stalking in. There is a purse around her shoulder, which she clutches. She stops in front of DEAN's empty cubicle. Her energy is way weird.)

ANI

Speaking of: Hi, Gloria!

GLORIA

Speaking of?

ANI

We were just talking about you.

GLORIA

Why were you just talking about me?

ANI

Your party. I'm so sorry I couldn't make it last night. Dean said it was really nice.

GLORIA

(a little taken aback,)

He did?

ANI

Yeah. Did you have fun?

GLORIA

(cold,)

Not really.

ANI

Oh.

(Beat, as GLORIA stares at ANI intensely, perhaps clutching her purse a little tighter. ANI feels a little freaked out.)

GLORIA

Where is Dean?

ANI

(freaked out,)

Uh, he's meeting with Nan right now.

GLORIA

Okay. I have to go.

(GLORIA stalks off.)

ANI

What the fuck was that?

KENDRA

What the fuck was what?

ANI

Gloria just like stared at me like this for like three minutes.

(stares at KENDRA like GLORIA,)

Like a crazy person.

KENDRA

Gloria is a crazy person.

ANI

No, this was like uncharacteristically crazy. Like bitchy.

KENDRA

You brought it on yourself.

ANI

What?

KENDRA

You think you're the first person to "apologize" for skipping her dumb party? If this woman didn't know her social standing in the office before, she certainly knows it now. I'd be bitchy, too.

ANI

Well, you didn't go to her party either. She didn't say anything to you.

KENDRA

She never says anything to me. I think I've made it perfectly clear to Gloria that she and I have no reason to ever speak to each other ever. Unlike you and Dean, I believe there's no point in being fake to her.

(MILES re-enters.)

ANI

I'm not being fake. I'm being polite.

MILES

Here you go.

KENDRA

Thank you, Miles.

(Beat, in which everyone "works." ANI's phone rings.)

ANI

Arthur Kimble's office.

(beat,)

Hi Clara. Arthur's is meeting with a writer at the moment, but can he call you right back?

(beat,)

Okay great.

(ANI hangs up the phone.)

KENDRA

Oh my god, Sarah Tweed is dead!?

ANI

What?

KENDRA

They found her body this morning! Oh my god. An overdose?

ANI

How am I just hearing about this?!

MILES

Who is Sarah Tweed?

KENDRA

Oh my god are you kidding me? / Ani -

ANI

This is so sad. What?

KENDRA

Miles just asked me who Sarah Tweed is.

ANI

What?

KENDRA

Now I feel a hundred years old.

MILES

So who is she?

ANI

I'll find you one of her songs.

KENDRA

Oh my god I used to love Sarah Tweed.

(A moody song begins playing from ANI's computer. ANI awkwardly sings along for a bar or two like a girl who thinks she likes to sing but really doesn't.)

MILES

I have never heard this before.

KENDRA

Is this from *Ophelia Street*?

ANI

No. *Glitter Witch*.

KENDRA

Duh -

ANI

I was obsessed with this album for an entire year of my life.

KENDRA

She got me through such a bad depression.

(beat,)

Oh my god, wait, this is my favorite part!

Me, too!

ANI

(ANI and KENDRA half-sing that part of the song together.)

You guys are so weird.

MILES

You're weird.

KENDRA

(DEAN finally emerges from NAN's office.)

Ok, well, let me know if you need me / to get you Aspirin or anything...

DEAN

I love this song.

KENDRA

(DEAN goes to his desk and grabs some manuscripts.)

What's wrong with Nan?

ANI

She's sick.

DEAN

You mean hungover? Is this like how dogs start to resemble their owners?

KENDRA

(DEAN flips KENDRA off.)

Ew. Is this Sarah Tweed? Why are we playing this?

DEAN

In memoriam.

KENDRA

What?

DEAN

/ She died.

ANI

KENDRA
She died.

DEAN
When?

KENDRA
Last night.

DEAN
OD?

KENDRA
Yes.

DEAN
Oh my god - Finally.

ANI
Rude. I loved her.

KENDRA
Is this song really ten years old?

ANI
Oh my god what? Where has my life gone?

DEAN
Oh, Ani, shut up -

KENDRA
Yeah, aren't you, like, 24?

DEAN
(dropping manuscripts off with MILES,)
Okay, Miles, it's your lucky day. I've got to re-schedule a bunch of meetings this morning, so you get to do first pass on some books we're considering for excerpt. So: read these and get me evals by the end of the day, okay?

MILES
Sure.

DEAN
And, uh, take your time. Don't work too hard. We're not paying you enough. And don't feel like you have to show up at 9 AM.

MILES

(with a laugh,)

I'll remember that for tomorrow.

(MILES puts on some headphones, starts
sorting through the book manuscripts.)

DEAN

(beat, crossing back to his desk,)

This song is so terrible.

KENDRA

You're terrible.

(remembering,)

Oh shit. Is it Thursday?

DEAN

Yes.

(KENDRA picks up a phone and dials a
number. She waits for someone to pick up and
motions for ANI to turn the music down a bit.
ANI complies. Meanwhile, everyone else starts
to "work." She proceeds to have a long
discussion in Chinese or Korean - whichever
the actress can speak/fake.)

KENDRA

(in another language,)

Hey, Dad. Is Mom there?... Can I speak to her? Okay....

DEAN

(to ANI,)

Is Kendra serious right now?

ANI

I know. I can't.

KENDRA

(still into the phone, still in another language,)

Mom - Hi! I totally forgot it was your Birthday! / I mean to call yesterday but I was so
busy - Happy Birthday!... I can't talk long, because I'm at work, but how are you feeling?
Good! Are you healing okay? Are the pills helping? Good... Good... Okay... Well I have to
go. I'm a work. Okay. I love you! Bye!

(Beat. They work.)

ANI

Oh, Dean, Gloria came by looking for you.

DEAN

Why?

ANI

I have no idea. But she was in like extra-crazy mode.

MILES

(taking out his headphones,)

Hey Dean?

DEAN

Yes, Miles?

MILES

(holding out something for him,)

I think you accidentally left this in the pile.

DEAN

(snatching it away, kind of freaking out,)

/ Oh my god! Thank you.

ANI

What was it?

DEAN

Nothing. Thank you, Miles.

MILES

No problem.

(MILES goes back to his reading.)

ANI

(to DEAN,)

What is that?

DEAN

/ Nothing.

ANI

Then why did you freak out like that? Let me see!

DEAN

No.

ANI

What was it Miles?

DEAN

(snapping,)

Stop, Ani! Mind your business!

KENDRA

(hanging up,)

You guys - what the hell! I was on the phone!

DEAN

You were on a personal call -

(LORIN - a sad sad sad sad guy - sort of stalks
on, goes over to ANI's cubicle.)

LORIN

Hey, I'm sorry you guys, but -

(distracted, to ANI,)

Can you - can you please turn that off? Please? -

ANI

(turning it off,)

Sorry, sorry, sorry -

LORIN

(to everyone,)

We are all trying to work down the hall, so if you could just please please just keep it down a little bit, we'd really appreciate it? I know it seems like you're isolated, but this hallway / actually carries sound -

KENDRA

Carries sound - / we know -

LORIN

And we can basically hear everything, so please. Thanks.

KENDRA

We'll keep it down.

(LORIN leaves.)

DEAN

Oh my god, Lorin, eat a dick.

ANI

Be nice! Factchecking is hard.

DEAN

The issue is closed. Lorin's just being annoying - like he's the only person ever doing any work. Just get headphones like everyone else.

KENDRA

It's gotten worse since he's been promoted.

ANI

Maybe he's under more stress?

KENDRA

We get it Ani. You're in love with him.

ANI

/ Kendra!

DEAN

What?

KENDRA

What? It's so obvious - the way you flirt. Besides, this office could use another couple besides Lucy and Marcus. / Yuck.

DEAN

You have a crush on Lorin?

ANI

I do not have a crush on Lorin - oh my god.

KENDRA

That's not how you were acting at the last office party. Though did we ever find out if he's gay?

DEAN

Lorin is not *gay*.

KENDRA

How do you know?

DEAN

We all know each other. I mean, I think he might be *Jewish*?

ANI

No his mom is Mexican -

KENDRA

You guys, Lorin is just a harried, passive-aggressive shell of himself and that has nothing to do with Race. It's just what happens when you stay in this hideous place for too long. It could happen to any of us.

DEAN

Really, Kendra? The intern is right there.

KENDRA

He's wearing his headphones. And, Ani, I hope you're paying attention. I know your whole thing is like "Oh, I'm so pretty. I'm a pretty nerd. I graduated from college a year early with my neuroscience degree and was going to like go to clone baby brains but accidentally wound up in magazines because I know science and computer stuff but if it doesn't work out I can always just go to brain school or computer school or wherever pretty nerds go."

(beat,)

But you better start figuring your shit out. Get a five year plan. Because if you don't, you're going to wake up one day and the thing you thought would be an interesting thing to do after college is actually your career and then you have to live with it.

(DEAN burps loudly.)

KENDRA

Ew. For example: this cautionary tale.

DEAN

Excuse me?

KENDRA

Don't you hold the title for the longest living assistant on Edit Row?

DEAN

No. Daisy's been here the longer.

KENDRA

Daisy doesn't count. She's the assistant to the editor in chief, which is basically an associate editor. And I said "longest living." Aren't *you* turning thirty any day now? I will die before I turn thirty in a cubicle.

DEAN

Let me know how I can help you get there.

(beat,)

And Daisy is not a fucking associate editor. First of all, she just ghost-edits all the writers Michael doesn't want. Secondly, if you're in a cubicle, you're an assistant.

KENDRA

Okay, Dean. Believe what you need to believe.

ANI

What's your five year plan, Kendra?

KENDRA

What do you mean?

ANI

You're 27. That gives you only three years.

KENDRA

Um I am clearly making healthy strides towards an exit.

DEAN

With what? Your fake twitter accounts or your fashion tumblr?

KENDRA

Eat me. At least I'm getting my name out there. I guess I should be on the Drunk Uncle Dean plan, getting wasted every night and continue waiting around here for some promotion that's never going to happen?

DEAN

Kendra, do some work.

KENDRA

If you had half a brain, you'd look around and see everyone in charge is pushing 60, or just past it and they aren't going anywhere and they are certainly not thinking about you. This bunch of postwar glutton-babies all got spoiled on the riches of being an American when being an American was basically the Best and, by freak chance, just happened to discover New York when it was also the Best and apartments were like a dollar. And now, all these decades later, here we are. Now that the publishing world's collapsed and contracting all around us, mostly because they were too busy bluffing and boozing their way through the 80s/90s, as opposed to, I don't know, anticipating the internet - now that all these martinis lunches have all dried up, these boomers in charge are like, "Wait, being a good editor and maintaining sustainable media industry is actually a skill that requires work? What is this work? How do you do it? Can I do it now?" And, in the meantime, who has historically been doing all the work? The poor suckers born a generation later. Their assistants who are now stuck as their middle-management with assistants of their own - i.e. us - some of whom think they're going to rise through the rank like they're bosses did without realizing that these editors were all assistants, again, by freak chance, in the exact historical window when this city actually accidentally had opportunity in it and not just the illusion of it. And now everything's all constipated. And do you know why? Because people actually died back then. There was something called *turnover*. Now these boomers aren't dying. And they know it. And, if we're not careful, they're going to starve us / out -

(NAN is heard vomiting loudly through the office door, cutting everyone off. Beat.)

KENDRA

Oh my god ew.

ANI

What was that?

NAN (O.S.)

Dean?

(DEAN goes to NAN's door.)

ANI

(to KENDRA,)

Did she just throw up?

DEAN

Nan? Is everything okay?

NAN (O.S.)

I'm fine.

DEAN

Are you sure?

NAN (O.S.)

Yes. But can you come here for a second?

KENDRA

(to ANI,)

See what I mean? Dog. Owner.

(Once DEAN has exited, ANI gets up goes around and looks at the document on DEAN's desk, nosily.)

ANI

Kendra.

KENDRA

What?

ANI

Dean has book proposal on his desk.

KENDRA

So?

ANI

It's his.

KENDRA

(getting up to go see,)

He does not!

ANI

A memoir.

KENDRA

A memoir about what?

ANI

"Zine Dreams, or Ambition." "Zine Dreams?" "Zine?"

(gasps,)

Is that supposed to be short for magazines?

KENDRA

Oh god. "New York City is a rat race and this is the story of one young professional's laps in it. This is about climbing every ladder of a publishing world only to be stuck in the same pit." What does that even mean?

(NAN's door opens and DEAN backs out of it, holding something. ANI and KENDRA run to their desks, guiltily, but DEAN doesn't notice.)

DEAN

(to NAN,)

Are you sure you can get on the plane?

NAN (O.S)

I'm sure. Please. I just have to get back to work.

DEAN

Okay.

NAN

Thank you, Dean.

DEAN

No problem.

(DEAN closes the door.)

ANI

(back at her cubicle,)

Dean, what happened?

(DEAN turns around slowly. He is holding a plastic bag full of vomit.)

KENDRA

Dean, please tell me that is not what I think it is!

(Silently, sadly, but swiftly, as if he, too, might upchuck, DEAN runs off-stage.)

ANI

Oh my god ew. Is that bag full of puke?

MILES

(taking his headphones off,)

What's going on?

KENDRA

Dean just walked out of Nan's office holding a bag of puke.

MILES

(peeking around the cubicle,)

Ew. What?

(DEAN returns shamefully, looking blanched.)

ANI

Are you okay?

DEAN

I don't want to talk about it.

KENDRA

I'm sure that helped your hangover.

ANI

Wait, are you going to throw up, too? I have a thing with throw up.

DEAN

I don't know.

ANI

I could get you a ginger ale or something?

DEAN

I just need some caffeine.

KENDRA

What caffeine? There's no more coffee in the snack room. But I'm probably going to make a Starbucks run in a bit, if you want something.

(KENDRA drains the dregs of her Starbucks.)

DEAN

Kendra, how do you get away with this?

KENDRA

Get away with what?

DEAN

Doing no work. You just got here an hour late, called China or something, monologued about baby boomers for fifteen minutes, and now you're leaving on a coffee break? Does Eleanor just literally have nothing for you to do?

KENDRA

It's not my fault my boss is self-sufficient enough to clean up her own vomit. And, as a woman who has managed to make a name for herself in an industry still dominated by privileged straight white men Eleanor is sensitive to the demands on my time -

DEAN

Kendra, you're a rich Asian girl from Pasadena with a degree from Harvard. That is essentially a privileged straight white man.

KENDRA

How privileged and white and male of you to say. And, somehow, also very gay. I can't wait to read it about it in "Zine Dreams."

(Beat, as DEAN realizes.)

DEAN

Fuck you guys! You went through my desk!?

KENDRA

Ani went through it.

DEAN

Ani!

KENDRA

Here I was thinking you were wasting away on the editor track. See, Ani? Even Dean had an escape plan. I have to admit I'm kind of impressed. You're not as dumb as you act. Just don't open the book with your stupid monastery story.

ANI

What monastery story?

DEAN

Kendra, please shut up. Some of us are trying to work.

KENDRA

Wait, did you not know that Dean tried to become a Buddhist monk? It's like the only interesting thing about him, and it's not even that interesting -

DEAN

Kendra, will you shut up? Will you shut the fuck up before I fucking kill you?

KENDRA

Um, do I need to contact HR?

DEAN

Do I need to I rip off your big fucking ugly mouth to cut out your ugly fucking tongue to piss down your stupid / fucking throat in order to finally get you to shut your stupid fucking face the fuck up you!

ANI

You guys... you guys... you guys... you guys... you guys -

(LORIN re-enters.)

LORIN

Really, you guys!? Really!? I'm really really not trying to be annoying, but can you guys please please please keep it down? Please, okay? I am asking you so nicely. We are working on a really insane deadline.

DEAN

Lorin, what is happening?

LORIN

We're running this last minute profile on some singer named Sarah Tweed -

DEAN

/ What?

ANI

/ What?

KENDRA

/ Wait, what?!

LORIN

She died.

KENDRA

We know. How are they profiling her now?

LORIN

Yeah, weirdly enough we've had this blog post that Kara wrote in inventory, that's randomly becoming timely, so they want to beef it up into a feature and we're rushing it into the next issue.

ANI

/What? Why?

KENDRA

Are you kidding?

LORIN

I know. It's fucking retarded. I'm sitting here waiting to be called back by some twenty six year old who happens to be the one person in the world to have done her PhD on Sarah Tweed. I'm thirty seven and all I have is a BA in French. Like why did I do that? I'm not French! My family's not French! I was supposed to be a lawyer. Someone shoot me.

(LORIN exits.)

KENDRA

This is so unfair! Why is Kara getting to write about Sarah Tweed!?

DEAN

It sounds like she already wrote the piece.

KENDRA

It was a blogpost! It was filler for their dumb website! You know that means she only tossed it off in like forty-five minutes and now they're rushing it into the next issue? Why does it always happen like this? This girl didn't write a single thing before she got here!

ANI

It's actually pretty good.

KENDRA

What?

ANI

She already filed a draft in the system.

KENDRA

(frantically searching her computer,)

What?!

(beat, as she reads the piece on her computer,)

Wha... I... Are you... Oh my fucking God. What the fuck is this title? "Serenading Sappho?" Why is Kara trying to make Sarah Tweed look like some huge lesbian!

DEAN

Wasn't she?

KENDRA

She dated like three girls! She was bi. Kara's just got some weird lesbian agenda where she's trying to make this a gay suicide or something. Should I say something to her? I'm going to say something.

DEAN

You should say something to the editor.

KENDRA

You're right! Whose the editor?

DEAN

Austin.

KENDRA

Jesus Christ. Of course it's Austin. This is such a conspiracy! I'm totally going to say something. We are just as qualified as the other end of that hallway and no one remember we're here and then an artist we both love - who we both cherish - gets written about poorly the very day after she dies? We have to take a stand against this! Ani come with me!

ANI

Leave me out of it.

KENDRA

You are such a pussy! And we have to remind people that we're here, you guys! I'll just go up to Austin and be like, "Hey, I read Kara's piece. I'm a huge Sarah Tweed fan and I read the draft and I noticed some things." I'm doing it!

DEAN

Do it!

KENDRA

I'm going to do it!

(KENDRA stands up, resolutely walks off.)

ANI

Where does it say that Austin is editing the piece?

DEAN

Nowhere. I just made that up.

ANI

Oh my God! That was so mean, Dean! What did you just do?

DEAN

I got her the fuck away from me so I could get some work done.

(a lesson,)

Don't go through my desk.

(noticing ANI exiting,)

Where are you going?

ANI

I clearly need to watch this?

(ANI scurries off after KENDRA. DEAN and MILES remain, sort of working. GLORIA comes stalking around the corner, sees DEAN.)

GLORIA

Hey.

DEAN

Hey, Gloria. Ani said you were looking for me earlier, what's up?

GLORIA

Uh, nothing. I figured it out.

DEAN

Okay... Can I help you with something?

GLORIA

Where did Ani and Kendra go?

DEAN

Ani's watching Kendra confront Austin about Kara's profile. Do you need them?

GLORIA

No.

DEAN

Ok.

(beat,)

Last night was fun!

(beat,)

How are you?

GLORIA

Fine.

(GLORIA stares at him for a long time, like she's about to say something, hands trembling in her pockets. Then, suddenly, she just stalks off, leaving DEAN behind, completely weirded out.)

MILES

Was that Gloria?

DEAN

Yes.

MILES

Yikes.

DEAN

I know. She's a little weird.

MILES

Yeah - I heard you guys talking about her just now.

DEAN

I thought you had your headphones on?

MILES

Yeah but I haven't really been listening to any music for a while.

(beat,)

Hey, Dean.

DEAN

Yes?

MILES

I only glanced at the cover letter, but I thought your book sounded good. I'd totally read it.

DEAN

Thanks.

MILES

I had no idea you were a Buddhist.

DEAN

I'm not a Buddhist. I worked in a Buddhist monastery. And it was only, like, a few months. It was bullshit.

MILES

Then why did you do it?

DEAN

I was dating someone in college who was really into Buddhism and it was this person's idea to basically try and live there and work there and I thought it would be interesting and worth writing about, but then I realized that Buddhist monasteries are just boring as shit and they work the volunteers like slaves. And the person I was dating turned out to be a total psycho. So I just left. And moved to New York.

MILES

Ah.

(beat,)

Do you think I should write a book?

DEAN

Uh, do you have something to write about?

MILES

Not yet, but I feel like I could figure it out. Did you know what you were going to write about before you decided to be a writer?

DEAN

Not exactly.

MILES

Then how did you know that you were a writer?

DEAN

I've just known since I was young. But it took me a while to start writing anything good. I needed some experience.

MILES

I admire people who've always known what they wanted to do. I've never known.

DEAN

I bet you're just naturally good at everything, huh?

MILES

(with a laugh,)

No - I can't even figure out what I'm going to do after college. I was thinking about Grad School or J school or something but now I think I want to wait maybe. I don't even know if I want to be a writer or an editor or work in magazines, really. My professor just thought I would be good at it.

DEAN

Yeah. Richard loves you -

MILES

Do you like working in magazines? Well, obviously not, since you're writing a book -

DEAN

That's not true. I'm just ready for a change.

MILES

Me, too. I just realized that I've spent my entire life being in school. I think I need to experience the real world. I'm actually thinking about maybe going abroad and just like teaching English. Just somewhere really far away and random. Like Germany or Japan or something, but I'm really interested in Africa, though. Did you know that, within our lifetime, they're expecting like two-thirds of the population of the whole continent to just be... gone? Just totally wiped out. I suddenly feel this deep anxiety about the future, about how everything I know now could just be gone one day - or like everything on the Earth right now at this exact moment could be totally different tomorrow.

DEAN

Yeah. Listen, I've got to get back to rescheduling these meetings.

(Beat before MILES goes back to his cubicle.)

MILES

So Nan's going to be gone tomorrow?

DEAN

Yeah. She's flying out this afternoon for the Edinburgh Book Fair.

MILES

When is she leaving?

DEAN

Well, she's about to leave for a noon lunch, and then I don't really know if she'll be back to the office before she heads to the airport.

MILES

Oh. Then do you think she'll have like a second to speak to me before she leaves? Just like a second.

DEAN

I don't know.

MILES

Cause, you know, tomorrow is my last day -

DEAN

No it isn't?

MILES

It is. It's been six weeks.

DEAN

Holy crap. I didn't even realize -

MILES

Ha ha ha. Yeah, time flies. I just feel like I just want to say a proper goodbye before she left. Just you know, to say goodbye. Just really quick. Is she going to have time?

DEAN

I mean, I don't know. She's also a little sick.

MILES

Do you think you could ask her?

DEAN

Um. Sure.

(picks up the phone dials,)

Nan? The intern's last day is tomorrow and he wants to know if he can come say goodbye before you - Are you going to have time? I told him you - Yes... It's Miles. Okay.

(hangs up,)

She said you can pop your head in right now if you want.

MILES

Cool.

DEAN

Just knock.

(MILES gets up, goes to the door, knocks.)

Hey, Nan?
MILES

Miles, come in, come in.
NAN (O.S.)

I just want -
MILES

Come in. You can close the door.
NAN (O.S.)

Wha - okay.
MILES

(MILES closes the door. DEAN looks a little alarmed, just as ANI is seen scurrying back onstage, past MILES, making her way to her seat.)

What happened?
DEAN

(KENDRA stalks back on-stage, looking really unhappy.)

You are a fucking asshole!
KENDRA

What happened?
DEAN

Austin is not editing Kara's piece, you piece of shit!
KENDRA

Really?
DEAN

No, Eleanor is!
KENDRA

You don't know what your own boss is editing?
DEAN

KENDRA

Eleanor is working from home today!

DEAN

Wow, so you really do have nothing to do.

KENDRA

You set me up! That is not cool! I would never do something like that to you!

DEAN

I swear I had no idea about Eleanor.

KENDRA

And because of you Michael now thinks I'm an idiot!

DEAN

Michael?

KENDRA

Yes! Because, after Austin told me he wasn't editing the print piece and I realized you were a fucking liar, he was just like, "Why don't we just call Kara in here and you can give her your notes yourself" and so, like, in stalks Kara, who I guess had been eavesdropping and she's like "What notes?" And I just point out all of the liberties she took with Sarah Tweed's sexuality and, I guess, this strikes a nerve because Kara is insecure and knows she's no supposed to be writing this, so she starst screaming at me, accusing me of being homophobic, which is not fair because I totally have a gay brother, and then Michael comes over from next door and he's like, "What is going on?" And Austin's all, "Kendra is just giving Kara some notes on the Sarah Tweed piece," then Michael's like, "Are these coming from Eleanor?" And I'm just like, "No, they're coming from me, why would they becoming from Eleanor?" And then the room gets really quiet and Michael's like, "Because Eleanor's editing the piece." And I have to make up some excuse about how Eleanor's been in meetings all morning and I look like a fucking asshole when you and Kara are the fucking assholes!

ANI

How is this Kara's fault?

KENDRA

Because she was turning a very professional conversation out to be some sort of catfight and trying to imply I was there to sabotage her -

DEAN

Which you were -

KENDRA

No I was not! I was trying to help!

DEAN

Kendra, you know, Kara's in the middle of closing a piece that's turning around in a day.

KENDRA

So? It's been in inventory for months. It was basically dead -

DEAN

Still she has to fluff it up to a profile in a day. I know this may sound a little foreign to you since you spent half your day in line for Sample Sales, but when people actually do work, it's actually stressful and you're sort of tired and the last thing you want is someone trying to "help you" by fucking with it.

KENDRA

Thanks for the life lesson. Now I have to warn Eleanor about this shit show - You know what, you people are fucking losers who can go fuck yourselves. Except for Miles. Wait, where is Miles?

DEAN

Saying goodbye to Nan.

KENDRA

I hope he's telling her about your book proposal.

DEAN

Ha ha.

KENDRA

Or maybe he's interviewing for your job.

DEAN

Oh, shut up.

KENDRA

Or maybe he's telling her about your book and interviewing for your job at the same time. Nan has seemed unimpressed with you lately. And Miles is young and smart and capable and not a drunk -

DEAN

Why don't you tweet about it on your twitter?

KENDRA

“Zine Dreams.” Who are you? What makes you think anything about your miserable little life is worth reading about?

DEAN

/ Tweet tweet -

KENDRA

The last thing the world needs is another memoir of a drunk white guy wasting his twenties away in New York - I’M GOING TO STARBUCKS!

(KENDRA grabs her purse and leaves.
LORIN comes over.)

LORIN

Are you guys kidding me right now?!

DEAN

Do you need to borrow a pair of headphones?

LORIN

I have my own headphones and I can still hear you! I can still hear you over my sixty dollar noise cancelling headphones, because you are making more than noise, okay?!

DEAN

Sorry.

ANI

How is the profile going?

LORIN

It looks like we’re over the hard part.

DEAN

Don’t take your morning nap just yet. Kendra just psyched Kara out with a bunch of notes that she’s probably going to incorporate -

LORIN

WHAT?! ARE YOU KIDDING ME!?

DEAN

I wish. Ask Ani.

LORIN

Where did she go? I'm going to kick her in the throat!

DEAN

Starbucks.

LORIN

WHAT?!?

(LORIN suddenly starts sobbing softly. Beat,
as he cries.)

ANI

(getting up going to comfort him,)

Lorin?

DEAN

Are you okay?

LORIN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm just so tired.

ANI

You've been up all night.

LORIN

No. Not just that. I'm fucking just tired of this job. I just turned 37, you guys, and I'm still a factchecker.

ANI

But you just got promoted -

DEAN

Yeah -You're the head factchecker.

LORIN

That is still a factchecker! In fact, it's worse because you're the fucking mother of all factcheckers. You have to stay here the whole fucking night factchecking the fact checkers and after like six hours of factchecking factcheckers factchecking all these sloppy fucking facts the writers could actually give a shit about, you just want to claw your eyes off and bleed out through your skull holes! You're just like, What does it even matter if this is true or not? It's all a fucking story in a fucking magazine! No one reads magazines for the truth! People just want something to read on the elliptical at the gym or to line their fucking canary cages with - I don't fucking know! And all that work just winds up in the trash by Friday.

(MORE)

LORIN (cont'd)

And then there's fresh load of this bullshit waiting for you in your mailbox on Monday! And what is a "profile writer" actually doing besides throwing one human being after another to the wolves of history, rendering entire lives flat and uncomplicated and 8,000 words long? Like this fucking Sarah Tweed girl. Why the fuck are we only interested in her now, now that she's dead? Why does dying suddenly make someone interesting? What the fuck is she going to do with a profile now? Sell her CDs? She's fucking dead. What is this going to do except make money for people other than her? It's so fucking fucked up. And I really envy her, you know. I wish I was dead, full of opiates in the back of station wagon right now. I fucking wish. Anything but this bullshit! I bet she was fucking smiling when she swallowed that bottle of painkillers and climbed into that sleeping bag. I bet she was just like, Finally, I'm getting the fuck out of this miserable existence, off of this miserable planet of people who seem like they're interested in you, but really only want you dead, who only want you when you're dead! What is this terrible place? Why are we like this? Is another human life anything to us but excuse to think about ourselves? Sorry, her music - I think her music is just really powerful.

ANI

What did you just listen to?

LORIN

Styrofoam Girl. Ugh - Everyone just suddenly feels so cruel!

DEAN

You're just having a moment.

LORIN

And did you hear about poor Gloria?

ANI

What about Gloria?

LORIN

No one went to her party last night.

ANI

Dean went.

LORIN

Oh, you did?

DEAN

I did.

LORIN

Did anyone else show up? Lydia said she didn't stay, because no one was there and it was so awkward.

DEAN

Yeah, there was like four people the whole night. She had all this catered food and a bartender. I got so drunk.

ANI

She actually came by here earlier and I asked her about the party and she told me she had an awful time.

LORIN

Ugh. I feel so bad. If I hadn't been here all night, I would have gone.

ANI

Really?

LORIN

Yes. Gloria's been here so long. They work her to the bone. And copy stays later than anyone else I know, except me. This place is her life - these are the like people she knows. She was just finally able to scrape enough of her crap salary together to buy her own place. This is probably the hugest thing to happen to her. So she pours all of her effort into throwing this party and no one - *no one* could be bothered to show up? And Gloria is, okay, a little weird, but she hasn't always been this way. She's just this lady from Florida who'd been reading the magazine since she was a little girl. Be careful Ani: This place just turns you into a - It just sucks your soul out of you and leaves you with a fucking empty apartment. Dicks for coworkers. Your youth gone. Your friends gone. Your dreams gone. Dean knows what I'm talking about. It's good you went, man. I should write her an e-mail.

(beat,)

Anyway, I have to get back to my desk, since I now know we're expecting a total rewrite. What the shit. Tell Kendra when she gets back to come see me. I'm going to uppercute her face!

(LORIN exits. Beat, before the sound of laughter comes from NAN's office. DEAN looks at the door.)

DEAN

What the hell?

ANI

Sounds like a fun interview.

(off DEAN's look,)

Kidding.

DEAN

Not funny. Do you think he's after my job?!

ANI

No -

DEAN

You know, he sat here and gave me this whole schpiel about how he didn't know what he wanted to do after college or if he was even interested in magazines and now he's probably going down on her in there.

ANI

He's just a sweet, likeable guy. Relax.

DEAN

Oh please. He's just a wooer and a seducer and just as cutthroat and ambitious as you or me. I promise.

ANI

I don't know if I consider myself an ambitious person.

DEAN

What?

ANI

I like to think I'm sort of just here to see what happens.

DEAN

Yeah, because you've got actual marketable skills -

ANI

What are you talking about?

DEAN

You can do math! You know what "code" is. All I can do is read English! You could go somewhere else. But here's what happens to the rest of us, Ani. You wake up one day and the thing that you thought was just going to be a fun thing to do after college turns into your career - your life. And then you have to live with it.

(GLORIA comes whipping around the corner,
hands in her pocket.)

GLORIA

Where did Kendra go!?

DEAN

Oh shit, she was here, but then she went to Starbucks. Do you need something?

GLORIA

Are you kidding me?! How long ago?

DEAN

I don't know. A while ago.

GLORIA

Well when is she usually back?

DEAN

It's Kendra. For all we know she's already home getting ready for bed.

GLORIA

Dammit!

ANI

Is everything okay, Gloria?

GLORIA

Yeah. It's fine! You edit people are just never at your desks! Do you guys just have like nothing to do?!

DEAN

Ha ha ha sort...

GLORIA

Fuck this!

(GLORIA stalks off, hands in her pockets.)

DEAN

Um...

ANI

See? Extra-crazy.

(NAN's office opens and MILES enters.)

MILES

Ha ha ha ha yes -

NAN (O.S.)

(sounding much better,)

Well, have a good senior year!

MILES

Yes thank you! Have a safe trip! And feel better!

NAN (O.S.)

Thanks. I will. Can you close the door?

MILES

Sure.

(MILES closes the door.)

DEAN

That was quite a goodbye.

MILES

Ha ha ha. I know. Nan is really amazing.

DEAN

She is. What were you guys laughing about?

MILES

Oh, just like... Professor Morrison.

DEAN

What about Rick?

MILES

Just a funny story about him.

DEAN

Okay. And what else?

MILES

And, I don't know, she asked me what I was going to do after graduation. I told her I didn't really know and she gave me some advice.

DEAN

That's nice. What kind of advice?

MILES

Just like... whatever. Like general advice. You know. Nothing specific, but she said I could call her if I was ever interested in working in publishing or something.

DEAN

Yeah, well, she sort of says that to everybody.

MILES

Yeah, but I don't know if I'm really interested in publishing. It seems like you guys have it pretty hard. Everyone here's so miserable, but anything you ever read about anything exciting to do or anywhere exciting to be, people aren't miserable, you know? They're excited -

(Screaming is heard.)

DEAN

What the hell?

MILES

What is - ?

(More screaming is heard.)

DEAN

It's coming from factchecking. Someone should go tell *them* to shut the fuck up.

(A gunshot is heard. Maybe a few.)

MILES

Whoa -

(MILES sees what it is, goes wide eyed.)

DEAN

What was that?

(MILES turns around and attempts to run off-stage past, DEAN. Meanwhile, the screaming grows and grows.)

DEAN (CONT'D)

Miles?

(MILES is just past them, when a shot is heard, which hits MILES in the back.

He goes down. DEAN see this. ANI sees
DEAN see this.)

DEAN (CONT'D)

Miles?

(A spot of blood begins to grow on MILES's
back just as GLORIA rushes on-stage with a
gun, but she cuts behind the cubicles, coming
up behind DEAN and ANI.)

ANI

Oh my god, what is going on?

GLORIA

Ani.

(ANI turns around, startled, sees GLORIA
with the gun. GLORIA shoots ANI in the face
and chest. ANI goes down behind the cubicle
divider. DEAN is frozen.)

DEAN

Gloria, no. No! No!

(GLORIA comes around to DEAN, backs him
into some file cabinets. His eyes are closed.
His hands are up. He's shaking. He's basically
crying without tears, scared out of his mind.
He wets himself.)

DEAN

Please, no, no, no - Please!

GLORIA

Dean.

DEAN

I'm sorry -

GLORIA

Dean.

DEAN

I'm sorry - I'm sorry -

GLORIA

I'm not going to shoot you.

DEAN

(hears her, stops mumbling, opens eyes,)

What?

GLORIA

You were always so nice to me. Thanks.

(beat,)

And thanks for coming to my party. You didn't have to say you had a fun time, but you did. Thanks.

(GLORIA goes into a corner and raises the gun to her own head.)

DEAN

Wh - wh - wh -

(GLORIA pulls the trigger. Blood splatters everywhere as BLACKOUT.

In the dark. Bach's "Mass in B minor" picks up where it left off and plays on through the intermission.)

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

(Eight months later.

A basically empty Starbucks in way West Midtown, sometime in the afternoon.

Outside, it is winter.

A bearded DEAN sits at a table, reading and marking up a manuscript, cup of coffee in front of him. He listens to music on his iPhone. He doesn't look so well - a little skinnier, gaunt. His legs shake nervously. He occasionally glances out a window. He is waiting for someone.

Bach's "Mass in B Minor" is still playing.

A Starbucks employee, SHAWN, who looks a lot like MILES, stands behind the counter, sort of staring at DEAN. DEAN catches him staring but goes back to work. Eventually, SHAWN just goes for it:)

SHAWN

Hey yo... Hey! Hey!

(He gets DEAN's attention. DEAN takes out his headphones and the music cuts out.)

SHAWN

Sorry - you just look so familiar. Do we know each other?

DEAN

I don't think so.

SHAWN

You not on TV or nothing is you?

DEAN

No.

SHAWN

A'ight. My bad. Maybe you just have one of those faces. You know, where you look like somebody? You ever get that?

DEAN

Not really.

SHAWN

There this girl who works here - Vanessa? She one of them girls that has Witherspoon face. You know how some white girls just randomly be looking like Reese Witherspoon? Vanessa be getting so mad when I say that though. She be like, "Shawn that is racist! All white girls do not like alike!" And I'm like, Bitch, it's not racist if I say you look famous. It's not like I mistook her for Reese Witherspoon. It's not like when people coming in here *mistaking* me for student they had the year they did Teach for America! Vanessa just be so sensitive. I didn't tap her on the shoulder and be like, "Reese Witherspoon is that you?" I just said she look *like* Reese Witherspoon, because she got a Witherspoon face. I mean, it would be different if somebody mistook me for somebody famous once in a while. That would be nice. But that, like, never happens.

(Eventually, a bundled up KENDRA has crossed past the window and enters now, maybe stomps the wet off her boots, pulls off her hoodie. Seeing her, DEAN slips his manuscript under his seat and stands to greet her.)

KENDRA

Dean, I'm so sorry I'm late - the trains / were - !

DEAN

It's okay. Totally okay. Thanks for meeting me all the way up here.

KENDRA

Of course.

(beat,)

KENDRA

It's so good to see you.

DEAN

It's good to see you, too.

(beat, as they disengage,)

How have you been?

KENDRA

I've been... pretty good. You know.

(beat, as DEAN looks her over,)

And how are you?

DEAN

I've been worse.

KENDRA

Right. Though, you look really good! I like the beard.

DEAN

Thanks.

(beat,)

This is a little surreal -

KENDRA

Yeah, eight months.

(beat,)

You know, I tried to get in touch actually, but -

DEAN

Yeah, I sort of fell / off the map -

KENDRA

And I didn't see you at anyone's funeral.

DEAN

I know. I didn't—I didn't feel great about that - but I heard they were nice.

KENDRA

They were. Especially Ani's... And Kara's too, actually.

(beat,)

Anyway, I'm glad you reached out.

DEAN

Can I get you to something? Some kind of almond milk something something?

KENDRA

Oh, no. No. I actually don't drink caffeine anymore -

DEAN

Really?

KENDRA

Yeah - I can barely set foot inside a Starbucks -

DEAN

Oh, I'm sorry - Should we not have met here?

KENDRA

Oh no! No no - I just can't stomach the stuff. I'm fine.

DEAN

... Because of Glor - ?

KENDRA

Oh yeah I mean yeah a little bit but also because I realized it makes me anxious which is probably related because you know. When I drink it, it does sort of remind me of where I was.

DEAN

Sorry - We can totally go somewhere else.

KENDRA

No no no. If it were that bad I'd have to move. It's just the taste. Like the same thing happens with Sarah Tweed now too. I mean, I'm sure you have a million of these things.
(beat,)

So where have you even been? For a while, it seemed like the only place I could find you was on TV!

DEAN

Yeah that was all a little intense...

KENDRA

I felt so bad for you! It was like I couldn't change a channel without seeing that same footage of you over and over getting carried out of the lobby -

DEAN

(embarrassed,)

God - where I'd pissed / myself -

KENDRA

And then all those interviews you had to do about Gloria and her stupid party and what she said to you - having to recount it over and over... I'm glad it all sort of died down.

DEAN

Me, too.

KENDRA

But, oh my god, wait. Happy Birthday!

DEAN

Ha ha oh god, it was—

KENDRA

/ Happy Belated Birthday!

DEAN

It was actually three months ago, but thanks.

KENDRA

Thirty - OMG! Did you get to have a... party or something?

DEAN

Not really. I spent it at my parent's house with them. / And some friends from home.

KENDRA

Aww, that's right, you're from—that's adorable.

DEAN

Yeah. But I'm definitely ready to get the eff out of Jersey.

KENDRA

Wait - You moved back to New Jersey?

DEAN

(after a beat,)

You didn't know about this?

KENDRA

Know about what?

DEAN

Well, after Gloria and the media stuff, I had sort of a breakdown and had to be hospitalized -

KENDRA

Oh my god, Dean -

DEAN

Don't worry - It wasn't for very long - I can't believe you didn't hear about this -

KENDRA

No. Are you...

DEAN

Am I...?

KENDRA

Doing better - ?

DEAN

Oh yeah - But while I was in there my parents came and packed up all of my stuff, and then it wasn't until I was home for a month that they finally told me that they broke my lease, and it was just a fucking nightmare -

KENDRA

Oh no!

DEAN

A fucking nightmare. It was like being kidnapped.

(beat,)

But I'm actually in the process of moving back - though moving back to New York in your thirties is The Worst. I'm still trying to find a place.

KENDRA

Oh God - Well I'll certainly keep my ears out for any leads.

DEAN

That's nice of you.

KENDRA

Though what am I talking about? With that advance you got, I mean, you could just hire a broker.

(Beat.)

DEAN

(modest,)

Yeah, well...

KENDRA

You know, I just just found out about the bidding war. Where did you wind up again? I forget.

DEAN

HarperCollins... It was not my first choice, but I was in the hospital during the auction so my agent went with whoever offered the most.

(MORE)

DEAN (cont'd)

(beat,)

Anyway, how have you been? You left the magazine?

KENDRA

I actually left like two weeks after - after you -

DEAN

I can't even believe they reopened.

KENDRA

I know. How disgusting was that? But, you know, I was just having lunch with Eleanor yesterday and she says the place is a disaster. Everyone is either new and stress out or just traumatized. She gives it a year.

DEAN

That's nice you're still in touch with Eleanor.

KENDRA

Yeah... How about Nan? Are you two -

DEAN

We e-mail.

(beat,)

Anyway. So what are you doing now?

KENDRA

Oh, just some freelancing.

DEAN

Really?

KENDRA

Yeah...

DEAN

I thought I heard somewhere you got a book deal?

(Beat.)

KENDRA

Oh, yes. Well, that, too. But that literally just happened. How did you hear about it?

DEAN

A little birdy. Called the internet.

(beat,)

I think FSG is a great fit for you. How far along have you gotten?

KENDRA

Well, I just started, so...

DEAN

Right.

KENDRA

But what about you?

DEAN

(gesturing vaguely out the window,)

I literally just came from a meeting with my editor and got about a million notes even though I'm not even finished yet. But they're trying to rush it into print, so..

KENDRA

They are?

DEAN

Yeah. Next summer.

KENDRA

And is it still called "Zine Dreams?"

DEAN

No. I changed / the title.

KENDRA

(with a laugh,)

Thank God - To what?

DEAN

Uh..."Gloria," weirdly enough... Their idea.

KENDRA

Not that weird... Is Gloria a big... part of it, or?

DEAN

No, no - I mean, not exactly - Or not entirely. It's still a memoir - but obviously it ends with her. And there's stuff about our... interactions woven into it.

KENDRA

And you're okay with that?

DEAN

Well, I can't not be okay with it. It's my life.

KENDRA

I'm sorry. I'm happy for you - I'm just suffering from a bit of Gloria fatigue. Isn't it so creepy how in the wake of something like that all people can care about is the perpetrator? It's like, people, why are we giving her what she wants? This kind of attention is obviously what she did it for. Like all that terrible stuff about her alcoholic Dad and his pistol collection. As if there was anything to say other than that she was a psychopath with a gun? Like what about the eighteen people she shot and maimed - or even just ten she actually killed, right? Maybe it's worth telling their stories.

DEAN

Yeah, I remember this from your proposal.

KENDRA

Excuse me?

DEAN

Isn't your whole concept like a focus on the victims, or something? One chapter per victim? Am I just making that up?

(Beat.)

KENDRA

You read my proposal?

DEAN

I did.

KENDRA

Where?

DEAN

A little birdy at FSG.

(beat,)

But you have nothing to worry about. It's really strong. Very tight. And your sample chapters? So moving. Especially that chapter on Miles and his family. And Ani. I have to admit I was kind of blown away. I've never seen you write like that.

KENDRA

Not like I ever had the chance...

DEAN

True. Though I always liked your twitter.

(beat,)

Are you writing about me?

(Beat.)

KENDRA

Excuse me?

DEAN

Are you?

KENDRA

Uh, don't flatter yourself... Are you writing about me?

(Beat.)

DEAN

Well, I mean, it's a memoir.

KENDRA

Uh huh. And what have you written?

DEAN

Nothing really... Yet.

(beat,)

It's actually been a weird experience trying to write this thing. You know, I've actually blacked out most of that day?

KENDRA

You did?

DEAN

I can only seem to recall it in bits and pieces - and trying to put it all together has really forced me to reflect a lot on that time and myself and who I was... back then... before Gloria, and I've kind of come to this conclusion that maybe I wasn't... the best guy... that I was asshole basically - which might have something to do with that environment - but also you know I was drinking a lot and sort of unhappy with where I was in my life and only kind of just realizing that - and, anyway, it's all kind of led me to this place of really wanting to apologize you... for anything I might have said that hurt your feelings or anything like that -

KENDRA

You don't have to do this.

DEAN

No, but I want to.

(beat,)

Also, I guess, I feel like it's one thing to have felt - or still feel! - however we felt slash feel towards each other, but I guess it would be another thing if these feelings sort of... found their way into our work. You know what I mean? Since we're both writing about that time and that place -

KENDRA

What could I possibly have to write about you, Dean? That you were a mediocre assistant with a drinking problem?

DEAN

I don't know, Kendra. It's not my book.

(starts going through his bag,)

I think it would just be a good idea if we bury the hatchet, if there even is a hatchet. Because who wants, like, a literary feud, right? And it might be nice to actually be watching out for each other, you know, as we both embarking on this new chapters in our lives.

KENDRA

Sure, Dean.

DEAN

Okay great!

(beat,)

Oh! And then there's this other weird thing...

(DEAN pushes a small stack of pages towards KENDRA.)

KENDRA

Uh, what is this...?

DEAN

It's a little thing that my lawyer and agents drafted up and I guess it's something they want us to both sign.

KENDRA

Saying what?

DEAN

It's a kind of non-disclosure agreement? But I guess it's totally a formality at this point, since you're not writing about me.

(Beat.)

KENDRA

Dean, this is crazy. I'm not signing this.

DEAN

You can take it home, if you want - / Show your -

KENDRA

Dean, I'm not signing it.

DEAN

But you just said you aren't writing about me.

(Beat.)

KENDRA

Obviously I am writing about you.

(beat,)

For one thing, after Gloria, you're the freaking face of the tragedy. It's unavoidable. Every other news item about the shooting quotes you or features you or -

DEAN

Right, but I don't think this says you can't write about me. I think it's more about what you write about me. And, if you read it, you'll see it cuts both ways - We each basically get approval over how we appear / in the other's -

KENDRA

You are not going to tell me what I can and can't write.

(beat,)

You don't, like, own this experience Dean. You are aware of that, right?

DEAN

With all due respect, Kendra, don't I? Or at least a little more than you. You weren't there. You were at Starbucks. Nothing happened to you.

KENDRA

But everything happened to you?

DEAN

Were Miles last words to you? How about Ani's? Do you know the sound she made between the first and second bullet? Does that sound keep you up at night? Or what about Gloria? Do you know what the look in a person eye's is like right before they shoot themselves in the face? No. But this is my lived experience, my actual life and I can't have you tarnishing it with your - with your -

KENDRA

With my what?

DEAN

With your ambition, Kendra. I just can't have you... profiting from my trauma.

KENDRA

Your trauma? Do you think I wasn't affected by this?

DEAN

How!?

KENDRA

I lost friends, Dean!

DEAN

Friends? Kendra -

KENDRA

Do you know what it was like to stand outside that building and watch them cart away body after body and not know who was inside a bag and who wasn't?

(Beat.)

DEAN

Are you really going to sit here and tell me you actually considered any of these people "friends?" When you made no secret of what you thought of that place or how much better you thought you were than everyone else? When you tore apart everyone's else's work and ambitions behind their backs? When we were all either competition to you - or, worse, just an audience to the tragedy of your thwarted genius? Ani and I were the only people who would put up with you and that's because we had to. And, honestly, if you hadn't excused yourself to Starbucks, Gloria would have killed you.

(Beat.)

KENDRA

But she didn't. And here we are: the survivors.

(beat,)

(MORE)

KENDRA (cont'd)

So what's the threat here? If I don't sign this, you're going to "defame" me in your memoir? You'll tell the world I was competitive - that I thought I was better than you? Go ahead. I wasn't there to be liked. I was there to be a writer.

DEAN

I'll say is that you're writing an exploitative book to save your non-career -

KENDRA

Exploitative?

DEAN

You're not some sort of investigative journalist! No one is asking you to write this! And there's nothing that qualifies you to write it. And, honestly, I think you know this, which is why you're bending over backwards with this crap concept about "victims." You are not a victim. You are just a leech - a parasite and those "victims" to you are just an excuse to pad a portfolio of blogposts about dresses.

KENDRA

What is it Dean? What exactly are you afraid I'm going to say about you?

DEAN

Why can't you just admit what you're doing?

KENDRA

What am I doing?

DEAN

You're trying to ruin me! You're trying to ruin me and I don't know why - I don't know what I ever did to you.

KENDRA

What are you talking about?

DEAN

I read what you wrote about Miles and you know I was not that type person.

KENDRA

What type of person?

DEAN

I'm the only person who interacted with him. You said he was mistreated, that I was threatened by him, suspicious of him -

KENDRA

Which you were -

DEAN

Not because he was black.

KENDRA

Then why was it? You certainly didn't treat any of our other interns that way.

DEAN

You don't know how I treated the interns because you were never there. And what does my relationship to the interns have to do with Gloria?!

KENDRA

Dean, you do not live outside of reality. Gloria does not exist outside of history. No one is calling you racist, but I am not going to pretend we worked in some race neutral place. I am describing what that world was and what happened in it. That is all. And I'm sorry I can't erase your... privilege for you. I can't even believe that that is what this was all about -

DEAN

You are so full of shit -

KENDRA

You know, a bad thing happened to both of us! - to all of us! - but you seem to think it happened only to you. And why is that? Because you went to Gloria's dumb party and she saved you? Because you were "a witness" to everyone's last moments? Or because you're entitled to think the world automatically cares about you and what *you* saw and what you think?

(beat,)

You are aware that the rest of the world has moved on from Gloria, correct? Every other week there's been another tragedy - another shooting. Every other week there's been a disgruntled somebody mowing down a movie theater or a kindergarten or a shopping mall or a doctor's office. With every bullet that's passed through their guns, Gloria has receded farther and farther into memory, becomes a shorter and shorter sentence in the annals of American violence. The only thing people will probably remember about that day is that it was the day Sarah Tweed died. You didn't survive the holocaust.

DEAN

You don't know what I survived -

KENDRA

I think I just realized what Gloria actually did. She didn't save you at all, did she? She couldn't. She thought she was giving you your life back, but there was no life there to give back. I mean, what are you trying to save here? What is the endgame? You don't actually believe a writing career is waiting for you on the other side of this? A career as what? A "memoirist?" Do you think you're still in some race? What was all that worth now, Dean?

(MORE)

KENDRA (cont'd)

All that networking? All that self-righteousness? All that slaving away in that cubicle as Nan's lapdog? Was it worth these fifteen minutes you're living as a footnote in life of our office freak?

(Beat.)

DEAN

You know, I haven't written my ending yet. And this will make an interesting scene.

KENDRA

Have you really been sitting here this whole time thinking about the scene this would make - how you would write this all down!? This is so sad -

DEAN

Just be careful you don't wind up in my book.

KENDRA

Be careful your book doesn't wind up in my book!

(beat,)

Don't you see it's over? Every breath you've taken - Every dream you've ever dreamt - Gloria took it. They even renamed your memoir to "Gloria." But maybe it's time to wake up, Dean. Maybe those "Zine Dreams" are dead. Maybe that life means nothing now - your life means nothing. Cut your losses and start over.

(DEAN reaches across the table and slaps
KENDRA across the face. SHAWN reacts.)

SHAWN

/ Whoa! Hey! Hey!

DEAN

There's your violence, you bitch! Don't you tell me my life is nothing! You don't know what it was like! You don't know what it was like!

SHAWN

Hey, man! Stop! Stop! Take that out of here!

(DEAN starts to gather his things.)

KENDRA

(shouting after him, taunting,)

No. But I know what that was like. And I know how my book ends!

SHAWN

(to DEAN,)

You gotta get out of here! Get out of here!

(DEAN exits. SHAWN makes sure he's gone.
KENDRA seems genuinely freaked out but
tries to hold it together.)

SHAWN

What was that? Are you okay?

KENDRA

I'm fine. Do you have ice?

SHAWN

(getting her ice,)

Do you want me to call somebody or -

KENDRA

No.

SHAWN

Well maybe you should just stay in here for a little bit just in case.

(beat, looking out,)

Who was that?

KENDRA

Nobody. Just a crazy person.

SHAWN

Who he look like?

KENDRA

What?

SHAWN

Don't you think he got one of those faces where he look like somebody?

(beat,)

There this girl who works here - Vanessa? She one of them girls that has a Witherspoon face. You know how some white girls just randomly be looking like Reese Witherspoon? Though Vanessa be getting so mad when I say that. She be like, "Shawn that is racist! All white girls do not like alike - !"

(NAN, who look a lot like GLORIA, walks in with SASHA, an editor at a nearby publishing house and former assistant, who looks a lot like ANI. SASHA is in the middle of greeting SHAWN, when NAN sees KENDRA.)

SASHA
(to SHAWN,)
Hi.

NAN
(to SASHA,)
Wait a second.
(to KENDRA,)
Kendra?

(KENDRA wheels around, sees NAN, not sure if it's her. Beat, in which she doesn't say anything for a long time.)

KENDRA
N - Nan?

NAN
What a surprise! Wait, did I just see Dean on the street?

KENDRA
Yeah - We just had coffee.

NAN
Oh!

KENDRA
What are / you doing here?

NAN
(to SASHA,)
That was Dean!
(to KENDRA,)

Long standing coffee date. That is so great that you two are still in touch.

SHAWN

(to SASHA,)

/ Can I start your order?

KENDRA

Yes!

SASHA

/ Yes. I'll have a skim macchiato with extra foam.

KENDRA

How are things at the magazine?

NAN

Oh, I actually left about a month ago.

KENDRA

You did? For where?

SHAWN

/ Anything else?

NAN

(opening her jacket, revealing:)

Well, I'm pregnant -

KENDRA

Oh! / Oh wow!

NAN

Yes. Eight months. And it's twins.

SASHA

Nan - excuse me - Can I get you something?

NAN

(moving for her wallet,)

Oh, I can -

SASHA

Stop - It's on us.

NAN

Just a chamomile tea then.

SASHA
(to KENDRA, being polite,)

Hi.

NAN
Oh, this is Sasha Leven / son -

KENDRA
Yes, I totally know / who this is!

NAN
Oh, okay. I didn't know you already -

KENDRA
Hi. You used to work at the magazine.

SASHA
(to SHAWN,)
And a venti chamomile, / please.

NAN
Anyway, it was time. And I wanted to see what this kind of life might be like.

KENDRA
Yes. And that work motherhood balance is so difficult.

NAN
Uh huh.... Plus the atmosphere there was just getting too oppressive.

(Beat.)

KENDRA
Maybe we should do lunch or something soon?

NAN
(sort of cagey,)
Oh -

KENDRA
Or, like a coffee maybe, or something -

NAN
Of course. Let me - Will you just e-mail me? My schedule's crazy but -

KENDRA
Totally.

NAN

You can get it from Dean.

(beat,)

Well... I have to get my drink now.

KENDRA

Right! I've got to go, too! It was nice running into you.

NAN

You, too.

KENDRA

Bye!

SASHA

Bye bye.

(KENDRA exits.)

NAN

Good God.

SASHA

What? Who was that?

NAN

Eleanor Gardner's old assistant. Kendra Something. Did you overlap with her?

SASHA

No, but she seemed a little aggressive...

NAN

Yes. Eleanor used to refer to as "Tiger Daughter."

SASHA

Oh no - Isn't that a little offensive?

NAN

Calling her a tiger?

SASHA

Yeah, like that whole Tiger Mom thing, or - ?

NAN

Oh! Oh right. Wow I never put that together... But Eleanor's great - She's just old. The point is that she was afraid.

(MORE)

NAN (cont'd)

I once asked Eleanor why she didn't just fire the girl and she told me she was too scared that if she fired her, Kendra would just climb the ladder somewhere else and come back to haunt her. And Eleanor would know. I mean, she's been in the business so long, she's seen every type of anybody that has ever passed through this world. And she was right. I mean, the girl just sold some book on Gloria and she wasn't even there.

SASHA

Oh that was Kendra Park!

NAN

That's right -

SASHA

How many more books about Gloria can that place take?

NAN

She sat in the cubicle right next to Dean, too.

SASHA

Poor Dean - You know, we actually tried to bid on his book -

NAN

You did?

SASHA

Yes, though they were just these sample pages from a memoir he'd been shopping around - did you ever see them?

NAN

Of course I did -

SASHA

Just terrible, right? And the whole thing was so icky with his little agent holding that auction less than a week after the shooting. But I was trying to be supportive because, of course, I knew him and I spent the whole time thinking, "It could have been me in that cubicle!" You know?

NAN

Did you know Gloria?

SASHA

Of course I knew Gloria. Didn't you?

NAN

Actually, Sasha, I barely knew the woman. Isn't that terrible? And, apparently, Gloria and I were the same exact age and we'd started around the same time. Isn't that crazy? I mean, we must have worked on something together at some point but I usually request Christine.

SHAWN

(setting out another drink,)

Skim macchiato / extra foam.

SASHA

(retrieving her drink,)

Thanks, Shawn.

NAN

Ugh - I want to talk about something else. Let's sit by the window.

(beat,)

How are things at -

(Drinks in hand, they go find a table to sit at.)

SASHA

Fine. You know: it's books. People kind of still read them. Kind of. Sorta of. Oprah fucked us. E-readers fucked us. Amazon is still fucking us. And now this new publisher's trying to push this new acquisition model, where all we try to do is get things that someone will want to option for a movie so that it will be turned into a movie so that we can get the book sales. So we make books that feel like movies. I feel so little screwed. I got into this business to make books I really cared about - that spoke to me and my generation. Now half my list is YA crossover -

(DEAN crosses in front of the window.)

NAN

Is that Dean?

(DEAN re-enters to retrieve the manuscript he left under his seat. SHAWN sees DEAN, makes a move as if to block him.)

SHAWN

Man, what are you doing?

DEAN

I left something! Relax!

SHAWN

Where is it? I'll bring it to you.

DEAN

What am I? Like banned from this place?

SHAWN

Where is it?

DEAN

Under the chair - right there. Those papers -

NAN

Dean?

DEAN

Nan -

NAN

Is everything okay?

DEAN

Yes, uh - hi!

(DEAN makes a move towards NAN.
SHAWN stops him.)

SHAWN

Hey, come on. Don't do this to me.

DEAN

I can't say hi to my fr - my friend?

SHAWN

(handing over the manuscript,)

Dude, I'm not getting fired for any craziness -

NAN

What is going on?

DEAN

(to SHAWN,)

Fine! I'll just stand in the door! Can I do that?!

(to NAN,)

Hi, Nan.

NAN
(seeing something in his face,)
Are you okay?

DEAN
I'm great -
(beat,)
Is that - Is that Sasha?

NAN
Yes! Your old predecessor -

SASHA
Hi, intern! I barely recognized you with your beard. How are you doing?

DEAN
Good.

SASHA
Are those the proofs for your book?

DEAN
Yes.

SASHA
I'm so looking forward to reading it!

DEAN
Don't hold your breath.

SASHA
I'm sorry?

DEAN
I said don't hold your breath. I may be dead - I mean I may die first - I mean I may be dead before I ever finish it. Or maybe I'll burn it.

(beat,)
What are you guys meeting about?

NAN
Oh we're... just catching up -

DEAN
(to SASHA,)
I've been trying to get a coffee with this one for months. You'd think five years would put you at the top of some list but I guess not.

(MORE)

DEAN (cont'd)

(to NAN,)

Did you get any of my e-mails?

NAN

Yes! Sorry. I'm so behind. But you know -

(gestures to her stomach,)

And scheduling's been so hard without a superstar assistant!

(beat,)

... But we just ran into Kendra!

(beat,)

She says you two reconnected?

(Beat.)

DEAN

Tell me what to do.

NAN

I'm sorry?

DEAN

About my book. How do I fix it? How do I rethink it? What do I do with the bad stuff? Do I throw it away? Do I start over? How do I start over? I need to be a writer. What do I do with the bad stuff?

(Dean has a panic attack, falls to the floor, etc.)

NAN

Dean! What's going on?

DEAN

I'm fine. I have to go. I have to go.

NAN

Oh, uh, okay -

DEAN

I'll talk to you.

(Dean exits.)

SASHA

Should I not have brought up the book?

NAN

What do I do? Do I go after him?

SASHA

No no no -

NAN

(to SHAWN,)

Why wouldn't you let him in?

SHAWN

He slapped that girl earlier.

NAN

The one who was just here?

SHAWN

Yeah.

NAN

Oh my / god.

SASHA

He slapped her?

(off SHAWN's nod,)

She didn't seem like she'd been slapped!

(NAN has a moment,)

Nan, are you okay?

NAN

What do I do, Sasha?

SASHA

This is my fault. Do you want to go somewhere else? I should have known we would run into everybody here. Or do you want to reschedule?

NAN

No, no. I just need a minute.

(beat,)

I mean, he's right. I've been ignoring his e-mails but I just haven't had room in my life for - for that! I'm pregnant, for crying out loud. I have a family on the way. But it was also five years we spent together. He knows some of my habits and quirks better than David does and I also feel like I've... watched him grow up somehow - like I was supposed to be protecting him, but from what? I just feel so guilty.

(beat,)

It's so hard to watch - when something like this comes out of nowhere and just derails your... derails everything. I just wish things could go back - to the way they were.

(MORE)

NAN (cont'd)

And not just for him. But for me too. I mean, I was on the other side of the glass when the woman blew her brains out!

SASHA

Oh God - I didn't know - !

NAN

Yes! And I'd just been talking to our intern, who she shot like five minutes after he left my office - Did you ever hear anything about him?

SASHA

What? No?

NAN

Oh, it's actually the saddest story. Somehow he's been, like, completely written out of the whole thing. His name was Mark. One of Richard Morrison's students? He was this incredibly bright kid. Black. Harvard. Anyway, it was going to be his last day working with us -

SASHA

Oh my god.

NAN

I know. And he did that thing, where he asked to meet with me before he left, which was so sweet -

SASHA

Oh I love when interns do that.

NAN

Me, too, but you know, sometimes it can backfire. And I wasn't completely expecting him to be a suck up, but I did brace myself. But then he came in and sat down, I asked him how he had enjoyed his experience, and then he told me that it had just been, "Okay."

SASHA

What?

NAN

And, of course, I was like, "Tell me more?" And what I realized is that Richard Morris has filled this poor boy's head with all these stories about how fun this office was, how crazy it was back in the day and he'd been disappointed.

(MORE)

NAN (cont'd)

Of course, he was talking about the time back when they had martini carts making rounds every day at four and there were always these illicit affairs happening all over the office and coke being done in bathrooms and other hijinks, and yes, I guess that exact historical time did sort of... produce... the most interesting work - or at least the work the magazine was known for - but it was also -

SASHA

Pre-internet.

NAN

Yes, well, I was going to say a disaster, but, yes, pre-internet, too, I suppose.

SASHA

There was no internet. When you sat at your desk, you had no choice but to work. And then when you were done working, you went crazy.

NAN

Right, but that time was also a financial disaster - mostly because everyone was walking around with these substance abuse problems - and that's half the reason why we went corporate the way we did - got bought out - We were so in the red. But Mark was saying, basically, that he thought he was going to be somewhere that was... more vibrant... and he started telling me some story Richard had told him about his days there and it was a funny story - God what was it? It was a story I actually knew, because I was there - in fact, it was during my early days there - and now I can't remember - it'll come to me - but, anyway, it was a funny story for him but a memory for me - and it was strange to feel your experience come back to you in that way - as anecdote in the mouth of some young person - and we both found ourselves laughing over this thing that he'd only heard about and this thing that I'd actually lived through and we got so swept up in the laughter and then, almost as suddenly, we realized we were just laughing and then the laughing stopped and - it was like he was reading my mind when he asked me, "What happened?" And I paused for a second and I didn't know what else to say except, "Things were different then." And he says, "Different how?" And I said, "Everyone was young and didn't know what they were doing. Everything was new and exciting and always discovery. And then it got old. We got old. And now things are different." And it was quiet for a moment and we talked about a few more things, all the while I'm thinking, "Did I really just say that?" And when he got up, I found myself blurting out, "Let me know if you're ever thinking about a career in publishing..." Just like that. And I knew that it was me like doing that last ditch pitch things - basically trying to convince myself that he was young and naïve and that I was wise and the one with all the power - as if I hadn't just told this boy that he had the power, that youth was... a weapon - and he just looked at me with the saddest, most knowing look on his face, and just thanked me and left. Then, five minutes later, Gloria happened. Heard those gunshots and those screams and before I even knew what was happening, I was underneath that desk. He was dead. All that youth was gone.

SASHA

Oh no - !

NAN

And then I realized I was pregnant -

SASHA

What!?

NAN

I'd been vomiting all morning and I had missed my period but I'm so stressed out all the time missing a period isn't even a - okay, TMI - but I'm crouched underneath my desk, trying not to breathe, afraid I would make some sort of noise and I realize I am clutching my belly. That was where my hands went. Straight over my stomach. And I very vividly remember looking down at my arms crossed across my stomach and putting it together and thinking to myself, "Who did this?". It was like some part of me was already working, without my even noticing it. It was like some part of me had already made the decision without my conscious self even noticing it. And I kept thinking, "Who did this? Did I do this? Did I do this?" Then I put it together.

(beat,)

I was under that desk for hours -

SASHA

What?

NAN

Everyone else got out pretty much as soon as it was over - I mean the whole thing must have taken fifteen minutes - but I didn't know what was going on - I didn't know it was over, and, you know, just my luck Gloria decides to end her killing spree right in front of my office. She shoots herself right there in front of my door. There were three bodies less than ten feet away from me, blood everywhere. I could see it, all over the glass. And I just couldn't open the door. I refused. I just sat and it was like my whole life flashed before my eyes and all I could think of was the intern just telling me he'd had an okay time and I was thinking, "What has my time been here for me? Okay? And am I okay with having spent so much of my life my time feeling okay? Is this how it could end? Like this?"

(beat,)

Eventually, I came to my senses and called 911 and the police that found me. They cleared a path and walked me out with a coat over my head and it was just a nightmare. My shoes kept slipping on the... Anyway, that's when I black out.

(MORE)

NAN (cont'd)

The next thing I know, I'm sitting on my couch with David, watching all these news reports about this woman and my assistant and it was suddenly like I didn't recognize anything - or anyone - including myself - I didn't recognize the person I'd been for the last however many years and I didn't know the person sitting on that couch next to my husband watching TV though I knew that that was the real me. It was like some spell had broken and I still can't tell if it was good or bad. But it's totally changed me. I feel changed.

(Beat.)

SASHA

Nan! Where did that just come from?

NAN

What?

SASHA

This story! How have you never considered turning this into something?

NAN

Into what?

SASHA

Uh, a book?

NAN

Oh come on, I thought you said everyone was sick of books about Gloria -

SASHA

Well, yes, for a bunch of twentysomethings talking about her. I mean, for them, you know - and I my heart really does go out to all of them; I mean, no one should have to go through this - but this is like the only real thing that's ever happened to them. No wonder they're all scrambling to get it down on paper. But you've got experience. You've witnessed things and, unlike them, Gloria is not the defining center of your being. She's the backdrop to a very real, very human realization about motherhood and time passing and mortality. That's something that people - real people - can connect to.

(Beat.)

NAN

Do you really think there's something there?

SASHA

Yes.

NAN

You know, I had actually been wondering...

(beat,)

What do you think I could get?

(BLACKOUT.

Bach's "Mass in B Minor" continues.)

SCENE TWO

(Years later.

The office of a television production company
somewhere in Los Angeles.

A cluster of two cubicles. One is empty, the
other is occupied by CALLIE, who looks a lot
like ANI and SASHA and sits reading a
manuscript. She is rapt and a little emotional,
dabbing occasionally at her eyes with a ball of
tissue. She reads and emotes for a stretch
before RASHAAD, who looks a lot like
MILES, enters with his new employee,
LORIN.

It is a little awkward between them, but
LORIN is in surprisingly good spirits.)

RASHAAD

And that's basically the tour.

LORIN

Cool.

(Beat.)

RASHAAD

(indicating the cubicle next to CALLIE,)

And here's where you'll sit.

LORIN

Okay, great.

(Beat.)

RASHAAD

(indicating a nearby door,)

And my office is here.

LORIN

Okay.

(Beat.)

RASHAAD

Cool.

(beat,)

Oh and - just a heads up: there's not a whole lot to do right now, since we're between cycles, so most of what you'll be doing is answering phones. I hope that's not too weird.

LORIN

Nah, not weird at all. I can answer a mean phone.

RASHAAD

Of course.

(beat,)

I'm sorry and can you remind me your name again?

LORIN

Lorin.

RASHAAD

That's right. Lorin. Lorin, Lorin, Lorin. Forgive me. I'm terrible with names - good with faces - terrible with names.

(beat, then indicating,)

Alright! Well my office is -

LORIN

Right.

RASHAAD

Knock if you need anything. I'll see if I can rustle up some scripts for you to read. It might be good for you to get to know some of our work, I guess?

LORIN

Totally.

RASHAAD

Alright. I'll just... I'll print them out and...

(RASHAAD gestures to a printer.)

LORIN

Okie dokie.

(With an awkward smile, RASHAAD disappears into his office and slides the door closed. LORIN notices CALLIE. He stares a while before:)

LORIN

Hi.

(CALLIE doesn't respond, absorbed as she is in the book. LORIN sort of takes that as a cue to sit down and mind his own business. He turns on the computer at his desk and stares at CALLIE for a while, as it loads. She reminds him of someone. She eventually feels him staring at her and looks up. They meet eyes.)

LORIN

Hi.

(CALLIE doesn't say anything, looks so disturbed, forces a smile, goes back to reading. He looks around for what he should do. LORIN watches her read for a bit, thinking about ANI, before he realizes that his computer has loaded. He tries to log in and fails.)

LORIN

Hey, I'm sorry, but do you know what the log in is for this computer?

(Beat.)

CALLIE

(sounding on the verge of tears,)

I.T. was just here to set it up for you. He'll be right back.

LORIN

Okay...

(For lack of anything better to do, LORIN settles in, takes out his headphones and his phone and check his mail or something. Eventually CALLIE finishes whatever she's reading and puts it to the side, sits back, and heaves a satisfied sigh.)

CALLIE

(small, to herself,)

Oh my god.

(Beat, in which stews in her feelings, blows her nose, tries to pull herself together.)

LORIN

Are you okay?

CALLIE

Yes. Sorry. Hi. I'm doing coverage -

(She gestures to the manuscript.)

LORIN

No problem.

CALLIE

You're Rashaad's new assistant.

LORIN

Uh, I guess... Lorin.

CALLIE

Callie.

(They shake hands.)

CALLIE

So weird right? He looks, like, nineteen?

LORIN

Who?

CALLIE

Rashaad.

LORIN

Oh - ha - A little bit, yeah.

CALLIE

He just just got promoted. Like two weeks ago, he was an assistant - sitting right there where you're sitting. Then he started optioning peoples' Instagrams and now he's a VP and it's like what the fuck - But there's all this turnover here, so what can you do?

(MORE)

CALLIE (cont'd)

I just wish he wasn't, like, being so gross about it - I mean, like his hiring you - What a douche move, right?

LORIN

Well -

CALLIE

I mean, no offense - but you could almost be his Dad, right? What a power trip. So annoying.

(Beat.)

LORIN

I'm not that old.

CALLIE

I mean - you know what I mean.

LORIN

Yeah, well, I wasn't exactly "hired." I'm a temp.

CALLIE

Ohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh! Oh oh oh oh -

LORIN

I was just placed here until, I guess, he... finds someone more permanent.

CALLIE

Oh! Oh, okay. They might hire you! That's happened before. Are you interested in television?

LORIN

Not really. I'm just doing this while I prep for the LSATs.

CALLIE

Okay. How long are you here, do you know?

LORIN

Just a month. I think.

CALLIE

That's good! I mean, maybe you'll like so much you'll wanna stay? That's happened before.

LORIN

How long have you been here?

CALLIE

Coming up on two years.

LORIN

Nice. You like it here.

CALLIE

Oh, yeah, I love it. I'm a big book nerd and my boss does book options, so, um, I just get to read a lot of stuff before it comes out. It's nice.

LORIN

Yeah, looks like you were in it just now.

CALLIE

Oh? Oh yeah, this is actually amazing. Do you remember that terrible shooting that happened at that magazine like... years ago?

LORIN

Yeah. Very well actually.

CALLIE

Ugh, I know - I was obsessed - But this is like someone's memoir about it?

LORIN

Is that "Gloria?"

CALLIE

Oh no - but I read that one. I thought it was, like, kind of pretentious and that there was no story. What did you think?

LORIN

I didn't read it.

CALLIE

Oh. Well, I mean, you're not missing anything. And didn't it come out later that the girl who wrote it was actually in a Starbucks or something when it happened? Anyway, this one is like a million times better -

LORIN

Who wrote it?

CALLIE
(checking the book,)
Uh... Nancy Martin?

LORIN
You're fucking kidding me?

CALLIE
You know who she is?

LORIN
I sort of know all those people.

CALLIE
You do!?

LORIN
Yeah. I worked there. I was there when it happened... Gloria.

CALLIE
No way!

LORIN
Yes way.

CALLIE
Oh my god! Oh my god!

(Beat.)

LORIN
(re: the manuscript,)
Do you think I'm, like, in it?

CALLIE
I - I don't know -

LORIN
Can I see that?

CALLIE
(handing it over,)
Yes. Of course! Oh my god.

(MORE)

CALLIE (cont'd)

(beat,)

You know, she's coming here in like ten minutes for a meeting?

LORIN

Nan?

(CALLIE nods,)

Wait - Are you guys thinking about making a show out of this?

CALLIE

Uh, well, we already have the film rights.

LORIN

You do?

CALLIE

We bought them off the proposal - but the feature guy who handled them left and my boss thinks we should pitch it as a limited series.

LORIN

(flipping through it,)

What the shit! Why?

CALLIE

Well, I mean, it's a very well-written like moving personal story and, um, basically, she has this amazing frame where she's underneath her desk and you don't totally know why, but then you realize that the shooting is happening, and it all takes place inside of her head during like the two hours she had to be under the desk, because she didn't even know when the shooting was over and then the cops sort of made her stay in the office after it was over because they to, like, remove the bodies that were blocking her door. And, so basically she her entire life is flashing before her eyes underneath this desk and you just hear about like all of these sacrifices that she had to make and how she'd like started to hate herself and then, basically, in the end, she looks down and realizes that she's been clutching her stomach for two hours and reveals that she just found out she's pregnant, basically, with like twins? And she's 40. And she realizes that she, like, has to have these babies if she's gets out of here, and so there's like all this tension about, like, how she may never get out alive? And it's basically about how like, wherever like death and chaos lurk, there's also like, life? And that's is basically the human experience? I mean, it's just so emotional.

LORIN

God that is such crap. Nan was a total ice queen.

CALLIE

Really?

LORIN

And she was an editor. The editors didn't even, like, see anything.

CALLIE

Really?

LORIN

Yeah. Someone saw Gloria loading the guns in the supply closet and went to tell the managing editor who sent out an e-mail to all the editors telling them to lock their doors and stay inside, because the glass surrounding their offices was apparently bulletproof or shatterproof or something?

CALLIE

Whoa.

(beat,)

How did you survive?

LORIN

Uh, I... saw people running so... I ran, too.

CALLIE

Oh...

(JENNA, CALLIE's boss, pokes her head out of her office. She looks a lot like KENDRA.)

JENNA

Callie! What is going on? I need the coverage!

CALLIE

(gathering the manuscripts,)

Sorry, Jenna - I got distracted but I just finished and can give it to you orally.

JENNA

Fine.

(to LORIN,)

Hi.

LORIN

Hi.

JENNA

Are you Rashaad's new assistant?

LORIN

Sort of - I'm temping.

JENNA
Ahhhhh - I see.
(beat,)
Well, welcome.

LORIN
Thanks.

(JENNA and CALLIE exit into JENNA's office. The door slides closed. Meanwhile, DEVIN, the I.T. guy who looks a lot like DEAN, enters.)

DEVIN
Hey. Somebody call I.T.?

LORIN
Oh, yeah, hi. I'm Lorin.

DEVIN
(gets to work on LORIN's computer,)
Hey. Devin.

(DEVIN works on LORIN's computer.)

LORIN
(making conversation,)
Is everyone who works here, like, twelve?

DEVIN
I know, right? Where you here from?

LORIN
I just moved back from New York. I'm actually from here.

(JENNA and CALLIE re-enter from JENNA's office. JENNA goes straight up to LORIN.)

JENNA
I'm sorry. Callie just told me everything. You were there?

LORIN
Yeah.

CALLIE
Hey, Devin!

JENNA

Do you know know Nancy Martin? She's like coming here in like ten minutes!

LORIN

I mean, we worked together for a long time -

JENNA

That is nuts! Did you know she's coming in here in like ten minutes?

(RASHAAD comes out of his office.)

RASHAAD

Guys, could you keep it down? I'm watching something.

JENNA

Uh, did you know your new assistant worked at that magazine where that lady shot everyone?

RASHAAD

From the Gloria Project? Oh snap.

(The phone on CALLIE's desk buzzes.)

JENNA

Oh my god - is that's her? That's her! That's her!

CALLIE

(into the phone,)

Yes. Hi. I'll come get her.

(hangs up,)

It's her.

(CALLIE exits.)

JENNA

How long has it been since you and Nancy have seen each other?

LORIN

Yeah, not since it / hap -

JENNA

This is going to be so crazy! What are you going to say?

LORIN

I don't - I don't know -

RASHAAD

Wait, where is Marketing? We should YouTube this - no, Periscope it -

JENNA

Wait - Did you know the shooter, too?

LORIN

Gloria? Yeah, I guess...

RASHAAD

Really? We've been waiting for someone to tell us about her, but like nobody seemed to really know her.

LORIN

That's not true. She'd been there a long time. A lot of people knew her.

JENNA

What about the guy who was, like, her best friend? The one she saved? Did you know him?

LORIN

Dean? He wasn't her best friend!

JENNA

Didn't he have a memoir, too, but it never materialized? What was that?

LORIN

Uh -

JENNA

Do you know if he ever finished it?

RASHAAD

Hey, Jenna? Let's have question at a time? Lorin, sorry dude. Do you know what packaging is?

(LORIN shakes his head,)

Okay, packaging is when we take a movie star and attach them to script in order to add value to it so that it will get done. Now, if we were going to package Gloria, who would you go to? I mean, it could literally be any star. Dream big.

LORIN

Gloria? A star? I don't know...

RASHAAD

Okay... Can you give us some sense of her qualities?

LORIN

I don't know - she was pretty normal? Like maybe a little awkward?

JENNA

A little awkward?

LORIN

Just shy. Like she kept to herself.

RASHAAD

That's good. Okay well what else can you tell us about her?

LORIN

I don't know - She was from, like, Florida?

RASHAAD

That is so creepy.

LORIN

It wasn't that creepy. She wasn't like some hick. She was actually very smart, very well-read. And she could be really nice sometimes - even funny. I mean, she was normal -

RASHAAD

Okay, you keep saying that, but if she was so normal, then why did she shoot all those people? That's normal?

LORIN

I just think people have really exaggerated her... personality... I don't think anything about her, like, screamed killer. I mean, she kept to herself, but she was otherwise normal. She read a lot. She always made her own lunch and brought it to work in these little tupperware containers and the lunches always smelled good when she reheated them in the microwave and they seemed like they took a lot of time to prepare. And she always offered you some if you asked about them. She spent a lot of time in the fall knitting, so I guess she was crafty. She once knit me a pair of socks when I asked her, too. And I was sort of joking but she did it anyway and they lasted a long time and they were really warm. She wore a lot of red. She liked television. She was normal. She did normal things. If anything, she was really just alone at her job, which is fucked up because the job was her life, and, in some ways, I'm not surprised she did what she did. It wasn't the healthiest environment - Like, it could have been any of us.

DEVIN

Then why didn't you shoot everyone?

LORIN

I just don't understand why you need to make a movie of this or cast anything! Like why don't you just make up your own story. Like why do you have to *use* Gloria's story.

JENNA

It's not Gloria's story. It's Nan's story.

LORIN

What? No it's not! This was like a group experience! This was a thing that happened to a lot of people! Not just Nan! Nan didn't see anything! Nan was part of the problem! Nan didn't know Gloria. Nan probably never even noticed Gloria. And, honestly, if Gloria worked here, if she walked in the door right now, you probably wouldn't even notice her either!

(CALLIE enters with NAN.)

CALLIE

Here she is...

(Beat. NAN clearly has no idea why everyone is standing around, looking at her.)

NAN

Hi.

JENNA

Hi, Nancy.

(Everyone looks at LORIN expectantly.)

LORIN

Hi.... Nan...

NAN

(clearly not recognizing him,)

Hi?

(Beat.)

CALLIE

Don't you guys know each other?

NAN

Do we?

LORIN

I think we used to work together?

NAN

Oh! Oh my god, hi! Remind me your -

LORIN

Lorin.

NAN

Oh god! A factchecker, right? It's been years! Hello! How are you doing?

LORIN

Good.

NAN

How crazy - about what happened at the office? With Gloria? I'm sure you heard -

LORIN

Yeah. I was there...

NAN

Oh! Oh course! Oh God - of course!

(beat,)

But can you believe it's been two years?

LORIN

Yup. It's all just a memory now.

NAN

Sometimes I think about it and I'm like - did that really even happen to me?

(beat,)

But look at us, huh?

(beat,)

You're out in LA now -

LORIN

Yup...

NAN

Working in television! How exciting!

LORIN

I'm actually just temping.

NAN

(disappointed,)

Oh...

(beat,)

Well it's so good to see you!

LORIN

Yeah, you, too.

(Beat, in which everyone seems completely underwhelmed.)

DEVIN

Wait, dude! You're a temp!? UGH! Oh... my... fucking... god.

(DEVIN walks off.)

RASHAAD

That guy has such a bad attitude.

NAN

So, uh, Jenna - should we start?

JENNA

Oh, yeah. Yes. Do you want anything?

NAN

I would love a coffee.

CALLIE

I was just going to go for a Starbucks run. What do you want?

NAN

Just a regular coffee. Large. Skim milk.

JENNA

Actually, could you get me an almond milk cortado? Four shots.

CALLIE

Okay.

JENNA

(to NAN,)

Come on in.

(JENNA and NAN exit into JENNA's office.)

CALLIE
(to LORIN,)
You want anything?

LORIN
No. I'm good.

CALLIE
Okay.

RASHAAD
Actually I'll take -

CALLIE
Rashaad. You have your own assistant.

(Beat. RASHAAD and LORIN awkward lock eyes and smile at each other.)

LORIN
I can get you something.

RASHAAD
Uhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh.... Maybe in a little bit.

(RASHAAD exits back into his office.)

CALLIE
(to LORIN,)
I think Rashaad is, like, scared of you. That is hilarious.
(beat,)
Okay. BRB.

(CALLIE starts to exit, just as DEVIN is re-entering.)

CALLIE
Hey, Devin, I'm making a Starbucks run. Do you want anything?

DEVIN
I don't drink that shit.

(CALLIE exits, as DEVIN crosses to LORIN's cubicle with a piece a paper.)

DEVIN (CONT'D)

No one tells me any fucking thing around here and I wind up looking like an asshole.
Okay, so here's the deal. If you're a temp, you don't get your own ID. You get a temp ID.
This piece of paper has all your Login information.

LORIN

Oh. Okay.

DEVIN

That it?

LORIN

I guess so.

DEVIN

(starts to exit,)

Good fucking luck at this fucking place!

LORIN

Hey.

(DEVIN stops,)

Thank you. I really appreciate your help.

DEVIN

(a little taken aback,)

You're welcome.

(Beat.)

LORIN

Do you want to grab a drink sometime, or...?

(Beat.)

DEVIN

Uh. That's really nice of you but I actually have a girlfriend...

LORIN

Oh - No! I meant, like, just a beer or something.

DEVIN

Oh! Oh God / sorry -

LORIN

I'm not -

DEVIN

Sorry -

LORIN

I was just curious about about IT - what's going on around here...

(Beat.)

DEVIN

... But aren't you just a temp?

LORIN

Yeah, I'm just trying this thing out where, like, I wanna know the people I spend my whole day with.

(Beat.)

DEVIN

You know, I'm not gonna, like, shoot up the office.

LORIN

No, no - I'm just trying to be more... present.

(beat,)

I've forgotten how to be... in an office. I'm just starting to be more comfortable around people again. A year ago, I couldn't even step foot in a place like this.

(Beat.)

DEVIN

Okay. Yeah, sure. I've got time for a beer.

LORIN

Cool.

DEVIN

That was so awkward. I'm sorry.

LORIN

No. Don't even worry about it..

(beat,)

Isn't funny how these places are just sort of the same? Almost down to the same people. Why is that, do you think?

DEVIN

I don't really know. This is the only job I've ever had.

Oh. LORIN

See you later. DEVIN

(DEVIN exits. LORIN sits at his computer desk. He logs into his computer.

NAN's laughter comes from JENNA's office. It annoys LORIN. He tries to ignore it but, eventually, there's more laughter and then someone else does the hall starts having a loud conversation.

LORIN tries to deal with it, but he can't. He puts on his noise-cancelling headphones, plugs them into his iPhone or his computer, and plays the Sarah Tweed song extra-loud.

Meanwhile, the printer next to him churns for a bit, starts to print, stops, and then beeps loudly. RASHAAD's door slides open. He seems to be calling for LORIN, but can't be heard over the music.)

Lawrence? RASHAAD
Hey, Lawrence! (beat,)
Logan!? (beat,)

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.)