

Wispy Business

"Pilot"

written by

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COLD OPEN

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MYRA (Outdoor Voices-wearing, Goop-loving woman in her late 20s) does yoga in the glow of her Byredo candle.

In child's pose with earbuds in, MUSIC BOPPIN', she doesn't see A SHADOW move behind her when...

CRASH! The sound of shattered glass from elsewhere.

The candle flickers out.

Myra whips out her earbuds, startled.

MYRA

Rachel?

Myra creeps toward her bedroom.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - MYRA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Myra peers in from doorway.

MYRA

Rachel? You there?

A shattered frame on the floor. Terrified, she reaches to flip on the light. No one's there. Phew.

MYRA (CONT'D)

Ha ha, Rachel...

She backs into the living room.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She scans the room. No one...then FAINT WHISPERS.

MYRA

Hello? Is anybody there?

Behind her, the DOOR SLAMS.

MYRA (CONT'D)

Please don't kill me, please don't
kill me!

Myra scampers to front door as lights flicker on and off.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Myra fumbles with phone pop-socket. SLAMMING sounds from inside apartment. Dials 911.

MYRA

Help! My apartment's haunted and –
This IS a real emergency! – What do
you mean you don't "do" ghosts? –
You want me to call WHO?

TITLE: WISPY BUSINESS

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. STARTUP CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

PERSEPHONE "PENNY" VU (29, Viet-Filipina American, a play-by-the-book overachiever) concentrates on a computer monitor. She scrolls through lines of code.

Her two bro-y cofounders, MATT and DUSTIN (late 20s), hover behind her in the darkened room.

Matt, nervous and sweaty, unzips his fleece vest and pulls it off his t-shirt.

MATT

Oh man, oh man, this is all because
I lost my lucky tigers eye bracelet
in Burma.

DUSTIN

Orbital Ventures is coming any
minute and we're never getting
funded cuz of your jewelry!

PENNY

C'mon, you guys don't believe that
superstitious crap, do you?

Her PHONE BUZZES. Mom's calling. She mutes it. Back to code.

PENNY (CONT'D)

The only thing that haunts me is
Matt's goatee from junior year.

MATT

Hey! You said you liked me with
facial hair.

PENNY

We were 19. I also ate Top Ramen
for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Matt looks disappointed. Penny giggles and gently shoves him.

PENNY (CONT'D)

We've both blossomed. You look just
fine.

Matt smiles. They share a look. Sparks? Dustin throws a
Cheeto at Matt.

DUSTIN

We're hundo p cursed. My
lightworker predicted "turbulence
ahead." Focus!

CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH. Dustin stress eats Cheetos. Crumbs fall
on his standard-fare programmer hoodie.

Penny's PHONE BUZZES. A text from Mom. She opens it:

- Penny can we talk?

We catch a glimpse at their text history. Texts from Mom that
she hasn't responded to: article about lung health; something
about a miracle fruit; a picture of a fat squirrel.

Penny sticks her phone in her pocket. Back to the code.

PENNY

Ah ha! Found it! You accidentally
created an infinite loop.

She types something and hits enter. CODE runs past the
monitor. On the conference room projector screen, the ROOMIES
app appears: it's Tinder, but for roommates.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Check it.

Dustin pulls out his phone, swipes away a man grilling
indoors. It works! High fives all around. Penny and Matt hug.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(fakes telepathy)

My genie-in-a-bottle's sending me
tomorrow's headline: "CODE BEATS
CURSE. PENNY VU SAVES THE DAY."

DUSTIN

That's not how it works.

He throws a Cheeto at her. Looks down — his bowl of Cheetos
is empty.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Dang it, that was my last bag.
Wait...my vent stash!

Dustin runs outta the room. Matt tosses the fallen Cheeto in
the trash.

Penny stands and wipes Cheeto dust from her dress.

PENNY
Cool, I look like a 3-year old
after snack time.

MATT
You make it work. But I am drowning
in sweat. Judd Sterling's gonna
think I'm a clammy hands.

Matt spirals. Paces.

MATT (CONT'D)
I'm not a man. I'm just a little
jelly hands boy.
(whispers to himself)
Just like in 3rd grade.

PENNY
Oooohhhkay. Here, my dad used to do
this whenever I felt panicky.

She takes his hands, puts them over his chest. He stops
pacing.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Breathe in...feel your lungs
expanding? And out. Feel better?

MATT
Thanks, Penny. I couldn't do this
without you.

Zing. Definitely some sparks. She gets suddenly shy and
retrieves her hand.

PENNY
Sometimes you gotta go for what you
want, even if it scares you. But
once you've done it, it won't be so
scary anymore.

DOORBELL RINGS.

MATT
Oh god, it's them!

PENNY
Don't worry about them. Trust
yourself. Ready, Matlock?

They take a breath together. He winks at her. They head out.

INT. STARTUP LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

JUDD STERLING (48, coiffed and tailored) waltzes in with his associates, BEN and BRADFORD (30s-50s).

JUDD
So good to see you again!

They shake hands with Matt and Dustin. Pile their coats onto Penny.

JUDD (CONT'D)
Is that -

PENNY	JUDD (CONT'D)
(muffled from coats)	- the most gorgeous fiddle
Penny - we've met.	leaf ficus I've ever seen?

Judd walks past Penny to a potted plant. Matt winces apologetically at Penny and squeezes her arm.

MATT
Thanks, Judd! Smuggled that baby back from the Amazon. Ayahuasca really changes your perception of legality.

The men walk off. The pile of coats shuffles toward the conference room.

JUDD (O.S.)
Cheetos! Wow. You guys remind me of a young me.

INT. STARTUP CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Orbital Ventures and Penny sit at the conference table while Matt and Dustin present at the front.

DUSTIN
- by leveraging existing networks, we fully expect our app to disrupt on a local and global - globocal, if you will - level.

MATT
New City -

Dustin swipes right on a picture of a woman and three pugs in a mid-century modern apartment. BRRIIING! - the sound of a successful Roomies match.

DUSTIN
 — New Roomies.

Orbital Ventures enthusiastically claps. Penny gets up to present. Ben nudges an empty water glass toward her, expecting her to fill it. She's thrown, but fills it.

Penny goes to the front of the room. Ben and Judd look at each other, confused — what's the secretary doing up there? Bradford doodles.

Penny clicks to the next slide.

— Penny Vu, Co-Founder & CTO

PENNY
 Roomies is built using Mongo DB,
 Express.js, Angular JS, Node.js —

The men lean back, unimpressed. Bored. Penny wavers. Bradford continues his doodle of Penny as Jessica Rabbit.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 We also have a robust API design,
 which I'll describe momentarily.
 And later, I'll go into our
 database design —

Judd perks up, looking intrigued. She's hooked him! Or so she thinks. He's actually watching...

Through the conference room window behind her: QUAN VU and CHERRY BAUTISTA VU (Penny's parents, 60s) wander around the office. Quan feels the soil of the ficus. Waters it. Cherry marvels at desk toys.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 (more confidently)
 — server maintenance, and
 scalability.

A CRASH. Penny turns around and sees Cherry rushing to pick up a spilled desk bowling game.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 Mom?!

Cherry pops her head in:

CHERRY
 Don't mind us. We don't mean to
 interrupt you. I brought pancit for
 you and your friends.

Out of nowhere, Cherry pulls out Tupperware of homemade noodles. Penny's mortified.

PENNY
(to the guys)
I'll just be a second.

She pulls Cherry out the door, but Cherry manages to drop off the food on the table.

INT. STARTUP OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Penny stomps toward Quan with Cherry in tow.

PENNY
Mom! Ba! What are you doing here?

QUAN pinches Penny's cheek.

QUAN
We miss you!

Penny eyes him suspiciously.

QUAN (CONT'D)
Fine. We need to talk, but you're always so busy with work, so we came to work.

PENNY
I'm in the middle of our pitch!
We're trying to secure \$5 Million in funding —

CHERRY
Don't sass us, Penny. Maybe if you weren't always galavanting around, we could have picked a better time.

PENNY
Make it quick.

QUAN
Penny, your mom and I need to retire.

CHERRY
Your ba is getting old.

QUAN
It's time you take over the family business.

PENNY

Right now?!

Penny nervously glances over her shoulder. The boys chow down on the pancit.

CHERRY

Are you saying your family isn't as important as building computers or whatever?

PENNY

That's not even close to what we do here.

LAUGHTER from the conference room. The boys have made a game of throwing and catching pancit noodles in their mouths.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Listen, I've never minded handling the books, but I won't take on doing the actual...you know. I don't believe in that stuff.

CHERRY

That stuff?! Penny! This isn't tarot or "therapy"! This is ghost-hunting! It's real!

PENNY

Well, I've never seen a ghost. And I'm pretty sure most "ghost sightings" are just people accidentally tripping on toxic mold and hallucinating.

(then)

Oo! Maybe we should pivot into mold remediation.

Quan gets real somber.

QUAN

The family business has been passed down for generations, Penny.

Lights dim. Quan is the only thing illuminated. Incense smoke appears out of nowhere. As he speaks, the smoke illustrates his words behind him:

QUAN (CONT'D)

Generation after generation, from my father, his father, his father before him stretching all the way back to the Lê Dynasty, a member of the Vu family has helped ghosts get 'unstuck' from the realm of the living so they can pass on peacefully.

Penny waves away his words – ancestors dissipate. Lights back to normal.

PENNY

Y'know, in high school, everyone thought our "family business" was a cover for a prostitution ring. And honestly? That would've been better. Because at least prostitution rings exist.

QUAN

Our work is sacred. And if you don't take up the business, our family legacy dies with you.

PENNY

Me?! What about Danté? Isn't it supposed to be passed down to a man anyway? Ask Danté! Not me.

CHERRY

Oh, Penny. You know we can't trust your brother with important things. Never forget Mr. Hopper.

FLASHBACK - INT. VU FAMILY APARTMENT - NIGHT (2004)

14-year-old Penny (Britney Spears tank. Camo pants) carries an EMPTY BUNNY CAGE and approaches 17-year old DANTÉ playing with a flip knife (goth kid in jncos).

PENNY

Danté, have you seen Mr. Hopper?

DANTÉ

I let him out. I let them all out.
(whispers)
Nothing should be caged.

Empty snake tank. We hear a SNAKE HISS. Penny looks in a corner and SCREAMS. FRANTIC SQUEAKS.

DANTÉ (CONT'D)

Oops.

INT. STARTUP OFFICE - DAY

PENNY

(shudders)

It took 4 days for Lord Chaos to digest him.

A moment of silence for Mr. Hopper.

Quan clutches his chest, emotionally and physically pained.

QUAN

If I knew that coming to America would mean that our family would lose everything that makes us who we are, I would've rowed that boat back to the Việt Cộng.

Quan buries face in hands. Cherry comforts him and gives Penny a grave look.

CHERRY

Can't you just take on one case, Persephone?

Cherry stares down Penny.

PENNY

Fine! Whatever. One case. But once I prove to you that ghosts aren't real, you have to stop bugging me.

Quan looks into Penny's eyes and grasps her shoulder.

QUAN

Sure.

INT. STARTUP CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Penny re-enters the conference room as her parents leave. But Orbital Ventures is up, putting their coats on. The men bro-hug and laugh at some inside joke.

PENNY

You're leaving already?

JUDD

We have to jet but love what you have so far. We'll stay in touch!

INT. PENNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

It's the weekend and Penny's parked on the couch one hour into what she expects to be a full-day binge of Agatha Christie movies.

PENNY

(gasps)

It's two of them! There's always more than one murderer!

A LOUD BANG on the door. Penny SHRIEKS, spills POPCORN all over herself.

XIMENA (O.S.)

Penny! Open up! I need help!

Penny runs to open the door. She finds her BFF & roommate XIMENA (29, queer, goofy but cool hair, Big Dick Energy) standing in the doorway struggling to hold up Quan as he slumps sideways into her, panting loudly.

PENNY

Oh my god, Ba! What happened?!

XIMENA

I found Ba hunched over downstairs and gave him a piggyback ride for 4 flights.

QUAN

Thank you, but I'm not your Ba, Ximena.

XIMENA

Okay, potato, potahto. C'mon.

Penny and Ximena help Quan into the apartment and onto the couch. Ximena gets him a glass of water.

PENNY

Ba, how are you feeling? Do I need to call Dr. Xi? Or an ambulance?!

QUAN

I'm fine. The case, Penny. Today. Let's go.

PENNY

Oohh.

Penny remembers the promise she made. Quan stands up but, still unsteady, falls back onto the couch. Penny and Ximena steady him.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Well, you can't go anywhere like this. You need to rest. It's the weekend anyway. Take the day off.

QUAN

Ghosts don't take days off, Penny.

PENNY

(lightening the mood)

Well maybe they should unionize. Paid time off won't fight for itself.

QUAN

We still owe money on the last hospital bill.

The room is tense and silent.

PENNY

I can figure out the money.

QUAN

It's not just the money. I have my pride and good standing with my clients. Let's go.

Quan gets up. Penny sits him down.

PENNY

Ba, it's okay. I promised. So, I'll go. You stay here and rest. Please. If anything, to avoid another hospital bill!

Ximena perks up. She dips out.

XIMENA (O.S.)

Perfect! I can go with you! We can use all that stuff I got!

QUAN

Stuff? What stuff?

Ximena returns with an armful of gear.

QUAN (CONT'D)

You don't need that. North American ghost-hunting equipment is all pseudoscience. Our practice is based in Viet ancestor worship.

Ximena's face drops. She swivels back into her room with her gear.

XIMENA (O.S.)
That guy on Etsy's getting a bad
review!

Quan turns to Penny, takes her hands in his.

QUAN
(to Penny)
All you need is yourself.

Ximena bursts back in.

XIMENA
I threw it out the window!

Quan and Penny shake their head at the interruption.

QUAN
(to Penny)
All you need is yourself, Penny.
It's in your blood. Intuit.

PENNY
Into what?

XIMENA
Like from Alaska?

QUAN
Just intuit it!

PENNY
Ximena, you should stay here and
watch after my dad. I won't be
long. I'm sure even Casper's got a
date tonight.

QUAN
Ask if he has eligible living
friends for you.

Penny rolls her eyes and leaves. Ximena plops down next to Quan on the couch, eats a fistful of Penny's popcorn.

XIMENA
So, this is nice. Have you eaten
yet?

Quan looks toward the door, concerned about Penny.

EXT. BROOKLYN SIDEWALK - DAY

Penny paces sidewalk, looking at building numbers. She's on the phone with Quan.

PENNY

Are you sure this is the right address?

QUAN

Yes yes yes. And don't worry. It's an easy case - you got this.

Penny tries the buzzer. It's broken. Tries the knob and lets herself in.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Penny enters. PHONE CRACKLES.

PENNY

Ba? Are you still there? Ba?

PHONE BEEPS. Call dropped.

DOOR SLAMS behind her. Penny's creeped out.

PENNY (CONT'D)

5B....5B...

A LIGHT FLICKERS. She walks upstairs. A step wobbles. CHILLS - the hair on her neck raises up. Penny lands on the 5th floor, looking around for the right apartment, when FINGERS APPEAR ON HER SHOULDER.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

She spins around.

MYRA

Hey! Oh my god, perfect timing.
Just stepped out for a matcha. Come
on in.

Myra opens the door an inch. A MEOW from inside.

MYRA (CONT'D)

Make sure to close it right behind
you so my cat doesn't slip out.

Myra enters and Penny quickly follows and shuts the door.

INT. MYRA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Myra leads Penny through her apartment.

MYRA

She gets a little underfoot.

Penny steps around the cat.

MYRA (CONT'D)

You seem younger than on the phone.
And a woman.

PENNY

My dad's not feeling well, so I
came in his place.

MYRA

Well, like I told your dad, I built
an altar to calm the spirits, just
like he said, but there's still a
weird energy in here.

A LAMP FLICKERS next to the altar. Myra shudders.

MYRA (CONT'D)

See? They're communicating with us.

Penny tightens the bulb. It stops flickering.

PENNY

Loose bulb.

MYRA
 (skeptical)
 That's...relieving, I guess? But
 look.

Myra grabs a lighter from the altar. Attempts to light the incense. IT DOESN'T LIGHT.

Penny SCOFFS – the incense sticks are UPSIDE DOWN, sticking out of a cup of dried quinoa.

She takes one and rights it, takes the lighter from Myra, and LIGHTS IT.

PENNY
 Ta dah.

Myra GASPS. Penny sifts through the quinoa.

PENNY (CONT'D)
 And it's usually in rice, not
 quinoa, but..

MYRA
 Hmph.

A SNIFFLE behind them. Penny turns around and glances into the room, noticing MYRA'S ROOMMATE, a young woman sitting on the couch quietly weeping. The cat bats at her bathrobe.

PENNY
 (whispering)
 What's up with her?

MYRA
 I think she's just getting used to
 the place. She's not a fan of
 visitors.

Penny nods, looking around for clues.

PENNY
 Hmm...so noises, huh? Do you think
 it might be your radiators?

MYRA
 Nope. Checked with the super. The
 heat's been off for weeks.

They stop in front of the bedroom door. Myra backs away.

MYRA (CONT'D)
 That's where all the stuff broke.
 I'm not going in there.

Penny slowly cracks open the door. She clocks the broken frame on the floor, a diploma inside it.

PENNY

I'll do my best to figure this out.
There's a logical explanation for
everything.

MYRA

Thank you so much. We really
appreciate it.

A LOUD THUMP. Myra SHRIEKS. Penny looks up. An idea! She dashes out of the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - 6TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Penny runs up the stairs to the 6th floor.

Penny knocks on door. It opens: a FRAZZLED DAD on the phone, stirring a pot. Kid toys everywhere. TODDLER SHOUTING.

INT. MYRA'S APARTMENT - LATER

PENNY

— and the 7 yr old just started
gymnastics. She's practicing her
floor routine. City life, you know.

Penny catches her breath and smiles triumphantly.

MYRA

(disappointed)

So that was it? Thanks for talking
to them.

PENNY

Sure thing!

MYRA

I am definitely not having any
children.

(baby voice to her cat)

Just my lil' fur baby for me.

PENNY

Cooooool...anyway, you can mail the
check to my dad or just like Venmo
me and I'll write him a check. I
keep telling him to go electronic.

MYRA

Oh — I have a check written out for you. Let me grab it.

Penny follows her into the living room.

PENNY

(whispers)

I really hope your roommate feels better. Tell her I'm sorry she had to go through this.

Myra snuggles the cat.

MYRA

(to the cat)

You hear that, Rachel? The nice ghost hunter lady's sympathetic and doesn't think I'm a crazy cat lady.

The cat purrs and jumps out of her arms.

PENNY

Ha. I meant your actual roommate.

MYRA

What roommate?

PENNY

The girl? The girl crying on the couch...

MYRA

What girl!?

Penny walks toward the girl.

PENNY

This girl right he-!

She TRIPS OVER THE CAT and falls THROUGH THE GIRL and SCREAMS.

WHOOOOOSH — The past 30 minutes rewind and then replay again in fast forward in Penny's mind.

MEMORY FLASH

Penny asks what's wrong with the crying girl on the couch. Rachel, the cat, MEOWS. Myra looks at the cat and says the cat doesn't like visitors. Holy. Shit.

END MEMORY FLASH.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Oh my god.

Then, Penny BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. Myra CHUCKLES nervously.

PENNY (CONT'D)

No. Wow. Wow. I cannot believe my dad pulled this off. He can't even figure out his flip phone.

Penny scans the apartment.

PENNY (CONT'D)

This is the best hologram I've seen.

MYRA

Like...Tupac at Coachella?

PENNY

I guess the tech's gotten better. But all holograms need light...

(to herself)

Where are you, light source? Where are you...

Penny stops at a light switch.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Once I turn off the lights, the light source will reveal itself.

Penny switches off the light. Darkness. A timid MEOW.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Huh.

Penny switches the lights back on. Turns around and THE GIRL IS RIGHT BEHIND HER!

Penny SCREAMS! Myra SCREAMS! The girl SCREAMS! The girl runs into Myra's bedroom and SLAMS the door. Penny races to the bathroom and SLAMS the door shut.

INT. MYRA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Penny hugs her knees on the tile floor, hyperventilating.

INT. MYRA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Myra, freaking out, paces outside the bathroom door. She BANGS on the door. APARTMENT WALLS MOAN AND CREAK.

MYRA
O-M-G! Get that whatever-you-saw
out of my apartment! You're the
Ghostbuster or whatever!

INT. MYRA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Penny on the phone with Quan:

PENNY
(whispers)
Dad!! How the heck....what am
I...oh my god, oh my god, ghosts...

INT. PENNY & XIMENA'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

Quan is laid out on the couch, cozy, "Murder on the Orient Express" paused on the TV.

QUAN
Penny, snap out of it. You have to
ask the ghost to leave. Now. Don't
make us look bad. Remember: intuit!

INT. MYRA'S APARTMENT - SIMULTANEOUS

Penny exits the bathroom slowly, still on the phone. Myra rocks back and forth on the living room floor, burying her face in the cat's fur. Lights flicker. CHORUS OF MURMURING comes from Myra's bedroom - LOUDER and SCARIER. Penny stares at the door to Myra's bedroom frozen.

PENNY
I can't.

Penny STAMMERS and walks back toward the front door, away from everything.

PENNY (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
I'm sorry, Ba.

QUAN (V.O.)
Hey. Remember to breathe. Once
you've done it, it won't be so
scary anymore.

Penny puts a hand on her chest, feeling herself breathe.

PENNY
Ok. I'm....going in.

She hangs up and turns back to the living room. Pauses outside the bedroom door. Takes a deep breath. Steps into the bedroom.

INT. MYRA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Penny shuts door behind her. Stands frozen against it. The girl is nowhere in sight.

PENNY

Hello? Are you in here?

WALLS MURMUR, like we're inside of sadness itself. Penny steps into the middle of the messy room, snotty tissues all around.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Please. I'm here to help.

Through the closed closet door, "Myra's Roommate" HELEN (24, Haitian-American), materializes and sits down on the bed. Helen looks like any human but paler, and like she hasn't slept in days.

HELEN

You're the only one who's seen me since I -

PENNY

(whispers)

Since you died.

HELEN

I know I'm dead.

PENNY

Oh, you do? That's great! Well, not great, but...if you know you're dead, you can just mosey on over to heaven or wherever, right? You're free.

HELEN

You think I haven't tried to leave? I'm stuck here with that girl and her needy cat and every time I try to leave, I end up back on this bed.

Helen cries again. Penny tries to hand Helen a tissue from the box next to her, but her hand goes right through it. Ghost box!

PENNY

Hmm. Interesting. What do you remember from before you died?

HELEN

I don't know!!

Helen sobs harder and grabs a tissue from the ghost-box.

PENNY

C'mon. You've gotta try.

Helen just sobs. Penny walks around the room and THROUGH ghost-tissues.

PENNY (CONT'D)

So, these are all yours...

HELEN

I know, I'm sorry. I've been too sick to clean. God, it's such a mess!

She sobs. The ROOM RUMBLES frighteningly.

PENNY

That's okay! That's okay, we're just figuring it out.

Penny walks around the room, touching eyeglasses, the desk, a lamp, a STACK OF PAPER HER HANDS GO THROUGH.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(gasp)

Ghost papers!

Helen perks up.

HELEN

My thesis on snail evolution during the Cambrian period.

PENNY

...wowwww. Um...fascinating!

HELEN

Thanks! I think I have an interesting take on the diversification of gastropods. Wanna read it?

Oops, she was just trying to be polite. Penny "tries" to lift the thesis, but her hand passes through.

PENNY

Looks like I can't. That's too bad.

HELEN

I'll send it to you! Just log into my email. It's helencadeau@vmail.com. Password's the same thing, but backwards.

Helen hovers behind Penny 'til she pulls out her phone and sends it to herself.

PENNY

Cool, I'll *definitely* read it.

HELEN

Thanks! I was working through the night to finish it. I'd even printed it out. But I had this terrible headache.

Penny clocks the empty Tylenol bottle on the bedside table. She tries to pick them up, but her hand passes right through.

PENNY

Did you take the whole bottle?

HELEN

Well, yes, but like over a whole week.

Penny clocks the Sudafed next to the Tylenol.

PENNY

With the Sudafed?

HELEN

Girl, I was congested. Nothing helped. I had to keep working.

PENNY

Taking more than the recommended dosage over a period of time will cause acute liver failure.

Penny looks at Helen. Helen looks at Penny. It registers.

PENNY (CONT'D)

You OD'd on acetaminophen.

HELEN

Oh god. How could I not know? I was gonna be a doctor!

PENNY

Of snails.

Helen SOBS.

HELEN

I was the first in my family to go to college. My granmè gonna be pissed. She thought it was too much. All that work! For what? It doesn't matter now.

PENNY

It was a human error made under intense pressure. I mean, the guy who made Segways rode his off a cliff.

Helen chuckles.

PENNY (CONT'D)

It happens to the best of us.

HELEN

Thanks for listening.

Myra calls out from the living room.

MYRA (O.S.)

The noises stopped. Is it gone??

The room has settled, the pulsating stopped. Penny and Helen look at each other. Penny smiles and sighs with relief.

PENNY

We all just wanna be heard.

MYRA (O.S.)

Was it the incense? Your dad said the incense would communicate my intentions to the ghost!

PENNY

Let's see if we can get you outta here. Give it a shot.

Helen snuffles and smiles, stands, and walks past Penny and through the wall. Penny smiles, satisfied.

Her PHONE BUZZES. It's Matt. Penny picks up.

MATT (V.O.)

Hey Pen! Great news! Orbital Ventures made an offer.

INT. MYRA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Penny grabs the check and runs past Myra to the front door.
Myra's still huddled with her cat.

PENNY
(covering her phone)
Glad it worked out, Myra! I gotta
run! Byyye!

EXT. BROOKLYN SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Penny speed-walks from Myra's, still on the phone with Matt.

PENNY
That's amazing news!

MATT (V.O.)
We need to sign it end of day or
they're backing out. Can you get to
the office in 30 minutes?

PENNY
Heading down now. Wow, does no one
take off weekends anymore?

DUSTIN (V.O.)
(on speaker phone)
Money doesn't take days off, baby!

Penny shakes her head and hangs up.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

A posted sign says the trains aren't running.

PENNY
Are you kidding me?! But trains
take weekends off!?

Pulls out her phone and checks car-share app. App messaging:

- Looks like we're busy! 1000% surge-pricing.

PENNY
Aghhhhh!

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Penny flags down a takeout DELIVERY GUY on a bike. Hands him some cash, gets on the bike, topples over.

PENNY
Nope! Still can't ride a bike!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Wind blows through Penny's hair as the bike speeds down the street. Delivery Guy pedals while she stands on back pegs.

INT. STARTUP CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Penny rushes in, sweaty, hair a mess. Orbital Ventures, Matt, and Dustin stand around a table.

JUDD
Ah, the lady of the hour.

PENNY
Got here as soon as I could!

MATT
No worries, Pen. We were just finishing up.

BEN
Just need your autograph. Tell your mom I loved her lo mein by the way.

Matt pulls out a chair for Penny. She sits.

Her PHONE BUZZES. Texts from Quan:

- She's at it again! More things flying off walls!
- Please fix! Help us save face!
- 🙏🙏🙏!!!

MATT
Ready, Pen?

She puts her phone away. Matt brushes her hair out of her face. They share an excited smile. Judd pushes the contract and a pen towards her.

She scans the contract, initialing as she reads.

PENNY

Wait, wait, wait. This can't be right.

She puts the pen down.

JUDD

Is something wrong?

Dustin shifts in his seat.

PENNY

Matt, can I talk to you outside?

INT. STARTUP OFFICE - DAY

Penny paces angrily outside the conference room. Matt gently reaches for her elbow.

MATT

Hey...take a second.

Matt places her hand on her chest.

MATT (CONT'D)

Breathe, remember?

Penny pauses and takes a deep breath, but then pulls away. She goes back to pacing.

PENNY

I think Judd's trying to screw me over. I'm not listed as a founder. And they left out my shares.

MATT

You're getting a good payout here.

PENNY

Maybe, but it's nothing compared to yours.

Penny stops pacing and turns to face Matt.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Wait, you knew?

MATT

Pen - Pen, I didn't think you'd be upset. It's a great deal.

PENNY

If it's so great, then why don't
you take it?

MATT

I would if that's what they offered
me, but it's not.

PENNY

So you're gonna Eduardo me?!

MATT

Hey, I'm cuter than Mark
Zuckerberg.

Penny shoots him a look — we're not flirting, buddy.

MATT (CONT'D)

You're the one who said to go after
what you want, even if it scares
you!

PENNY

I was talkin' about me, you idiot!
I said that when I thought I was
what you wanted! I didn't say that
so you'd screw me over!

MATT

Pen, c'mon. Don't you want Roomies
to happen for us?

PENNY

You mean happen for you! I'm the
one who built the app. All those
sleepless nights coding. For what?!
My work matters and I deserve to
get recognized for it!

She remembers Helen.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(to herself)

My work matters. Her work matters.

MATT

Who? What?

Penny turns to leave. Matt grabs her arm.

MATT (CONT'D)

Listen, this is it. It's happening.
We gotta trust ourselves and not
worry about everyone else, like you
said, Pen.

PENNY

No, you mean trust yourself and not
worry about me. This isn't fair,
Matthew, and you know it.

She storms into the conference room.

PENNY (CONT'D)

No. Nope! I am not doing this
crappy deal.

She rips the contract up, with some effort, and throws it at
them. Takes out her phone and taps something on the screen.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I just froze the code repository.
You want my work? You're gonna need
to make a better offer.

She grabs Bradford's doodle and rips that up too.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(to Ben)

And it's pancit, but I won't offend
my mother with your ignorance.

Penny heads out pausing at the door.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I'll leave you with your
conscience!

Penny triumphantly exits the conference room, then remembers
her final task.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(screaming through window
of conference room)

Right after I use the printer.

They watch on as she prints 60 pages. Awkward.

She grabs the stack of papers, Helen's thesis. Bolts out the
door.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Penny on the back pegs of Delivery Guy's bike speeding down the street.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY

Penny runs down university hallway, finds the professor's door, and drops off thesis in slot outside door.

Pre-lap: APPLAUSE.

INT. UNIVERSITY HALL - DAY

SUPER: 3 weeks later

A small commencement ceremony.

SPEAKER

Helen was a gifted and passionate scholar. She had almost completed her degree before she passed away. It is my privilege to recognize Helen's significant contributions to her field of study.

APPLAUSE.

Helen's parents, MARJORIE and WILLIAM (50s, sweet and tearful) go up to accept the diploma in her honor.

Penny sits next to Quan, Cherry, and Ximena in the back. Quan squeezes Cherry's hand.

QUAN

(with pride)

Look what our daughter did.

CHERRY

She did good.

Penny, stunned, looks around in confusion.

PENNY

I'm sorry, what did you say?

QUAN

I said there's no food here. I thought there would be food.

PENNY

Oh. For a second, I thought you
were proud of me.

CHERRY

Why do you always think we're
talking about you? That's why your
forehead's so big.

Cherry moves Penny's hair to cover some of Penny's forehead.

CHERRY (CONT'D)

Have you considered bangs?

Penny pushes Cherry's hands away and fixes her hair.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

Penny, Cherry, and Quan finish eating at a Chinese restaurant
as Ximena stands with a glass raised.

XIMENA

I am SO honored to grab the yoke of
the water buffalo that plows this
family business forward. To family!

Other restaurant goers gawk. One old man raises a teacup.

QUAN

(embarrassed)

Okay, Ximena. That's enough. Thank
you.

DANTÉ (now 35, tattooed and badass) comes through the door.

PENNY

Oh, god. Why is Danté here?

XIMENA

I invited him! I thought this was a
whole family par-tay!

Quan and Cherry take a deeeeeep breath.

Danté walks up to the table.

QUAN

Hello, son.

DANTÉ

Looks like I made it just in time
for dessert.

CHERRY
No flambé, Danté!

Penny's PHONE BUZZES. A text from Matt:

- Can we please talk? Please?

She opens the message. A bunch of unanswered messages from Matt.

PENNY
Look, guys, I can't stay.

She looks down at her phone, types out "Hey...." then deletes text she started.

PENNY (CONT'D)
I gotta head out soon. I have a lot of work to do.

CHERRY
Already?

PENNY
Yeah, I gotta print a new sign for our shopfront.

DANTÉ
I wouldn't worry about that...

PENNY
Danté, our shopfront can't say "Wispy Business" on it anymore.

DANTÉ
Well, the thing with the shop is..

EXT. SHOPFRONT - DAY

A "Wispy Business" shopfront sign SMASHED on the ground.

Penny's shoved aside by an INVISIBLE FORCE. An ASIAN GANG MEMBER (30s), marches past her and MATERIALIZES THROUGH the front door to join other GHOST ASIAN GANG MEMBERS (30s-40s), drinking and gambling inside.

Danté motions at the shop as Penny, Quan, Cherry, and Ximena stand outside, mouths agape.

Penny storms up to the front door.

PENNY

I'm not gonna let some mid-after-
life-crisis biker wannabes kick us
out of OUR shop for their little
card game!

She gets to the door and a FORCE EXPELS HER, throwing her to
the ground.

END SHOW