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Teen Girls Never Forget

Megan Downey

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Teen Girls Never Forget

by

Megan Downey

A thesis presented to the

Faculty of the Department of
The School of Film and Television
Loyola Marymount University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts in Writing for the Screen

May 5, 2022

FINAL THESIS
FEATURE SCREENPLAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Student Name: Megan Downey

Thesis Logline: Separated from her best friend, a co-dependent teenage girl scours NYC's East Village—clinging to young strangers, a stray golden retriever, and too many sake bombs—as she grasps for stability post 9/11.

Teen Girls Never Forget

Title

A teleplay written and produced and presented to the faculty of
the Writing for the Screen MFA Program in the School of Film &
Television at Loyola Marymount University of
Los Angeles, California

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Fine Arts

Writing for the Screen

By

Megan Downey

Student Name


Megan Downey (m1ey 2, 2022 12:38 PDT)

Student Signature

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Writing for the Screen:

Megan Downey

Student Name

May 2, 2022

Date

SCWR 690 Instructor Signature

SCWR 691 Instructor Signature

Graduate Director Signature

TEEN GIRLS NEVER FORGET

Written by

Megan Downey

M.downey.M@gmail.com
(914) 318-4772

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

The Manhattan skyline glints harshly in the sun. There are no super-tall buildings yet, just the old standards making steel and glass peaks and valleys.

A gap where the Twin Towers once stood grows bigger and bigger, until we move through it, into the city.

PEDESTRIANS swarm around honking CABS to cross busy streets. COPS stand menacingly outside subway stations.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

The MTA's "See Something, Say Something" POSTERS hang by STRAPHANGERS jerking back and forth as their train car moves.

INT. SUBWAY - PLATFORM - DAY

TEENS chase each other down a subway platform, laughing, pushing each other around, then straighten up as a MACHINE-GUN COP comes down the stairs toward them. Good behavior until they clear Machine Gun Cop, a beat, then Teens horse around again.

EXT. QUEENS - DAY

SUPER: 2005, Queens, NY

WHOOSH, a plane flies overhead a neighborhood of turn-of-the-century houses on tree-lined streets.

INT. FOREST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - BATHROOM - DAY

CRISSI CONNOLLY (15), a cunning anxious girlie, washes her hands aggressively, rinses, takes another round of soap and starts all over.

Her best friend, ANNA TAYLOR (15), brash and studious, sits on the counter pulling tendrils out of her ponytail.

 CRISSI

 You brought your iPod to listen in
 homerom, right?

 ANNA

 Duh.

CRISSI

Okay good, then we do math,
english, whatever, for gym we walk
the track and listen to Beyonce,
then lunch we'll sit with the
volleyball girls and do the
crossword, but leave like ten
minutes early to do locker clean
out so we can bounce as soon as
ninth period ends. Then snacks,
swings, TRL. Perfect, right?

ANNA

But what do we do between third and
fourth period?

Crissi's face falls, oh fuck.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm kidding! You have every second
of this day planned.

CRISSI

It's our first last day of high
school, I want it to be perfect.

Anna checks the mirror, hates the tendrils, takes her hair
down completely.

RINGGGGGGG, the school bell goes off.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Shit.

Crissi shakes water off her hands, books it to the door. Anna
is mid-hair fix.

ANNA

Bitch, wait--up or down?

CRISSI

We don't have time for up!

INT. FOREST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Crissi and Anna (hair down) walk down the hall with linked
arms, each with one earbud in.

INT. FOREST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

A checked-out TEACHER reads a magazine at their desk. STUDENTS horse around, pass magazines back and forth, listen to iPods.

Crissi and Anna sit together, gabbing.

INT. FOREST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

RIIIING, the bell goes off as Students siphon off to their tables: the HOT JOCKS, the FUNKY ART KIDS, the MUSIC INDIES, the INTELLECTUAL ASSHOLES.

Crissi and Anna enter and beeline for a table in the corner, exchanging nods, smiles with other tables.

They sit down with COURTNEY and EMILY, who are picking at plates of french fries and reading COSMO.

COURTNEY

Hey sluts!

CRISSI

Happy last lunch!

Crissi and Anna dump out brown bag lunches on the table, and wordlessly give and take different snacks from their respective piles.

Crissi unfolds a photocopied version of the NYTimes crossword, Anna hands her a pen.

EMILY

Page thirty eight is insane.

ANNA

Lemme see!

Emily passes the Cosmo over. Anna scans the page, eyes wide.

CRISSI

What's a nine letter word for,
like, random?

COURTNEY

Arbitrary.

ANNA

Wait, cum has calories?

EMILY

Only if you swallow it.

The girls all gag.

 CRISSI
Anna, the capital of Uruguay?

 ANNA
This is important.

 CRISSI
What more could you possibly learn
about blowjobs?

 COURTNEY
She has to read, she's not a hands-
on learner.

 CRISSI
Uruguay? Capital city?

 ANNA
Hold on... there's a girl who
escaped from her rapist.

Anna flips pages ahead to the story. Emily nods knowingly.

 EMILY
Page seventy-two.

 COURTNEY
Can you read it out loud?

 CRISSI
Can we not?

 EMILY
We need to know how to save
ourselves, girl.

Crissi looks to Anna, who's on board. They have a quick back
and forth with their eyes, then Crissi puts down her pen.

 ANNA
 (reading)
Two years ago, when I was twenty, I
was walking to my car when...

PRELAP RIIIIIIIIIIING

EXT. FOREST HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A scruffy brick building. The final bell RINGS, school's out!
The doors burst open, STUDENTS stream out.

One KID hits play on an iPod plugged into a batter-powered speaker and "School's Out Forever" blasts.

Crissi and Anna come through the doors looking relieved. Crissi and other Students toss piles of notebooks in garbage cans on the sidewalk.

CRISSI

We're outie three thousand!

Anna looks up at the school, a little wistful.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

What're you doing?

ANNA

What? Nothing!

CRISSI

Let's go.

Crissi heads off. Anna takes one more glance at the school before catching up to Crissi.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Crissi and Anna walk down the block, a CUTE GUY (17) jogs after them.

CUTE GUY

Yo wait up!

Anna slows up, grabs Crissi to make her stop.

CRISSI

What?

CUTE GUY

Anna, what's good?

ANNA

Ya know. You exited for summer?

CUTE GUY

You know it. We should hangout sometime. Can I get your number?

Anna give him a once over. He's fully staring at her boobs.

ANNA

My phone plan sucks, lemme give you my AIM instead.

She rips a piece of notebook paper, scribbles her screen name, hands it over. He checks it, smiles.

CUTE GUY
Alright, catch you later.

He gives Crissi a nod. She looks skeptical.

CUTE GUY (CONT'D)
Little Connolly, tell your brother
I said what's up.

Crissi nods. Cute Guy retreats.

CRISSI
That was odd.

ANNA
He was being nice!

CRISSI
He was staring at your boobs the
whole time.

ANNA
Do you ever feel like you could
actually take over the world by
distracting guys with your boobs?

CRISSI
No. You're not actually gonna hang
out with him, are you?

The girls stop at the corner, head into...

INT. BODEGA - CONTINUOUS

Shelves to the ceiling jam-packed with snacks and mini bottles of household sundries. Cases full of cold drinks. Crissi and Anna beeline to the MAGAZINE RACK.

ANNA
Maybe, I have to weigh my options.

CRISSI
What the fuck does that mean?

Crissi grabs a People, Anna takes it out of her hand and replaces it with an Us Weekly.

ANNA
This summer I'm ready to become a
woman of the world.

CRISSI
You're a girl of Queens, bitch.

ANNA
I'm ready to grow beyond that.

CRISSI
What's wrong with being that.

Anna pats her on the shoulder.

ANNA
(patronizingly)
You'll understand one day, Crissi.

CRISSI
Fuck off. Get the usual?

Anna nods, the girls fan out in the store. Crissi runs her hand along the drink cases until she gets to *the one*. She grabs two SNAPPLES--one raspberry, one peach.

Anna picks up chip bags and shakes them, until she finds just the right ones.

Crissi gets to the register, the BODEGA GUY gives her a nod.

BODEGA GUY
Alright miss, that's two.

Crissi pulls two bills out of her pocket. Anna tosses the chips on the counter. Bodega Guy gives her a *nod*.

BODEGA GUY (CONT'D)
Hey lil ma, no charge.

Anna blushes. Crissi looks at him, suspicious.

ANNA
Thanks!

EXT. BODEGA - MOMENTS LATER

The girls slam their Snapple bottles into the heels of their hands ten or so times.

ANNA
Being a woman of the world gets you
free shit.

Anna POPS her bottle open. Crissi rolls her eyes.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Crissi and Anna swing on a swing set, munching on chips. Crissi has a notebook out, writing a list in milky gel pen.

CRISSI

Definitely hit Rockaway a few times, and I can probably get my brother to drive us to Jones Beach. The second half of July I think we should go running every day, I want to stay in shape for volleyball.

ANNA

I'm probably not gonna be an every day runner.

CRISSI

Well, not every day, we have Beach Saturdays, and if we're going into the city, like when we do the Chelsea Piers trapeze or shopping or whatever.

Anna twists her swing round and round and round, then releases her feet, sending herself spinning.

ANNA

So I have to tell you something.

CRISSI

What?

ANNA

Just please don't be mad at me.

Crissi looks to Anna, but can't catch eye contact in all the spinning. Crissi grabs one of the chains of Anna's swing, jerking her to a stop.

CRISSI

I'm not gonna be mad at you.

ANNA

I'm pretty sure you are.

CRISSI

What could be that bad?

ANNA

I'm going to a different school next year.

Crissi drops the swing chain, steps away.

CRISSI
Why would you do that?

ANNA
My parents want me to go to this private school to be more like, academically challenged. It's actually pretty cool I got in.

CRISSI
So you've been planning this for a long time? And you're just telling me now?

ANNA
Well I didn't know if I was gonna get accepted. Or get the scholarship. And the letter from Northfield just came--

CRISSI
Northfield?

Anna nods.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
Is that in the Bronx or something?

ANNA
Um, it's actually in Massachusetts. It's a boarding school.

Crissi's stunned.

CRISSI
So you're leaving me.

ANNA
It's not like that!

Crissi looks lost, walks away. Anna runs after her.

ANNA (CONT'D)
And we still have the summer! All that stuff we can do together!

Crissi takes a beat.

CRISSI
The running?

ANNA
Yeah, even the fucking running.

Crissi holds out a fist, pinkie out.

 CRISSI
 You promise?

Anna nods, locks her pinkie in Crissi's.

 ANNA
 Promise.

They hold eye contact, kiss their fists with their pinkies connected, sealing the deal.

INT. CONNOLLY HOUSE - CRISSI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Teen clutter, CDs piled on top of the dresser, clothes piled on a desk chair. Stickers make a gallery wall by the closet, an FDNY one in a place of prominence.

Crissi and Anna lie in bed flipping through US WEEKLY.

 CRISSI
 I feel like you're the Paris and
 I'm the Nicole.

 ANNA
 You are literally exactly the
 Paris, what are you talking about?

 CRISSI
 That's a very Paris thing to say.

Anna grabs the magazine, getting a closer view of the pics.

 ANNA
 I wish my mom would let me get my
 bellybutton pierced.

 CRISSI
 It probably hurts like a bitch.

 ANNA
 That's fine, I just want people to
 like, know I'm not a nerd when I
 get to my new school.

Anna hops off the bed, applies lip gloss in the mirror. She admires her work.

 CRISSI
 You could go to the guy on St.
 Mark's who doesn't I.D.

ANNA
That's not real.

CRISSI
It totally is! My cousin got
pierced there.

ANNA
Seriously?

CRISSI
Yeah. Cuz I know your fake I.D.'s
literally only ever worked at that
one store on Queens Boulevard.

ANNA
We can't all get our I.D.s from
older cousins, check yourself.

CRISSI
Well, maybe the kids at your new
school can help you get a good one.

ANNA
Shut up.

Anna turns back to the mirror, looks at her navel, then a
smile spreads across her face.

ANNA (CONT'D)
We could get them together.

CRISSI
My I.D. works, it's real.

ANNA
No, we could get matching
bellybutton piercings.

CRISSI
You want me to get a hole in the
middle of my stomach?

ANNA
It's like the grown-up version of a
friendship bracelet. Forever.

Crissi thinks a beat, looks back to the magazine. Hmm.

CRISSI
That's hot.

INT. CONNOLLY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

A '90s kitchen--white refrigerator, wooden cabinets with white knobs. Chicken motifs. A wall of family photos, including a headshot of DAD (40s) in a FDNY dress uniform. A Celtic cross hangs over the kitchen table.

Crissi bounces back and forth in front of the toaster. A plate and a packet of ICING carefully laid out on the counter. Her brother, KYLE (17, self-parentified) shovels eggs into his mouth.

KYLE

Toaster strudel is not a real meal,
Crissi, you need protein.

CRISSI

I need you to get off my ass.

KYLE

Our bodies are temples.

CRISSI

God didn't create the gift of
Toaster Strudel for us to shun it.

KATHY CONNOLLY (late 40s) Crissi and Kyle's anxious mom, enters, beelining to the coffee maker, patting Crissi on the shoulder on her way.

KATHY

You're up early.

CRISSI

I'm meeting Anna, we're going to
the city.

KATHY

What time are you coming back?

CRISSI

Late.

KATHY

That's not an answer.

CRISSI

I literally don't know. We're gonna
go shopping and maybe see a movie
and eat and whatever, so...

KYLE

Just give her an estimate.

CRISSI
Somewhere between eight and eleven.

POP, the toaster strudel jumps up from the toaster, Crissi tosses it onto the plate and starts drizzling frosting.

KATHY
You'll call me at five and tell me
what time you'll be back.

CRISSI
Sure.

KATHY
Crissi.

Crissi looks at her, Kathy is not fucking around.

CRISSI
Yes, I'll call. At five.

KATHY
Do you have a sweatshirt?

CRISSI
It's ninety degrees out, ohmygod!

Crissi grabs her toaster strudel, incredulous, and exits.

Kathy looks at Kyle, he shrugs, what can he do?

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS:

-Outside a brick house, Crissi runs down the front steps

-Outside a pre-war apartment building, Anna exits

-Crissi walks down the street, licking frosting from her hand
as she swerves around a pile of trash bags

-Anna walks down the street, puts on lipgloss, checks herself
in the tiny mirror in the lipgloss handle

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Close on Crissi and Anna's green STUDENT METROCARDS swiping
through the turnstile.

INT. SUBWAY - TRAIN CAR - DAY

Anna and Crissi subway surf, each with one earbud in their ears connected to Anna's iPod. Crissi runs her finger down a written list.

CRISSI

A.E., then Urban. We can walk over to 2nd Ave and split Pomme Frites--

ANNA

It's too hot out for Pomme Frites.

CRISSI

But it's on the list.

ANNA

But it was ten degrees colder when we made the list.

CRISSI

Then what do you want to eat?

ANNA

Let's just decide later.

CRISSI

I don't wanna--

Anna jerks back as the train slows, yanking the earbud out of Crissi's ear. Anna grabs onto Crissi, steadying herself.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

--do that!

ANNA

Then you can have Pomme Frites.

CRISSI

It's too big to eat by yourself, that's why we go halvsies.

SCREEEEEEEEEEEECH, the most heinous version of metal-on-metal grinding rings.

INT. URBAN OUTFITTERS - DAY

Crissi and Anna methodically flip through a rack of bubble dresses. A midi file version of Rihanna's "PON DE REPLAY" plays from Crissi's phone, she digs it out of her purse.

CRISSI
 (into phone)
 Hello?... Yeah, Mom, we're fine.

Crissi rolls her eyes at Anna, who gives her a knowing look.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Why?... Yeah, she's here... Ugh,
 fine, one sec.

Crissi puts her hand over the receiver.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
 She wants to hear your voice to
 confirm we're both alive.

Anna puts her hand out, no big deal.

ANNA
 (into phone)
 Hi, Mrs. Connolly... Yeah, just
 doing some shopping... We will...
 Okay, bye.

Anna hangs up.

CRISSI
 I hate when she does that.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. URBAN OUTFITTERS - LATER

Crissi, arms piled high with clothes, nudges Anna.

CRISSI
 I'm gonna try on.

Crissi heads toward a sign that reads FITTING ROOMS.

Anna has a sea of shirts draped over one arm. She flicks through a rack, hanger by hanger, eyes fixed on TREVOR (16) a Ryan Cabrera type who's cute and knows it.

He looks over and Anna looks away. Then the reverse. And again. He moves to a rack of sweaters closer to her. Another eye flick.

TREVOR
 Can you tell me what color this is?

He holds up a dark green sweater.

ANNA
Is this a trick question?

He laughs.

TREVOR
No, I'm just kinda color blind.

ANNA
Oh, that sucks.

He shrugs, they share an awkward smile.

TREVOR
I get by.

He looks through another rack. Anna watches, intrigued.

ANNA
I can help you find something else
green to match that... if you want.

TREVOR
You seem kinda busy there.

He motions to her arm full of shirts.

ANNA
I've got a free arm.

FITTING ROOM #1

Crissi fusses with a low-rise skirt.

RACKS

Anna holds a shirt up to Trevor's chest. At contact there's a ZING, and they shove their faces together.

Anna pulls back, giggles.

ANNA
You wanna try stuff on?

He nods, she grabs his hand and leads him across the store.
They barrel into...

FITTING ROOM #3

Anna and Trevor make out. It's a little jilted, but they manage to keep diving in. Anna peels her top off, Trevor pulls off his hat.

FITTING ROOM #1

Crissi examines herself in the mirror, a floral belly shirt on. She sucks in her stomach, releases, sucks in.

She opens the door and looks around. No Anna in sight, she's forlorn. Salesclerk spots her.

SALESCLERK

That's really cute on you.

CRISSI

Oh, I dunno. I wanna ask my fr--

SALESCLERK

A lot of people can't pull that look off so you should really take it while you can.

CRISSI

Ok, thanks?

Crissi looks around, scrunching her nose.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna try something else while I wait for her.

Crissi's dressing room door bangs shut.

MATCH CUT TO:

FITTING ROOM #3

Anna and Trevor's connected bodies hitting the door with a THUD. They're unfazed until...

KNOCK KNOCK.

They freeze.

SALESCLERK (O.S.)

Everything ok in there?

ANNA AND TREVOR

Yeah!

SALESCLERK (O.S.)

It's one customer per fitting room. Open the door.

Trevor motions no, Anna gives a painful nod, yes. She opens the door slowly.

SALESCLERK (CONT'D)

Ugh, seriously? This is an Urban Outfitters, not MTV Real World, get the fuck out.

EXT. URBAN OUTFITTERS - DAY

Anna and Trevor are shoved out the front door as she pulls on her shirt.

ANNA

My friend's still in there! I'm gonna sneak back--

TREVOR

No, I don't want you get in trouble in there.

ANNA

That's really sweet, but I can't just leave her.

TREVOR

I got you, I'm supposed to meet my sister at that Starbucks across the street in a few, why don't we go there and you can watch the door for your friend.

Anna thinks, Trevor offers his hand, omg.

INT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - DAY

Trevor slides into a seat next to TESS (17), his vintage-wearing Virginia-Woolf reading sister. She's got three notebooks splayed out in front of her, picking at her scalp.

TREVOR

Sup, sis.

TESS

I'm having a stress response right now, I am not well.

TREVOR

Chillax.

TESS

Wish I could, but I'm on deadline.

TREVOR

It's summer vacation.

TESS

Not for me. I went to that accepted students breakfast thing at Barnard and the editor of the school magazine spoke and it turns out they only take like, two freshmen a year, and if you don't get on freshman year, you might as well fling yourself into the Hudson River, okay?

Trevor looks at her like she has three heads.

TESS (CONT'D)

So now I have to submit some sort of character study that proves I have the chops to interview, like, legit people. And it's due before the school year starts.

TREVOR

So you have all summer.

TESS

Next week's 4th of July, then it's the week at Grandma's, all the summer birthday parties, then it's hot soup weather for 2 weeks and it's deadline.

TREVOR

Dope. You want a frapp?

TESS

Are you ever not thinking about what to put in your mouth next?

He shrugs.

EXT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - DAY

Anna paces, watching the Urban Outfitters door.

INT. URBAN OUTFITTERS - DAY

Crissi speed walks through the store, running up and down stairs, around over-stuffed racks, increasingly panicked. She stops at a table of accessories, breathes. In, out. In, out.

CRISSI

Anna?!

She looks around the salesfloor, to no avail. Her breathing gets shallow, the room spins for a moment until...

EXT. URBAN OUTFITTERS - DAY

Crissi charges out the door, hands on her knees, gasps for air over and over.

ANNA (O.S.)
Crissi! CRISSI!

Crissi looks up, her face flushes with relief. Anna waves. Crissi steps way out into the avenue, waits for a few cars to go, then darts across.

EXT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - CONTINUOUS

Anna jumps Crissi into a bear hug, Crissi pulls back.

CRISSI
You took off?!

ANNA
Ohmygod no I got kicked out!

CRISSI
Who gets kicked out of an Urban Outfitters?

ANNA
Me and... Trevor?

CRISSI
Who the fuck is Trevor?

ANNA
Come inside, he's getting us frapps, I'll explain everything.

Anna ushers a frazzled Crissi into...

INT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Trevor puts four whipped-cream topped FRAPPUCINOS on the table in front of Tess.

TESS
Did they mess up the order?

TREVOR
No, the other two are for--

Anna pulls Crissi up to the table.

ANNA
Hey!

TREVOR
Them.

ANNA
This is my friend Crissi.

CRISSI
(to Anna)
Who are these people?

TREVOR
Anna and me met at the store.

TESS
Anna and I.

CRISSI
Who are you?

TREVOR
(to Anna)
This is my sister, Tess.

ANNA
It's so nice to meet you!

CRISSI
(to Anna)
I need to talk to you.

Crissi pulls Anna to the other side of the shop.

ANNA
Let go, ow.

CRISSI
What is happening here?

ANNA
I think he's the one.

CRISSI
Your soulmate?!

ANNA
O.M.G. no, the one I'm gonna lose
my virginity to.

CRISSI
You wanna have sex with bargain bin
Ryan Cabrera? Today?

 ANNA
Yes.

 CRISSI
That's NOT PART OF THE PLAN!

Anna looks mortified, looks over to see if Trevor's watching them. He unabashedly is.

WITH TESS AND TREVOR:

The siblings watch Crissi talk animatedly, Anna crossing her arms, getting defensive. Tess is eating it up.

 TREVOR
Full disclosure, I made out with
the one on the left at Urban. You
think they're fighting over me?

 TESS
I assure you, they're not.

 TREVOR
What do you know?

Crissi huffs off, joins the BATHROOM LINE.

 TESS
Let's find out.

Anna rejoins them at the table.

 TESS (CONT'D)
Were you guys fighting over my
brother?

Trevor kicks Tess under the table.

 ANNA
What? No. We just had some personal
stuff to cover real quick.

INT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - HALLWAY - DAY

Crissi waits in line. She pulls out her list of the day's plans, her eyes dart over to Anna.

BACK TO:

INT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - SAME

Tess aggressively observes the people coming through the front doors, unimpressed. Trevor scoots in closer to Anna.

TREVOR
She's your best friend?

ANNA
Yeah, since forever.

TREVOR
No offense or anything, but she seems kinda psycho.

ANNA
She so isn't, it's just a weird day. And she has a lot of anxiety.

Tess perks up, jots something down.

TESS
How's that manifest for her?

ANNA
I feel like I shouldn't be talking about that.

TREVOR
You wanna go somewhere and finish that... *other* conversation.

He takes her hand, rubs her palm with his thumb.

ANNA
I do, like, really do, but we had some plans today that--

He laces his fingers into hers. Anna stops breathing for a moment, grips his hand back, lets out a tiny SQUEAK.

INT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - BATHROOM - SAME

Crissi splashes water on her face, holds her wet hand to the back of her neck. She confronts herself in the mirror.

INT. 6TH AVE STARBUCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Crissi clocks Anna and Trevor holding hands as she returns to the table. Tess sees her see it, is thrilled.

ANNA
Hey, bitch!

Crissi sides into her seat, slowly unwraps a straw and plunges it into her drink. She takes a long sip, grimaces.

CRISSI
What flavor is this?

TREVOR
Strawberries and cream.

She eyes the caramel drizzle on Anna's drink, switches their cups. Anna doesn't react. Tess's eyes widen.

ANNA
Did anyone else hear that thunder last night?

No. CRISSI Yeah. TREVOR

ANNA
It was super loud.

An awkward beat.

ANNA (CONT'D)
So, Trevor and I were thinking of going to hang solo for a little bit, but then we could meetup again at the piercing place at three?

CRISSI
Three o'clock?!

ANNA
That's what time we were planning to go, right?

CRISSI
Yeah, but--

ANNA
Do you mind?

Anna gives her a pleading look. Crissi gives a "do you really have to?" look. Anna's eyes say "it's important!"

Tess watches the back and forth.

CRISSI
Yeah, no, that's chill.

Anna jumps up, gives Crissi a quick side hug.

ANNA
Love you, bitch!

TREVOR
Later.

Anna and Trevor smile at each other, float out the door.
Crissi looks pissed.

CRISSI
They're going to have sex with each
other. Right now.

TESS
He's my baby brother, I'd rather
not think about that.

Crissi is clearly thinking about it. She looks almost frozen,
except for her hands wringing the life out of the paper list.

TESS (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

Crissi tries to take a deep breath, but all she can get is
shallow ones.

CRISSI
I shouldn't have let her go. I have
to save her from herself.

TESS
Maybe just, chill for a second get
your--

Overcome, Crissi bolts out the door. Tess senses a story,
sprints after her to...

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Crissi looks up and down the street, to no avail. Tess comes
out the door, Crissi sees and narrows in on her.

CRISSI
I don't know which way they went!

A CUSTOMER gives Crissi and Tess the stink eye as they shove
their way past them to the Starbucks door.

TESS
Okay, let's go for a little walk--

Tess ushers Crissi around the corner onto a side street.

TESS (CONT'D)

And maybe try calling her.

Crissi nods, pulls out her phone and dials. Tess watches as Crissi shakes her head.

CRISSI

It went straight to voicemail.

TESS

Okay, so, you're gonna meetup again at three.

CRISSI

That's too late! Call your brother.

TESS

And use daytime minutes?

CRISSI

It would take like, one minute to say "where are you?" "We're here."

TESS

I'm feeling a lot of pressure here and I'm already very stressed, can you back off for a second.

CRISSI

What're you stressed about?

TESS

Just the writing assignment that my entire future hinges on.

Crissi side-eyes her.

TESS (CONT'D)

Look, I need to interview someone for my piece and you need to kill time, can I interview you?

CRISSI

Can you tell me where your brother took my friend?

TESS

I don't have a LoJack on him.

A SNORT sounds from O.S. Crissi and Anna turn to see a CREEPER listening from their open apartment window.

Crissi looks horrified, Tess flinches.

 CRISSI
 Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

 TESS
 Come on.

Crissi and Tess book it down the block, Tess checks back over her shoulder.

 CRISSI
 What about your apartment?

 TESS
 What? He would never. So is that a yes on an interview?

 CRISSI
 Fine, whatever, just help me find her, okay?

 TESS
 Maybe they're in the park.

 CRISSI
 She's gonna have sex in a *park*?!
 She's never even done it in a bed!

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

A bustling-ass scene. NYU kids preen in their most "I don't belong in my hometown" outfits, artists hock their wares, dueling boomboxes blast HIPHOP.

Tess and Crissi power walk down a walkway and ZOOM are almost taken out by an unbothered SKATEBOARDER. They both shoot the Skateboarder a dirty look and keep moving.

 CRISSI
 ANNA! ANNA, ARE YOU HERE?

 NYU KID
 Honey, performance art on that side of the park only, please.

 CRISSI
 I'm looking for my friend!

 NYU KID
 Are you though?

Crissi gives NYU Kid the finger, keeps moving. Tess is delighted watching this slice of life. She pulls out a notebook and pen, takes notes.

Crissi darts across the paths on the park's west side, Tess trailing her. Crissi looks behind bushes, under trees. Crissi pauses for a second to pet a super cute GOLDEN RETRIEVER, then right back to the search.

Crissi breaks up a couple mid-makeout, revealing Anna and Trevor DOPPLEGANGERS. Ugh.

The Dopplegangers go back to sucking face.

CRISSI

Well?!

TESS

What does home mean to you?

CRISSI

It's where your people are, but if they're not there then where would he take her?

TESS

Oh! He takes dates to the Strand.

CRISSI

The bookstore?

TESS

I'll acknowledge he has a dumb person's haircut right now, but he's actually well read.

They walk out of the park, up the street. Crissi is booking it, Tess hustles to keep up.

TESS (CONT'D)

Where are you from, exactly?

CRISSI

Forrest Hills.

TESS

Queens. I see that for you.

Crissi stops a moment, looks at Tess, challenging.

CRISSI

Yeah, and don't forget it.

EXT. STRAND BOOKS - DAY

A Renaissance Revival corner building with red awnings. Carts full of used books line the sidewalk outside, with signs reading \$1 Books, \$2 Books.

Crissi and Tess head through the front door.

INT. STRAND BOOKS - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Lit bitch mecca. Tables crammed with books fill the front of the floor, tall stacks as far as the eye can see. Crazy-high ceilings. It's crowded with SHOPPERS, but quiet.

Tess pauses at a table labeled New Releases. Crissi does a sweep of the first floor, weaving in and out of the stacks, never looking back. Tess trails her.

CRISSI

They're clearly not here.

Tess heads for the stairs.

TESS

Come on.

Crissi follows, they walk down to...

INT. STRAND BOOKS - BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A quieter, lower-slung space. Short shelves under fluorescent lighting. The girls get to the bottom of the stairs, Crissi instinctively turns right, Tess grabs her arm and pulls her to the left.

TESS

Trevor is really into history, and there's this corner with a weird chair that...

Tess stops short, Crissi runs into her.

CRISSI

Jesus!

Tess waves her arm revealing an old-ass wooden chair.

TESS

He likes to show people the chair, some old white man of note sat in it like a hundred years ago. But it is empty, so...

Crissi does an about-face, heads back to the stairs.

 CRISSI
 (mocking)
 They probably went to a bookstore
 instead of someplace to bone.

 TESS
 For your information, lots of
 people have hooked up here.
 Intellect is sexy.

INT. STRAND BOOKS - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

At the top of the stairs, Crissi's eyes light up as they land on a propped-up copy of SWEET SIXTEEN PRINCESS by Meg Cabot. She grabs the book.

 CRISSI
 There's a new Princess Diaries out!

Tess scoffs.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
 What's your problem?

 TESS
 Nothing! Just, chick lit's not my
 genre of choice.

 CRISSI
 This series is so good, your loss.

 TESS
 Do you consider yourself a reader?

 CRISSI
 Sure. You don't have to be a
 dramatic nerd to read books, you
 know that, right?

Crissi keeps moving, Tess follows.

 TESS
 Who's your favorite author.

Crissi spots COSMO on a magazine rack, her eyes light up, she pats the magazine.

 CRISSI
 Anna loves Cosmo.

TESS
That's troubling.

CRISSI
She's not a hands on learner! I
need to find her, come on.

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Trevor grabs two SNAPPLES out of the fridge, hands one to Anna. They smile.

ANNA
Thanks.

She looks around the kitchen/dining/living room, taking it in. Trevor watches her, bemused.

POP, they open their Snapples, each take a sip, put the lids back on. She looks to him, expectant.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Do you want to go to a different
room, or...

TREVOR
Whatever you want is good.

ANNA
Take me to your room.

He nods, excited.

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - TREVOR'S ROOM - DAY

Painted wood furniture, band posters on the wall, clothes piled on the floor by the closet. A mini gumball machine full of mentos. Axe body spray.

Anna and Trevor sit on the twin bed, each waiting for the other to make the move.

TREVOR
You have really pretty eyes.

ANNA
You have a really pretty mouth.

TREVOR
Thanks.

Anna inches toward him. He gives her a "this ok?" look, she nods, he scoots forward too. She climbs him with her hands. It's clumsy, he's amused.

ANNA

Kiss me.

He does. They paw at each other. He pulls back for a moment, her face fills with shame.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Did I do something wrong, I--

He shakes his head, shushes her. He kisses her forehead, her nose, her lips. They stay lip-locked almost long enough to suffocate before Anna pulls back with a mischievous look.

She tries to peel Trevor's shirt off sexily, but he's lying down, so it stays put under him.

He realizes what she's trying to do, leans forward to help, but SMACKS into her forehead. Startled, she leans back.

TREVOR

I got it.

He takes his shirt off. She slides her own off.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

You're super hot.

She runs her hand back and forth on Trevor's stomach, parallel to the top of his jeans. Back and forth, and back, and forth.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

What're you doing?

ANNA

Warming up the zone around your package. Is it driving you crazy?!

TREVOR

Yeah?

They kiss more. Trevor unbuckles his pants.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

This ok?

ANNA

Totally!

He slithers out of his jeans, she pulls off her shorts. Underwear-clad Anna looks at totally naked Trevor. She stares at his dick, cocks her head.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Do they all look like that?

Trevor looks embarrassed.

TREVOR

I don't look at a lot of guys junk,
but yeah, mine's like, normal.

She nods, taking in the information.

ANNA

Do you have any doughnuts?

TREVOR

You're hungry?

ANNA

No, um, just, I've read it can
extra sexy to eat a doughnut off a
guy's dick.

Trevor's face freezes, he's not sure what to do.

TREVOR

We don't have junk food.

Anna's face falls, Trevor scrambles.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

We might have some bagels.

ANNA

That might work!

Trevor hops up, wraps a towel around his waist and heads toward the kitchen. Anna takes a few deep breaths, psyching herself up.

Trevor comes back in with a winning smile.

CLOSE ON a hand-rolled cinnamon raisin bagel on Trevor's outstretched hand. The way the dough rose, the bagel's hole is closed up.

Anna takes the bagel, sizes Trevor up, starts digging into the center of the bagel. She yanks enough dough out to make a quarter-sized hole. She holds it up, proud of her handy-work.

TREVOR

I don't think that's gonna fit on
my dick.

He grabs the bagel, takes a bite, offers it to Anna, who
shakes her head.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

But we could have sex like, the
normal way. If you want to.

ANNA

Old school. Yeah, let's do that.

They kiss as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. UNION SQUARE - DAY

A crowded outdoor farmer's market in full swing. Tess stands
on a bench looking for something, Crissi sweats standing
below her.

TESS

There's the kettle corn truck he
loves, maybe he's buying her some.
Come on.

Tess jumps down, heads toward the crowd.

CRISSI

Maybe we should walk around instead
of through.

TESS

That's illogical, it's twice as
long that way.

CRISSI

But I've had bad experiences at
this market, and it's--

Tess grabs Crissi's wrist, pulls her into the crowd.

TESS

What kind of bad experiences?

SHOPPERS weave around the girls, Tess guides them around
lines at the duck eggs, mobs around the tomatoes.

Crissi looks lowkey panicked. Her eyes dart until they land
on... ANNA?

A GIRL wearing the same shirt as Anna, same hair color, seen from the back comes into view. Crissi yanks her arm from Tess, diverges toward the Girl, pushing her way through.

But the crowd morphs and grows around her, she gets a glimpse of Girl, then she's gone again. Finally, Crissi presses her way out into a clearing, and BAM a tote full of GIANT ASS SUNFLOWERS slams her in the face.

Crissi's stunned, disoriented. The TOTE OWNER gives her an "oops!" look and keeps moving. As Tote Owner leaves, Crissi finally gets a straight-on view of Girl. Crissi's face falls, it's not her girl.

Crissi whips her head around to a DUDE passing out mix CDs, he tries to hand one to her.

DUDE

Miss, you like music?

CRISSI

NO!

A HARE KRISHNA in orange robes slides into view, forcefully hands her a PRAYER CARD, holds out his hand for payment.

Crissi shakes her head vehemently, drops the card, RUNS.

Tess comes through the crowd behind Crissi and spots her running.

TESS

You didn't answer my question!

Crissi hears the familiar voice, turns back, and runs SMACK into a MISTER SOFTEE TRUCK.

Tess's eyes go wide.

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - TREVOR'S ROOM - DAY

Anna lies on the bed, Trevor on top of her. They're still.

TREVOR

You're in the driver's seat.

Anna swallows, nods.

ANNA

I don't even have my learner's permit yet.

Stillness again. He searches her face, she tries to cover her nervousness with a smile that screams "oh fuck."

ANNA (CONT'D)

It's not--I want to, like, in theory, ya know? I totally did want to like a minute ago, really! But I don't anymore now? I want to want to, but--

Trevor climbs off Anna hops out of bed, she looks worried.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Trevor, back in boxers and a tee, passes Anna one of his shirts. She slides it on looking defeated. They sit together, he tries to read her. Her sadness turns to anger. She lets out a guttural YELL. He jumps back.

TREVOR

You said you didn't wanna--

ANNA

I WANTED to! I just couldn't.

Trevor looks truly confused.

TREVOR

So we didn't.

ANNA

Yeah.

TREVOR

And you're mad at me?

ANNA

I'm mad at me!

TREVOR

Whoa.

Trevor gently backs away, sits on his desk chair. Anna takes a few deep breaths.

ANNA

I'm really sorry.

TREVOR

It's okay, my sister yells at me all the time.

ANNA

I meant for giving you blue balls.
I know you shouldn't get someone
hard if you aren't gonna be
responsible and make it soft again.

TREVOR

Uh, good news on that front.

He gestures to his boner-less boxers.

ANNA

So I'm not just a virgin who can't
drive, I'm a boner killer too!

TREVOR

Hey, I've only done it twice.

ANNA

I spent so much time reading. I
should be ready.

TREVOR

It's not a study thing, it's a
feelings thing.

Anna looks at him with new eyes.

ANNA

Are you like, smart?

He shrugs, gestures to a National Honor Society certificate
taped to the wall. Anna looks like she's rethinking
everything she's ever known.

TREVOR

There was this time last year when
my sister was gonna do it with her
boyfriend, but in the moment she
was like, nah, I don't think we
should right now. But he just did
it anyway.

Anna looks at Trevor, the words pull her out of her own head.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

And when she got home she came in
and sat in this chair and fucking
cried. It really messed her up. She
has trust issues and shit now. I'm
not gonna be the guy who messes
somebody up like that.

ANNA

Ohmygod, that's so fucked. This feels like a dumb question, but is she... ok?

TREVOR

Now, yeah. But she says it's something that's always there.

Anna nods, she gets that.

EXT. UNION SQUARE - BENCH - DAY

Crissi holds a Poland Spring bottle to her head as a makeshift ice pack. Tess holds three fingers in front of Crissi's face.

TESS

How many fingers am I holding up?

CRISSI

Three hundred.

TESS

You might be concussed.

Tess gets a lightbulb, pulls out her notebook to jot a note.

CRISSI

Tess. I need you to focus.

TESS

How do you feel?

CRISSI

Put the notebook away.

Tess looks at her skeptically. Crissi's eyes say "don't fuck with me." Tess is intrigued, slides the notebook away.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

You clearly don't know your brother the way you think you do. But there will be no more notes, no more questions, no nothing, until you take me to your fucking apartment to find my friend.

Tess thinks for a moment.

TESS

Have you always been co-dependent?

Crissi pops her lips. Tess looks annoyed.

TESS (CONT'D)
Ugh fine, but they're not gonna be
there, come on.

Tess heads west, Crissi jumps up, relieved, and follows.

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Tess slowly opens the apartment door, Crissi pushes ahead of her, barrels into...

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - DAY

Crissi scans the living area, Tess gently closes the door.

CRISSI
Anna?!

TESS
They're not here.

Crissi heads down a hall, not the one we saw with Anna and Trevor before.

TESS (CONT'D)
Stop!

CRISSI
Anna?

Crissi reaches for a door handle, Tess sprints, blocks it.

TESS
That's my parents room.

CRISSI
Maybe they're--

Tess gags.

TESS
What in the Oedipus, who goes to
their parents' room to hookup?

Crissi shrugs.

TESS (CONT'D)
It's literally silent in here,
we're alone.

Crissi pauses for a moment, listens. Hmm.

 CRISSI
 Where's your brother's room.

Tess gestures the other way, walks back through the living area. Crissi follows, then stops when she spots the open SNAPPLE BOTTLES Trevor and Anna left on the counter.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
 They were here.

She holds up the Raspberry Snapple.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
 This is Anna's flavor!

Tess stands down the hall, looking into Trevor's room.

 TESS
 Well, they're not anymore.

Crissi hugs the Snapple to her, rushes past Tess and into...

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - TREVOR'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sheets are mussed, pillows askance. A condom wrapper on the floor by the bed. Crissi GASPS, looks devastated.

 CRISSI
 Fuck.

 TESS
 I feel like we shouldn't be in here
 right now.

Crissi's eyes are glued to the bed.

 CRISSI
 This is where they did it.

Tess looks queasy.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
 They had their heads on those
 pillows. And their feet down there
 and their...

Crissi motions around the middle of the bed, can't bring herself to say the words. A truly horrified Tess pushes Crissi toward a door at the other end of the room.

TESS
You seem really upset, we should probably...

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - TESS'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tess pushes Crissi into her bedroom, which is connected to Trevor's, railroad style. Tess slams the door behind them.

Crissi looks lost, she scans the room, every surface is cluttered: tons of books, notebooks and other literary detritus spread across a desk. Clothes piled up on the desk chair and on the floor in front of a closet.

CRISSI
There's nowhere to sit.

Tess bear hugs the pile of clothes on the chair, moves it over to her bed. Crissi slinks into the seat.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
I thought you'd be a lot cleaner.

TESS
It's been a hectic week, okay?

Tess self-consciously tidies around them. Crissi absentmindedly picks up a Rubik's cube from a shelf.

CRISSI
I failed... I don't know what I'm supposed to do anymore.

Crissi's fingers fly around the cube. Without looking, she solves it, plunks it on Tess's desk, which she's clearing papers off of.

TESS
What the fuck?

CRISSI
It's a pattern. If you memorize the movements you just repeat them til it's perfect.

TESS
Doesn't that take the fun out it?

CRISSI
It's a guaranteed win.

Something sparks in Tess's mind, she grabs a post-it and jots down a note.

TESS

Not to be a bitch about it, but you promised you'd sit for an interview if I brought you here.

CRISSI

But you brought me here too late!

TESS

That doesn't change our deal. And there's still over an hour til your meeting Anna at the piercer.

A beat.

CRISSI

Wait I think I'm like, starving.
Can we have lunch first?

INT. TREVOR AND TESS'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Crissi and Tess stand with a sea of cabinets and the fridge open. It's an ingredients house--whole heads of lettuce, canisters of grains, everything needs assembly.

CRISSI

This isn't food, it's ingredients.
I want something already made.

TESS

This is really nice produce. What's your idea?

CRISSI

Anna and I were supposed to go to Pommes Frites for lunch. That's like, our ritual.

TESS

You want a pile of fried starch?

CRISSI

Potatoes are the food of my people.
They always make me happier.

EXT. POMMES FRITES - DAY

A whole-in-the-wall french fry joint on Second Avenue. A wooden sign reading POMMES FRITES hangs over a striped awning. A shingle-sign in the shape of a cone full of french fries juts out from the front.

Crissi and Tess sit on wooden chairs out front, a big cone of fries and a line of little sauce cups.

Tess has her notebook perched on her lap, writing with one hand and eating with the other.

TESS

What do think about the cliché of teen angst?

CRISSI

I'm not a cliché.

TESS

Did't say you were.

CRISSI

I don't really think about it.

TESS

Do you think you're more moody or sad now than when you were, say, ten years old?

Crissi's body stiffens.

CRISSI

That's a completely different time.

TESS

Right, a different decade. So were you happier then? More carefree?

Crissi thinks a moment. She goes somewhere deep inside her mind, she looks pained.

Tess watches, in awe of herself. She tries to hide a smile as she watches her subject squirm.

Crissi blinks hard, shakes it out. She grabs a fry.

CRISSI

I don't wanna talk about that.

Tess lets the moment hang, looks hopeful, she almost cracked it. Crissi's eyes fall, she goes inward again for a split second, redirects her energy.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

What's the point of this? Why don't you write about yourself? Were you happier when you were ten?

TESS

I have to profile you, on the teen experience in the new millennium, because that is how I will get onto the Barnard magazine my freshman year, so I'll be Editor and Chief my senior year, which will prove once and for all that I am the better journalist!

Tess snatches a sauce from their communal setup.

CRISSI

Better than who?

TESS

My narcissistic ex boyfriend.

CRISSI

You do seem like a grudge holder.

TESS

It's not just about Austin! If I don't make the magazine, how will I be our generation's Sylvia Plath?

Crissi shakes her head, not buying it.

CRISSI

Either way, you're definitely not gonna be that.

Crissi slides another sauce closer to herself, dips.

TESS

You haven't read my work.

CRISSI

But you have way more of a Joan Didion thing going on. You're clearly off kilter, but I can't see you sticking your head in an oven.

Tess sits back, looks baffled. Crissi gestures to Tess's last few fries.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Are you gonna eat those?

Tess shakes her head. Crissi grabs them as... BARK, a collarless GOLDEN RETRIEVER (5) jogs up to the girls.

Crissi's eyes light up when she sees Golden.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
Hi, angel. Who are you?

She holds a fry up and Golden sits.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
Such a good girl!

Crissi tosses the fry up, Golden jumps and catches it.

Golden licks Crissi's hand, tries to hop up and lick her face. Crissi gives Golden pets, snuggles. There's a warm comfort between them. Tess looks confused.

 TESS
I pegged you as a cat person.

 CRISSI
You're clearly projecting.

Tess shrugs. Crissi looks into Golden's eyes.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
Who are you? The best girl?

 TESS
Do you know about that whole thing
with the golden retrievers at
ground zero?

Crissi freezes a moment, Tess doesn't notice.

 CRISSI
(curt)
Yeah.

 TESS
I always think about that when I
see them.

Crissi feels around Golden's neck.

 CRISSI
(to Tess)
No collar.

 TESS
Too bad.

Crissi looks at Tess, appalled.

 CRISSI
We can't leave her out here,
wandering around alone.

TESS

We kind of can. Someone else will
find her.

CRISSI

What kind of monster are you?

Crissi grabs the rest of her fries in a napkin, uses them to
lure Golden to follow her down the street.

Tess looks exasperated, scribbles something in her notes,
then follows.

INT. DUANE READE PHARMACY - DAY

A fluorescent-lit corporate pharmacy. Crissi guides Golden
through the aisles, giving her encouraging pats. Tess follows
at a distance looking mortified.

TESS

I really don't think she should be
in here.

CRISSI

It's for like two minutes to get a
leash, relax.

A BABCIA pushing a GRANNY CART sees the dog, looks disgusted.

BABCIA

Young lady, no. No dogs should be
in here, this is for medicine.

Tess turns, grabs a bottle of TUMS, pretends to read it.

CRISSI

They sell dog stuff here!

Babcia stands her ground, blocking the aisle with her cart.
Crissi huffs, pulls Golden back the way they came from.

Crissi sees Tess's charade.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Tess, come on.

Tess looks to Babcia, mortified, and drops the Tums.

Crissi and Anna dart away from Babcia, find their way to the
PET CARE AISLE. A few shelves of dog food, toys, bowls, etc.
Crissi holds up different collars to Golden. Tess fidgets.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
Pink's super hot, but the blue
really brings out her eyes.

 TESS
Just pick one!

An EMPLOYEE rounds the corner with Babcia at their side.

 BABCIA
There! Get that mongrel out!

 EMPLOYEE
You can't bring pets in here!

Golden lights up, thinks Employee wants to play. She scampers toward them as Employee backs away. Babcia YELPS in disgust.

 CRISSI
Come back!

 EMPLOYEE
Not me, not today.

Employee takes off at a full sprint, Crissi takes off after them, calls over her shoulder.

 CRISSI
You loop around to the other side,
we'll catch her between an aisle.

 TESS
Once again voicing that this is a
terrible idea!

Golden slaloms through CUSTOMERS in the pharmacy line as Employee escapes through a door labeled EMPLOYEES ONLY.

Crissi sprints after Golden, past a bucket of Fourth of July DECORATIONS, a piece of bunting gets caught on her purse and YANKS a bucket full of red, white, and blue BOUNCY BALLS over. Crissi's eyes go wide as she sees the balls ricochet.

Tess does an uncoordinated jog along the store's end caps, looking down each aisle.

CLOSE ON a bouncy ball, bouncing off the well-worn carpet... bounce... bounce... BARK! Reveal Golden chasing the ball down a long aisle.

Tess sees Golden from the end of the aisle, she SQUEALS, hears herself, grimaces.

Crissi rounds the corner, her face floods with relief. Golden catches the bouncy ball, looks very proud of herself.

Crissi and Tess meet in the middle of the aisle, Crissi slips a collar around Golden's neck, clips on a leash.

The girls nod to each other, take a deep breath. They look at the shelf next to them, both freeze. It's FAMILY PLANNING, a wall of condoms and pregnancy tests.

Tess sees Crissi's dog-induced smile fading.

TESS (CONT'D)

You know, my brother's actually a really good guy. I'm sure your friend is fine.

CRISSI

Really?

TESS

Yes! He's an idiot, for sure, but he's not a threat.

Crissi takes that in.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Crissi walks Golden down the street, looking proud of the pup. Tess keeps pace with them, notebook in hand--she waits for the right opening.

TESS

What do you like about animals?

CRISSI

They're honest.

TESS

In what way?

CRISSI

They let you know exactly how they feel, if they come sit on your lap or bark at you to get away. They can smell something and know if you're a good person or another animal they'd want to chill with.

TESS

They've primitive.

CRISSI
They're instinctual. And loyal.

Tess nods. Crissi offers her the leash.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
You want a turn with her?

Tess looks trepidatious.

TESS
Uhhhhhhmmmmmm, I'm all set.

CRISSI
(teasing)
She doesn't bite.

TESS
You actually don't know that.

Crissi gives the leash a little tug, then forces it into Tess's hand. Golden looks back, sees her new charge. Golden YIPS, Tess flinches, shoves the leash at laughing Crissi.

A midi file version of Rihanna's "PON DE REPLAY" plays, Crissi's eyes light up, she pulls out her ringing PHONE.

Her face falls when she sees the caller ID: MOM. She answers.

CRISSI
(into phone)
Hi, Mom... Yeah.... No, we're fine,
we're--

Golden BARKS at Crissi.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
(into phone)
We're in a park... I know we're not
allowed at Tompkins... Oh, Anna's
in the bathroom... She really had
to go... Yeah. Ugh, do I have
to?... Uh, okay, but the line's
really long so it might be a little
while... Okay... Yeah... Bye.

Crissi hangs up, looks worried.

TESS
Was that--

CRISSI

My mom, she wants to hear me and
Anna on the phone together, asap,
or I'm fucked.

Tess looks up at a nearby OLD BANK building with a CLOCK on
the facade.

TESS

It's almost time to meetup.

CRISSI

I don't even know if she's gonna
be there!

TESS

If she's not, that says a lot.

Crissi's caught off guard, looks lost. She looks down at
Golden, finds resolve, heads down the block.

EXT. PIERCING PARLOR - DAY

A graffiti covered storefront on a lower story of a small
building, half a flight of stairs down from street level.

Crissi and Tess walk down the block, Golden on her leash.

Crissi spots Anna and Trevor at the top of the stairs. She
stops. Golden continues until the leash pulls her. Golden
BARKS, Anna looks toward the sound, she and Crissi lock eyes,
both looking insecure, scared.

The foursome and Golden meet face to face. An awkward beat,
the siblings look at Anna and Crissi expectantly.

Anna looks at Golden and up to Crissi again, her eyes ask,
"what's happening?"

Tess and Trevor spot each other, she gives a "are you kidding
me?" look, he returns with a "it's chill, be chill," look.

TREVOR

Whose dog is that?

CRISSI

Mine.

TESS

No one's.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

She found us.

ANNA

She's a stray?

CRISSI
I'm adopting her.

ANNA
You can't be serious.

CRISSI
Who would joke about that?

ANNA
Your brother's super allergic.

TREVOR
Yo, me too.

Anna shoots him a "shut up," look. He nods apologetically, takes a step back.

ANNA
Can I talk to you for a second?

Crissi pulls out her phone, dials.

CRISSI
We have to check in with my mom,
she called a little while ago.

ANNA
What did--

CRISSI
(into phone)
Hi, Anna's out of the bathroom,
so... Yeah, fine.

Crissi shoves the phone into Anna's face. Anna flinches, surprised, but takes the phone.

ANNA
(into phone)
Hi Mrs. Connolly... Mhmm... We
will, totally.

Anna hangs up, hands the phone back to Crissi.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Can we talk inside?

Crissi looks down at Golden, avoids Anna's eyes.

CRISSI
I can't bring Golden inside.

ANNA
Do you, like, not want to get
pierced anymore?

CRISSI
I have to think about her, too.

TREVOR
We can watch her for a sec.

	CRISSI		ANNA
No!		Great.	

CRISSI (CONT'D)
Tess is terrible with animals, and
you're some stranger to her.

ANNA
YOU were some stranger to her what,
an hour ago?

CRISSI
A lot can change in an hour.

Anna looks confused. Tess nods in agreement, jotting down a
quick note.

TESS
Why don't we take a loop of the
block while you think it over?

EXT. SIDE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

A residential street, full of Greek revival three and four
story APARTMENT BUILDINGS.

Crissi walks Golden, staying a few paces ahead of Anna, Tess,
and Trevor.

CRISSI
(to Golden)
You're such a good girl. Yeah, I
would never abandon you with a
stranger, I'll take care of you.

Tess jogs a few paces to catch up with Crissi.

TESS
You wanted to find your friend, we
found her, why're you moping?

CRISSI

I'm not moping! I'm adjusting to who she is now.

TESS

So talk to her. The best conflict resolution is just having it out and trying to move on.

CRISSI

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

Tess scowls, jots a note down. She looks back to Trevor for help, nodding toward Anna and back to Crissi. He shrugs.

ANNA

(to Trevor)

She knows I can see her, right?

TREVOR

Yes and no.

Golden stops, gets in position to poop. Crissi's eyes go wide, she had *not* thought about this.

CRISSI

Shit.

TESS

What?

CRISSI

Shit!

Crissi gestures to Golden, who's mid-business. Tess, Anna, and Trevor stop at Crissi's side, look to her, expectant.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Does anyone have a bag?

Head shakes. Crissi shoves the leash into Tess's hand. Tess holds the leash as far from her body as possible, looking grossed out.

Anna digs in her purse for a bag substitute.

Crissi sprints to the NEWSPAPER BOXES on the corner, opens them one by one--they're all fucking empty!

CRISSI (CONT'D)

There's no newspapers!

TESS

It's a well-read neighborhood!

Crissi rejoins the group, looks conflicted.

ANNA

This is clearly evidence you are not equipped to adopt a dog off the goddamn street.

CRISSI

Is it bad if I just leave it?

TREVOR

It's pretty rude.

Crissi gives him a dirty look.

RANDO (O.S.)

Excuse me.

The group splits, revealing a RANDO walking a SCHNAUZER.

CRISSI

Do you happen to by chance have a spare poop bag?

Rando looks at her with disdain, Crissi looks embarrassed.

RANDO

What kind of irresponsible person takes their dog out for a walk without a bag?

CRISSI

I'm new at this.

Rando signals for their Schnauzer to sit, he does. They pull a poop BAG out of a roll clipped to their leash and hand it to Crissi.

RANDO

So? Isn't it the most basic part of caring for them?

Crissi squats down to clean up the poop. Out of her view, the Schnauzer jumps up and mounts Golden.

RANDO (CONT'D)

Do you want to live in a city covered in dog shit? I don't! That's why I bring a fuckin' bag and take care of--

TESS

We get it!

Rando shoots Tess a dirty look. Trevor spots Schnauzer humping Golden, looks concerned.

TREVOR

Yo, your dog's humping hers.

Everyone follows the leashes to the two dogs.

RANDO

Cookie, no!

CRISSI

Get off her!

Rando pries the Schnauzer off Golden, Criss crouches down to hug Golden to her. Schnauzer whips around and NIPS at Rando, who jumps and drops the dog.

TESS

I think you should leave.

RANDO

We're going.

Rando gives Tess a death stare, then tugs the Schnauzer's leash and leads him across the street and away.

The group walks, Golden heeling.

CRISSI

That was so fucked. Why was he trying to hump by sweet baby?

TESS

I'd say all evidence points toward your sweet baby being in heat.

Tess points to a trail of tiny drops of blood on the sidewalk behind them. The group all look at the drops, then at Golden.

ANNA

Like Elizabeth Taylor in that episode of Sex and the City.

TESS

Exactly.

Anna and Tess share a look of understanding, Crissi clocks it, looks unnerved.

CRISSI

What do we do?

TESS

In the show, Anthony puts her in a diaper and sends her out into the dog show ring.

CRISSI

Okay, let's find a Duane Reade.

ANNA

You can't be serious! Are you really that delusional?

Tess and Trevor hesitantly shake their heads. Crissi looks at them, betrayed.

Tess's phone RINGS, she answers and steps away for an inaudible conversation.

CRISSI

She needs us! She's alone in this world and whoever was supposed to protect her disappeared and we are all she has.

TREVOR

I don't think it's that deep.

Crissi stares down Trevor, Anna looks back and forth between them, unsure. Tess rejoins the group, looks around, the vibe is *off*.

TESS

I have good news. So I, meaning you too, was just invited to a once in a lifetime get together. An opportunity for the ages.

TREVOR

How did you turn a five second phone all into four hundred words?

Tess gives him an exasperated sibling look.

TESS

It was 25 words, tops. But all I know is my friend Jason has his dad's credit card and unlimited sake bombs are on him. You in?

CRISSI

I could use a drink.

ANNA

Same.

TREVOR

So what do we do with...

All eyes on Golden, who's somehow come into possession of a FILTHY CONDOM.

CRISSI

No! Drop it!

Golden jumps from side to side, looks up at freaked Crissi with not a thought behind her eyes.

Tess gags, Anna freezes, Trevor laughs, Crissi inches toward Golden's head, motioning for her to open her mouth.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Come on, dude, DROP it! That's not food, it's--

Crissi reaches a hand out to swat Golden's mouth open, but closes her eyes in disgust and misses.

TESS

Don't touch it!

Trevor grabs a small BRANCH off a nearby tree. He waves it in front of Golden, who looks intrigued.

TREVOR

Here, girl, come on.

Trevor tosses the small branch up, Golden leaps, opens her mouth, the condom falls, she catches the branch.

Crissi looks relieved. Golden drops the branch, jumps excitedly. She tries to lick Crissi's face, but she recoils. The ick has set in.

CRISSI

Fine, maybe I can't watch her all the time.

ANNA

Thank you!

CRISSI

But I can't just leave her back on the street.

ANNA

You know where we could take her...

Anna gives a knowing look. Crissi slowly nods, resigned.

Tess looks to Trevor, her eyes asking if he knows anything. He shakes his head. Tess looks back to the girls, curious.

EXT. FIRE HOUSE - DAY

Crissi gives the Golden big pets outside the front door. Anna looks pained, Trevor vibes, Tess nudges Crissi.

TESS

What're you waiting for?

CRISSI

Just... I haven't been here in awhile, so it feels kinda weird.

TESS

You know what'll help that? I nice refreshing sake bomb.

CRISSI

Just gimme a second.

Crissi does a jump-wiggle, trying to shake off her feelings.

ANNA

I'll go in with you.

Anna gives Crissi a sympathetic, pleading look. Crissi shakes her head.

CRISSI

Tess, can you?

Tess shrugs, nods. Anna watches as Crissi opens the door and walks Golden in. Tess follows into...

INT. FIRE HOUSE - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

American flags, a trophy case, a TRIBUTE BANNER to fallen members. Crissi walks with mental blinders on, following the sound of BOISTEROUS CONVERSATION. Tess trails her up the stairs. They climb in silence.

EXT. FIRE HOUSE - SAME

Trevor leans against the side of the building, tossing a quarter up in the air and catching. Anna paces.

TREVOR
I didn't know this was a thing.

ANNA
What?

TREVOR
Fire stations taking dogs. I knew
you could leave babies there, but--

ANNA
They wouldn't usually.

TREVOR
But they would for her?

ANNA
Yeah, she's special.

INT. FIRE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Crissi and Tess enter slowly. A group of FIREFIGHTERS sit at a long table mid-meal. A flicker of pained recognition crosses Crissi's face.

CRISSI
Matthews?

The whole table turns to look at her, the dog, and Tess, who hangs back, leaning on the door jam.

One of the firefighters, DEPUTY CHIEF MATTHEWS (50s, gregarious, warm) gives her a warm look.

MATTHEWS
Hiya, kid. What're you doing here?

CRISSI
We need help with...

She gestures to Golden.

MATTHEWS
Hey guys, this is Crissi. Her dad
was with me on Ladder 47 downtown
when we went downtown. He was one
of the best.

Nods of respect around the table.

Tess turns to Crissi, surprised.

Crissi tears up, turns away, embarrassed. Matthews sees it, makes a smooth sweep across the room.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

I'll be back, fellas.

He puts his arm around Crissi and ushers her out into...

INT. FIRE HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tess watches as Matthews gives Crissi a comforting smile.

MATTHEWS

Hey, hon, you know you can always
come here for help, any of the
guys, not just me, we've got you.

She nods.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

So, what's goin' on?

CRISSI

So, we found the dog--oh, that's
Tess--um.

MATTHEWS

Hi, Tess.

Tess gives a little wave.

CRISSI

We found just wandering around
alone. And we didn't want to leave
her out on the street, in case
something happened.

MATTHEWS

Connolly to the rescue.

CRISSI

I just remember the department has
a lot of golden retrievers, like,
from dad's...

MATTHEWS

The service. I remember.

Tess's eyes dart back and forth between them, transfixed.

CRISSI

Right. So, she looked just like that one, so maybe you could adopt her, for the station? She's really nice, she'd just need some training or something.

MATTHEWS

That's a really nice idea, kids.

He looks at Crissi with kind eyes, understanding.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

You have my word I will find her a home, here or elsewhere.

Relief floods Crissi's face. Matthews gives her shoulder a good squeeze.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

You're a good person, Crissi Connolly, good things are gonna happen to you, you hear me?

She gives a halfhearted nod.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

But it's not your job to save every lost dog. Don't take that on.

Crissi takes that in, then gives a real nod, half smile. She hands the leash over to Matthews. He gives her a wink.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

I'll walk you girls out.

Crissi heads down the stairs. Matthews gestures for Tess to go ahead. He walks next to her.

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Look out for your friend. It's been a few years, but losing a parent? That never leaves you.

Tess is taken aback--she nods solemnly.

EXT. FIRE HOUSE - DUSK

Catatonic-looking Crissi and an eerily calm Tess come out the front door. Anna hops to, sidles up to Crissi.

ANNA

You okay?

CRISSI

Yeah, it's fine.

TESS

Sorry, I didn't--

CRISSI

Can we not talk about this?

ANNA

I know it was hard going back in there after so--

CRISSI

I'm NOT going to talk about him!

Anna backs off, Tess looks at Crissi like she's never seen her before--with more empathy and more fascination.

Trevor looks around at all the girls, tension in the air.

TREVOR

So we're not talking, that's chill.
What are we gonna do?

Crissi takes a deep breath, her eyes fill with resolve. She looks Trevor dead in the eyes.

CRISSI

I dunno about you, but I'm gonna go with your sister to get wasted.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A hole-in-the-wall spot. Mood lighting, glossy black tables, a small SUSHI BAR on one wall.

Crissi, Anna, Tess, and Trevor stand next to a big booth, where JASON (15, overcompensating for his insecurities) and BECCA (16, sardonic broad) sit, wave the newcomers to sit.

The foursome slide in--Crissi next to Trevor.

EVERYONE

Hey! What's up? What's good?

A WAITRESS stops by the table.

JASON

We'll take a round of sake bombs
for the table, please.

BECCA

And gyoza, maybe two orders? Three?

Nods around the table. Waitress exits. The group splinters
into two-person convos. Jason reaches a hand out to Crissi,
she shakes it.

JASON

I'm Jason.

CRISSI

Crissi. Tess said you're buying us
all drinks?

JASON

I got my dad's AmEx Gold Card.

She leans back, gives him a skeptical once-over.

CRISSI

Must be nice.

Jason scoffs.

JASON

Not really. It's hush money so I
don't spill his shitty secrets.

CRISSI

And we all get to reap the rewards.
Cheers to him.

Crissi grabs the half-full drink in front of Jason and downs
it, he watches, surprised.

JASON

Nah, fuck my dad. I just found out
everything I ever knew about him
was a lie.

CRISSI

You're a teenager, we're supposed
to get disillusioned with adults.

Jason looks pissed.

JASON

You don't understand, this is next
level. And he thinks he can throw
money at the problem.

CRISSI

Wow, so tough. Do you have enough cash to wipe your tears away?

JASON

What's your problem?

CRISSI

Just sounds like you're blowing whatever out of proportion.

JASON

I'm fucking not.

CRISSI

What, he's ruining your life?

JASON

Yeah, he is! He's having an affair, he's breaking up our family. What the fuck would you know about that?

A moment, Crissi chooses her words carefully.

CRISSI

Nothing. My dad is dead. And I'm not even allowed to be mad at him cuz he's some sort of hero.

Fuck. Crissi and Jason hold each other's gaze, recognizing something between them. A mutual anger, sadness. They get it.

JASON

I don't know what to say to that.

CRISSI

No one does.

Waitress delivers a round of drinks, exits. Becca makes intent eye contact with each of them.

BECCA

Ready?

Nods all around, they hold their fists an inch off the table on either side of their drinks.

EVERYONE

One, Two, Three--

SLAM, fists make contact with the table, in slow-motion, sake cups teeter off their chop-stick scaffolding and PLUNGE into glasses of beer.

Back to speed, everyone takes big sips--Crissi and Jason keep going, stealing glances at each other as they chug their whole glasses.

Anna makes pleading eyes at Crissi, who turns away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - LATER

Empty glasses, half-eaten plates of food, chopstick wrappers strewn between dishes.

Everyone's a bit tipsy. Tess and Trevor have an inaudible sibling tiff, Anna and Becca have an animated convo. Crissi holds up a sushi roll, Jason looks at her, skeptical.

CRISSI

So just cuz you know that it's imitation crab, now you hate every California roll you've ever had?

JASON

It's fake!

CRISSI

But it's still food.

JASON

Is it though?

CRISSI

How many times do you think you had sushi before you knew?

JASON

Maybe once a week with my parents for like, awhile.

CRISSI

So like, hundreds of times. And you liked it then.

JASON

Yeah, but now I know better.

CRISSI

So you're gonna swear off all crab rolls for the rest of your life?

JASON

It's one kind of roll that I know not to trust.

Crissi dips the roll in soy sauce, pops it in her mouth.

CRISSI

An imitation crab roll is better than going hungry, dude. It rounds out a bento box, you take it out and it's like... "wait, this used to be more filling."

Tess scans over her notes, Trevor looking over her shoulder.

TREVOR

Did you get your story?

TESS

Not the one I was expecting. Did Anna tell you about her dad?

TREVOR

Yeah.

TESS

She never mentioned it to me.

Trevor looks surprised.

TREVOR

What'd you guys talk about?

TESS

I was looking for like, teen angst, a girl Holden Caulfield or something, but the more I pushed into her feelings, the more she pushed me away.

TREVOR

Maybe she didn't wanna talk about that shit.

TESS

But I think I'm supposed to follow that to get to the most interesting story, right?

TREVOR

Not if it's giving someone PTSD. That's pretty fucked.

TESS

I didn't know!

TREVOR

But now you do, what're you gonna do about it?

Tess thinks, looks across the table at Crissi.

TESS

Crissi, wanna come to the bathroom with me?

CRISSI

Uh, sure. Lemme--

She motions to Jason to scoot out of the booth, he does. Anna sees the motion.

ANNA

What's?

TESS

We're going to the bathroom.

ANNA

I'lll come!

Crisis freezes.

CRISSI

Actually, I don't have to go.

Trevor gives Tess a nudge.

TESS

Just come to chat.

CRISSI

While you pee?

Anna gives Becca a pleading look.

BECCA

We all have to go, it's a cardinal rule of being a girl out in public.

ANNA

It's practically in the bible.

Trevor and Jason look on hesitantly, knowing better than to say anything.

Crissi feels the eyes on her, begrudgingly gives in.

CRISSI

Fine.

Crissi gulps down the last of yet another drink and slides out of the booth.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Drunk Crissi, Anna, Tess, and Becca in a small, grimy bathroom. A single stall separates the toilet from the sink.

Crissi's feet are visible below the stall door. Tess washes her hands while Anna leans against the door, fidgeting, as Becca reapplies lip gloss.

FLUSH. Crissi exits the stall and Tess and Anna surround her.

TESS

I wanted to make sure you knew that I didn't know about you losing your father, so if my questions triggered PTSD for you, that's my bad, truly.

CRISSI

I'm not having this conversation.

Crissi pushes past her to the sink. Tess smarts, Anna stays on Crissi.

ANNA

You can't keep ignoring me.

CRISSI

I actually have to.

ANNA

Or what?

CRISSI

Or I'm going to have to tell you what I really think of you.

Anna crosses her arms, steels herself.

ANNA

Go ahead.

CRISSI

You've been so legitimately shitty to me. You fully ditched me so you could become "Woman of the World" so you can impress some future friends at your new school who you literally don't even know yet. What kind of friend does that?

Anna thinks that over, taking the question seriously. She looks pained as the answer comes to her.

ANNA
One who's been fucking suffocated.

CRISSI
You think I smother you?

BECCA
(to Tess)
Maybe we should give them privacy?

ANNA
(to Becca)
Don't move!
(to Crissi)
This is what you always do! You push everyone else away. And then all the pressure's on me, as your only friend.

CRISSI
You're delusional.

ANNA
You did it with Kevin.

TESS
Who's Kevin?

CRISSI
No one.

ANNA
Her ex. They dated for like two months last year and she barely talked to him that whole time.

CRISSI
His favorite movie is The Fast and the Furious, we just didn't have anything to talk about.

ANNA
Well those were the best months of my life.

Crissi looks stung, she wasn't expecting that.

CRISSI
Sorry being my friend's been such a burden to you!

The bathroom door opens, a CUSTOMER tries to enter.

TESS
Occupied!

Tess and Becca push the door shut and lean on it. Customer KNOCKS loudly.

BECCA
Just a minute!

ANNA
I need more than one friend, and there's nothing wrong with that.

CRISSI
You mean you need someone to have sex with?

Anna pulls back for a second, Crissi looks excited, like she finally hit the nerve she was looking for.

ANNA
I didn't have sex.

CRISSI
Are you shitting me?

ANNA
No. I thought it--

BANG, BANG, BANG a series of knocks on the door.

MANAGER (O.S.)
Management, you can't block this door, it's a fire hazard.

TESS
What do we--

CRISSI
It's a fire hazard, get away!

Tess and Becca shuffle away from the door, it SWINGS open, revealing a pissed-off Manager. Customer beelines past the girls into the stall.

MANAGER
Get the fuck out of here.

TESS
Actually our friends are back at the table, we were just having a little emergency with--

MANAGER

Nah, these walls ain't thick,
you've been screaming in there.

INT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

A pissed Crissi and Anna along with Tess and Becca are escorted to the front door by Manager. Trevor and Jason spot them from the table.

BECCA

Guys, we got a code red.

Jason motions for the check, Trevor gives him a pat on the back, heads toward the girls.

Crissi and Anna trade dagger eyes.

EXT. JAPANESE RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

The Group spills out onto the sidewalk. Tess looks around at the energy bouncing off these chaotic kids, picks a direction and points down the block.

TESS

This way!

Tess leads the way, the others follow. Anna bumps Crissi as they all fall in line.

CRISSI

Can you not?

ANNA

Oh please.

CRISSI

You've actually been so selfish all day, I should just expect you to shove me aside right?

ANNA

I'm selfish?! I've been trying to talk to you since we met up. I needed a friend tonight and you're too busy being a little bitch because I wanted to do something without you for a couple hours.

Tess looks concerned, falls back to keep an eye on the fight.

CRISSI

You left me! Why does everyone I depend on disappear? It's not fair. I hate it and I hate you for leaving me.

ANNA

I just wanted to do one thing for myself. Not everything is about you, you know.

Jason strains to hear the convo from the back of the group, jogs a couple paces to

CRISSI

Yeah, that's pretty fucking clear to me. My dad DIED saving other people's parents, almost nothing is about me.

ANNA

This isn't that.

CRISSI

I wanted one nice day with who I thought was my best friend, and I got nothing. So have a fucking blast at your new school. I hope all your new friends love your story about meeting a random guy and going off to hookup with him in the middle of the day. I'm sure they'll think you're so cool, even though you didn't even go through with it. But I don't. I think you're a dumb, selfish bitch.

ANNA

That makes two of us.

Anna darts across the street, Crissi steps off the curb to follow, a car WHIZZES BY, Tess pulls her back, Crissi does a tipsy sway.

CRISSI

FUCK.

Crissi looks down the street--coast is clear--she gestures smugly to Tess, who releases her. Crissi and the rest of the group run across the street and gather near...

EXT. THE CUBE - NIGHT

A sculpture of a cube, eight feet long on each side, that's mounted on one of its corners. The Cube sits in the middle of a pedestrian plaza bordered by two diagonal streets.

Two KIDDOS (12) grip corners of The Cube and spin in on its end. Crissi and the rest of the teens are mesmerized. Anna leans in to Crissi's ear.

ANNA

What's going on with you?

Crissi wiggles away from Anna, ignoring her. Anna looks sad.

The Kiddos finish their spinning, wander off laughing.

A pigeon lands on top of The Cube. Crissi gestures to it.

CRISSI

I bet that's nice up there, being on top of the world, just letting things spin around you, not feeling anything.

Tess and Anna hear Crissi--they look to each other, cock their heads.

The pigeon flies away, Crissi's eyes light up. She slaps Jason and Trevor on the shoulders and steps up to The Cube.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Gimme a boost, guys.

TREVOR

Yo, forreal?

CRISSI

Bitch, yes.

Trevor leans back, nods, impressed. He and Jason share a look--they're down.

The boys link their hands to make steps and crouch down. Crissi steps onto their hands, grabs their shoulders, hoists herself up. She sways, grabs onto the side of The Cube for stability, giggling.

Anna grabs Tess's arm.

ANNA

She's gonna hurt herself!

TESS

Where was that concern eight hours ago, hon?

ANNA

I look after her every day, okay?

Becca watches, cocks her head.

BECCA

She's got pretty good drunk balance.

Crissi clings to The Cube, the guys give her a PUSH and she reaches for an indent further up, aaaaaand she GRABS it!

She takes a step up into another ridge in the sculpture, but as soon as she puts her weight on that leg it SLIPS.

CRISSI

Jesus, Mary and Joseph!

ANNA

CRISSI, get down!

Jason and Trevor scramble to get under her. Crissi gives Anna the finger...

...realizes she's hanging on by ONE HAND, looks panicked and grips the lip of the sculpture with both hands.

Crissi reaches with her legs to find her footing. She walks her hands over a few inches, swinging her body over to another cut in the sculpture.

A PASSERBY looks up at her, scoffs.

PASSERBY

You're gonna crack your fucking head open, sweetheart.

CRISSI

I've been through worse!

Passerby keeps it moving. Crissi gets her foot into a secure spot, breathes a sigh of relief. She looks up, setting her sights on the top.

She pushes up, reaches a higher ledge. One more step up and her hand lands on the TOP EDGE. A smile spreads across her face, almost there!

ANNA

You've lost your fucking mind, I'm calling your Mom.

Crissi freezes. She closes her eyes, gathers herself, then slowly turns to stare deep into Anna's soul.

CRISSI

Don't you fucking dare scare my Mom like that. I have my FULL mind and it is furious with you.

Anna freezes, stunned.

Crissi thinks she's won, SNEERS at Anna, who's not having it. Anna holds her phone up like she's about to dial.

Crissi's eyes go wide. She slithers down The Cube like her life depends on it.

Jason and Trevor get under her and lift her down.

Crissi storms up to Anna, reaches for the phone. Anna pulls it away.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Why are you torturing me today?

ANNA

I fucking hate you right now, but I'm not gonna let you run around like a drunk maniac and get a concussion or run into traffic or some shit like your old ass Irish relatives you've told me about.

Crissi looks stung.

CRISSI

Are you trying to play the responsible one right now? Seriously? You are so full of shit, I can't believe this act.

ANNA

I have been looking after you for years, I had to become the responsible one.

Crissi pushes Anna, who looks pained. Anna pushes her back, puts her phone away.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Bitch, what is going on with you
right now?

Crissi looks smug, opens her mouth but no retort comes. She realizes the real answer's coming up. Crissi starts losing her breath, her eyes search for something to save her from the feelings that are coming up.

Trevor, Tess, Jason and Becca SIDE BAR, keeping eyes on Crissi and Anna.

TREVOR

Should we try to get in there?

TESS

And say what?

BECCA

We can't just have them screaming
in the street, that's a public
intoxication charge waiting to
happen, trust me.

Crissi storms off, tears stream down her faces. She tries to shake them off.

ANNA

You can't just run away in the
middle of a fight!

CRISSI

Yes I can, right now, watch me.

Crissi takes off at a run.

BECCA

We've got a runner.

Jason instinctively springs after her. He looks over his shoulder to Anna.

JASON

I got it, you all just stay
together, okay?

Crissi darts across the street.

JASON (CONT'D)

Wait up!

CRISSI

If you're coming you gotta catch up
to me.

Tears stream down her cheeks. Jason picks up the pace, catches up to her. They make eye contact for a moment, a look of recognition.

They run side by side along side streets...

Down the Bowery...

Across Houston...

The streets get narrower and more crooked as they get lower in Manhattan.

As the lower buildings close in around them, Jason lets tears fall, YELLS out.

Crissi YELLS too, but can't sustain the sound. Her breathing gets heavier, more labored.

They cross Canal, into...

EXT. CHINATOWN - MOTT STREET - CONTINUOUS

Crissi slows down, struggling to catch her breath. She doubles over.

JASON

Are you good?

CRISSI

Not for years.

He rubs her back, looks around unsure.

JASON

You want a water or something?

She looks up at him, and then at the building behind him. An inconspicuous restaurant, hand-written sign on the door.

CRISSI

Shit.

JASON

Are you gonna hurl?

CRISSI

No. I mean, maybe. But no. I just, how did we end up here?

He shrugs.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

I used to come here with my Dad every year on Take Your Daughter to Work Day.

JASON

You wanna get food?

Crissi shakes her head.

CRISSI

I tried to go once after he was gone, but he used to order some special thing and he knew how to say it in Chinese and I fucked it up and what I got was weird and not the same and just like, sad.

Jason thinks a moment.

JASON

I know where we can go.

Crissi nods, he smiles gently.

EXT. COLUMBUS PARK - NIGHT

A paved playground. Net-less basketball hoops, monkey bars, metal slides.

Crissi and Jason sit on the swings eating from giant cups of ice cream. Jason rocks himself forward and back. Crissi twists around, the chains of her swing zippering together.

JASON

Were you close to your Dad?

CRISSI

Isn't everyone when they're a kid?

JASON

I dunno.

CRISSI

You weren't?

JASON

Oh for sure, he was my hero.

CRISSI

Until you found him cheating.

JASON

It feels like everything before that's tainted, teaching me how to ride a bike or driving out to the beach after I got shots at the doctor. Pretending he gave a shit about us being a family.

CRISSI

But you do still have a family.

She gestures with her spoon toward his ice cream. He takes one more bite, then they trade cups.

JASON

Not after I tell my Mom.

CRISSI

So don't!

JASON

I'm not gonna lie to her, that's what he's doing.

CRISSI

Sometimes you gotta protect yourself. Do you have any idea what I would give to have a whole family again? To have my parents together for my high school graduation or to move me into college?

JASON

That's different.

CRISSI

Some people get to choose when they stop being a kid. I didn't, and it makes everything else harder. Don't rush into grownup stuff if you can avoid it. I've been trying to explain that to Anna for weeks and I can't deal with all you lucky shitheads not taking my word for it, okay?

Jason looks surprised.

JASON

Is that what you were fighting about back there?

Crissi rolls her eyes, exasperated.

CRISSI
No, that was about everything else.

 JASON
You guys were super harsh.

 CRISSI
We said what we needed to say.

 JASON
You needed to call her a dumb,
selfish bitch?

Crissi stops twisting her swing, looks taken aback.

 CRISSI
Did I say that?

Jason nods. She looks down, ashamed.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
I just didn't want everything to
change again.

He takes that in. Deep breath.

 JASON
I get that.

Crissi pushes off the ground with one foot to keep spinning, but her foot slips, she starts to SPIRAL, the chains of her swing untwirl faster and faster.

Crissi looks freaked, Jason jumps up.

 CRISSI
Help!

Jason tries to grab the upper part of the chains that have already untwirled, he gets a good grip, looks confident he's got it, then BAM the swing whips around and Crissi's legs take Jason out at the knees.

He goes down hard.

 JASON
Shit!

Crissi YELPS, her swing does it's last spins and jerks to a slow back and forth rotation.

She stops the swing with her feet, rolls off it onto the ground next to Jason. They both breathe heavily, but as they lie, looking up at the sky, their breathing slows.

CRISSI
Are you okay?

 JASON
No, but, yeah.

They look at each other, both a little scared, unsure.

The midi tones of "Pon de Replay" play from Crissi's phone. She pulls it out and answers.

 CRISSI
 (into phone)
Hi, Mom.

 KATHY (V.O.)
You girls alright?

 CRISSI
Mhmm.

Crissi gets up, a calmness falling over her as she sits back on the swing, staying still.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
We're with some other friends too,
we're gonna be home kinda late,
I'll call when we get on the train.

 KATHY (V.O.)
You better.

 CRISSI
Do... um, I mean, like...

Crissi's eyes get misty.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
Are you ever mad at Dad? For dying?

The sound of a deep breath from Kathy.

 KATHY (V.O.)
I was. For a long time.

 CRISSI
How'd you stop?

Jason watches her, worried.

 KATHY (V.O.)
I realized the things I loved about
him most were why he was gone.

Crissi turns the words over in her head, her eyes searching until it all adds up.

KATHY (V.O.)

Criss--

CRISSI

Mhmm. I um, I gotta go now.

KATHY (V.O.)

Love you.

CRISSI

Me too.

Crissi hangs up the phone. Jason steps up next to her.

JASON

You want a push?

She shakes her head, mmmmmmm no, yes, she nods. He pulls the swing back and lets go, she soars through the air, pumping her legs to go higher and higher.

As she swings forward and back, her consternation falls away, something sparks inside her--her eyes go wide, her feet HIT the ground, dragging her to a jolting stop.

JASON (CONT'D)

You don't look so good.

CRISSI

Excuse me?!

She reels back, looking a little nauseous.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Okay, I have felt better. But I want to find our group so I can talk to Anna.

Jason nods approvingly, dials his phone.

JASON

(into phone)

Yo girl, where are you guys at?

SPLAT, Crissi coughs and sputters, leaning over her own vomit. Jason looks on, gags. He hangs up the phone.

Crissi spits, shakes it off, stands up triumphant.

CRISSI

I actually feel a lot better now.

Jason looks disgusted.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
 Where's the train?

Jason gestures for her to follow, she does. They walk out of the park, along...

EXT. CHINATOWN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jason steps out into the street, holds his arm up to hail a cab. Crissi gives him a quizzical look.

 JASON
 You wanna leave this night in the
 hands of the MTA?

 CRISSI
 You know you can't use your gold
 card in a cab, right?

Jason rolls his eyes at her.

A cab pulls up. He opens the door for Crissi.

 CRISSI (CONT'D)
 Way better I yacked out there than
 in here.

The DRIVER hears through the open window, turns to them.

 DRIVER
 No, close the door, you're not
 getting sick in my cab.

 CRISSI
 I'm done!

 DRIVER
 That's what they all say.

Crissi looks at Jason, indignant. He looks back and forth between her and Driver, nervous..

 DRIVER (CONT'D)
 CLOSE IT!

Jason instinctually follows the yelled instruction and the cab speeds off.

 CRISSI
 We needed that!

JASON

There's always another cab.

She scrunches her face as ANOTHER EMPTY CAB approaches going the other way.

He darts out, waving his arm. The cab flashes its hazards, makes a U-TURN. Jason looks to Crissi, eyebrows raised.

She gives him a "fine, you win," look as he opens the door and they slide in.

INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER - MOVING

Crissi and Jason sit on opposite ends of the backseat. The windows are down, the hot night air blowing their hair back.

Jason looks pensive, worried.

JASON

Please don't say I told you so, but
um--

Crissi looks at him, dead serious. He avoids her eyes.

JASON (CONT'D)

I know I was really talking a big
game about taking my dad down, but
now I think I wanna stay out of it.

Crissi looks relieved.

Jason's surprised by the silence, looks to her, she gives a reassuring nod, his shoulders relax.

CRISSI

I think that's really smart. Cuz
whatever happens with your dad
changes your mom, too.

They hold eye contact. Crissi's eyes mist up, Jason nods in understanding. Deep breath.

Crissi lets a tear fall, turns away and leans her head on the windowsill. Jason watches, then follows suit.

Across the middle seat, their hands find their way to each other, their fingers weaving together, resting comfortably.

EXT. CAB - SAME - MOVING

We follow behind the cab, the tops of Crissi and Jason's heads sticking out of the windows.

The cab climbs up Center Street, a little yellow dot between the looming turn-of-the-century industrial buildings of TriBeCa, dark columns and tall windows, devoid of light.

INT. CONTINENTAL BAR - NIGHT

A grimy, one-room spot, sometimes called the worst bar in New York and for good reason. A sign by the bar reads "5 shots for \$10" TECHNO MUSIC plays.

The place is hopping, PARTIERS bump and grind on the dance floor. Crissi and Jason weave through the crowd.

Crissi spots their crew by the bar, grabs Jason's arm and points, his eyes light up. They dart over to the bar, spurring a flurry of hugs, high-fives with Anna, Tess, Trevor, and Becca.

Crissi gives Anna a nervous wave, smile. Anna does the same.

TREVOR

Who wants a shot?

Jason, Tess, and Becca's hands shoot up.

CRISSI

(to Anna)

Can we talk?

Anna nods, they look around until they spot the BATHROOM DOOR, then Crissi leads the way.

Tess watches them, it's taking everything in her not to follow. She grabs Jason and points after Crissi and Anna.

TESS

Should I go--

JASON

Nah, they gotta make up one-on-one.

INT. CONTINENTAL BAR - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

An absolutely gnarly space with an abundance of supportive energy. A couple GIRLIES stand around a crying CHICK.

GIRLIE 1
No, absolutely not, he is not being
considerate of your feelings--

GIRLIE 2
At all!

Crissi and Anna enter.

CHICK
Maybe I did something that turned
him off, he was really sweet when
we went out last week.

GIRLIE 1
He was straight up ignoring you out
there, that's not okay!

Crissi and Anna look to each other, to the Girlies, who
realize they're being watched.

GIRLIE 2
(to Chick)
We need to set a good example for
them, hon.

Girlie 2 dabs the tears under Chick's eyes away, careful not
to smudge her mascara.

GIRLIE 1
(to Crissi and Anna)
Don't ever let someone treat your
girlfriends like shit, ladies.

GIRLIE 2
That's coming from older and wiser
women, take note.

Crissi and Anna give slow, nervous nods.

GIRLIE 1
Come on sluts, we're finding new
dick tonight.

Girlie 1 grabs Girlie 2 and Chick's arms, pulls them out.

Crissi watches the door as it shuts.

CRISSI
Best of luck to them.

Anna gives her nothing. Crissi takes a breath, resets.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Right. So obviously we left off on not a great note. So I wanted to like, clear the air.

Anna looks skeptical.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

Everything I said was true, but I wish I didn't say it like that.

ANNA

All of it?

CRISSI

I mean, yeah. Pretty much.

ANNA

Is this an apology?

CRISSI

If you want to call it that, yeah.

ANNA

Are you gonna say the words?

CRISSI

Fine, yes, I'm sorry.

ANNA

Cool. I'm sorry I didn't listen to you before. You were being a clingy bitch, but you were right.

Crissi's eyes light up.

CRISSI

About what?!

ANNA

About sex!

CRISSI

Oh right. Thank god! I was so fucking worried you weren't gonna realize in time, we spent those hours trying to save you. For someone who's so smart, sometimes you act like an idiot.

Anna gives her a wtf look.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

But you're my smart idiot.

ANNA
What about you?

CRISSI
Fine, I'm a smart idiot too.

ANNA
No, what happened with Jason? Did
you guys...

Anna makes a lewd gesture, Crissi covers her hands.

CRISSI
No! It's not like that.

Crissi turns away, fusses nervously with her hair in the
mirror. Anna watches, smiles to herself.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
Are we okay?

ANNA
I think the distance in the fall
will be good for us.

Crissi freezes.

ANNA (CONT'D)
So there's room for new people, and
time just for us on school breaks.

Crissi thinks a beat, digests.

CRISSI
I can live with that.

They make eye contact in the mirror, smiles spread across
their faces. The bitches are back!

Crissi's eyes light up, she gasps.

CRISSI (CONT'D)
I have an idea.

Off Anna's intrigued face...

INT. CONTINENTAL BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Crissi and Anna beeline together back to their crew. The
music's even louder than before.

Crissi whispers in Tess's ear, Anna in Becca's. The Becca's pulled the other way by a FAN who asks something out of earshot, hands her a napkin and pen. Becca signs an autograph signs an autograph on a napkin, passes it back to Fan.

Anna gives her a questioning look, Crissi mouths "what the fuck was that?" Becca waves it off, looks to Tess--they confer with their eyes about what Anna and Crissi whispered and come to a consensus, they're totes in. SMILES!

Crissi grabs Jason's shoulder, whispers to him as he takes a sip of his drink. He SPITS his drink out, gives her a "are you serious?" look. She gives him a playful swat.

Anna and Trevor are in a standoff. She pulls his ear, he shakes his head. Crissi approaches Anna, expectant, but Anna gestures to Trevor with exasperation. He shakes his head.

In an inaudible exchange, Crissi makes the case to Trevor. Tess looks on, impressed, then swoops in for backup.

Exasperated, Trevor throws his hands up, gives in. Crissi and Anna burst into smiles, they high-five Tess.

EXT. ST. MARK'S PLACE - NIGHT

Crissi and Anna lead the pack, with Tess, Becca, Trevor, and Jason following. The group's giddy, laughing, energy bouncing off each other.

Crissi starts jogging. The rest of the group follow suit, hopping over fire hydrants, weaving around PEDESTRIANS and pay phones.

Becca stops, enthralled, at rack of sunglasses in a sidewalk shop, Tess pulls her back into the fray.

EXT. PIERCING PARLOR - NIGHT

Out of breath and laughing, the group takes stock. Crissi looks to each of the others.

CRISSI
Okay, everyone be cool.

INT. PIERCING PARLOR - NIGHT

Crissi leads the group in. A piercing GUY (20s) looks them up and down, HUFFS.

GUY
Stars or dolphins?

Crissi grimaces at him. He gestures to a poster of tattoo drawings labeled "MOST POPULAR," with a dolphin and grouping of little stars.

CRISSI
Oh my god, no, we want our bellybuttons pierced.

ANNA
Why would we want dolphins?

BECCA
They're the only other species that mates recreationally.

Anna thinks that over. Jason shakes his head, amused. Crissi gestures "talk to the hand" at Becca, who's unbothered.

TESS
You do bellybuttons, yes?

GUY
Yeah. Four of yours?

Tess narrows her eyes.

TESS
That's a sexist assumption.

Crissi's neck tenses, she shoots Tess dagger eyes.

CRISSI
But not wrong, yeah, four.

Guy begrudgingly pulls out a receipt pad, jots things down.

Crissi looks to Anna, excited. Anna grabs her hand, they SQUEAL, Guy flinches at the sound, then points to Anna.

GUY
(to Crissi)
She's eighteen?

CRISSI
Yeah.

GUY
(to Anna)
She's eighteen?

He gestures to Crissi. Anna nods. He points to Becca, who's nose-to-the-glass at a case of bellybutton rings.

GUY (CONT'D)

Her?

CRISSI

She's nineteen.

GUY

And little Gloria Steinem?

Tess rolls her eyes, Trevor stifles a laugh.

CRISSI

Yeah, she's a freshman at Barnard.

GUY

Of course she is. Alright it's twenty bucks each. You pay before.

The girls reach into their pockets and purses, fishing out crumpled bills.

Jason steps in front of them, plunks down the Gold Card.

JASON

I got it.

Guy looks at the card, looks at Jason with disdain.

GUY

Nah, cash.

Jason sheepishly collects his card. One by one, the girls put their assembled \$20s on the counter.

CRISSI

(to Jason)

It's a nice gesture, but we can take care of ourselves.

Guy SLAPS the carbon copy receipt on the counter as he swipes the cash into a drawer. He heads through a doorway, waves them into...

INT. PIERCING PARLOR - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A room with two padded massage tables, tattoo and piercing equipment neatly lined up against the wall.

As the group files in, Tess turns to Trevor.

TESS

If you tell Mom about this I'll
have to tell her you brought a girl
to the apartment.

TREVOR

Real mature, Tessie.

She punches him in the arm and he ignores it in a way only
siblings can.

Guy plunks a tray of bellybutton rings onto a table.

GUY

Take your pick, and whoever's first
can hop on.

The girls look at the rings. Anna picks up two with matching
red crystals, offers one to Crissi.

CRISSI

That's hot.

ANNA

Totally.

Guy clears his throat loudly.

CRISSI

Right, can I go first?

Nods. Crissi hands her chose ring to Guy, then lies down on
the table, pulls up her shirt.

The rest of the group gather around her, she looks a little
nervous as Guy lines up a big NEEDLE with her bellybutton.
Trevor covers his eyes, freaked out.

TESS

Is that sterile?

GUY

Yeah, all of our tools are
sterilized per New York State law.

He gestures to a laminated poster that reads "All of our
tools are sterilized per New York State law."

ANNA

If it's laminated, it's true.

GUY

I'm gonna count to three, please
don't scream, I have tinitis.

Crissi opens her mouth, but doesn't know what to say to that. Anna leans over, gives her a reassuring look.

GUY (CONT'D)

One, two--

Crissi GRABS Anna's hand as she braces for pain.

GUY (CONT'D)

Three.

PUNCH, the need comes through Crissi's skin. Jason stares at the needle, mouth agape.

Crissi closes her eyes, grimaces, then CLICK, her face relaxes, she looks down and the red gem ring shines back at her. She's euphoric.

PIERCING MONTAGE

- Anna on the table, white knuckling the edges of the foam tabletop. Needle through skin. She looks down, confused--that was it?

- Tess on the table, propping her head up with an arm, overly cool. She watches the needle, as it pierces the skin her face contorts, she SCREAMS, Guy covers his ears. Trevor peeks through his fingers, worried.

- Becca on the table, she pulls her shirt up, revealing an already-pierced bellybutton. Guy looks at her like she's an idiot. The girls nudge her, point to her piercing, she looks down, surprised. She thinks a moment, something clicks, oh yeah. Crissi bursts out laughing, has to steady herself on Anna. Guy points to a sign that reads "NO REFUNDS," Tess reads it, looks to Trevor, then Jason.

- Jason sits up on the table, Guy holds a piercing gun to his ear, CLICK, Jason flinches as a silver stud shoots through his lobe.

END PIERCING MONTAGE

INT. PIERCING PARLOR - BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The girls and Jason admire their piercings in a big mirror. Trevor shakes his head.

TREVOR

That was a lot more needles than I thought I was gonna see today.

CRISSI

It was always part of the plan.

She and Anna lock eyes with a conspiratorial sparkle.

BECCA

I totally forgot I got this done in
Cabo last spring break.

ANNA

(to Trevor)
Who is she?!

TREVOR

I can't make it make sense.

Jason mean mugs in the mirror, his piercing shines.

JASON

My dad's gonna's hate this.

CRISSI

But do you love it?

He shrugs.

JASON

Time will tell.

Tess gasps, the others turn to her.

TESS

That's the title.

Crissi knows exactly what she means, the others look lost.

TESS (CONT'D)

I'm writing about Crissi, or, it
started out about Crissi but she's
kind of an emblem of all of us, the
post-September 11th adolescents.

Anna frantically looks to Crissi on the mention of 9/11,
ready to swoop in for care, but Crissi's okay.

TESS (CONT'D)

If it's still okay with it?

CRISSI

Yeah. And like, that is legit, only
time will tell.

A beat, they all process that thought. Crissi moves through gravity of it the fastest, she looks around at her new little crew, pleased.

CRISSI (CONT'D)

So, what's everyone doing tomorrow?

Tess and Trevor look to each other, shrug. Becca shakes her head, nothing.

JASON

Just chillin'.

ANNA

I'm around.

CRISSI

Sweet. Everyone gimme your number and I'll make a plan.

She passes her phone to Jason, he types in his number, passes it along. Crissi watches her phone exchange hands, a smile spreads across her face.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

Crissi and Anna stand on the train, examining their bellybutton rings in the window's reflection. Suddenly, Crissi realizes something. Shit.

CRISSI

My mom's gonna fucking kill me.

ANNA

Ditto.

They look to each other, eeeeeek, but they can't help but GIGGLE. They feed off each other, their laughter building to hysterics. They collapse into seats, falling into each other as they laugh, tears streaming down their cheeks.

The tears help them ground themselves, their laughter slows, they catch their breath.

CRISSI

We're so fucked.

She lays her head on Anna's shoulder. Anna looks a little lost, sits with it. She leans her head on Crissi's.

WHOOSH, the train car exits a tunnel, barrels along the elevated tracks. The lit-up Manhattan skyline peeks through the train window over the girls' heads.

CUT TO BLACK.

SUPER: After the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, search and rescue dogs hunted through the wreckage for survivors--many were golden retrievers.

PHOTO MONTAGE OF GOLDEN RETRIEVERS WORKING AT GROUND ZERO

CUT TO:

SUPER: These K-9s worked 12-hour days for stretches of ten days at a time, but the dogs didn't find any survivors.

The dogs were so discouraged by their lack of saves that first responders started lying in the rubble and letting the dogs find them so the K-9s could feel like they'd done their job well.

The last known living service dog to have worked at ground zero, a golden retriever named Bretagne, died in 2016.

Never Forget.

FADE TO BLACK.