

Ides of May

by

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CHAD FORRESTER, 29, looks straight ahead. He's an average Joe, nothing extraordinary except the bruises on his face.

CHAD
I'd never been in a fight before.
It hurts.

Touches his swollen lip. A smear of dried blood under his nose.

CHAD (CONT'D)
Seven years together. For now
anyway.

He sits on a metal bench in a jail cell.

CHAD (CONT'D)
I married a witch. And she did this
to me.

FADE TO:

SUBTITLE: "THAT MORNING"

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Chad staggers around the corner, rubbing sleep from his eyes and sniffing something in the air. He has studious features, inquisitive, thoughtful, filled with book smarts. Here, however, he encounters a real-world problem.

CHAD
What's that smell?

The open-concept apartment allows him to see the French doors at the opposite end. Smoke wafts into the main room from an enclosed balcony bathed in sunlight.

SUNROOM - CONTINUOUS

HOLLY FORRESTER, 27, sits cross-legged atop a large pillow on the floor. She has short, red-dyed hair, a piercing in her nose, and a partial sleeve tattoo.

She meditates in front of a spread of Tarot cards. Smoke rises from a six-inch cauldron nearby.

Chad peers through the glass, knuckles at it. Holly opens an eye. Chad opens the door.

CHAD
What're you burning?

HOLLY
White sage.

CHAD
Why?

HOLLY
It helps rid the house of bad
vibes.

CHAD
I thought smoke triggered your
asthma.

HOLLY
I don't have asthma anymore.

CHAD
You don't?

HOLLY
I know, right? I've been noticing a
lot of changes since I started
meditating.

CHAD
Me too.

He closes the door.

MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chad walks away, swatting at the smoke.

CHAD (VO)
Our mornings used to be different.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Two cellphone alarms ring at the same time. Chad and Holly wake up, smile at each other. Holly's flashback appearances are devoid of piercings and tattoos, and she has long, curly brown hair.

CHAD (VO)
We used to wake up at the same
time.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

They sit at a bistro table, eating breakfast together.

CHAD (VO)
Eat scrambled eggs and toast. She
made the eggs. I made the toast.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

They leave the building, kiss on the sidewalk, and get into
separate cars parked along the curb.

CHAD (VO)
We left the house at the same time,
and always kissed good-bye. Always.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Chad sits on a weight bench along the wall, lifting curls.

CHAD (VO)
Holly gets up early now to
meditate. And she gave up breakfast
for a cup of tea.

He looks over at Holly. She sits at the dining table, peering
into her teacup.

CHAD (VO)
She likes to read the leaves.
Thinks it'll ... prognosticate her
day.

He clangs the barbell to the floor.

CHAD
You'll call your parents today?
Holly?

Holly holds up a finger for him to wait until after her
divination. He huffs and begins curling the barbell with his
other arm.

HOLLY
I'm sorry, you were saying?

He holds up a finger for her to wait until after his reps.
She makes a face. He drops the barbell.

CHAD
I asked if you'll call your
parents.

HOLLY
I will.

CHAD
Cause you said you'd call
yesterday, and your mother texted
me again this morning.

HOLLY
Yesterday was not a good day.

CHAD
Is that what your tea leaves said?
Or the Tarot cards?

He picks up the barbell and curls some more.

HOLLY
You don't have to be so dismissive.

CHAD
I'm just tired of being the
messenger. If you don't wanna talk
to your parents, tell them
yourself.

HOLLY
They made their choice.

CHAD
Not that I'm on their side, but
it's kind of hard for all of us to
believe. You know? How you can be
one person your whole life and
suddenly be somebody different.

HOLLY
Isn't that what life's about
though? Learning, growing,
changing. The journey of the soul.

CHAD
I'm fine with change. People
change. I've changed. I used to
hate spinach artichoke dip, and now
I love it.

HOLLY
You're comparing me to dip?

He clangs the barbell to the floor.

CHAD

I didn't marry a goddamn witch!

Holly jumps out of the chair and shows him the cup of tea.

HOLLY

These were right about you.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Chad takes a shower. Holly brushes her teeth in the steam.

CHAD

Well? ... Holly?

HOLLY

(spits)

I was brushing my teeth. Okay?
That's why I didn't answer. I'm not
ignoring you.

CHAD

What did the tea leaves say about
me?

HOLLY

Does it matter? You don't believe
it anyway. Listen, I promise I'll
call my mother. Okay? I'll see you
after work. Have a good day.

Chad pokes his head from behind the curtain to give her a
kiss, but she's already gone. The door closes on his puckered
lips.

CHAD (VO)

We always kissed good-bye. Always.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Chad steps off an elevator and lopes past dozens of cubicles.
He wears a suit and carries a briefcase.

CHAD (VO)

I'm the bookkeeper for Torcom, a
supplier of office and electronics
equipment.

He's important enough to get his own office.

CHAD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He sets his briefcase on the desk and fires up a desktop computer.

CHAD (VO)
I'm a numbers guy. Numbers make
sense to me. They always add up.
They never lie.

He looks at the photo on his desk. The wedding portrait of Holly and him. When she was normal, and they were happy.

CHAD (VO)
When I met Holly, she wasn't a
witch.

FLASHBACK:

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Holly, 20, wears makeup, jewelry, and a designer sweater. She fits the part, classy.

CHAD (VO)
She was a salesclerk. Behind the
counter at Macy's.

Chad, 22, walks over with a set of clothes. His stride slows, struck by her beauty.

CHAD (VO)
I was a junior in college, buying
clothes for my internship that
summer. She was the most beautiful
girl I'd ever seen.

An elderly woman joins Holly behind the counter, gives instructions.

CHAD (VO)
And the only employee there who
hadn't hit menopause yet.

Holly walks away. The elderly woman smiles at Chad.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Are you ready to check out?

CHAD
Yeah, but ...

He watches Holly disappear in the crowd.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - A WEEK LATER

Chad sets a stack of dress shirts on the counter.

CHAD (VO)
I went back every week, trying to
get her attention.

Holly scans and bags the shirts.

CHAD
All shirts today. I have enough
pants.

He chuckles, but she's not amused.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - A WEEK LATER

Chad sets a handful of ties on the counter.

CHAD (VO)
Maybe I was trying too hard.

Holly scans and bags the ties.

CHAD
I forgot to buy these last week
when I bought all those shirts.
Remember when I, you know, last
week, I was ... I was the guy that
bought all those shirts ...

His voice trails off, cause clearly, she's not interested.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - A WEEK LATER

Chad sets a pile of tiny square boxes on the counter.

CHAD (VO)
Or maybe I didn't realize that it
wasn't meant to be.

The elderly woman smiles at him.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Are you ready to check out?

CHAD
Where's the other girl?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Pardon me?

CHAD
The other girl. Curly brown hair,
my age.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Oh, her. She was fired.
(whispers)
Theft.

Chad frowns and walks away. The elderly woman looks down at the counter.

ELDERLY WOMAN
What about all these cuff links?

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly works here now, fluttering about with different flowers, assembling a bouquet. Hair in a ponytail, shirt sleeves rolled up, she adapts to any environment.

CHAD (VO)
A week later, when I should've been
going to Macy's to buy another
shirt accessory, I walked into the
flower shop instead.

Chad strolls in, absorbs the colors and aromas. He sees Holly, stares to make sure it's really her.

CHAD (VO)
And that's when I realized that if
it wasn't meant to be, then she
wouldn't have been there.
Glistening among the flowers like
the morning dew.

Holly hands the bouquet to a woman.

HOLLY
There you go. I hope she enjoys
them.

The customer walks away. Holly smiles at Chad.

HOLLY
Hi, there. What can I do for you?

CHAD
Yeah, hi. Um, I want to order a
bouquet for my mother. For Mother's
Day.

HOLLY
Sure, we can put something
together. What kind of flowers does
she like?

Chad doesn't know. Doesn't care.

CHAD
You used to work at Macy's, right?

HOLLY
I try not to think about that.

CHAD
I used to ... well, I bought a
stack of shirts once. And the next
week, I bought a handful of ties.

She remembers. He sees it in her eyes.

CHAD
I can't believe I'm telling you
this. Um, I went back the next week
to buy a bunch of cuff links. But
you weren't there. And I was
worried that I'd never see you
again.

Her eyes sparkle, and she melts in his arms.

HOLLY
Oh, Chad!

MAN'S VOICE (OFF)
Hey, Chad!

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

MARCUS GROGAN, 40, owner of Torcom, towers over Chad's desk.
He's never lost the swagger from his high school football
days.

MARCUS
Get focused, man! This is serious!

He waves a letter in Chad's face.

MARCUS
Yesterday's mail. From the IRS!
"Inconsistencies in FICA
reporting." "Failure to comply."

Chad snatches the letter, reads it over.

CHAD
But the software ... it's never
been wrong before.

MARCUS
Maybe the problem is data entry.

Chad meets his glaring eyes.

MARCUS
I think you'll admit that you
haven't been focused lately.
Problems at home? Right? Well, this
is MY home. So fix it.

He stomps away, spins back as he reaches the door.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
I want our tax forms cross-
referenced with all employee
records by the end of the day.

CHAD
There's over forty people on staff.

MARCUS
I can lower that number.

He slams the door. Chad flips the letter away and sinks into his chair. He opens a desk drawer and removes a thick accordion file. An eight-inch block of paperwork thuds on the desk.

CHAD (VO)
Numbers never lie.

FLASHBACK:

INT. IN-LAWS HOUSE - DAY

Chad, 24, sits at the kitchen table, working on a notebook and calculator.

CHAD
These numbers don't lie.

Holly, 22, and her father, GERALD, sit on opposite sides. Holly's mother, BETTY, bustles about the kitchen, cooking dinner.

CHAD

My student loan payments. Our rent going up. We've almost maxed out our credit card as it is.

Chad scans the room. Holly is quite concerned. Betty stops chopping vegetables to frown. Gerald leans back, chewing at a toothpick.

CHAD (VO)

Holly's father retired early from the military. They were living off his pension. Holly's mother was a career stay-at-home mom, even though they no longer had kids in the house. So Holly and I had to finance the wedding.

Gerald leans forward and removes the toothpick, uses it like a magic wand to summon a splendid idea.

GERALD

People from church will help.

EXT. CHAPEL LAWN - DAY

A dozen circular tables fill the lawn. Mid-reception party, a hundred people, lots of action.

CHAD (VO)

Holly grew up in the church, so for all the families she knew, it was like she was their daughter too.

A portly man and woman sit at the head table. PRESIDENT WALLACE and his WIFE.

CHAD (VO)

Branch President Wallace performed the ceremony. His wife played the organ music.

A middle-aged woman, SISTER JENSEN, patrols the party, snapping pictures with a professional camera.

CHAD (VO)

Sister Jensen volunteered her photography.

Another middle-aged woman, SISTER LOWRY, slices up the multi-tiered cake.

CHAD (VO)
Sister Lowry donated a cake from
her bakery.

CLAUDE, 18, Holly's brother, and a few other YOUNG MEN
distribute slices of cake to the tables.

CHAD (VO)
Holly's brother, Claude, and the
other young men, helped set up
tables and serve the food.

EXT. CHAPEL - LATER

Holly hugs her best friend, CAROLINE, then ducks into the
backseat of a car, where Chad waits. An elderly man, BROTHER
O'NEILL, closes the door for her.

CHAD (VO)
Holly's best friend, Caroline, she
got her father, Brother O'Neill, to
chauffeur us away from the ceremony
in his brand-new Cadillac.

Holly and Chad smile at each other and wave at everyone.

CHAD (VO)
Holly got an employee discount on
the flowers. And I negotiated a
bump in our credit limit. Third-
party catering, dress and tux, all
in all, the whole thing set us back
only twenty-six hundred and forty-
five dollars.

Everyone chases after the Cadillac as it drives away.

CHAD (VO)
With the support of everyone in the
church, we were on our way.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad compares paper copies of W-2 forms to a spreadsheet on
the computer. He gathers papers into the manila folder and
adds it to a small stack of folders on his desk.

He pulls another one from the accordion file. He exhales,
straightens his posture, rubs his neck. He needs a break.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

BRIAN, 28, co-worker and life-long friend, lights up a cigarette. He works in sales, so he talks a lot of bullshit, but as a friend, he's a genuine guy. Chad sips from a mug of coffee while they talk.

BRIAN

Sure there's changes. Since the baby's born, we don't have sex.

CHAD

I mean, her as a person. You know, the person you married. Is she radically different? Does she have, uh, a new philosophy on life?

BRIAN

I don't think so. We don't talk much.

CHAD

Brian, can I tell you something?

BRIAN

I thought you were.

Chad looks around. Even though they are alone, he leans in and whispers.

CHAD

Holly is a witch.

BRIAN

A witch?

CHAD

She's, um, taken up witchcraft. She calls herself a hedge witch.

BRIAN

Like warty nose and spells?

CHAD

No warts. Yet. But she burns incense to cleanse the house of spirits. She's into astrology and Tarot cards. Reads tea leaves. A lot of weird stuff like that. You know, meditates, goes to yoga class.

BRIAN

Yeah, yoga is weird.

CHAD

She used to be so conservative.
Growing up in the church. She
wanted ME to be in the church. Then
all of a sudden, she just stopped
going. Cut her hair, dyed it red.
Got a tattoo, a nose piercing.

BRIAN

Maybe she's mentally ill.

CHAD

I'm not a big religious guy myself,
but you don't go from that to
witchcraft.

BRIAN

When did you first notice any
changes?

Chad sips his coffee and thinks.

CHAD

About a year ago, I came home from
work one day ...

FLASHBACK:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Piles of lilac sprigs cover the dining table. Holly sits in a
chair, plucking petals, one by one. She collects them in a
large bowl.

Chad sets down his briefcase and surveys the scene. The bowl
is half filled with petals.

CHAD

What're you doing?

HOLLY

Making lilac syrup.

CHAD

I'm sorry, what?

HOLLY

Lilac syrup. See the lilacs? Aren't
they pretty? And they smell so
good.

She holds up a sprig for him to smell. He's not impressed.

CHAD
You didn't go to work today?

HOLLY
No, I did. That's how I got the lilacs. Flo let me leave early. So I could work on this project.

CHAD
You've been plucking flowers all day?

HOLLY
Not all day. Just three hours.

CHAD
What exactly do you do with lilac syrup?

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Holly watches Chad drink from a glass of purple lemonade.

HOLLY
You can mix it with lemonade. Or any other sweet cold drink.

Chad swallows and shrugs.

INT. SUNROOM - LATER

Holly watches Chad absorb the mist from an oil diffuser.

HOLLY
Add a few drops to your essential oils.

Chad inhales and shrugs.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Chad sits naked in a bath. Holly sits on the edge of the tub, wearing clothes.

HOLLY
Mix it with some epsom salt for a nice relaxing bath.

She reaches over and turns off the faucet. Chad soaks and shrugs.

Holly checks out his naked body. Steam rises from the water.

HOLLY
Lilacs also represent new
beginnings.

She reaches in, runs a finger along his arm.

HOLLY
The arousal of young love.

Her finger moves up toward his shoulder.

HOLLY
Did you know that we're entering
Beltane?

He shakes his head. Now her entire hand rubs his chest.

HOLLY
Beltane is halfway between the
spring equinox and the summer
solstice. It's the most sexually
charged time of year.

Her hand rubs down his chest and into the water.

HOLLY
Can you feel it?

He nods. She keeps touching him. He lunges at her, pulls her into the bath. They kiss passionately. Water splashes about.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Holly's wet shirt on the floor. TRACK into ...

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A trail of droplets. More soggy clothes. TRACK into ...

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A bra. TRACK into bed.

Chad and Holly pant heavily, post-coitus.

CHAD
So ... how much syrup are you gonna
make?

She laughs. He laughs. They snuggle.

CHAD
I do have another question though.

HOLLY
Hmm?

CHAD
Did you tie your hand to the
bedpost with your underpants?

HOLLY
Maybe.

CHAD
Is that something you wanna
experiment with?

HOLLY
Maybe.

Chad holds her, shocked, excited, confused.

CHAD (VO)
And that's when I knew. She was
definitely not the same woman I
married.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Brian stares agape, cigarette clinging to the corner of his
lips.

CHAD
Anyway, I need to get back to those
files.

BRIAN
You can't leave me like this.

Chad walks away.

BRIAN
So many questions! Do you tie her
up? Does she tie you?

Chad enters the building through the side door.

BRIAN
Fuck me ...

Brian takes a final drag and flicks the cigarette. He taps at his phone and holds it to his ear.

BRIAN
Hey, sugar, I was just thinking
about ya.

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad calculates and compares numbers.

CHAD (VO)
I added and re-added numbers all
day. And the entire time, I kept
wondering if this IRS audit was my
fault.

He slaps a folder onto the pile and grabs another one from the accordion file. He's in a real groove now.

CHAD (VO)
Did I do something wrong? Was there
a simple solution that I just
wasn't seeing?

He eyes the wedding photo on his desk.

CHAD (VO)
Maybe this whole thing with Holly
was my fault too.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Chad mingles with church members after Sunday service.

CHAD (VO)
I went to church on the important
days. But maybe I should've gone
more.

Chad shakes hands with another MAN.

CHAD
I'm Chad, Holly's husband.

CHURCH MAN
I remember you from Christmas. Have
you considered becoming a member?

INT. IN-LAWS HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad sits at dinner with Holly and her family.

CHAD (VO)
Only a few hundred times.

Gerald holds a fork in one hand, a scripture in the other.

GERALD
All I'm asking is that you pray
with an earnest heart. If you do
that, you'll get your answer.

Chad nods and takes a bite.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad sits in a chair, staring at two church MISSIONARIES on the couch.

CHAD (VO)
The longer I avoided it, the more
they sent the missionaries over.

MISSIONARY
Have you considered getting
baptized?

Chad fumbles for the right words. Holly enters the room.

HOLLY
Dinner's ready!

CHAD
Saved by the dinner bell. Eh?

The missionaries don't laugh. God's work is no joke.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Chad lounges on the couch in a football jersey. Holly stands over him, wearing her Sunday dress.

CHAD (VO)
We debated faith. Holly agreed that
spirituality is a personal journey.
But she kept hoping that I'd come
around.

They're not arguing, but there's palpable tension.

CHAD
I'm just not comfortable there.
Everyone pesters me about joining
the church.

HOLLY
I know.

CHAD
I can't just go to support you, I
have to get pestered too.

HOLLY
I know. Hey, it's okay. Enjoy your
game.

Disappointed but understanding, Holly leans down, kisses him
good-bye.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Chad watches Holly interact with Caroline and her husband,
ADAM. They recently had a BABY.

CHAD (VO)
I was never going to be a member of
the church. And because of that, I
was depriving her. Of being an
eternal family.

Caroline allows Holly to hold the baby. She marvels at the
cuteness.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad slaps a folder on top of the pile. He pulls out the
remaining folders from the accordion file and measures the
stack against the folders he's already done. Exactly half. He
checks his watch. Lunch time.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly waters flowers. Chad walks into the shop with a take-
out bag.

HOLLY
Oh, hi. What're you doing here?

CHAD
I thought I'd bring lunch.
Sandwiches from Duke's.

HOLLY
Flo's on lunch right now. I have to
wait--

FLO
I'm back.

FLO, 60, the town's resident florist, walks in from the
greenhouse entrance.

CHAD
Perfect timing.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly and Chad sit on opposite sides of a picnic table. They
unwrap their sandwiches.

HOLLY
There's a lunar eclipse tonight.

CHAD
Oh yeah?

HOLLY
I thought we could watch it
together. At least for a bit. It's
like a two-hour thing.

CHAD
Sure. What time does it start?

She bites into her sandwich, flinches.

HOLLY
Is this provolone? I can't do real
cheese anymore.

She opens the sandwich and picks out the slices.

CHAD
I'm sorry. I didn't know.

HOLLY
I've been trying to limit my dairy
intake. Might be the cause of my
digestive problems.

CHAD

You never told me. I would've said no cheese.

HOLLY

It's okay, Chad. I'm taking it off.

CHAD

Seems there's a lot you don't tell me anymore.

He chomps into his sandwich. Holly watches him, thinking about what to say.

HOLLY

I did tell you, though, that I've been exploring the trauma I grew up with.

CHAD

Yeah ...

HOLLY

Well, it's hard to explain it to you, if I don't understand it myself.

CHAD

I support you in whatever you need to do. But how long is this gonna take?

HOLLY

You can't put a timeline on the healing process.

CHAD

Cause life moves on and if we're going to buy a house and start a family ...

HOLLY

See, that's what I'm taking about. Having to meet these certain benchmarks. That my life only has purpose if I have a husband and a house and kids. Maybe I don't want those things.

CHAD

What?

That hurt. She sees it in his eyes, even as he tries to hide them.

HOLLY

Right now, I mean ... See, this is why I wanted to wait until ... I DO want those things. But I don't want to be told that I NEED them. Does that make sense?

CHAD

Nothing makes sense anymore.

HOLLY

Chad, look at me. Am I the same person you married? The same person you fell in love with?

CHAD

No.

HOLLY

Then can you honestly say that you're still in love with me?

CHAD

Yes. Because I feel it.

He taps his chest.

HOLLY

Well, I'm feeling different things. We haven't been very close lately. And I know that I'm to blame for much of that. Digging into my past and all. I need to figure things out. What it means being a woman, being a wife. I love you, Chad, I always will, but right now, I'm not IN love with you.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Chad lopes toward his office, take-out bag in hand. Brian comes out of nowhere to stroll beside him.

BRIAN

I have some follow-up questions.

CHAD

Not now, Brian.

BRIAN

What do you use to tie each other up?

CHAD
I don't have time for this.

BRIAN
Stockings? A belt?

Chad bolts into his office and slams the door in Brian's face.

BRIAN
Call me.

CHAD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Chad sits in his chair, sulking, staring at the wedding photograph. He lays it facedown on the desk. And tries to get back to work.

CHAD (VO)
She loves me, she loves me not.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Chad, 23, hides in a cluster of bushes, plucking the petals off a daisy.

CHAD
She loves me, she loves me not. She
loves me, she loves me not.

No more petals. He stares across the park. Holly, 21, sits in the grass at the edge of the pond, watching ducks glide in the water.

Damn the daisy. Chad tosses the flower aside and marches forward.

POND - CONTINUOUS

Chad sits beside Holly. She smiles, but doesn't seem enthused to see him.

CHAD
Hi. Nice day.

HOLLY
How'd you know I was here?

CHAD

I had a feeling. You like to come here and think. Would you rather be alone?

HOLLY

I just needed to get out of the house.

She reaches over, holds his hand. They watch the ducks in the pond.

HOLLY

Did you know that ducks have a different mate every season? It only lasts six or seven months. Then the females nest their eggs. And the males lose the colorful feathers that made them so attractive. They play their roles perfectly.

Chad looks at Holly, not sure what to say.

HOLLY

Geese and swans, however, find one mate for their entire lives. Isn't that strange? How these species of birds can live so differently?

She squeezes his hand, smiles genuinely now.

HOLLY

Have you seen the new foot bridge over the pond?

EXT. FOOT BRIDGE - LATER

Holly and Chad step hand-in-hand onto a foot bridge that spans the pond. It's decorated with flowering ivy to give it a rustic look.

CHAD (VO)

I wasn't prepared for the vision I saw when I stepped on the bridge that day.

A beam of sunlight strikes Chad in the face and suddenly:

The foot bridge vanishes, and they are walking down the aisle in church. Wedding gown, tuxedo, family and friends.

Chad stumbles, struck by the vision. Holly holds him and giggles.

HOLLY
You all right?

Chad steadies his feet and peers into her eyes.

CHAD (VO)
She loves me, she loves me not?
There was no doubt. She was the
one.

EXT. FOOT BRIDGE - A WEEK LATER

Holly and Chad walk across the bridge. Chad stops her, drops down to a knee.

CHAD (VO)
I brought her back to the bridge a
week later.

Chad shows her a diamond ring. Holly nods, laughs, cries. The excitement sparks an asthma attack. Chad stands up to comfort her, but Holly uses her inhaler. All is well.

CHAD (VO)
And gave her a ring that cost
thirteen hundred and sixty-three
dollars.

Chad takes her finger. They are both trembling so much that the ring slips from their hands, bounces between planks, and plunges into the water.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

The jeweler presents Holly and Chad with another ring.

CHAD (VO)
Which included an extra thirty
dollars for the insurance policy.

Chad puts the ring on her finger. They share a laugh and a kiss.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad stares out the window. He takes a bite of his sandwich from lunch.

CHAD (VO)
If only there was an insurance
policy for love.

He's hungry, but has no appetite. He stares at the sandwich with disgust.

CHAD (VO)
Was Holly substituting for our love
the way she substituted for real
cheese?

Chad grabs the take-out bag, shoves the sandwich inside, and launches it into the trash can.

CHAD (VO)
If she was falling out of love with
me, was she falling in love with
someone else?

FLASHBACK:

INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

Chad and Holly walk into the communal space of a yoga studio, door chimes announcing their presence. This is the first flashback where Holly has short, red-dyed hair.

SWAMI DAN, 35, enters from a hallway and crosses the room toward them. Of petite stature, he looks even smaller in his oversized loincloth robe. He wears his long hair in a ponytail, and his beard is braided into a six-inch tail.

SWAMI DAN
Welcome to Swami Studio. I am Swami
Dan.

HOLLY
I'm Holly. This is my husband,
Chad.

She goes for a handshake, but Swami puts his hands together and bows.

SWAMI DAN
Namaste.

HOLLY
Oh, yes, Namaste.

She repeats the gesture.

SWAMI DAN
Are you interested in yoga classes?

HOLLY
I am. We live in an apartment, so there's not a lot of space to work with.

CHAD
That's why we're looking to buy a house. Right, honey?

Holly shoots a glare at Chad. Swami senses the tension.

SWAMI DAN
Well, this is the communal space. Allow me to show you everything that Swami Studio has to offer.

HOLLY
Of course.

Swami leads her toward the hallway.

SWAMI DAN
We have a main studio, an illumination room, a meditation room ...

They disappear. Chad strolls about, looking over the decor:

Posters of yoga poses and chakra knowledge. Salt lamps and buddha statues. Yoga equipment. A table with essential oils, incense, and a little zen garden.

Chad picks up the tiny rake of the zen garden and drags it in the sand. He sets it down and turns around. To find Swami right behind him.

SWAMI DAN
You don't approve of this lifestyle?

CHAD
Where's ...

SWAMI DAN
She's enjoying the meditation room. I suspect you are a non-believer.

CHAD
I believe in many things.

SWAMI DAN
Not the practice of yoga?

CHAD
Holly can do yoga all she wants. I don't, however, think we need to pay for classes. When we're trying to save for a down payment on a house.

SWAMI DAN
A house that YOU want.

Holly pokes her head in.

HOLLY
Swami Dan, I have some questions.

Swami bows at Chad and walks away.

CHAD (VO)
I had questions too. Who was this alleged Swami?

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad searches through a database on his computer.

CHAD (VO)
A careful search of local businesses turned up the name Daniel Leonardo Kochanowitz. AKA Swami Dan.

He looks over Swami's social media profile. Tame stuff. Pictures with yoga students. Buddhism quotes. Nature photos.

CHAD (VO)
Swami Dan was thirty-five, single, a self-proclaimed ascetic. Yet he had an extensive social media profile. I knew he couldn't be trusted.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad eats a spaghetti and meatball dinner. Holly, wearing her yoga gear, stands beside the table. She sips a smoothie and orates about class.

CHAD (VO)
But Holly trusted him more and
more. Went to the studio more and
more.

Chad pretends to be interested, but he's annoyed that she missed dinner again.

CHAD
There's more spaghetti. I can fix
you a plate.

HOLLY
Nah, I'm gonna stick with these
fruit smoothies. They really seem
to be helping. Swami Dan says I
have a blockage in my manipura
chakra. That's what's leading to my
digestive problems.

Chad stabs a meatball, mutters to himself.

CHAD
Shove a meatball up his chakra.

HOLLY
What?

CHAD
Nothing ...

INT. YOGA STUDIO - DAY

A few dozen people mill about the studio, sipping tea, eating
fresh fruit, chatting. A banner on the window proclaims:
"OPEN HOUSE"

CHAD (VO)
Swami Dan talked a good game. And
when he talked, people listened.

Swami stands on a bench and clangs tingsha bells to get
everyone's attention.

SWAMI DAN
Welcome, yogis. We gather here to
banish the illusion. To unite mind,
body, and spirit as one.

Holly and others are entranced by his words. Chad stands
among them, arms folded.

CHAD (VO)
His fortune cookie phrases might've
fooled everyone else. It was
different when we were alone.

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - LATER

Chad wanders down a hallway. He approaches a door, reaches
for the knob. Swami Dan enters the hallway behind him.

SWAMI DAN
May I help you?

CHAD
I'm just looking around.

SWAMI DAN
The westward hallway is for members
only. Would you like to be a
member?

CHAD
Maybe. Maybe I want to look around
first.

They walk towards each other while they talk.

CHAD
Isn't that the whole point of an
open house? To look around?

SWAMI DAN
The point of an open house is to
open minds. To the possibilities of
the world around us. But an open
mind doesn't seem like anything
you're interested in.

CHAD
Are you saying I'm closed minded?

They are face to face now.

SWAMI DAN
My, you have a sharp ear for
insults.

CHAD
Yeah? Well, I have a sharp tongue
too.

SWAMI DAN
Let's hear it.

CHAD

I don't trade insults with people
who wear a rat tail on their face.

Holly steps into the hallway.

HOLLY

There you are.

CHAD

I was just--

But she was talking to Swami.

HOLLY

Some prospective members would like
to talk to you.

Swami strokes his braided beard.

SWAMI DAN

Despite all my rage, I am still
just a rat in a cage.

Swami walks away with Holly. Chad ponders the final quote.
He's heard it before.

CHAD (VO)

That was his first mistake. Quoting
the Smashing Pumpkins.

INT. YOGA STUDIO - NIGHT

Chad walks into the studio. Holly and Swami are laughing.

CHAD (VO)

His second mistake was scheduling a
yoga class alone with my wife.

HOLLY

Chad, you gotta hear this one.

SWAMI DAN

Two Buddhists and a Mormon walk
into a bar.

CHAD

They close in thirty minutes. So if
we wanna get your car ...

HOLLY

Oh, sure, um, let me get my bag.

Holly disappears down the hallway. Swami steps toward Chad.

SWAMI DAN

Why don't you like it that Holly comes here?

CHAD

Is she the only one who signs up for these night classes?

SWAMI DAN

Does that bother you? Us being alone. Your attractive wife, and her spiritual teacher.

CHAD

You think my wife's attractive?

SWAMI DAN

Don't you?

CHAD

Well, yeah, but ... Look, what is your problem with me?

SWAMI DAN

I don't think you support Holly's spiritual journey. And she doesn't think so either.

CHAD

She said that?

SWAMI DAN

Your attractive wife confides in me.

Holly returns, all smiles.

HOLLY

I'm ready!

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Chad drives Holly to the auto dealership.

CHAD

Aside from Buddhists jokes, what do you guys talk about?

HOLLY

Spiritual stuff.

CHAD
Care to elaborate?

HOLLY
You really want to know? We were
talking about Maya.

CHAD
Who's Maya?

HOLLY
Not who, what. It's the idea,
basically, that life is an
illusion. That the biases of our
past experience become superimposed
on our daily life, creating a false
reality.

CHAD
Oh. Is that all?

HOLLY
Is that all?! That's everything! I
mean, think about it. Every day, we
find ourselves in these situations
where our preconceived notions are
telling us how to behave and what
to think.

CHAD
But if he's telling you to believe
this, isn't that a contradiction?

HOLLY
His teaching comes not from biases.
But from a place of love.

CHAD
Love?

HOLLY
Yes, love. He loves me. He loves
you. He loves all of us.

Holly gazes off, a fondness in her eyes.

CHAD (VO)
She really admired him. And I
admired how composed I was about
it.

Chad wails on the car horn for a solid three seconds. Holly
freaks out.

HOLLY
Chad?! What're you doing?!

CHAD
Nothing ... I ... almost hit a
squirrel.

HOLLY
I didn't see any squirrel.

CHAD
Maybe it was an illusion.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad works through the folders, still checking numbers. The stack has shrunk to less than ten. His cellphone chimes. He slaps the folder shut, adds it to the finished pile, and picks up his phone.

A message from Holly: "Hey"

He replies: "Hey"

"Thanks for the sandwich."

"You didn't even like it."

"No but thank you."

"We should talk tonight."

"I have yoga class."

Chad huffs. Really? Isn't their marriage more important? He stares at the pile of folders yet to be worked.

"I'll leave work ASAP."

"Okay."

He sets his phone aside. Checks the clock on the wall. Grabs another folder.

CHAD (VO)
False reality? Illusion? Kinda like
a happy marriage.

FLASHBACK:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chad, 27, and Holly, 25, sit on one side of a booth. Holly still has long, curly hair.

They stare across the table at Brian and his girlfriend, SHELLY, who nuzzle noses. Chad and Holly sip from their drinks. Awkward.

CHAD

Sooo, you guys wanted to tell us something?

BRIAN

We sure do. Right, sugar?

SHELLY

Seeing as you're our closest friends. We wanted to tell you first.

BRIAN

Well, we told our parents first, but you know, socially speaking--

SHELLY

We're expecting!

Brian rubs Shelly's belly, and they nuzzle noses again.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Chad drives them home from the restaurant. Holly stares out the window.

CHAD

How about that, huh?

HOLLY

Good for them.

CHAD

I thought they might want to get married first.

HOLLY

That hardly seems to matter anymore.

CHAD

It mattered to you.

The silence is heightened by the clicking turn signal as they wait at an intersection.

CHAD
Have you thought about starting a family?

HOLLY
We are a family.

CHAD
You know what I mean.

HOLLY
We don't have room in the apartment for a nursery.

CHAD
Maybe we should start looking for a house.

HOLLY
Maybe.

CHAD (VO)
There was a time she had her future all figured out.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Chad, 24, and Holly, 22, stroll hand-in-hand along the moonlit shore.

HOLLY
Two-story house, four bedrooms, two baths. And a play room in the basement for the kids.

CHAD
How many kids?

HOLLY
I'd say three or four.

CHAD
I'd be fine with two. One of each please.

HOLLY
"May I take your order?" You know, the sex is up to you.

CHAD

Sex is up to me? I say, let's have it. Right here on the beach.

He gropes her. She shrieks and squirms away.

HOLLY

No, that's not--

CHAD

Really, let's do it.

HOLLY

Someone will see us.

CHAD

No one's around.

HOLLY

Could be another couple on their honeymoon.

CHAD

Let's make them jealous.

HOLLY

No!

She runs away. He gives chase.

CHAD (VO)

We never did have sex on the beach.
But we saw a couple of turtles.

INT./EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chad drives through a housing development.

HOLLY

Where are we going?

He stops along the curb in front of a house for sale.

CHAD

It hit the market last week. I saw it when I went for a jog.

HOLLY

It's cute, I guess. Hard to see in the dark.

CHAD

They have an open house this
Sunday, if you want to take a look.

Holly lowers her head. Suddenly it hits her.

HOLLY

Can we go home? I don't feel well.

CHAD

Something you ate?

HOLLY

Maybe, I ... I just need to lie
down.

CHAD (VO)

I should've seen it sooner.
Whenever we talked about getting a
house, she made excuses.

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

Chad and Holly tour a house with a realtor.

HOLLY

I'm not crazy about the layout.

EXT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

Chad and Holly stand on a front porch with a realtor.

HOLLY

I'm not crazy about the
neighborhood.

INT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

Chad and Holly look around another house.

HOLLY

I'm not crazy about the kitchen.

Chad gives her an incredulous look.

CHAD (VO)

Maybe she was just plain crazy.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Holly stands in front of the mirror, checking out her short, red-dyed hair. Chad stares at her, shocked.

CHAD
What've you done?

HOLLY
You don't like it?

CHAD
Your long, curly hair ...

HOLLY
I'm more than my hair, you know.

CHAD
Why red?

HOLLY
Cause why not?

INT. MAIN ROOM - DAY

Chad watches a basketball game on TV while chowing down on nachos. Holly walks into the room with her upper arm in plastic wrap.

HOLLY
Guess what I did today?

CHAD
You went shopping?

HOLLY
No. I got this.

She points to her arm. Chad glances at her, then back at the game. Double take. What?

CHAD
Is that a tattoo?!

HOLLY
Yep.

CHAD
A real one?!

HOLLY
No, it's from a Cracker Jack box.

Chad stares at her, cheese on his chin, trying to process this. Suddenly, he leaps off the couch and inspects it.

CHAD

Snakes?

HOLLY

It's the Auryn from the NeverEnding Story.

CHAD

Say what now?

HOLLY

The Auryn is the necklace from the movie. It represents the infinite balance of being.

CHAD

Uh huh. What about "your body is a temple?" "Temples are sacred?" ...

HOLLY

You know what's inscribed on the back of the Auryn? "Do what you wish."

She walks away, leaving Chad dumbfounded.

CHAD (VO)

I thought making lilac syrup was crazy. Then she cut her hair and got a tattoo.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chad cooks a spaghetti dinner. Holly walks in with a shopping bag.

CHAD (VO)

It didn't stop there though.

HOLLY

Sorry I'm late. I stopped to get parmesan cheese. And a nose piercing.

CHAD

Yeah, right.

He takes the container of parmesan and sees the hoop in her nostril. Double take. What?

CHAD
Oh my god, you did.

HOLLY
You don't like it?

CHAD
It doesn't matter if I like it. You already did it.

HOLLY
Well, I always wanted one.

CHAD
You can't hide that from your parents like you hide your tattoo.

HOLLY
I know. I've decided to stop hiding.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DAY

Holly rips open a package and removes a deck of cards.

CHAD (VO)
A week after that, she ordered her first set of Tarot cards.

Chad pauses from opening his junk mail.

CHAD
What are you, a fortune teller now?

HOLLY
It's not for telling fortunes. It can help unlock your intuition. Tap into your higher self. I've been doing a lot of reading about it. I think it'll be good for me.

INT. SUNROOM - DAY

Holly shows off her new witchcraft decor to Chad.

CHAD (VO)
Then she started skipping church and fully embraced witchcraft.

The six-inch cauldron. A sign of the lunar cycle.

CHAD (VO)
Her cauldron for burning sage. And
a sign of the lunar cycle. Because--

HOLLY
Once you are attuned to the phases
of the moon, you can harness her
innate powers.

Accent shelves carved with Wiccan pentacles. Decorative
crystals.

CHAD (VO)
Shelves for her growing collection
of crystals. And--

HOLLY
Witches bells!

She clangs a fistful of brass bells high in the air.

CHAD
What are those for?

HOLLY
You hang them from the door to ward
off negatively. Now when you have a
bad day at work, these will cleanse
you when you get home.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad slaps the last folder onto the finished pile.

CHAD (VO)
I could really use them today.

He leans back in the chair, exhales an exhausted sigh. He
sees the wedding photo lying face down, stands it back up.

CHAD (VO)
The more Holly embraced witchcraft,
the more she avoided other things.

FLASHBACK:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad and Holly settle into bed.

CHAD (VO)
Church, house-hunting, sex.

He runs his fingers along her arm, but she rolls away to the edge of bed.

INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Chad sits at a desk, watching pornography on his laptop.

CHAD (VO)
Five months went by. No sex. So,
you know, I had to take matters
into my own hands. And that's when
I saw him.

Chad leans forward, staring hard at the screen.

CHAD
Is that Swami Dan?

The PORN ACTOR looks like Swami Dan, minus the braided beard.

PORN ACTOR (ON TV)
Give it a little tug, babe.

Chad stares, shocked.

CHAD (VO)
The rat tail was gone, but it was
definitely him.

INT. MAIN ROOM - NIGHT

Holly wears her yoga gear. Chad confronts her.

CHAD
I'm telling you it's definitely
probably him.

HOLLY
Why were you watching pornography
anyway?

He stares. Uhhh ...

CHAD
This is not about me. Okay? This--

HOLLY

It is about you. Because you don't like Swami, you're making up these lies.

CHAD

You want to see the video?

He heads for the laptop.

HOLLY

No!

CHAD

It'll just take a second. I saved the link.

HOLLY

I bet you did!

CHAD

So I could prove it to you.

HOLLY

He wouldn't do that. He's a good person. And I'm late for class.

She grabs her duffel bag and walks away.

CHAD

Ask him if he knows Dustin Peaches!

Chad sinks into a chair.

CHAD (VO)

She trusted Swami Dan more than me.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad stares at the wedding photo.

CHAD (VO)

I had to get home. To save our marriage. Whatever's left of it.

He grabs the files and shoves them back into the accordion folder.

INT. MARCUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Marcus sits at his desk, typing at the computer. A knock on the door.

MARCUS

Enter.

Chad steps in, briefcase in hand.

CHAD

Sir ...

MARCUS

Did you find the mistake?

CHAD

I went through every employee file. The numbers all add up. It's the same as on the tax forms. I don't know where the mistake is.

MARCUS

You need to find it.

CHAD

I checked everything. I don't know what else to do.

MARCUS

You go back to your office and stay there until you find it.

CHAD

Sir, I've been adding numbers all day. My head hurts, I'm hungry, and I need to go home because my marriage is falling apart.

MARCUS

So is your career. Now get back to your office.

CHAD

No!

Chad leaves, slamming the door. Marcus vaults out of his chair.

MARCUS

Damn you, Forrester!

OFFICE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Chad storms away. Brian sneaks up on him.

BRIAN
I don't suppose you have any more
of that syrup, do you?

CHAD
What?

BRIAN
That lilac syrup.

CHAD
Not now, Brian.

Chad bolts onto the elevator.

BRIAN
Just a cup. A teaspoon. One goddamn
petal.

The elevator doors close on Brian's face.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Call me.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Chad walks in the front door. Before he even sets down his
briefcase, Holly hops in from the sunroom.

HOLLY
Hi!

CHAD
Hi?

HOLLY
I have everything set up.

CHAD
For what?

She motions to her room. Chad kicks his shoes off and
follows.

SUNROOM - CONTINUOUS

A fire smolders in the cauldron and a deck of Tarot cards are
spread on the floor, overlapping each other face down.

CHAD

When I said we should talk, I meant, you know, talk.

HOLLY

This is an exercise in self-reflection. The cards encourage us to ask questions about ourselves. And the current state of our lives.

CHAD

Uh huh.

HOLLY

Chad, you said you wanted to understand, right? How I'm facing my trauma. This is how. Through introspection.

CHAD

What do I do?

Holly plops onto her floor pillow.

HOLLY

Sit in front of the cards.

CHAD

I'll wrinkle my pants.

She gives a look. He's joking, yet not joking. He kneels.

HOLLY

I shuffled the cards, but now you're going to choose three of them. Whichever three that your intuition is drawn to. Set them in front of you, face down.

He selects three cards.

HOLLY

We're going to do a past, present, and future reading. This first card will shed light on something that has helped shape the current situation.

She nods, and he flips it over. A pleasant image of a young man and woman.

HOLLY

Two of cups. Twos represent partnership. Cups are emotion.

(MORE)

HOLLY (CONT'D)
The young couple are sharing
drinks, sharing emotion. A first
love, perhaps.

CHAD
Could be us. Except we weren't
first loves.

HOLLY
Yes, we were.

CHAD
No. You dated that Justin guy.

HOLLY
Joel? I didn't love him. My parents
wanted me to date a return
missionary.

CHAD
How long were you together?

HOLLY
I don't know. Six months? Then he
gave me mono. Which he got from
Becky Schwartz. My parents still
blame me. They don't want to think
that a return missionary would
cheat on me. That's what attracted
me so much to you. Even though you
weren't in the church, you had a
strong moral compass.

She reaches out and takes his hand. He thumbs at her wedding
ring, looks in her eyes. They haven't connected like this in
months.

CHAD
What does the next one say?

He flips it over: the Tower, struck by lightning.

HOLLY
The second card describes what's
happening right now. And here we
see the tower, a card in the
journey of the major arcana. This
card usually means chaos, upheaval.
The tower itself is an illusion.
The lightning sets us free.

CHAD
An illusion of what?

HOLLY

Could be anything. Marriage? How you thought it would be. And how it really is.

CHAD

The tower is falling apart. Does that mean our marriage is falling apart?

HOLLY

Not the marriage itself, but the IDEA of marriage. Like, I grew up thinking that marriage had to be a certain way. And that wasn't healthy. Not for me, not for you.

CHAD

Is that why you're not in love with me anymore?

HOLLY

Being in love is a fluctuating thing. When we're connected, I'm in love with you. We just lost our connection recently. But talking about it helps. Maybe I can share my trauma with you, instead of pushing you away.

CHAD

I'd like that.

They squeeze hands again, smile. Holly motions to the final card. Chad flips it over. Ten of swords. The picture startles him.

CHAD

My god, that's a gruesome image.

HOLLY

It can be, if you look at it a certain way.

CHAD

How else do you look at it? He's stabbed in the back with ten swords. This is my future?

HOLLY

(chuckles)

You're kind of proving the point of the card. Which is an over-reaction to a situation.

(MORE)

HOLLY (CONT'D)

Look at the image, not just the dead man, but everything around him. The water behind him is calm. Beneath the dark sky, the sun is shining. Things aren't as bad as they seem.

CHAD

But he's stabbed in the back. Not once, but ten times.

HOLLY

Stop focusing on the swords. These aren't literal swords. Okay? Swords represent conflict. Maybe it's the internal conflict that'll kill you. If you can't accept the changes taking place in your life.

He ponders this.

CHAD

Things aren't as bad as they seem?

HOLLY

No.

CHAD

Okay. I trust you.

HOLLY

Good. This has been good. Thank you for being open-minded enough to do this with me.

She starts gathering the cards together.

CHAD

So you wanna order in some dinner, stream a movie?

HOLLY

I gotta go.

CHAD

Where?

HOLLY

Yoga class.

She sets the Tarot cards in a pile on her table and grabs her duffel bag.

MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chad follows her into the main room.

CHAD

I thought we were connecting here.

HOLLY

We were. We are. Yoga is just something I need to do for me.

CHAD

And I support that. But the whole time you're doing this for you, I'm eating dinner by myself every night.

Holly steps closer. She understands.

HOLLY

You're right. I don't have to go every night. I'll go every other night, so we can still have dinners together.

CHAD

Or go in the afternoon, so your night is free.

HOLLY

I like night classes. It's quiet. No one else is there.

CHAD

Do you ever wonder why that is?

HOLLY

No. ... Why?

CHAD

It's just a coincidence that no one else signs up for these night classes?

HOLLY

I guess ...

CHAD

It's because Danny likes being alone with you.

HOLLY

Not this again.

CHAD
He's fooling you.

HOLLY
He's my spiritual teacher.

CHAD
He's a phony! A goddamn porn star!

HOLLY
I'm not listening to this.

She hefts her duffel bag and walks away. Chad watches, helpless.

INT. MAIN ROOM - LATER

Chad paces the room now, holding the ten of swords card, working himself into a frenzy.

CHAD
You're not the only one with trauma, you know. All the shit I put up with from your parents. And the missionaries. And now this fucking swami! I deserve better than this. Add numbers all day, get yelled at, can't find the mistake. Lots of mistakes here! Bought a sandwich with the wrong kind of cheese. Can't have sex, can't watch porn. Maybe I'm not a spiritual teacher, but I know a fucking phony when I see one!

He tosses the card and storms off.

INT. YOGA STUDIO - NIGHT

Chad bolts through the door. The communal room is empty. Swami enters from the hallway.

SWAMI DAN
There you are.

He stops short, surprised to see Chad.

SWAMI DAN
Oh. Why are you here?

CHAD
I need to talk to my wife. And
you're gonna talk too.

He advances toward the hallway.

SWAMI DAN
I'm sorry, but she's not here.

CHAD
She's always here. Even when she's
not physically here, her mind is
here. Consumed with this spiritual
journey.

SWAMI DAN
She's making good progress.

CHAD
Holly?!

SWAMI DAN
I told you, she's not here.

Swami guards the hallway entrance. Chad stares him down.

CHAD
Step aside.

SWAMI DAN
This is a safe space.

CHAD
Not for you. Move, Danny boy.

Swami closes his eyes and puts his hands together, meditation
pose.

SWAMI DAN
Namaste. Namaste.

CHAD
Move or I'm ripping that rat tail
off your face.

SWAMI DAN
Namaste. Namaste.

CHAD
Or maybe I should "give it a little
tug, babe."

Swami's eyes pop open.

SWAMI DAN
Why did you say that?

CHAD
Why do you think I said it? Dustin
Peaches ...

SWAMI DAN
Namaste? Not today! Hiyah!

Swami kicks and karate chops him. Chad backpedals, flailing his arms to deflect blows.

The door chimes. Holly enters, duffel bag in hand. They stop fighting to look at her.

HOLLY
What's going on?

SWAMI DAN
Your husband threatened me. Call
nine-one-one.

CHAD
I did not.

SWAMI DAN
He said he was going to rip the
beard off my face.

CHAD
Rat tail. It's a fucking rat tail.

SWAMI DAN
Its proper name is an Asian twist.
Hiyah!

Swami leaps into the air and kicks Chad in the face.

HOLLY
Swami, no!

Chad drops to a knee, touches his nose. Blood on his fingers. He stands up, turns to walk away.

CHAD
Asian-twist ... this up your ASS!

Spins around. Fist lands a solid punch.

HOLLY
Chad, no!

Swami staggers back, touches his nose. Blood on his fingers.

Epic stare-down. Squinting eyes. Gritting teeth. Howling yelps. They charge at each other.

HOLLY

Good lord.

Now she calls 9-1-1.

Swami kicks Chad in the gut, chops to the back.

Chad elbows Swami, hoists him onto his shoulders. Airplane spin. Launches.

Swami tumbles across the floor. Chad dives at him, elbow drop.

But Swami rolls away. On his knees, grabs Chad by the ankle, twists.

Chad SQUEALS, claws at the floor, eyes a stack of yoga blocks.

Swami tries to yank him back, but he's out-weighted. Chad kicks free, crawls.

He grabs a yoga block and flings it at Swami's face. A direct hit. Another and another.

Swami stumbles, finds his balance. He marches forward, deflecting yoga blocks with karate chops.

Chad fires them furiously, each one turned aside. The pile gone. Swami advances.

A large stability ball. Chad grabs it, launches. BONKS Swami in the face, knocking him off his feet.

Chad retrieves the ball, stands over the prone enemy. Raises the weapon over his head. Evil cackle.

Spikes the ball into Swami. It bounces back, THWACKS Chad in the face, knocking him to the floor.

HOLLY

Stop! I just called the police!

They stagger to their feet. Chad limps away. Swami in steady pursuit.

Chad spots a set of decorative samurai swords on the wall. He stops to admire them. And reflect.

CHAD

Swords? Conflict?

Swami tackles him.

He straddles Chad, digs fingers into his neck, pinching the trapezius. Chad swings an uppercut to the jaw, knocking Swami off.

Now Chad rolls on top. Yanks Swami's ponytail and beard braid.

Swami lifts a knee into Chad's groin. Chad collapses into a fetal position, writhing.

HOLLY

That's enough!

Swami backsprings to his feet and takes a breath. His ponytail is loose. He removes the hair tie and sways his luscious mane like in a shampoo commercial.

SWAMI DAN

Now you've done it.

Chad crawls away, injured ankle, throbbing groin.

Swami advances on him. Chad makes it to the table against the wall. A rolled up yoga mat lies beneath.

He grabs the mat and props it into the floor, helping himself to his feet. He spins around, thrusting the mat like a sword.

Swami digs into a pocket of his robe and uncoils a yoga strap. He cracks it like a whip. Chad cowers.

Parry and thrust. Sword and whip. Parry and thrust. Now the boomerang shot!

Swami whips the strap in circles overhead and snaps it toward Chad. It latches onto the yoga mat and yanks it from Chad's hands. The mat unrolls across the floor.

Cornered against the table, Chad feels behind him for another weapon. His fingers dig into the tabletop zen garden.

He sprays a cloud of sand into Swami's face. Swami coughs and claws at his eyes.

Chad darts to the yoga mat. He starts spinning Swami in a circle, wrapping the mat around him. One arm gets trapped.

Swami flails his other arm, but can't see where he's swinging.

Round and round, dizzy, all wrapped up. Swami stumbles, crashes into the table. He grabs the tiny rake from the zen garden. En garde!

Chad scoffs, trembles his hands.

CHAD

Oooh, I'm scared of that.

Swami shakes the sand from his eyes and lunges with the rake. Two prongs up Chad's nostrils. Lifted in the air. Tippy toes.

CHAD

Yoouuwww!

A karate chop into Swami's arm sends the rake flying. Then a leg sweep drops Swami to the floor.

Swami tries to roll himself free. One rotation.

Chad returns to the table, swats aside the incense sticks, and grabs a book of matches.

Two rotations. Swami stares up at the enemy.

Chad kneels on Swami's free hand. Then he strikes a match.

CHAD

Tell her the truth, or the rat tail gets it.

The match gets closer. Eyes wider.

Door chimes. Two OFFICERS rush in, one male, one female. They draw their weapons.

MALE OFFICER

Freeze! Drop the match!

FEMALE OFFICER

Maybe not drop it. Just blow it out.

MALE OFFICER

Good call. Blow it out!

Chad lowers his face closer to Swami and whispers.

CHAD

Blow it out your ass.

He blows out the match and stands up, arms raised.

FEMALE OFFICER
Back away from the Swami.

HOLLY
Officers, this is a big
misunderstanding. I, I just didn't
know what to do.

SWAMI DAN
He trespassed on my property.

CHAD
I'm a yogi.

SWAMI DAN
He's NOT a yogi. He assaulted me.
With a deadly weapon.

CHAD
Yoga blocks? And you hit me first.

SWAMI DAN
I'm pressing charges. I want him
arrested.

The officers look at each other, nod agreement.

MALE OFFICER
You have the right to remain
silent.

HOLLY
Oh my god, no!

The officers cuff Chad and escort him from the studio. Holly
looks back and forth between Chad and Swami, tears in her
eyes.

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Chad sits in the back of the police car, watching Holly
interact with the officers. The conversation over, the
officers walk toward him, and Holly retreats to the yoga
studio. Chad stares in disbelief.

FADE TO:

INT. SUNROOM - MORNING

White sage burns in the little cauldron. Holly sits on her
floor pillow, examining a three-card Tarot spread.

HOLLY (VO)
My day starts with introspection.
For twenty-five years, I accepted
the person I was. Then I started
asking why.

She jots notes in a journal about the Tarot cards.

HOLLY (VO)
I keep a log of my readings. A
trick I learned from a fellow
witch. It helps clarify things from
day to day. So does meditation.

She sets the journal aside, on a table next to a photograph:
Holly as an eight year-old, curly hair, Sunday dress. It's
not in a frame, just propped against a desk lamp.

Holly closes her eyes, meditates.

HOLLY (VO)
It's amazing how simple breathing
exercises can free you from the
weight of the world. Inhale,
exhale. Stress melts away. Just you
and a clear mind.

Chad taps on the glass. Holly opens an eye.

HOLLY (VO)
And your husband.

FLASHBACK:

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Chad buys a bouquet of flowers from Holly.

HOLLY (VO)
Chad was the sweetest guy I'd ever
met. He said things and did things
that made me feel special.

She hands him the bouquet and he hands it right back to her.
He bought them for her!

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly, 13, and a dozen YOUNG WOMEN--which includes her
friend, Caroline--sit in rows of folding chairs, receiving
religious instruction.

HOLLY (VO)
 Growing up in the church, you never
 felt special. You felt like
 everyone else.

She looks up from her scriptures, down the row of girls. They
 all look the same in their primped hair and dresses.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad, 22, sits at the dinner table with Holly, 20, and her
 family.

HOLLY (VO)
 The problem was: Chad wasn't a
 member of the church.

Gerald glares at Chad.

GERALD
 What are your intentions with my
 daughter?

Chad's not sure how to answer. He looks at Holly, but she
 hides her face, embarrassed.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam, Caroline's future husband, sits beside Holly, 18, at
 the dinner table.

HOLLY (VO)
 But the guys from church were such
 phonies.

Gerald smiles at Adam.

GERALD
 Tell us about your mission.

ADAM
 It was incredible. I baptized
 eighteen new members. To see the
 difference it made in their lives,
 it really strengthened my
 testimony.

Holly sits stoically.

HOLLY (VO)
It wasn't their fault. They were
just playing the roles expected of
them.

GERALD
Isn't that impressive, Holly?

HOLLY
Oh, yes.

She nods politely.

HOLLY (VO)
We all were.

INT. MALL - DAY

Chad and Holly walk through the mall, holding hands.

HOLLY (VO)
Chad was real. He liked me for who
I was, not who I was supposed to
be.

Holly stops, drawn to a store window display of decorative
crystals. Chad nudges her to go inside. They do.

EXT. FOOT BRIDGE - DAY

Chad proposes. Holly wards off her asthma attack.

HOLLY (VO)
I guess in some ways, I wanted Chad
to save me from all this.

Chad takes her finger, but the ring plunges into the water.

HOLLY (VO)
I should've known it wouldn't be
easy.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Chad and Holly sit at a large table with her family. Holly
shows off her ring.

HOLLY (VO)
We broke the news to my parents
over dinner at Delmonico's, Papa's
favorite restaurant.

Gerald reaches out. Chad thinks he's going in for a handshake.

GERALD
Pass the bread sticks.

Oh, sure. Chad passes the bread sticks.

EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

Holly and Chad sit in the backseat of Brother O'Neill's Cadillac.

HOLLY (VO)
I became a wife, even though I
wasn't ready to be one. Ironically,
it was the first step toward
breaking away.

Holly spots her parents in the crowd. She waves as the car drives off.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Holly swirls her teacup three times in her left hand. She inverts it and places it on the saucer. Chad lifts weights nearby.

HOLLY (VO)
Tarot cards and tea leaves: they're
gateways to understanding yourself.

Holly and Chad have an animated discussion while she examines the tea leaves.

HOLLY (VO)
I'm still learning. And Chad is
still learning to accept it.

Chad clangs the barbell to the floor.

CHAD
I didn't marry a goddamn witch!

FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly, 13, and the young women receive instruction.

HOLLY (VO)
When you grow up in the church,
you're taught that witchcraft is
evil.

Class instructor, Sister Simpson, reads from the scriptures.

SISTER SIMPSON
"The thieves, and the robbers, and
the murderers, and the magic art,
and the witchcraft that was in the
land."

Holly follows along in her own scriptures, takes notes.

HOLLY (VO)
Mentioned in the same breath as
thieves and murderers.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Holly stands at the podium, looking out at the congregation.

HOLLY (VO)
You don't question it. You believe
what you're taught.

She bares her testimony.

HOLLY
I know these things to be true and
I say them in the name of Jesus
Christ. Amen.

Holly returns to the pew beside her pleased parents.

INT. BOOK STORE - DAY

Holly strolls down an aisle, browsing. She comes across
reference books on witchcraft.

HOLLY (VO)
It didn't matter if I had an
interest in the occult. I could
never show it.

She reaches for a book. When her mother turns the corner,
Holly itches at her cheek instead.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - DAY

Holly and her family wander through booths with crafts and homemade foods. Holly notices a tent with a sign that advertises "TAROT READINGS."

HOLLY (VO)
I had to be a good daughter. A good
Christian.

Gerald puts his arm around Holly and steers her back to the family.

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly reads from her "Personal Progress" book. A chapter called, "A Daughter of God."

HOLLY (VO)
And I was. Until I turned eighteen.

INT. MALL - DAY

Holly, 18, and Caroline shop for sunglasses at a kiosk.

HOLLY (VO)
And we bumped into Matt Vandermere
at the mall. He was a young man
from our church.

MATT, the man working the kiosk, is only a few years older than them.

HOLLY (VO)
We hadn't seen him in a few years.
We thought he went on a mission.

Matt laughs.

MATT
No, no, a mission wasn't for me. In
fact, I left the church.

Holly and Caroline share a quizzical look.

HOLLY
You can do that?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Holly skulks along main street of a modest downtown.
Restaurants, convenience shops, bars.

HOLLY (VO)
Opting out of a mission was one
thing. Leaving the church was
another.

She glances over her shoulder, weaves in and out of shadows.
She arrives at "The Fuse Box," the hippest night club in
town. Matt works at the door, checking IDs. Holly is next.

MATT
Hey, you made it.

HOLLY
Caroline chickened out.

MATT
Her loss. I got you. Go on in.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - CONTINUOUS

DJ music, laser lights, a fog machine. Holly walks in,
absorbing the scene. Lots of bodies dancing, lots of skin.

HOLLY (VO)
I was a long way from girls' camp.

She strolls onto the dance floor, inhales the music.

HOLLY (VO)
I was alive.

And she lets loose.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Gerald sleeps in a recliner. Holly tiptoes in, but Gerald
rouses when she closes the door.

GERALD
It's late.

HOLLY
I know. Sorry.

GERALD
Where were you?

HOLLY
I went for a walk, down by the
lake.

GERALD
You worked up quite a sweat.

Holly looks down at her armpits.

HOLLY
I ran home when I realized how late
it was.

GERALD
Hmph. Well, don't do it again.

Holly nods and climbs the stairs. Pauses to look back.

HOLLY (VO)
It was the first time I ever lied
to my parents. The first time I
wasn't lying to myself.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Holly escapes the steamy bathroom, closes the door on Chad's
kissy face.

HOLLY (VO)
Finding yourself is a lonely
endeavor.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Holly drives to work. She waits at a stop light.

HOLLY (VO)
That's the one thing I miss about
the church. The support system. The
community. You don't feel weak when
you're all in it together.

The light turns green, but Holly's lost in thought. A horn
honks behind her. She proceeds through the intersection.

HOLLY (VO)
But I can no longer ignore the
toxicity of the lessons we learned.

The road widens into two lanes, and the male driver passes her.

TRUCK DRIVER
Damn woman driver!

Holly glares at him.

HOLLY (VO)
Like what it means to be a woman.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly, 13, reads aloud to the young women from her "Personal Progress" book.

HOLLY
"As you prepare for your sacred mission by becoming a righteous woman, your natural feelings of tenderness, love, and caring will grow. You will learn to serve, nurture, teach, and lift others."

SISTER SIMPSON
Thank you, Holly. Who would like to read next?

Caroline raises her hand.

HOLLY (VO)
We learned that it was our duty to serve. Not just God, but man.

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly, 13, and the young women watch a movie.

HOLLY (VO)
And we learned that our value as a woman is determined by the men in our lives.

The movie "Johnny Lingo."

MR. HARRIS (ON TV)
 "Johnny, I misjudged you. I thought
 you were thinking only of how
 important you would look to your
 friends giving eight cows for a
 wife. I didn't know you wanted to
 make Mahana happy."

JOHNNY LINGO (ON TV)
 "More than happy, Mr. Harris. I
 wanted her to be an eight-cow
 woman."

INT. CHAPEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sister Lowry gives instructions to Holly and the young women.

HOLLY (VO)
 We met at the chapel every Tuesday
 night for a young women's activity.
 We learned how to bake.

Lowry patrols the room, observing everyone's technique.

SISTER LOWRY
 Doing this will ensure that our
 brownies are extra moist.

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Sister Simpson demonstrates how to properly sit in a chair.

HOLLY (VO)
 Or we learned other modest
 behaviors.

Back straight, legs crossed at the ankles, hands folded in
 lap. The young women mimic her.

INT. CHAPEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Another baking class with Lowry.

HOLLY (VO)
 While the young men went scouting
 and camping and played sports.

Holly looks out the window at the young men playing flag
 football in the yard.

HOLLY (VO)
Gender roles were clearly defined.

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly, 13, reads aloud from the "Personal Progress" book.

HOLLY
"Apply the principles of repentance
and forgiveness. Refrain from
swearing, gossiping, criticizing
others, and other unworthy speech."

SISTER SIMPSON
Thank you, Holly. Who would like to
read next?

Caroline raises her hand.

HOLLY (VO)
Some lessons, you never forget.

END FLASHBACK:

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Holly pulls up to the next stop light. She looks at the
adjacent lane, at the male driver who honked at her. She
flips up her middle finger.

HOLLY
Fuck you, asshole!

The light turns green, and Holly peels off. The guy is
shocked by her actions. The driver behind him honks.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly bustles about, watering flowers.

HOLLY (VO)
I'm a floral sales rep at Flo's
Flowers. Seven years now, after a
brief stint in women's apparel at
Macy's.

The phone rings. She hustles to answer it.

HOLLY
Flo's Flowers, Holly speaking. How
may I help you?

She sets down the watering can and grabs a pen and paper.

HOLLY

Yes, we can do that. When do you
need it? ... We'll have it ready.
... No problem at all.

She hangs up and examines a nearby bouquet.

HOLLY (VO)

I chose flowers because I see them
as kindred spirits. Striving to
maintain their beauty even while
they're dying.

She touches a wilted petal.

HOLLY (VO)

That's how it feels sometimes being
a woman.

FLASHBACK:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Holly, 16, files out of the chapel with everyone after
service.

HOLLY (VO)

Growing up as young women, we're
taught to be ashamed of our bodies.
Like it was my fault for growing
breasts.

Branch President Wallace guards the door. He frowns at Holly
and announces:

WALLACE

That dress is a little revealing,
don't you think?

Everyone hears. Holly hangs her head in shame.

HOLLY (VO)

It was his duty as a man of
authority to point that out to me.
To everyone.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Betty lifts Holly's dress from the sewing machine and holds
it out for her. Holly stares at it, aghast.

HOLLY (VO)
The next day, my mother sewed lace
around the collar to hide my
cleavage.

Holly fingers the garish three-inch lace.

BETTY
Well, try it on. Let's see how it
looks.

Holly snatches the dress and storms away.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She marches toward her room, nearly in tears.

HOLLY (VO)
The dress I had bought myself with
birthday money was ruined. I never
wore it again.

She disappears in her room, slams the door.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Holly, 18, waits in line outside "The Fuse Box."

HOLLY (VO)
I didn't buy myself another dress
until I started going to the Fuse
Box on Friday nights.

Matt smiles at Holly and waves her inside.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Holly dances wildly in the fog, looking good in her new
dress.

HOLLY (VO)
There was a whole other world
around me that I was never aware
of. Because I was sheltered by my
parents.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE OFFICE - DAY

Holly, 20, stands in front of an older male MANAGER.

HOLLY (VO)
I didn't know how to handle it when
things went wrong.

He circles behind her, fingers the hair along her neck. She
doesn't dare move.

HOLLY (VO)
Like when the manager at Macy's
made a move on me.

He kisses her neck. Now she moves. He grabs at her, but she
fights free and flees the room.

OFFICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Holly rushes down the hallway, tearing up.

HOLLY (VO)
He accused me of stealing and fired
me. I didn't know I could speak up.

The elderly female employee stops her, asks a question. Holly
remains tight-lipped.

HOLLY (VO)
I saw the world differently now.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly stares at the bouquet with the wilted petal.

HOLLY (VO)
The person I was ... became like a
flower ... slowly dying.

She plucks the petal, cradles it in her palm.

Flo, enters through the greenhouse.

FLO
Welp, just got off the phone with
my doctor. Said my heart keeps
getting weaker.

Holly looks at the wilted petal, tucks it in her pocket.

FLO

Too much stress. Maybe it is time.
Lucy and Sebastian already said
they want no part of this. If only
there were somebody ...

She looks at Holly.

HOLLY

Me? Own the flower shop? Really?

She smiles at the thought.

HOLLY (VO)

I never considered having a career.

FLASHBACK:

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Holly, 17, sits with the guidance counselor.

HOLLY

I'm not really interested in
college.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Have you thought about what kind of
career you'd like to have?

Holly shakes her head.

HOLLY (VO)

As a young woman, the only career
you're expected to pursue is a
homemaker.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

JOEL, a different return missionary, sits at the dinner
table.

HOLLY (VO)

So instead of finding a university,
you're supposed to find a husband.

Gerald smiles at the young man.

GERALD

Tell us about your mission.

JOEL

It was amazing. I spread the word
to so many people. It really
strengthened my testimony.

Holly sits stoically.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Holly eats cereal at the kitchen table, watching Betty bustle
about making breakfast. Claude sits there too, playing a
handheld video game.

HOLLY (VO)

It's a life path reenforced by your
parents.

Gerald walks in, sits down. Betty immediately serves him a
plate of eggs, sausage, and toast.

HOLLY (VO)

Mom serves Dad. He doesn't have to
ask for it. It's just supposed to
be.

Betty serves him a cup of coffee and rubs his back. He
doesn't even acknowledge her.

HOLLY (VO)

I wonder what kind of person my
mother wanted to be? Did she want
to go to college? Or own a flower
shop?

Betty looks over her family.

BETTY

Can I get you kids anything else?

CLAUDE

Yeah, some more cereal.

Betty takes his bowl to refill it.

HOLLY (VO)

No "please." No "thank you." My
brother was growing up just like
Papa. And I was ...

Betty serves Claude his cereal and smiles at Holly.

BETTY
Are you done, dear?

END FLASHBACK:

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly waters the bouquet that had the wilted petal.

HOLLY (VO)
Yeah, I'm done. Done living the
life I was supposed to. I'm living
for me now.

She looks over at Chad, who holds a takeout bag.

CHAD
I thought I'd bring lunch.
Sandwiches from Duke's.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly and Chad sit at the picnic table, not eating their
sandwiches.

HOLLY
I love you, Chad, I always will,
but right now, I'm not IN love with
you.

Chad wraps up his sandwich and stands to leave.

HOLLY
Chad, don't go.

CHAD
What do you want me to say to that?

HOLLY
I ... I don't know ... Say you'll
give me time. And wait for me.

He shoves his sandwich in the takeout bag and starts to walk
away. Stops, looks back.

CHAD
I see the pain you're in. And you
know what? It hurts me too. Cause I
can't do a damn thing about it. The
more I try to help you, the more
you push me away. I can't even
bring you a sandwich.

He walks away. Holly tears up.

HOLLY (VO)
It's hard enough trying to de-
program the effect the church had
on me. Now I have to worry about my
husband too.

She watches Chad get into the car and slam the door.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. ORNATE TEMPLE - DAY

Gerald, Betty, Holly, 18, and Claude, 16--all dressed in
white--stare up at a massive church temple. Holly looks at
her parents. They don't even look happy.

HOLLY (VO)
It doesn't matter if husbands and
wives aren't in love. What matters
is that they're sealed for time and
all eternity.

They begin to climb the concrete steps toward the temple. A
long staircase, like ascending into heaven.

HOLLY (VO)
When I was eighteen, we went to the
temple in Boston to get sealed as
an eternal family.

INT. CHAPEL OFFICE - DAY

Holly, 18, sits across from President Wallace.

HOLLY (VO)
In order to go to the temple, you
had to pass a worthiness interview.

WALLACE
Are you sexually active?

HOLLY
No.

WALLACE
Do you masturbate?

HOLLY
No.

Wallace stares at her, measuring her honesty.

HOLLY (VO)
When you grow up in a certain
environment, you think it's normal.

INT. CHAPEL OFFICE - DAY

Holly, 13, sits across from President Wallace.

HOLLY (VO)
But there's nothing normal about
subjecting a thirteen year-old girl
to such questions.

WALLACE
Are you sexually active?

HOLLY
No.

WALLACE
Do you masturbate?

HOLLY
No.

Wallace stares at her.

HOLLY (VO)
I didn't even know what that meant.
But if he was asking, then it had
to be bad.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Holly and Chad make love, missionary position.

HOLLY (VO)
Sex was presented in such a
negative light, that even when
you're ready for it, you're not
sure if you should enjoy it.

Holly goes through the motions.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Chad naked in the lilac bath. Holly rubs his chest.

HOLLY (VO)
I had to overcome the shame of my
sexuality. In order to really get
wet with it.

Chad pulls her in the tub.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Holly, 25, urinates on a home pregnancy test.

HOLLY (VO)
It's the trained mindset, that sex
isn't about having fun. It's about
making babies.

She sets the test on some toilet paper and lays it on the
sink. Watches, waits.

HOLLY (VO)
While I waited for the results, I
imagined myself giving birth to a
baby girl.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Holly in a hospital bed, cradling a baby dressed in pink.

HOLLY (VO)
And a flood of memories hit me from
my own childhood.

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly, 13, reads her "Personal Progress" book.

INT. CHAPEL OFFICE - DAY

Holly answers questions from President Wallace.

INT. CHAPEL CLASSROOM - DAY

Holly watches "Johnny Lingo."

INT. CHAPEL KITCHEN - NIGHT

Holly, 16, in baking class.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

President Wallace comments on Holly's cleavage.

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Holly, 18, sits next to a different return missionary at dinner.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Holly stares at the pregnancy test.

HOLLY (VO)
I imagined my daughter taking my
place in all those memories. And I
realized that I didn't want her
growing up in that world.

The pregnancy test is negative. Holly sighs relief and tosses it into the trash.

HOLLY (VO)
There was no baby. But that was the
day I started to question
everything.

She stares at herself in the mirror.

END FLASHBACK:

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly paces along the side of the building, phone to her ear. Caroline answers.

CAROLINE (OFF)
Hello?

HOLLY
Hey, it's Holly. How are things?

INT. CAROLINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Caroline navigates lunch for an infant and a toddler. Stay-at-home Mom.

CAROLINE
Oh, you know, peas and carrots all
over the floor.
(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna put you on speaker, so
watch the curse words.

INTERCUT SCENES.

HOLLY
That's me. Curse every chance I
get.

A nervous laugh. A nervous silence.

HOLLY
So I was wondering if we could get
together for lunch this weekend.
Just you and me.

CAROLINE
My days are kind of full here.

She wipes up vegetables from the floor.

HOLLY
I'm sure they are. Can't Adam watch
the kids?

CAROLINE
You're serious?

HOLLY
Your mother then?

CAROLINE
I don't like to bother her.

HOLLY
Come on, Caroline. It's been too
long since we've seen each other.

CAROLINE
That's cause you don't come to
church anymore.

HOLLY
No, I don't. ... That's why I'm
calling. I ... I need someone to
talk to.

CAROLINE
Listen, Holly, I overheard your
mother talking with President
Wallace. Tattoos?! Really?!

HOLLY
I have one tattoo. So what?

CAROLINE
There's even rumors that you're
practicing witchcraft. Is that
true?!

HOLLY
If it is?

CAROLINE
Then I'll be praying for you.

Caroline ends the call. Holly pockets her phone and stares at
the apple orchard across the street.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. ORCHARD - DAY

Holly, 18, and Caroline pick blueberries with the other young
women. Holly pops a few in her mouth.

CAROLINE
They have to be weighed first.

HOLLY
Just a few is okay. Have one.

She tosses a berry at Caroline. It bounces off her cheek.

CAROLINE
Stop it.

Caroline tries to laugh it off, but she's annoyed. They keep
picking.

HOLLY
Do you remember Matt Vandermere?

CAROLINE
The guy who left the church?

HOLLY
Yeah. Well, I went to that club he
told us about.

CAROLINE
What?!

She yells a bit too loud, drawing looks from the other young
women. They resume in hushed voices.

CAROLINE
Do your parents know?

HOLLY
Of course not.

CAROLINE
How'd you explain where you were?

HOLLY
I lied.

CAROLINE
Holly, you can't do that.

HOLLY
I know. But it was quite a thrill.

CAROLINE
Lying to your parents?

HOLLY
No, dancing at the club. The music,
the lights. I felt so free.

They keep picking berries. Caroline glances around and pops a
berry in her mouth. Holly notices, smiles.

HOLLY (VO)
But the church is no dance floor.

INT. CHAPEL OFFICE - DAY

Holly sits opposite President Wallace.

HOLLY (VO)
Guilt got the better of me, and
before long, I was confessing my
sins. Of dancing and lying about
it.

Wallace huffs deeply.

WALLACE
Do you remember the vows you made
about purity during your baptismal
covenant?

HOLLY
Yes, sir.

INT. CHAPEL BAPTISMAL ROOM - DAY

Holly, 8, stands in a shallow pool of water. She's cradled by
Brother O'Neill, who submerges her backwards into the water.

HOLLY (VO)
The church baptizes children at the
age of eight. They pretend that
it's your choice.

Brother O'Neill stands Holly up. She looks through her drippy
hair at her proud parents.

HOLLY (VO)
But what eight-year-old is going to
say no to her parents?

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Holly, 21, faces off with her parents.

HOLLY (VO)
I didn't stand up to them until
Chad got involved.

GERALD
He's not even a member.

BETTY
Maybe he's going to be.

HOLLY
He doesn't want to be a member.

GERALD
Because he has no morals.

HOLLY
You don't even know him.

GERALD
I know that if he really loved you,
he'd do it. So you can have a
proper temple wedding.

BETTY
Maybe the missionaries can talk to
him.

HOLLY
He's talked to them. Plenty of
times. They don't listen.

GERALD
They're inviting him to receive the
restored gospel through--

HOLLY
 You don't listen either. You keep
 spewing the same things. Chad
 doesn't want to be in the church
 because he sees the world
 differently. And I love him for
 that.

Holly walks away. Her parents are stunned.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Holly and Chad sit in the grass at the edge of the pond.

CHAD
 Would you rather be alone?

HOLLY
 I just needed to get out of the
 house.

She reaches over, holds his hand.

HOLLY (VO)
 Chad saw ME differently too. That's
 when I knew that I wanted to spend
 the rest of my life with him.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly hands a bouquet to a customer.

HOLLY
 Enjoy. Have a nice day.

As the customer walks away, Holly sits on a stool and grabs
 her phone. She sends Chad a text: "Hey."

HOLLY (VO)
 How do I make him understand what
 I'm going through?

FLASHBACK:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Holly stares at herself in the mirror.

HOLLY (VO)
Trauma is real. And healing is
hard.

She grabs a tuft of long curly hair, snips it with a pair of scissors.

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Holly, 8, wears a dress and long curly hair. Post-service, Sister Jensen pats Holly's head.

SISTER JENSEN
I'm so jealous of those curls. Just
beautiful.

Holly squirms.

BETTY
Holly, what do you say?

HOLLY
Thank you.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Holly cuts another tuft of hair.

HOLLY (VO)
That's all I heard growing up. How
beautiful my hair was. It came to
define me.

She tugs more hair and cuts roughly now. Tears welling in her eyes.

HOLLY (VO)
Who am I without my hair? Without a
husband? Without a house and kids?

Snip, snip, snip.

HOLLY (VO)
Who am I?

INT. PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Holly, with short red hair, styled and dyed professionally, shows her nose piercing to her parents.

GERALD

You look like ... I don't know
what. Not like you.

HOLLY

That's the whole point.

GERALD

That doesn't make sense.

HOLLY

I'm a different person now.

GERALD

Because you stopped going to
church. You need to come back. Get
close to God again.

HOLLY

God's not the answer.

Betty shrieks.

GERALD

Holly!

HOLLY

But you'll never see it because
you're in it. When you're in it,
you don't see it. You have to get
out of it, in order to see it.

GERALD

What the hell are you talking
about?

BETTY

Maybe the missionaries can help.

HOLLY

Listen to yourselves. You're so
brainwashed by the church that--

GERALD

How dare you talk to us that way!

HOLLY

Does my dyed hair make me a bad
person? Does my nose ring?

GERALD

"Ye are the temple of God. And the
Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

HOLLY

Do I have to go to church to be spiritual? I'm more spiritual now than I've ever been.

GERALD

"If ye defile the temple of God, ye shall God destroy. For the temple of God is holy, and ye are a temple."

Holly stares at her parents. Gerald enraged. Betty fighting back tears. They will never understand.

HOLLY

Well, guess what, Papa? God can't destroy this ...

She yanks up her shirt sleeve to reveal the tattoo. Betty collapses into Gerald's arms, sobbing. Gerald grits his teeth.

GERALD

Look what you've done to your mother. Get out.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Holly sits in her sunroom, cutting up a sheet of paper with scissors. It's titled: "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

She adds a square of paper to a fire already burning in her little cauldron. She hears the apartment door open, sets aside the paper and scissors.

MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She hops into the room, surprising Chad.

HOLLY

Hi!

CHAD

Hi?

INT. SUNROOM - LATER

Holly and Chad sit with the Tarot cards between them, talking. She takes his hand. Their eyes connect.

HOLLY (VO)
We were finally communicating. Chad
was starting to understand.

INT. MAIN ROOM - LATER

Chad and Holly argue. Holly walks away with her duffel bag.

HOLLY (VO)
And then he made those stupid
accusations about Swami.

INT./EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Holly wipes her tears while she drives.

HOLLY (VO)
Swami is my teacher. My
inspiration. My friend.

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

Holly sits in the grass at the edge of the pond, under the glow of streetlights.

HOLLY (VO)
I owe my spiritual awakening to
him. Why can't Chad support me like
that?

She holds the wilted petal from the flower shop. She tosses it into the water.

INT. YOGA STUDIO - NIGHT

Holly walks in with her duffel bag, sees Chad and Swami fighting.

HOLLY (VO)
They're the two most important
people in my life. And they hate
each other.

EXT. YOGA STUDIO - NIGHT

The policewoman talks with Holly, then walks away.

HOLLY (VO)
What happens now?

Holly looks at Chad in the back of the police car. He hangs his head.

FADE TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Chad touches his swollen lip.

CHAD
I married a witch. And she did this to me.

The policewoman listens from outside his cell.

FEMALE OFFICER
Are you sure she's that kind of witch?

CHAD
She was burning something in her cauldron when I got home. Probably put a spell on me.

FEMALE OFFICER
Maybe she was burning white sage.

CHAD
How do you know about that?

FEMALE OFFICER
My sister's a witch. A hedge witch.

CHAD
That's what Holly is!

FEMALE OFFICER
Oh, then, it wasn't her. Hedge witches bridge the gap between the physical and spiritual world. They don't deal in curses.

CHAD
All I know is that she's not the woman I married.

INT. YOGA STUDIO - NIGHT

Holly ushers Swami into the meditation room.

HOLLY
I really think you ought to get
checked out.

SWAMI DAN
Nonsense.

HOLLY
You could have a concussion.

SWAMI DAN
I'm alright. I'm just worried about
you.

HOLLY
Here, sit down.

He eases onto a backless leather bench in the middle of the
room, grimaces at the pain.

HOLLY (CONT'D)
I have some aspirin in my bag. I
don't have any band-aids though.

She examines the cuts on his face.

SWAMI DAN
There's a first aid kit in the
supply closet. Down the westward
hallway.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

The policewoman returns with some band-aids.

FEMALE OFFICER
Here you go.

Chad groans as he stands up, walks over, takes them.

CHAD
Thanks.

FEMALE OFFICER
So what was your wife like when you
got married?

CHAD

She was, you know, a little more
... traditional.

FEMALE OFFICER

Meaning what? Cook and clean for
you?

CHAD

No. I mean, yeah, but ... it wasn't
cause of me. She grew up in a very
religious family. And now she's a
witch. One extreme to the other. I
just can't understand it.

He has a band-aid ready, but doesn't know where to place it.

CHAD

Can you, uh ...

FEMALE OFFICER

Sure.

She takes the band-aid, and he leans his face close to the
bars. She applies it to his cheek. Two male officers laugh at
the end of the hallway.

MALE OFFICER

Hey, Suzy, you wanna stop mothering
the perps?

The policewoman glances at them, looks back at Chad.

FEMALE OFFICER

Maybe you should give her time to
figure out what she's going
through. It's not easy being a
woman in a man's world.

Her words sink in with him, and he sees in her eyes exactly
what he's been missing.

INT. YOGA STUDIO - NIGHT

Holly walks down the hallway. She opens a door. Nope, not the
supply closet. Wait, what is this? She steps inside.

SECRET YOGA ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A dozen closed-circuit monitors, each showing a room within
the studio. Communal room, meditation room, illumination
room, women's locker room.

And another room that she's never seen before. With a king-sized bed and a tripod camera. Straps and chains hang between the tall bedposts.

Holly surveys the rest of this secret room. A promotional poster on the opposite wall advertises a movie: "Dustin Peaches is ... YOGI BARE." The actor is clearly Swami Dan, and he is clearly naked.

INT. MEDITATION ROOM - LATER

Holly walks in, carrying medical supplies. She kneels beside the bench, where Swami is laying down.

SWAMI DAN
I could use that aspirin.

HOLLY
Let me get you cleaned up first.

SWAMI DAN
I appreciate you.

She dabs a cotton ball with alcohol. Touches his cut cheek. He flinches.

HOLLY
Does that sting?

SWAMI DAN
A bit.

She dabs more alcohol, presses harder.

HOLLY
How about now?

SWAMI DAN
Oww. Yeah, it burns.

HOLLY
How about now?

She pours alcohol from the bottle on his cheek. He sits up.

SWAMI DAN
Oww! My eyes! Oww!

HOLLY
Shit, I'm sorry.

She really is sorry, didn't mean to get his eyes.

SWAMI DAN
Water! I need water!

Holly sprints to a side table and grabs a bottle of water.

SWAMI DAN
It burns! Oh, Buddha, it burns!

She uncaps the water and shakes it all over his face.

SWAMI DAN
I said water!

HOLLY
It is water. Open your eyes. We
need to flush them out.

He blinks furiously, and she empties the bottle. Both panting, they start to calm down. Swami rubs his eyes with the sleeves of his robe.

SWAMI DAN
Holly, why ... ?

She throws the bottle at him.

HOLLY
Chad was right about you. You have
cameras all over this place.

SWAMI DAN
It's not what you think.

HOLLY
I think you watch women change in
the locker room.

SWAMI DAN
Okay, it is what you think. But
there's a reason.

He moans in agony, rubs his eyes again.

HOLLY
I'm listening ...

SWAMI DAN
I grew up in a family with no
inhibitions. My parents were
nudists. They'd walk around the
house all day with no clothes. I'd
get home from school, and they'd be
having sex on the couch. They had
friends over.

(MORE)

SWAMI DAN (CONT'D)
 Had sex with them too. Wild orgies.
 They watched porn. They filmed
 porn. It was all normal to me. I'm
 a victim here. Just like you and
 your childhood.

HOLLY
 Yeah, well, just because you have
 trauma doesn't mean you can take it
 out on the people you love.

Suddenly she realizes what she said, and the words hit her
 hard.

HOLLY
 (to herself)
 Oh, Chad ...

Swami rises to his feet, groping at the air.

SWAMI DAN
 Help me, Holly. Help me see again.

She grabs his shoulders, looks in his rapidly blinking eyes.

HOLLY
 You need to do something for me
 first.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Chad leans against the wall, dozing. He startles awake at the
 sound of the cell door clanging open.

FEMALE OFFICER
 You're free to go.

CHAD
 What?

FEMALE OFFICER
 Your swami friend dropped the
 charges.

CHAD
 Really?

FEMALE OFFICER
 Maybe your wife put a spell on him.

INT. BRIAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brian talks into his phone.

BRIAN
What? Why are you at the police
station?

INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Chad on the phone.

CHAD
I'll explain when you pick me up.

INTERCUT SCENES.

BRIAN
Chad, I'm a little tied up right
now.

Brain sprawls in bed, hands tied to opposite bedposts.
Shelly, in lingerie, holds the phone to his ear.

CHAD
Well, I'm not calling Holly. She's
with her boyfriend.

BRIAN
Boyfriend?

CHAD
Nothing. Just come get me.

Shelly dangles her breasts in Brian's face. He chomps at
them.

BRIAN
I'm so hungry. ... Chad, buddy,
listen to me ...

CHAD
No, you listen. I've had a shit
day. And when you had a shit day, I
was the one you called for help.
Remember Louie's bachelor party?
Should I tell Shelly what happened?
Put her on the phone.

Brian looks Shelly up and down in her lingerie.

BRIAN
Okay, okay, I'm coming.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Brian walks Chad across the parking lot to his car.

BRIAN
You got beat up by a yoga
instructor?

CHAD
I didn't get beat up. He kneed me
in the balls.

BRIAN
He fights dirty. I respect that.

Brian gets into the car. Chad opens the door, but notices in
the sky ...

A full moon, just beginning to eclipse.

INT./EXT. CAR - LATER

Brian drives them through the city streets.

BRIAN
What'd you do to piss off Grogan?

CHAD
He doesn't like to be told no.

BRIAN
I told you. Life's better as a Yes-
Man.

CHAD
We're getting audited by the IRS.
Some mistakes on our tax forms, and
I couldn't figure it out.

BRIAN
Call the temp agency.

CHAD
Temp agency?

BRIAN
Yeah, remember? Your two-week
vacation. Grogan had the temp
agency send a guy to cover for you.

CHAD
Temp agency. That's right. He
wasn't the only one either.

BRIAN

No. There were, like, six or seven of them. All sharing the conference room. They helped with those mail order sales from the tornadoes in the Midwest.

CHAD

I checked all our employees on staff, but I never checked the temp workers. Take me to the office!

BRIAN

I'm taking you home. Cause I need to get home before the baby wakes up.

CHAD

Brian, my job depends on it.

BRIAN

Too bad the office is closed.

CHAD

You have keys, don't you? Assistant sales director. Come on, be a Yes-Man!

INT. CHAD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chad flicks on a desk lamp and settles into his chair.

CHAD

I bet this two-bit accountant fucked up the withholdings.

He rummages through a desk drawer for more folders. Brian hangs up his phone.

BRIAN

Well, that's it! The baby's awake! ... I'll be in the restroom. Jerking off.

He leaves. Chad opens a folder and starts analyzing forms. He grabs a notepad and jots down numbers. Flips the page, checks the next sheet, jots some more.

FADE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad walks in the front door. Sluggish. It's been a long day. He flips on a light. It's too quiet. Where's Holly?

He spots a Tarot card on the floor, picks it up. The ten of swords, cast aside during his fit earlier. He steps into Holly's room.

SUNROOM - CONTINUOUS

A salt lamp glows, but Holly's not around. Chad sees the Tarot deck resting on the table and places the ten of swords on top.

He notices the photograph of eight-year-old Holly. Picks it up, looks at her innocent, childish face.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Chad steps out of the back door. Holly stands in the small, fenced yard, staring up at the eclipsing moon.

Chad walks over, rests his hands on her shoulders. She turns to face him.

HOLLY

Are you all right? I went to the police station but--

CHAD

I'm okay.

HOLLY

Chad, you were right about--

CHAD

Shhh. It's okay.

HOLLY

I'm sorry.

CHAD

I'm sorry too.

He hugs her. She nuzzles into his chest. Feels good to be held. Exactly what she needed.

CHAD

We're more prone to emotional upheaval during a lunar eclipse.

She looks at him, wide-eyed, smiling.

HOLLY
You DO listen to me.

CHAD
Yes, but I hear you now.

They kiss. They hold each other. They watch the moon transform. Everything in the universe, perfectly aligned.

FADE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Two cellphone alarms ring together. Chad and Holly arouse.

CHAD (VO)
The next morning, we woke up at the same time.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Holly scrambles eggs on the stove. Chad butters toast.

CHAD (VO)
We ate a breakfast of scrambled eggs and toast.

HOLLY (VO)
I made the eggs.

CHAD (VO)
I made the toast.

HOLLY (VO)
Then we went to work.

INT. MARCUS'S OFFICE - DAY

Marcus sits in his chair, looking at sheets of data. Chad stands beside him, explaining his discovery.

CHAD (VO)
I explained to Mr. Grogan how the other accountant had mistakenly withdrawn payroll taxes from all the temporary workers.

Marcus leaps out of his chair and enthusiastically shakes Chad's hand.

CHAD (VO)
Not only did he avoid a federal
audit, but he saw a refund of
twelve hundred and thirty-eight
dollars.

INT. FLOWER SHOP - DAY

Holly enthusiastically shakes Flo's hand.

HOLLY (VO)
And I made a verbal agreement with
Flo to buy the flower shop. I'm
going to be my own boss!

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chad and Brian sit on the couch, drinking beers. Brian's
toddler grabs a cracker from the plate of appetizers on the
coffee table.

CHAD (VO)
That night, we celebrated with
friends.

Chad leans forward, interested in a news report on the TV.

CHAD
My god, Holly, look at this.

Holly and Shelly wander in from the kitchen. The TV shows
police officers leading Swami Dan in handcuffs from his
studio.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
Multiple counts of invasion of
privacy. Authorities say they
discovered a network of hidden
cameras throughout the studio,
including the women's locker room
and a secret bedroom chamber.

As the officers shove him in the patrol car, Swami Dan shouts
obscenities at the camera. An officer yanks Swami's rat-tail
beard to get him in the car.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
If convicted, he could face up to
ninety days in jail and a five-
hundred-dollar fine.

Chad looks at Holly.

HOLLY
Must've been an anonymous tip.

Brian points at the TV.

BRIAN
That guy looks familiar.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

Chad and Holly sit on a leather couch, holding hands.

HOLLY
And that's our story.

CHAD
Yep, that's our story.

The THERAPIST sets aside her notepad and pen.

THERAPIST
I appreciate that both of you came to see me. It's not often that both people in a relationship are willing participants.

Chad and Holly smile at each other.

THERAPIST
In light of the information that you've shared, it's my professional opinion that the two of you, do not, in fact, need couples therapy.

CHAD
Oh, good.

THERAPIST
I would, however, recommend individual sessions for you, Holly.

HOLLY
Me? Really?

THERAPIST
Considering what you experienced growing up in the church, I feel you would benefit from ongoing therapy.

HOLLY

Um, yeah, all right. I'd be open to that. When would you like to see me?

The therapist grabs a tablet and searches through a calendar app.

THERAPIST

How about Thursday?

HOLLY

This coming Thursday, or next Thursday?

THERAPIST

Every Thursday. We have a lot of work to do.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Chad drives, head swaying side-to-side, grinning ear-to-ear. Holly looks at him from the passenger seat.

HOLLY

What's that look for?

CHAD

I don't need therapy.

HOLLY

Having a reaction like that might mean that you do.

CHAD

Well, you're not a professional. And the professional said--

HOLLY

She doesn't know you like I do.

CHAD

You respect her opinion, though, right? Otherwise, why would you agree to see her?

HOLLY

Okay, you can shut up now.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Holly reclines on a table, sonogram equipment circling her protruding belly. Chad stands nearby, eyes fixed on the ultrasound screen. The ultrasound TECHNICIAN points things out.

TECHNICIAN

There's the head. Arm one. And arm two.

Chad responds to a chime on his phone.

CHAD

Your mother just texted me. Did you forget to call her?

HOLLY

Yesterday was not a good day.

CHAD

You've been saying that for five months.

HOLLY

I have not.

CHAD

Do your parents even know that you're pregnant?

HOLLY

Oh, shush now. You're ruining my good vibes.

(to technician)

Go on, you were saying?

TECHNICIAN

Would you folks like to know the sex?

Holly and Chad share a look. He defers to her.

HOLLY

Yes, we would.

TECHNICIAN

It's a girl.

HOLLY

A girl? ... A girl. ...

The truth sinks in. Mixed emotions.

TECHNICIAN

Congratulations. We'll get you
cleaned up, and then schedule your
next appointment.

HOLLY

Any day but Thursday.

CHAD

Namaste, honey. Namaste ...

He pats her head lovingly. She glares at him.

FADE OUT.