

SELF-PARTNERED

"Pilot"

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COLD OPEN

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - DAY (MORNING)

An ALARM CLOCK plays an upbeat song. SAM (Samantha) FISCHER (late 30s), in her bed, opens her eyes, barely awake.

A once sensitive, brilliant, vaguely sophisticated woman, now buried under tons of responsibilities and worries.

The kind of woman you would see on a street and wouldn't notice, because you simply don't care.

Sam straightens up and sits on her bed. Still sleepy, she rubs her eyes and her forehead.

The positive and energetic vibe from the song still playing contrasts with Sam's weary face.

SAM

Get up, Sam...

She glowers the alarm clock still playing. She turns off the radio and crawls out of bed. Time to start the day.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Still dressed in her pajamas, she walks, then stops in her tracks and stares at one of her bookcases.

It's filled with dozens of CHILDREN'S BOOKS, TROPHIES, AWARDS, CERTIFICATES, all with her name, "SAMANTHA FISCHER", written on it.

PHOTOS of Sam holding children's books and awards or standing with characters (unicorn, elf, duck, bear, fairy) and with A MAN (50-60s). Both smile from ear to ear.

A tribute to her past glory. Today, it makes her cringe in disgust. Now, all this is gone. She sighs.

SAM

Fuck that...

INT. ENTRANCE - LATER

The PHOTOS, TROPHIES and CERTIFICATES are now packed in a box on the floor, with the words "FUCKING LOCKER #32" written on it with a black marker.

Her keys in one hand and plastic containers filled with cookies and muffins in another, Sam walks towards the door. She looks at a bundle of ENVELOPES on the console table.

Several, from different companies, have "FINAL NOTICE" or "PAYMENT DUE" written on it. Another one is from a sender called "POWER EDITION". Sam hesitates, then grabs it.

As she is about to leave, she stops, goes back and angrily kicks the box.

SAM

Asshole...

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING - LATER

Sam walks pretty fast. In fact, she's almost running.

She spots her car in the distance, tries to find her key car, but drops the bunch of keys. It stops her in her tracks.

SAM

Shit!

She seizes the keys as fast as she can and keeps going.

GINA MURPHY (50s), small, nice but gullible woman, appears not far behind and runs towards her.

GINA

Samantha!

Sam keeps walking, pretends she didn't hear her.

GINA (cont'd)

Samantha!

Sam won't be able to get rid of Gina. She reluctantly stops.

SAM

What?

Out of breath, Gina finally reaches Sam.

GINA

You didn't confirm your presence at the next condo association's meeting.

SAM

I'll be there. As usual.

Sam walks back to her car, looks anxiously at her wristwatch. She speeds up the pace, Gina on her tail.

GINA

It's just... you didn't provide the figures for the last month.

SAM

I know. I was a little busy. It will be ready on time, okay?

GINA

It's just... people are worried. You know... with what happened last year... it's not that we don't trust you, but...

Sam stops again and turns to Gina, open-mouthed. She can't believe what she just heard.

SAM

What does this have to do with anything? It's not like I was responsible for what happened!

GINA

Of course, I know. I'm sorry.

Sam finally reaches her car. As she is about to get in, she turns to Gina.

SAM

Look, if you're not happy with me being on the board, I can leave, if that's what you want.

GINA

No, of course not! We'll wait and I'll talk to the others.

Sam gets in her car and leaves without a glance for Gina.

EXT. PARKING - DAY (A LITTLE LATER)

SCOTT PARKER (30s), snub, rigid, stands close to his car. He's the kind of person you don't want to piss off.

Another car arrives at full speed, squealing its tires, and stops next to him. Sam rushes out.

SCOTT

Thank God! I was about to leave.

SAM
Sorry I'm late.

Sam runs to her trunk. She takes out plastic containers filled with muffins and cookies and hands it to Scott.

SAM (cont'd)
So, we have banana, blueberries,
chocolate chips, oat, maple walnut,
apple, gluten-free...

She pauses, hesitates, then ransacks her trunk.

SAM (cont'd)
Fuck!

SCOTT
What?

SAM
I forgot double chocolate!

SCOTT
What? But they are people's
favorite! We need it for the
fundraising!

SAM
All right, all right!
(beat)
I'll find a way to bring it to you
before the end of the week, okay?

SCOTT
Okay, fine. Try not to forget!

SAM
Yeah, yeah. I really have to go,
now.

She rushes into her car without further ado and leaves.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION - MORNING

Sam barges in, out of breath. STEVEN LOPEZ (early 30s), the receptionist, smiles at her. Discreet, professional, nothing seems to impress or bother him.

STEVEN

Welcome to Puss in Boots.

SAM

Hi, I'm so sorry I'm late.

STEVEN

Oh, you're the new employee.

Still trying to catch her breath, Sam bobs her head. It is then that her boss, JEFF NEWTON (early 30s), friendly, dynamic, charming, arrives.

JEFF

Samantha! I was afraid you might have changed your mind.

SAM

No, no. I'm here. I apologize, there was so much traffic... Not really good for my first day, huh?

JEFF

Don't worry about it. We are flexible with schedules here.

SAM

Oh... okay?

JEFF

Let me show you your office before we join the others.

Jeff grabs her arm and brings her to--

INT. SAM'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

The place looks like any other of the same kind: a desk, a computer, a phone, pens, and paper.

JEFF

Here's where the magic happens. Can't wait to see yours.

Sam tries to hide her complete lack of enthusiasm.

SAM
Yeah, me too.

TAMMY EVANS (mid 25s) a bit naive, bubbly, enthusiastic, in the next cubicle, waves at her.

TAMMY
Hey! The others are waiting.

JEFF
Yeah, we're coming!

INT. OFFICE MEETING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

ANNA TEMPLE, cold, brilliant, KATHY PRICE, full of life, expressive, curious, and MARCO ADAMS, professional but insecure, seated at the conference table. All are in their mid 25s.

Jeff, Sam and Tammy enter and interrupt their conversation.

JEFF
Hey everyone! So, here's our new addition to the team: Samantha Fisher!

SAM
You can call me Sam. Everyone does.

Everybody greets her. Sam smiles and sits. Anna throws her a surprised look.

ANNA
Samantha Fisher like the writer?

SAM
Yeah... That's me...

Tammy nearly leaps up.

TAMMY
Oh my God! I knew you looked familiar! I loved you so much as a kid!

KATHY
Did you write "The rainbow unicorn"?

SAM

Yeah, that's also me.

KATHY

It was so cute. That book was one of my favorites as a kid!

TAMMY

You reminded me of Dr. Seuss. You used to be so good.

SAM

Huh... Thanks, I guess...

MARCO

I saw you on TV. Weren't you involved in a trial or something?

Tense, Sam taps anxiously on the armrests of her chair.

SAM

Huuuhh... I...

TAMMY

Something happened with your publisher, right?

Sam is about to answer, but Marco doesn't let her.

MARCO

Oh yeah! I remember! Wasn't he like... caught in a brothel in Thailand?

KATHY

Holy fuck! That was him! It was just so weird! I heard he was a complete maniac or something!

SAM

Well, he was not exactly a maniac...

TAMMY

What the hell happened?

SAM

Huh... well... he... had asphyxiophilia...

ANNA

What the fuck is that?

JEFF

It's when someone is aroused by
being asphyxiated or strangled.

Everyone stares at Jeff, with a puzzled expression.

KATHY

Okay...

SAM

He also had... katoptronophilia...

Everyone now stares at Sam with a WTF expression.

MARCO

Sounds like the name of an insect.

SAM

It's arousal to sex in front of
mirrors. And in his case,
preferably with pretty young women.

CROWD

Eeeewww... gross... that is so
weird!

ANNA

Then what's with the trial? Where
you implicated in that?

Sam starts gasping, uneasy.

SAM

God, no! My editor accidentally
died... well... you know... and
after that, we realized that he had
been defrauding the IRS for years
and that he owed money to a lot of
people.

KATHY

Holy crap...

SAM

From that point on, everything went
pretty much downhill.

ANNA

Did you know about all this?

SAM

Absolutely not!!! I had nothing to do with that. And it took a while before I was cleared.

ANNA

You worked with him for years! How could you not know?

TAMMY

What the hell is wrong with you, Anna? Leave her alone!

Jeff, sensing tension arousing, intervenes.

JEFF

Look, Sam, like many other people involved with that publisher, was nothing but a victim. So, let's change the subject, shall we?

But the others completely ignore Jeff's remark.

MARCO

(to Sam)

I don't know I you did it. I would have felt so ashamed. I mean, everyone was talking about this. Your face was all over the media associated with that perv.

Uncomfortable, Sam doesn't know what to do with herself.

SAM

Yeah, that's kind of how I felt.

TAMMY

I would have gone to a desert island to live with wild dogs.

KATHY

I would have dug myself a house underground and never come out.

MARCO

Or hide on a farm in Alaska to raise chicken.

TAMMY

They raise chicken in Alaska?

KATHY

I've heard that chicken poop really stinks.

Anna seems downright annoyed by the conversation.

ANNA

(to Kathy)

Like you know anything about chicken poop.

KATHY

What's wrong with you, today?

ANNA

I have a ton of work to do, and we're wasting time talking about bird shit!

JEFF

People, that's enough. We're here to talk about our brand-new product. So, let's get started.

Jeff grabs a box from the floor and places it on the table. He takes out an egg-like object with a flexible stem: a vibrating bullet.

JEFF (cont'd)

All right. We need a little brainstorming to sell this baby. Any suggestions?

(beat)

Sam? What does this remind you of?

SAM

Huuuh... Close Encounter of the Third Kind?

Everyone stares blankly at Sam. Obviously, no one knows what she's talking about.

SAM (cont'd)

It's an old movie. About aliens visiting Earth, and... never mind... Your parents probably know about it.

JEFF

Okay... anyone else?

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - LATER

Everyone exits the conference room and goes to their cubicle. They all look kind of worn out: the brainstorm wasn't easy. Jeff turns to Sam.

JEFF

There's someone else you haven't met. Let me introduce you to him.

INT. JASON'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

A young man, JASON DAVIS (25), gentle, shy, works on his computer, headphones on and two huge screens in front of him. Jeff gently taps him on the shoulder.

JEFF

Jason, I'd like you to meet Sam, our new sales and marketing employee.

JASON

Nice to meet you.

SAM

Likewise.

JASON

Wow... you talk really nicely. Like my grandma.

SAM

Okay. Thank you.

JEFF

(to Sam)
Jason is responsible for the website and the company's IT system.

(to Jason)
Sam is a writer and has a degree in... French literature--

(to Sam)
--right?

SAM

Yes, exactly.

JASON

Nice. When I was younger, I really liked "A Christmas Carol" by Dickens.

Sam blinks her eyes, puzzled.

JASON (cont'd)
I mean... he was European, right?
And France is in Europe?

SAM
Huh... yeah...

Jeff senses the unease and decides to intervene.

JEFF
(to Jason)
Okay, we won't disturb you any
longer and we'll let you work.

JASON
Bye! Nice talking to you, Sam.

SAM
Yes, you too.

Jeff quickly grabs Sam's arm and pulls her towards her cubicle.

JEFF
(to Sam)
I have some other new merchandise
that I want you to look at and I
need a fresh perspective. I'm sure
that with your literary skills,
you'll come up with great new
ideas.

SAM
Will do, boss. With pleasure.

JEFF
What was that weird thing with
Close Encounter of the Third Kind?

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. TERRACE - DAY (LUNCHTIME)

It's a bright, hot summer, the sun is blinding. Sam sits at a table and drinks water.

She stares at the "POWER EDITION" ENVELOPE, which she has taken out of her purse and placed on the table.

After hesitating for a while, she gives in and finally decides to open it.

She reads it quickly. Almost immediately, words jump out at her: "we regret to inform you that our team did not select you for further consideration..."

SAM

Jesus, fuck.

Another rejection letter. Sam sighs, downcast. Obviously, it's not her first one. Sam furiously throws the letter on the table. She beckons a WAITRESS who comes to her.

SAM (cont'd)

I'll have a big glass of wine, please.

The waitress bobs her head and leaves.

It is at that moment that a woman, JESSIE LEWIS (35-40), expressive, opinionated, a bit crazy, joins her. She's Sam's best friend.

JESSIE

Hey, girl! How was your first day at your new job?

Sam shrugs.

SAM

Okay.

JESSIE

You don't sound too happy about it.

SAM

Yeah, yeah, it's just...

(She hesitates.)

Promise not to tell anyone?

Jessie sighs, a little annoyed.

JESSIE

Alright, fine.
 (sarcastic)
 Tell me your dirty little secret.

SAM

I didn't tell anyone yet, but that
 new job... it's not for a
 publishing company.

JESSIE

Well, what is it?

SAM

It's a job for a sex toy company.

Jessie bursts out laughing.

JESSIE

Oh my god! That is the funniest
 thing I've ever heard! You, working
 in a sex shop!? You, of all people!

SAM

No... a sex toy company.

JESSIE

(chuckling)
 What's the difference?

SAM

They're a manufacturer, not a
 retailer.

JESSIE

Like that matters.
 (beat)
 Hey, do you get an employee
 discount?

SAM

Ha! Jeez, Jessie. I just started
 yesterday.

JESSIE

Hey, what good is it if you don't
 have perks?

A waitress brings them menus and Sam's wine. Sam and Jessie
 thank her with a simple nod. Jessie stares at Sam's glass.

JESSIE (cont'd)

Wow. Didn't think it was that bad.

SAM
It's been a fucking crapy year,
so... I really need it.

JESSIE
Okay. So? Do you?

SAM
Do what?

JESSIE
Have perks or discounts?

SAM
I don't know, I didn't ask.

Jessie rolls her eyes.

JESSIE
Of course, you didn't.

Jessie takes a sip of her water.

JESSIE (cont'd)
Does it pay well?

Sam sighs and cringes with a reluctant expression.

SAM
Better than every other job I ever
had.

JESSIE
Ha! ha! I would have bet on it!

SAM
Whatever. Anyway, that's pretty
much the only reason why I applied.

JESSIE
(satisfied)
Told you that working in art was a
waste of time.

SAM
You never told me that.

JESSIE
(mocking)
Yes, I did. You just don't listen.

SAM

That's because you talk too much.
Anyway, I completely disagree with
you.

JESSIE

Like that's new.

SAM

Oh, and not a word about this! I
don't want my parents and my kids
knowing I work with dildos and butt
plugs all day!

Jessie doubles over with laughter.

JESSIE

Seriously? How long do you think
you can hide this from them? And
what are you gonna tell them?

SAM

I don't know, okay? I'll think of
something.

JESSIE

I don't get it. Working for a sex
toy company must be great.

SAM

Yeah, sure. Cause I need another
sex scandal to rebuild my screwed
up career.

JESSIE

Aren't you exaggerating a little?

SAM

Have you Googled my name lately?

JESSIE

No...

SAM

Okay, let's see...

Sam grabs her phone and starts browsing.

SAM (cont'd)

So... the first words that come
next to mine are "creepy pervert
publisher".

She keeps browsing.

SAM (cont'd)
Oh... there's also "sleazy fuckboy editor"...

JESSIE
Okay, I get it.

Sam ignores her and keeps reading out loud.

SAM
... and "smutty sicko author".
Oh... look at that one, my favorite...

JESSIE
Fine, I said I get it. But if you didn't want that job, why did you take it?

Sam picks up the ENVELOPE from POWER EDITION and hands it to Jessie.

SAM
Because of that.

Jessie looks at the letter.

JESSIE
Again? I'm so sorry for you. It's just not fair. You did nothing wrong. Why should you have to pay for that shit?

SAM
I know. And now, I'm about to sell a fucking kidney to pay for my mortgage. And my lawyers.

JESSIE
Which one?

SAM
Pick one.

JESSIE
So... bright new day, huh?

SAM
Yeah... bright new day.

JESSIE

Well, what are you gonna do?

SAM

I don't know. To be honest, I clearly don't fit in that place. Everyone's so young there. I feel like a grandma. Maybe I should quit.

JESSIE

I'm not giving you any advice. You never listen to me anyway.

SAM

Yeah...

Sam casts a distracted glance at the street where onlookers are passing by.

INT. OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

Sam reluctantly walks to her cubicle. If she could walk backward, she would.

KATHY (O.S.)

Hey, Sam! Come here!

Attracted by the voice, Sam joins Kathy, Jason, Marco and Tammy, together in--

INT. JASON'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

On Jason's screens, plays a video of Sam, as a teenager, holding a trophy, with the MAN who was in the PICTURES, her editor: LEONARD PHILLIPS.

Next to them stands a stuffed unicorn mascot. At the bottom of the video, is the text: "Samantha Fisher and her publisher, Leonard Phillips, win their 5th literary award".

JASON

Look, it's you!

TAMMY

It's so weird to see you like that!

KATHY

Must be quite a change, huh? From unicorns to dildos...

SAM
Yeah, quite a change...

Tammy points at Mr. Phillips in the video.

TAMMY
So, that man, he was your editor?

Sam watches the video with a mix sadness and anger.

SAM
Yeah. He was.

INT. SAM'S CUBICLE - A MOMENT LATER

Sam sits on her chair. She looks at a box containing several sex toys. She grabs her cellphone and sends a text to Jessie.

CHYRONS OF SAM AND JESSIE'S TEXTS

Sam: "I have to find a way to leave this place."

Jessie: "You're quitting?"

Sam: "Perhaps I could write something so dumb they'll just fire me."

Jessie: "Like what? That abstinence is the new thing?"

Sam: "I think I'll use Close Encounter of the Third Kind."

Jessie: "I literally have no idea what you are talking about."

Sam: "That's okay. I do."

Sam puts her phone down. She looks at her screen, then starts typing.

ON SAM'S SCREEN

the words appear: "This vibrating bullet is so from outer space it will take you to the next level."

SAM
Yeah... that really sucks.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. FISHER'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Sam opens the door, and gets in.

SAM
Mom! Dad! It's me!

Sam closes the door. Suddenly, a huge Newfoundland dog jumps on her, puts its front paws on her chest and licks her face. Sam tries to turn her head away.

SAM (cont'd)
MOOOM!!!

INT. FISCHER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A SHORT MOMENT LATER

Sam sits on the couch, the dog next to her. She looks at it with disdain and fear, as he pants loudly. She finishes wiping the drool from her face with a washcloth.

In front of her, her parents, JAMES FISCHER (65-70), laid-back, funny, and LYNDA MURPHY (65-70), maternal, a bit intrusive, sit on another couch, smiling.

SAM
(to her parents)
Care to explain?

LYNDA
That's our new dog.

SAM
(looks at the dog)
That's not a dog, that's a...
(hesitates)
... hairy, drooling dinosaur. So,
care to tell me why?

JAMES
To protect the house.

SAM
From what? Pigeons?

LYNDA
Burglars, of course.

SAM
(skeptical)
Burglars?

JAMES
Did we tell you that Mrs. Thompson
got robbed a few weeks ago?

SAM
Yes, you told me all about it.

LYNDA
Well, we bought Stompy to protect
us.

Sam looks at the dog, still panting.

SAM
Stompy?
(to her parents)
Anyway, you're always home. When is
a burglar going to come?

JAMES
While we're sleeping!

LYNDA
Or shopping...

SAM
Okay... no offense but how is...
Stompy going to protect you? By
squashing the burglar?

JAMES
Seriously?

SAM
Licking him to death?

LYNDA
That's ridiculous!

SAM
Drool on him until he dies?

LYNDA
Why are you always like that?

SAM
Like what?

LYNDA

Like... like you want to spoil everything!

SAM

I don't want to spoil anything, it's just...
 (she hesitates)
 ... taking care of a dog is challenging. I'm just worried.

JAMES

(calmly)
 Honey, we hear you, but your mom and I made a decision. Don't worry, we can take care of ourselves.

SAM

(firmly)
 Fine, but if you change your mind, I'm not taking care of that dog.

LYNDA

Of course, sweetie.

JAMES

Now, want to help me with the BBQ?

Sam shrugs. She has nothing better to do anyway.

SAM

Yeah, why not?

They get up, followed by Stompy.

LYNDA

(to Sam)
 Will you tell us how is your new job? I'm dying to know about it!

SAM

Yeah... sure...

EXT. FISHER'S BACKYARD - A MOMENT LATER

Sam helps Lynda prepare a salad while James cooks the meat on the BBQ. Suddenly, the doorbell rings.

SAM

(to Lynda)
 Are you waiting for someone?

LYNDA

Oh, yes! Can you get that?

SAM

Sure.

INT. SAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE - HALLWAY

Sam opens the front door. A MAN (35-40) stands there. He is rather tall and large, dressed in casual clothes.

MAN

Hi, are you Mrs. Fisher?

SAM

Not quite, I'm Miss Fisher.

MAN

Oh... you must be her lovely daughter, then.

He holds out his hand to her.

MAN (cont'd)

Nice to meet you.

Sam closes her eyes, holds back a sigh.

SAM

Oh dear... I'm sorry, what's your name?

MAN

David.

SAM

Right... David. I apologize for my mom. I'm sure she described me as a nice person and all, but the truth is, I don't want to get hooked up with anyone. I'm very happy the way I am, and as weird as it may sound, I enjoy very much being single, okay? So, again, I'm sorry if my mother told you otherwise, and I'm sorry she made you waste your time. But I'm not looking to hook up with anyone right now.

David looks at her, puzzled.

DAVID
 Huh... I'm here for the sink... I'm
 just the plumber.

Sam freezes, stunned and speechless.

SAM
 (embarrassed)
 Oh... huh... the kitchen sink or
 the bathroom sink?

DAVID
 The kitchen sink.

SAM
 Okay... I'll take you to it then.

Sam turns around. When she turns her back on David, she has a disheartened expression.

EXT. FISHER'S BACKYARD - LATER

Sam and Lynda sit at the table and eat their salad while James watches the BBQ. STOMPY lies on the ground next to them and chews a SQUEAKING dog toy.

NOISES made by DAVID are heard from the kitchen.

LYNDA
 (to David)
 Are you okay!? Do you need
 anything?

DAVID (O.S.)
 I'm fine, thank you.

LYNDA
 Are you sure you don't want
 something to eat? Like hamburger or
 maybe some steak?

DAVID (O.S.)
 No, ma'am. I don't eat on the job.
 But thanks anyway.

Sam gives a suspicious look to her mother.

LYNDA
 What?

SAM

What the hell are you trying to do,
Mom?

LYNDA

Nothing!

SAM

You know you're supposed to pay him
with cash and not meatballs, right?

Lynda rolls her eyes and sighs. Sam shakes her head and
keeps eating.

LYNDA

He's Mrs. Morgan's nephew. You
know, my colleague in the choir?

SAM

Yeah, but that doesn't mean you
have to feed him.

Annoyed, Lynda raises her arms in the air.

LYNDA

I know that... but he seems like
such a nice man, don't you think?

Sam looks daggers at her mother. James puts plates on the
table, one with hamburgers and the other one with steaks,
then sits down.

JAMES

(to Sam)

So, how's your new job?

Sam freezes for a second. She forgot to think about a
convincing answer.

SAM

(falsely
enthusiastic)

Good, I like it!

LYNDA

Oh, that's wonderful! What is it,
already?

SAM

I... have to write press releases,
presentation texts, and sales
pitches.

JAMES

Great. What's the company?

Sam's eyes widen. She needs to find something fast.

SAM

For... Power Edition...

LYNDA

Oh, you always wanted to work for that publisher! Good for you!

Sam nods and keeps eating silently.

LYNDA (cont'd)

So, you will have some of their books for free, right? Will you be able to get me some?

Sam holds back a reaction. She painted herself in a corner. But she smiles and act normally.

SAM

Sure, Mom. No problem.

JAMES

Where is their office?

SAM

On Main Street. Downtown.

LYNDA

Eh! I think Norma's workplace is close to there. When I'll see her, I could stop and pay you a visit to the office.

Sam takes a sip of wine, more nervous. Her lie keeps biting her in the ass.

LYNDA (cont'd)

So, what do you think?

SAM

Yeah, I suppose. But I don't know if my employer will accept that.

JAMES

Why wouldn't they? Everyone has the right to get some visitors in the workplace.

SAM

I don't know. I'll check with them,
okay?

LYNDA

You want me to talk to them for
you?

SAM

NO! I'm a grown woman, I can take
care of myself. We'll see about
that later. Let's just eat, okay?

David gets out of the house and joins them in the backyard.

DAVID

Everything's working now. It was
just a broken seal.

LYNDA

(very enthusiastic)
Oh, that is so great! Thank you so
much, David!
(to Sam and James)
Isn't that wonderful?

Sam looks suspiciously at her mother. She feels there's
something fishy going on.

SAM

(to her father,
sarcastic)
Well, isn't that funny? It was just
a broken seal.

James keeps eating silently. Lynda gets up quite promptly,
arousing Sam's suspicion even more.

LYNDA

(to David)
I'll give you the check and walk
you to the door.

Sam watches her mother leaving and getting into the house
with David.

LYNDA (O.S.)

(to David)
So, I see you don't have a ring.
Are you single?

Sam raises her arms in the air and rolls her eyes, annoyed.

SAM
 (to Lynda)
 Mom, I can hear you!!!

James starts to laugh. Sam shakes her head in discouragement.

SAM (cont'd)
 (to James)
 Why is she always like that?

JAMES
 (kindly)
 She just wants you to be happy.

SAM
 (irritated)
 But I am happy. How many times do I have to tell you all?

JAMES
 Let it go. It keeps her busy.

SAM
 Well, she could find something else to keep herself busy.
 (beat)
 Like my brother Michael, for example. You remember I have a brother, don't you?

JAMES
 Of course, I do! I'm not that old!

Lynda comes back and sits down. She smiles from ear to ear.

LYNDA
 (to Sam, trying to be subtle)
 Well, if you ever need a good plumber, I would be happy to give you David's number. Do you know he has his own company?

Sam sends a look to her father, who shrugs and laughs.

INT. SAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Sam holds a full, heavy plastic bag in one hand and a pile of frozen food in the other. Lynda searches her chest freezer.

SAM

I think I have enough food for two weeks, Mom.

Lynda closes the freezer.

LYNDA

Wait, I have something else!

Lynda leaves while Sam sighs, seemingly nervous. She tries to look at the time on her wristwatch, but with her hands full, she has trouble seeing it.

SAM

Mom, hurry up! I have to go!

LYNDA (O.S.)

I'm coming!

Lynda gets back, with children's clothes folded into a pile.

LYNDA

I have pants and a few t-shirts. Oh! Here's one with a unicorn for Amy and a Fortnite shirt for Noah. You think they'll love it?

SAM

Hmmm... You know that Fortnite sucks now.

LYNDA

What? Since when?

SAM

Apparently, it's been sucking for two years.

Lynda seems disheartened. Sam feels pity for her.

SAM (cont'd)

Okay, you know what? Hand it to me, I'll give it to them anyway.

LYNDA

Are you sure?

SAM

Yeah. They change their minds like they change their socks, so who knows?

Lynda tries to give the clothes to Sam, but with her hands full, she doesn't know how to, and they both hesitate. Sam points the pile of dishes in her arms with her chin.

SAM (cont'd)

Put it there.

Lynda places the clothes on the pile, and Sam holds them with her chin. She goes to--

INT. SAM'S PARENTS' HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sam arrives at the door, but with her arms full, she can't open it. She looks back.

SAM

(to her parents)

Huh? A little help?!

James quickly joins her and opens the door for her. It's then Lynda's turn to arrive. Sam goes out and down the stairs.

EXT. FISHER'S FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

James helps Sam, opens the trunk of her car and she puts her stuff into it. Then, Sam waves at her parents who wave back at her, and she gets in the car.

JAMES

Bye, honey!

LYNDA

Don't forget, if you ever need a plumber...

SAM

Jeez! Mom, stop it!

Sam leaves the driveway.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. SAM'S BUILDING'S CORRIDOR - DAY (AFTER NOON)

Sam runs breathlessly towards her apartment. She arrives at her door where TOM (Thomas) SHEPPARD (35-40), friendly, simple, expressive, AMY SHEPPARD (11 years old), jaded, independent, intelligent, and NOAH SHEPPARD (9 years old), naive, tender-hearted, full of energy, wait for her.

SAM
I'm so sorry.

Noah jumps right away in her arms.

NOAH
Hey, Mom!

SAM
Hey, sweetie.

TOM
Where the hell were you?

SAM
I had to go take cookies and muffins to the Scouts.

TOM
Again?

SAM
No one else had the time.

TOM
And you do?

Ignoring Tom, Sam unlocks the door to her condo.

INT. SAM'S ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Sam's apartment is a loft. The kitchen, living room, and dining room are open plan. Noah jumps in.

Amy, hunched, head down, passes by, goes straight to her room, and slams the door. Noah goes to--

INT. SAM'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Noah starts rummaging through the refrigerator.

INT. SAM'S ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Sam looks at Tom, puzzled.

SAM
What's wrong with her now?

TOM
Hem... If I'm not some old schmuck
dad and I get it right, Noah has
committed a crime of lese-majesty
for throwing cheese sticks at her
in the car.

Amy suddenly opens the door to her room.

AMY
(screaming)
That's not it!

She slams the door again, leaving Sam and Tom dumbstruck.

TOM
Well, apparently, I'm an old
schmuck dad, 'cause I don't know
what the problem is.

INT. SAM'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Noah, sitting on the kitchen counter, sips juice.

NOAH
She's just a tight-ass!

INT. SAM'S ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Tom and Sam turn to Noah, shocked.

SAM
Noah!

TOM
(firmly)
Hey, what did we say about that
kind of language?

INT. SAM'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Noah sighs and gets down the counter.

NOAH
No bad words, no cursing.

INT. SAM'S ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Tom and Sam look towards the kitchen where Noah is.

SAM
(to Noah)
Remember what I told you: language
is the window to your mind. Be
careful with it.

TOM
(to Sam)
Hum... Nice parenting intervention.

SAM
Thanks. I'm actually proud of this
one.

Noah passes in front of them, rather nonchalantly, with his
juice and a bowl of chips, and goes to the--

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--where he crashes onto the couch. Then, he turns the TV on.

TOM
(to Sam)
Eh, how was your first week at your
new job?

SAM
It was okay.

TOM
Good! What are you doing?

Sam tries to keep a casual attitude.

SAM
Oh... writing stuff for a
publishing house.

Tom is about to say something but is interrupted by Noah.

NOAH (O.S.)
Mom? What's Puss in Boots?!

Panic! Sam looks terrified. She runs to--

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Noah, still on the couch, looks at Sam's phone. Sam rushes over and snatches it away.

NOAH

Hey!!!

Sam frantically taps on her phone to erase the number. It's Tom's turn to enter, as calm as usual.

TOM

(laughing)
Receiving calls from Shrek, now?

SAM

(to Tom)
What?

TOM

Puss in Boots... Shrek? You know?

SAM

Oh! Huh... no, it's just... a wrong number.

Tom, perplexed, looks at Sam who continues to tap desperately on her phone. Having finally succeeded, she breathes a sigh of relief.

TOM

Well, if you don't need anything, I'm gonna go.

He turns around but stops.

TOM (cont'd)

Oh, if you ever learn why Amy is upset, I would like to know.

NOAH

I said it. She's just a--

Amy suddenly opens her door and interrupts Noah.

AMY

(screaming)
I'm not a tight-ass!!!

Amy slams her door again.

TOM
(to Noah)
Stop annoying your sister.

Sam leaves and goes towards--

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She knocks on Amy's door. Meanwhile, Tom and Noah continue arguing indiscernibly.

SAM
Honey, what's wrong?

AMY
(through the door)
I don't want to talk about it.

SAM
It's a bit hard for me to help you
if I don't know what's going on.

Amy suddenly opens the door.

AMY
I don't want any help!!!

Then she slams the door again, right in Sam's face.

TOM (O.S.)
Well, that reminds me of someone.

Sam turns around and sees Tom behind her.

SAM
(calmly)
I can handle this.

TOM
She's still my daughter. I think I
can give you a hand.

Sam ignores him and turns to the door.

TOM (cont'd)
(to Amy)
Is it because Noah farted in the
car?

Amy bursts the door open.

AMY

No!!

Then she slams the door, right in Sam's face again.

NOAH (O.S.)

(insulted)

Hey, I didn't fart! Why are you blaming me?! That's not fair!

Noah runs to his room and slams the door, leaving Sam and Tom more confused than ever. Sam turns to Tom.

SAM

What the hell happened in the last few hours?

TOM

I don't know. Nothing in particular.

Sam tries to open Amy's door, but it's locked.

SAM

Amy, you're not going to lock yourself in your room for the rest of the day.

AMY

(through the door)
Just watch me.

SAM

So, you're not going to eat the really amazing dinner grandma made?
(tempting)
It's pizza, your favorite.

AMY

(through the door)
I have some Twizzlers in my drawer.
I'll survive till Monday.

SAM

With Twizzlers? That's ridiculous.

Amy opens the door.

AMY

I'm not ridiculous!!!

Amy slams the door in Sam's face once again.

SAM
Stop doing that!!

TOM
Are you sure you don't want my
help?

Sam turns around and looks at him.

SAM
No, I'm fine. I can take care of
this. It's my week. You did enough
already, get some rest.

She turns back to Amy's room door. Tom keeps watching her,
smiling.

TOM
It won't kill you to accept other
people's help, Sam.

Sam sighs and turns back again to look at Tom.

SAM
(a bit sharply)
Thank you. I have this. You can go,
now. Everything's okay.

Tom stays where he is and crosses his arms, still smiling in
a mocking, yet affectionate way.

TOM
When are you going to stop playing
superwoman?

SAM
I'm not playing superwoman.

TOM
(sarcastic)
The hell you're not. And I'm the
Queen of Denmark.

SAM
Then you can go back to your
carriage, Princess Hilda.

Sam grabs Tom's arm and pulls him gently towards the--

INT. SAM'S ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Sam leads him to the door.

TOM
(mockingly)
Ich liebe dich.

SAM
That's German. Now get out. Get
some rest. Take care of yourself.
Go... I don't know... play bowling,
make waffled. Have fun. And give my
best to your lovely wife.

Tom shakes his head, opens the door, and gets out of the
apartment to--

INT. BUILDING'S CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Tom stops in the doorway and turns to Sam.

TOM
Fine, I'm leaving. But let me tell
you that since you've been living
alone, there's no one to tell you
to slow down.

SAM
You do that perfectly, every week.
Thank you.

Tom raises his arms in the air, he gives up. Then, he walks
towards the elevator while Sam stands in the doorway and
watches him.

While waiting for the elevator, he looks at Sam.

TOM
You know, even Josie thinks you're
working too much.

SAM
(clearly not caring
at all)
That's very nice of your wife to
worry about me. I'm fine.

Tom shakes his head, he gives up.

TOM
Don't say I didn't warn you.

SAM
(solemnly)
I swear to you, on the head of our
children, I will never say that.

The elevator doors open, and Tom gets in. Sam is about to return to her apartment, but just before the elevator doors close, Tom yells.

TOM
Stop being a superwoman!

Sam freezes and is about to respond, but she doesn't have the time: the elevator's doors are closed. She groans and goes back inside.

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sam's phone rings. It's Jeff.

SAM
Oh dear...

She takes a deep breath and answers, anxious.

SAM (cont'd)
Hi?

JEFF (V.O.)
Hey, sorry to bother you at this
hour. I know it's a bit late. I
really needed to talk to you.

Sam bites her lips, apprehensive. Did her plan to get fired work?

SAM
I'm listening.

JEFF (V.O.)
I apologize for telling you this
now, but... your last sales pitch,
with that... thing from outer
space? It's great!!!

SAM
What?

JEFF (V.O.)
The customers loved it! In fact,
they have increased their order.

SAM

They did?

JEFF (V.O.)

I suppose they appreciate your sense of humor. I knew you could bring some bright ideas to the team!

SAM

Okay... that's good...

JEFF (V.O.)

I can't wait to see your next texts. It's going to be great! See you on Monday!

SAM

Yeah, see you.

She hangs up, a bit in shock.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

With a disheartened expression, Sam looks at the children's rooms' doors, still closed.

SAM

Are you sure you don't want to come out?

AMY

(through the door)
Yes, I'm sure.

SAM

Noah?

No answer. Sam sighs. What the hell is she going to do?

Her face suddenly lights up as if she just had an idea. She goes to--

INT. SAM'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

While whistling, Sam prepares some popcorn, calmly, as if nothing happened.

She pours melted butter and salt on it. Then, she goes to--

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She sits on the couch and changes the program playing on the television. She starts eating her popcorn as if everything was normal.

The iconic Harry Potter theme begins to play rather loudly.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Noah opens his door and sticks his head through the opening. Then it's Amy's turn to do the same.

They look at each other, confused. After a few seconds of hesitation, they get out of their room and go to--

INT. SAM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They look at Sam and the television. Then, they sit on the couch, Noah on Sam's left, Amy on her right.

They send each other an icy look but start eating the popcorn from Sam's bowl.

The movie keeps playing.

SAM
So, what's the story?

Amy nibbles her popcorn, hesitates, but finally gives in.

AMY
(to Noah)
You ate the last bagel.

NOAH
That was two days ago!

AMY
Yeah, but I was hungry an hour ago.
If you didn't eat that last bagel,
I would have kept it for the road
and I would not have been hungry.

Amy and Noah stop talking, and pout while watching TV. Sam tries to hide a smile.

SAM
Did Tom tell you that everyone in
the house has the right to eat a
precise number of bagels?

AMY
Yes, he did.

Noah rolls his eyes and groans. Sam turns to him.

SAM
Well?

NOAH
(sighing loudly)
Okay, I'm sorry.

SAM
(to Noah)
See, that wasn't so hard.
(to Amy)
Happy, now?

Amy is still a bit grumpy.

AMY
Yeah, yeah...

SAM
There, everything's fine now.

Amy and Noah continue to munch on their popcorn silently, still a bit grouchy, but start to pay more attention to the movie.

SAM (cont'd)
Your father will be quite happy to learn that I handled the situation with brio.

The kids ignore their mother's remark.

SAM (cont'd)
I really like Harry Potter. There's nothing like flying brooms, big ugly trolls, and one evil overlord to bring a family together.

Still no reaction from the kids.

SAM (cont'd)
Don't you agree?

Amy remains silent and Noah mumbles something inaudible.

After a while, Sam, Amy, and Noah watch the film with attention. Amy turns to Sam.

AMY
Mom, what's the thing with Puss in Boots?

Sam freezes with and closes her eyes.

SAM
Oh Dear...

INT. OFFICE CAFETERIA - DAY (MORNING)

The usual office cafeteria: tables with chairs all around, coffee machines, vending machines, a refrigerator.

Tammy, Marco, Anna, Jason and Kathy are seated, eat their breakfast and drink their coffee.

SAM
(to everyone)
Good morning.

Everyone waves at her.

TAMMY
(to Sam)
How was your weekend?

Sam sits down with her colleagues.

SAM
Same as usual. Stuff with the kids
and all.

KATHY
You have a family, then? You don't
talk about them too much.

SAM
I prefer to be discreet about my
private life. But yeah, I have two
kids. Their father and I have been
separated for two years.

TAMMY
Have you made a new boyfriend
since?

SAM
Oh God, no. I'd rather not.

ANNA
So, you've been single for two
years!? Might as well say two
decades! I haven't been single for
that long in years.

MARCO
You're barely older than two
decades anyway, Anna.

ANNA
So?

KATHY
(to Anna)
So, Marco wonders if you can count.

ANNA
Go fuck yourself, Kathy!

JEFF (O.S.)
Did I just hear a bad word?

Jeff comes in and goes directly to the coffee machine to order coffee.

JASON
(to Jeff)
Aren't there always bad words all day long here?

Jeff chuckles.

JEFF
What matters is the context in which they are said. As long as it remains professional.

ANNA
(to Jeff)
Sam just said she hates men.

SAM
I never said that!

JEFF
We are all free to make our own choices. No one is going to judge you here, Sam. We'd be ill-advised to do so.

SAM
(to everyone)
I do not hate men, okay?

ANNA
Then why did you say "Oh God, no. I'd rather not" when we asked about a new boyfriend?

SAM
Because I like to be single.

MARCO
No one likes to be single.

SAM
(to Marco)
Some people do, trust me.

ANNA
(to Sam)
Then, what's your problem?

SAM
I don't have any problem.

TAMMY
Are you afraid of commitment?

SAM
No.

KATHY
Were you broken by love?

SAM
Broken by love? No. I just like
being alone.

TAMMY
(to Sam)
We should look into that.

SAM
No, you really shouldn't.

Jeff claps his hands.

JEFF
People, we have to come up with new
stuff for the new season. And I
have a feeling that my new favorite
employee is going to make our sales
rocket.

(Anna flinches when
he pronounces "new
favorite employee")
So, I want everyone in the
conference room in ten minutes.

Everyone leaves, but Jeff and Sam. Jeff smiles warmly to
Sam.

JEFF (cont'd)
I'm really happy to have you on our
team. I knew my instincts were
right.

Sam gets up and walks towards the door, Jeff on her tail.

JEFF (cont'd)
You have such a great imagination.
It's refreshing.

SAM
Thanks.

JEFF

Now, let's put that to good use and
sell more butt plugs, shall we?

SAM

Oh Dear...

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW