

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Is That You, Cecelia?

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

by

Erica Leigh Scandariato

May 2018

Copyright by Erica Leigh Scandariato 2018

The graduate project of Erica Leigh Scandariato is approved:

Alexis Krasilovsky, MFA

Date

Eric Edson, MFA

Date

Scott Sturgeon, MFA, Chair

Date

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my MFA cohort and the CTVA department for all their support and guidance.

And my deepest thanks to my friends, family, and precious cat James, for their endless support, love, and encouragement.

Table of Contents

Copyright Page	ii
Signature Page	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	vi
“Is That You, Cecelia?”	1

Abstract

Is That You, Cecelia?

By

Erica Leigh Scandariato

Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting

Leslie Clemins is 29, still lives with her parents and for all intents and purposes, is a loser. She's committed to a life ran by her own self-serving, self-righteous, neurotic theories. When she's arrested for an outburst at a Subway Sandwich shop over an "unfair coupon," she's forced to do community service. There, she meets Casper Randazzo, a 74-year-old alcoholic. When Casper reveals Leslie looks exactly like his recently deceased wife, Cecelia, Leslie skips out on her community service and moves in with Casper at the 55 and older community, "Leisure Village." As Leslie becomes entangled in Casper and Cecelia's life, the dysfunctional relationship leads to revelations about themselves and Cecelia, proving it's never too late to grow up.

IS THAT YOU, CECELIA?

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Dark and filled with the type of junk someone doesn't really have the space for, but doesn't necessarily want to get rid of either - e.g. a panini press. We hear a woman--

WOMAN (O.S)

You ever have the feeling you were born at the wrong time? I haven't decided if I came too early or late, but I know my timing is off.

Amongst the purgatory clutter is LESLIE CLEMINS (29), permanent frown. She lies on an AIR MATTRESS, stares at the ceiling, and scratches her arm.

She sits up, turns to the camera. The rubber mattress SQUEAKS.

LESLIE

Here's the thing, if life is a filing cabinet where you can categorize everyone and everything, which it is, I'd be filed under miscellaneous. However, the problem is your success in life is predicated on picking a file and that's all anyone wants you to do. From day one, you're just trying out different folders. Sports? How about ballet? Maybe baton twirling? And maybe something sticks. Nothing stuck for me and honestly it's for the best. Because really it's all an uphill journey to nowhere. Jobs... relationships... They're all terribly disappointing in the long run.

(beat)

But the thing is, if you don't pick a folder, you end up back-

-

MOM (O.S.)

Dinner's ready!

LESLIE

Home. Sure, the air mattress isn't that comfortable and my dad is a real stickler with my water usage, but it beats overpriced rent.

MOM (O.S.)

(extremely loud)

I said... dinner!!!

LESLIE
(top of lungs)
Alright! I'm coming!

Borderline scary. Leslie turns back to camera and smiles.

A slow HISS. She sinks, as the air mattress deflates.

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - DAY

Wood paneling and Formica. Sign on the door reads, "DONALD SHENKER, D.D.S."

Leslie sits at main reception counter behind a little window. In the waiting area, NERVOUS PEOPLE sit and pretend to read magazines.

Leslie holds a phone to her ear.

LESLIE
Ma'am can you hear me?
(beat)
Is your earpiece volume up?
(beat)
Yes, you can control the volume of your ear piece.
(beat)
Okay on the side of your phone there's two buttons. Hit
the top one...
(beat)
Keep hitting it... Yep, there it is, okay. So yes, your
cleaning is all set for Saturday at noon.

DONALD SHENKER (60), slightly disheveled with mad scientist vibes, pokes his head out of an office.

DR. SHENKER
Leslie, do you have a second?

INT. DONALD SHENKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Surrounded by more wood panelling. Dr. Shenker sits across from Leslie, who scratches at her arm.

DR. SHENKER
Are you okay?

LESLIE

Yeah, it's probably Scabies, but what's up?

Dr. Shenker's eyes widen. He nods hesitantly.

DR. SHENKER

Well, I called you in here to let you know you're being promoted. Congratulations.

LESLIE

Hmm... thank you, but... no thank you.

DR. SHENKER

You don't want a promotion?

Now he scratches his arm--

LESLIE

Nah, I'm good.

DR. SHENKER

But Leslie, you've been here a year now and you're overqualified. You have a college degree. It's just a little bit more responsibility... more on the billing side of things.

LESLIE

Dr. Shenker, when I took this job we knew what the arrangement was. You get an overqualified receptionist, I get free cleanings... That's why I took it.

DR. SHENKER

You can't be a receptionist forever.

LESLIE

Hmm... I'm pretty sure I can.

She turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Don't let anyone ever tell you that you can't do something. What they really mean is, "I don't like what you're doing... your life choice, is making me uncomfortable." Truth is, you can do whatever you want.

DR. SHENKER

But why would you want to remain a receptionist?

LESLIE

Because getting promoted isn't going to make my life better. In fact, it will make it worse.

DR. SHENKER

How is that possible?

LESLIE

Because if I get promoted then I'll start making more money and then I'll start buying more things that cost more money to upkeep, and then I'll need another promotion. And you see, next thing you know it, I've been abducted into the vicious cycle of consumerism where I'm suddenly thinking I need a Shark vacuum. No one needs a four hundred dollar vacuum. I've decided to get off that train, so no... I don't want a promotion. I wanna stay below average, mediocre at best... What's that saying? Once you're at the top, there's only one direction to go in. Well it's down, and that sounds terrible. So I'm good already on the ground.

(looks at watch)

I'm gonna head to the doctors--

DR. SHENKER

Again?

LESLIE

But really, thank you. I appreciate you looking out.

Dr. Shenker is perplexed. Leslie exits. He scratches his arm.

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - RECEPTION COUNTER - DAY

Leslie enters.

SHERRY (56), angry about what menopause has done to her body, looks up from her Lean Cuisine at Leslie--

SHERRY

Are you working on anything right now?

LESLIE

I'm about to go the doctors--

SHERRY

Again?

LESLIE

I'm still scratching my arm, so yes.

SHERRY

Well I have a fun little task for you when you return--

She SLAPS an old school Rolodex on the counter.

SHERRY (CONT'D)

You think you can alphabetize Richard's Rolodex?

LESLIE

Seeing as I know the alphabet, I think I could manage.

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

That's Sherry and in case you didn't notice, she's awful. She's awful because she thinks because she cares about this job, I should too. And listen, by not caring, I'm not talking about efficiency.

Sherry TAPS her giant acrylic claws on the counter.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm efficient at my job. I do everything that's asked. I'm just merely aware that what I do isn't rocket science. And there's no need to pretend the work I'm doing here is contributing to humanity in any way. It's not. I've accepted and embraced it... my reasons stated earlier with Dr Shenker. But Sherry can't handle the fact that what she spends forty-five hours a week doing is completely meaningless and so she's constructed an entire charade that what she does is important. But deep within her, beneath the veneer of cheap make-up and bad perfume, she wants to not care too. She's unaware of it, but what she hates about me is that there's a certain lightness in which I approach my menial administrative tasks. She's chained to it spiritually, a slave to the charade. And I am free.

(beat)

But she wants to chain me to it and that's when she gives me tasks like alphabetizing a Rolodex, which I won't do.

Turns back to Sherry.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Sure, I'll get to it when I'm back from my appointment.

Sherry points to an empty candy dish on the counter.

SHERRY

The courtesy bowl is empty.

LESLIE

I don't feel comfortable supplying mints loaded with sugar to our customers. It's like your AA Sponsor only meeting up with you at a bar. It's tacky and tasteless, Sherry, and if you can sleep at night knowing that you're setting up people already plagued with gum disease to fail... that's fine. But I can't.

SHERRY

You're impossible.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Leslie sits on the exam table in a hospital gown across from DOCTOR GLASS, pretentious and perched on a wheelie stool.

Leslie claws at her arms, which are covered in welts.

DR GLASS

I don't see a clinical need to prescribe medication.

LESLIE

Well will it hurt me if you do?

DR GLASS

No. But again, there's no clinical need.

Leslie stares for a beat.

LESLIE

But what's the harm in being safe?

DR GLASS

Because Leslie, you don't have Scabies.

LESLIE

Then why am I itching? Why is my body covered in welts?

DR GLASS

We scraped your skin... I put it under a microscope... There was nothing.

LESLIE

Yes, but I read there's only at most, up to thirteen mites on your body at one time, which means the chances of getting one in a scraping is rare. It's why Scabies is often misdiagnosed.

DR. GLASS

You made me scrape in thirteen different locations.

She takes a breath.

LESLIE

Fine, I'll just put this out there... No disrespect, but I'm battling one thousand when it comes to my Web MD diagnostics.

DR GLASS

I'm an MD and I'm not diagnosing you with Scabies. Where would you have gotten Scabies?

LESLIE

I think the proper question is where can you not get Scabies? Look around... The world is filled with savages. I work in a Dentists' office. I'm surrounded by people.

(beat)

But I think it was the laundromat.

DR GLASS

That's very rare.

LESLIE

I have a penchant for the rare.

DR GLASS

Leslie do you want Scabies?

LESLIE

No.

DR GLASS

Well it seems like you do. A medical professional is telling you, you don't have them. Most people would run from this office, jumping for joy--

LESLIE

Most people don't know any better.

DR GLASS

Oh, so you're saying you know better than most? You know better than an MD?

LESLIE

Oh don't make this about you. Is it so wrong to question a doctor? I've been burned before by medical professionals. And I've learned you gotta look out for you because nobody really is. And just because you're paranoid it doesn't mean people aren't out to get you.

DR GLASS

I'm not sure that's a healthy way to live.

LESLIE

Neither is suffering with undiagnosed ailments, but you don't seem to think it's a big deal for me, sooo--

Leslie gets up.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Doctor... I will see you in a week.

She holds out her hand. Doctor hesitates. She smiles. Then he smiles too and shakes her hand. She slips behind the changing curtain. Then pokes her head back in.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Any chance this is a systemic allergic reaction?

DR. GLASS

It's possible.

LESLIE

An allergic reaction to the mites that are burrowing in my skin?

She ducks back behind the curtain. He shakes his head.

DR. GLASS

Leslie, go back to work.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET - DAY

Leslie walks. She looks around and sees--

- A CHILD'S ice cream scoop falls off the cone, lands with a PLOP. He SCREAMS.

- A dog takes a shit. A SEXY WOMAN steps in it. SQUISH.

- A SIGN SPINNER with headphones on spins a sign outside a SUBWAY SANDWICH SHOP. He drops the sign. He picks it up and repeatedly SMASHES it into the ground in a fit of rage.

Turns to camera--

LESLIE

I mean, it's a sea of death out here. We practically exist in a graveyard and we wonder why we're all so depressed?

She walks toward the SUBWAY SANDWICH SHOP. The Sign Spinner is up and running, bobbing to his headphones... until he drops the sign again and has an even bigger melt down.

INT. SUBWAY SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

Leslie's at the counter. An IDIOT TEENAGE SANDWICH ARTIST puts on his plastic gloves.

IDIOT KID

Sup?

LESLIE

I'll take the chicken bacon ranch on the honey wheat.
Footlong, please.

Idiot kid gets to work. Leslie turns to camera--

LESLIE (CONT'D)

One of my generations' major oversights... Coupons.

She holds up a COUPON FOR A FIVE DOLLAR FOOTLONG.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Besides the obvious student loans, this is another reason we're all in debt. All you have to do is take fifteen minutes a week to clip some coupons and you can get a sandwich for five dollars that you can split between two meals.

IDIOT KID (O.S.)

Veggies?

Leslie turns to him.

LESLIE

Lettuce, tomato, red onion.

Back to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

That's a meal for two dollars and fifty cents... in 2017. But no one wants to take time. We're all above coupons. You should've seen the coupon waste next to the mailbox at my old apartment building. You would've thought these people were millionaires. It's truly offensive.

She reaches end of food line. Idiot Kid punches the buttons at the register. Leslie hands over coupon.

IDIOT KID

Uhhhh...Chicken Bacon Ranch is a specialty sub. That coupon only works on our cold cut variety.

LESLIE

Excuse me?

IDIOT KID

You can't use the coupon.

LESLIE

Where on this coupon does it say the information you just told me?

IDIOT KID

It doesn't.

LESLIE

So the coupon is misleading?

IDIOT KID

Lady, I dunno. Do you want the sandwich or not?

LESLIE

I want to talk to your manager.

Idiot Kid exhales.

IDIOT KID

Chris! Another crazy lady wants to talk to you!

Leslie and Idiot Kid have an awkward stare down as the elevator music blares on. The line of patrons grows restless as they watches the atrocity unfold.

CHRIS (30's) emerges from the back. He's engaged in a detached way that makes him treat every situation the exact same way, aka Customer Service Autopilot.

CHRIS

What's the problem, ma'm?

LESLIE

The problem is your coupon is misleading. If there are exclusions they should be listed in the fine print. I feel the only fair solution is to honor it.

CHRIS

Well we've been running this promotion for quite some time and you seem to be the only one to have a problem with it.

LESLIE

Oh, is that so? Maybe I'm the only one who's paying attention?

Chris laughs.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

This is funny?

CHRIS

Listen, I'm sorry but we don't make the rules. It's corporate--

LESLIE

And what's the phone number for corporate?

OLD LADY (O.S.)

Don't bother you'll never get someone on the phone.

Leslie turns around. A PISSED OFF OLD LADY shakes her head.

LESLIE

Thank you, Ma'm. I appreciate the support, but this is between me, Chris, and what's his face--

IDIOT KID (O.S.)

Greg.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And this is about the principle of the matter. Could I let it go? Sure, but that's how it starts. You let one thing go and then you have nothing. They've taken it all--

Old Lady stares at Leslie, shakes her head. Leslie looks over at Chris and Greg. They also stare blankly.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I can no longer eat here for obvious reasons.

Leslie exits.

INT. LESLIE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie enters. She stops dead. On the couch, in a line, sits--

JANET CLEMINS (60), rocking mom bangs and a sensible blouse. JOHN CLEMINS(62), face of stone. Brother SAM and his wife SUSIE, early 30s hipster yuppies.

They all stare at Leslie.

LESLIE

What is this an intervention?

JANET

Yes, honey. I'm afraid so.

LESLIE

I was joking.

JOHN

We're not. We've supported you long enough and your attempts at Vlogging.

LESLIE

It's vlogging.

JOHN

Vlogging... vlogging! Who gives a shit!? Both aren't real words.

Leslie turns to the camera--

LESLIE

I want you to know I only vlogged for like a week--

JOHN

You need to get a real job and it's time you get on with your life.

LESLIE

I have, by actively choosing not to.

SAM

Then you haven't.

LESLIE

Since when do you have an opinion about my life? Now that you're married and "settled" you know how things go? You registered at a Williams Sonoma with a laser gun and people bought you a bunch of gifts and you fed said people overpriced buffet food, in a barn, with twinkle lights, while these now inebriated acquaintances applauded you for a pretty standard life choice. So this does not make you an expert in anything, including my life.

Susie clings on to Sam, fearful. Leslie rolls her eyes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Also not sure if you both know this, but if you stop touching each other for one second, the other one won't disappear.

Leslie turns to camera, cringes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

That was a little too far. But let me tell you everything you need to know about my relationship with my parents compared to my brother's. How to put this... Let's just say if my parents were to go on a date with my brother, there would be instant sparks... maybe someone's even making it to second base. Now if they were to go on a date with me, I'm not making it to date number two. They're never calling me again. Which is fine, because I wouldn't want to date my parents either.

JANET

You know Beth's daughter Liza... she met someone on Tinder.

LESLIE

Mom, I'm not going on Tinder. People on Tinder give each other diseases.

SAM

Don't you see guys? She has an excuse and reason for everything, each one more ridiculous than the next--

LESLIE

So let's get down to it, you're kicking me out?

JANET

No honey, of course we'll give you some time to gather yourself--

JOHN

Not too much. I worked my whole life to own this house and I miss my basement.

Leslie turns to camera

LESLIE

They're totally kicking me out.

Turns back to parents.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

It's fine, you know what... I'll just leave right now. No big deal.

Leslie exits in a huff.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Leslie grabs some stuff and throws it in a bag.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Leslie, bag in hand, stomps to the corner. She stops under a streetlight.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

ELEVEN YEAR OLD LESLIE sits on same corner with a My Little Pony suitcase next to her. Tears in her eyes.

Adult Leslie enters, sits down next to her. Tears also in her eyes.

She turns to camera.

LESLIE

I guess this has always sort of been my thing. A flare for the dramatic.

(turns to young Leslie)

Walking back is the worst, isn't it?

Young Leslie nods. They both stand up and dust the dirt off their butts in sync.

INT. LESLIE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Leslie lies on the air mattress. Now she scratches at her stomach. Lifts her shirt, revealing the RASH is worse.

We hear the slow HISS. The air mattress deflates again.

Leslie SIGHS.

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Leslie sits in front of the Rolodex. She places the last card in the slot. Turns to camera.

LESLIE

I'm not proud of it either. I gave in. Some days you just can't fight the good fight and you're somebody's bitch.

Today... I'm Sherry's.

Sherry walks over.

SHERRY

You know, I was thinking. We should transfer all those business cards onto index cards.

Leslie shoots the camera an eye roll, turns back to Sherry.

LESLIE

I'm actually leaving early. Sick day.

SHERRY

You do look tired.

LESLIE

(back to camera)

It's like she read a manual on how to be the most inconsiderate human being--

Dr. Shkenker pokes his head out of the office.

DR. SHENKER

Leslie, you wanted to see me.

INT. DR SHENKER'S OFFICE - DAY

Leslie sits in front of him.

DR. SHENKER

Now you want the promotion?

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

Like I said, I'm not proud of it.

(turns to Shenker)

Unfortunately, some unforeseen circumstances have sprung up in my personal life and it looks like I'm going to have to temporarily board the train--

DR SHENKER

The train of consumerism and ladder climbing drudgery -- that us pathetic souls, ride on a daily basis?

Leslie smiles and nods.

LESLIE

Yes, exactly. It's unfortunate, but I do plan on it being an express train ride. So yeah... thank you for the extra money.

Leslie stand up, sticks out her hand. He doesn't budge.

DR. SHENKER

Well, Leslie, it's too late.

LESLIE

I'm sorry, I'm not sure--

DR. SHENKER

We've already given the promotion away--

LESLIE

To who? The plastic plant in the lobby?
(beat)
It's just Sherry and me.

DR SHENKER

And it's Sherry's now. She's enthusiastically decided to take on more responsibility. And you know what? She was thankful for the opportunity. It's nice to see some people grateful for opportunities other people offer them.

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

Do you see this hostility?
(to Shenker)
Woah Doctor Shenker I was unaware of the resentment you're clearly harboring toward me.

DR. SHENKER

Well I've put up with a lot of your shit.

Leslie's eyes widen-

DR. SHENKER (CONT'D)

All of the phantom ailments and doctors appointments--

He scratches himself.

DR. SHENKER (CONT'D)

I was up all last night scratching. You know Leslie... you're a very difficult person.

LESLIE

Oh you think I'm difficult? Well then... imagine how difficult it is for me to be me.

He shakes his head.

DR. SHENKER

And I put up with it because your mother Janet was my high school sweetheart, but you know what I realized? Janet picked your father, why do I give a shit about her fucked up daughter?

Leslie stands up.

LESLIE

Oh yeah. Listen Shenker, I've put up with a lot of your fucked up shit too-

Leslie exits room. After a beat she returns with the Rolodex in hand.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Who uses a Rolodex in 2018? I'm someone who loves to kick it old school, but a Rolodex is an inefficient waste.

She opens the Rolodex and dumps it over in front of him. Business cards RAIN DOWN onto the floor.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Maybe now that Sherry has more responsibilities she can take on this shit one--

Leslie storms out of the office, into--

INT. DENTAL OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Filled with patrons, including some small children. A YOUNG GINGER TROUBLEMAKER stares wide-eyed at Leslie.

Dr. Shenker trails Leslie.

Sherry looks up from yet another Lean Cuisine, with a smug smile on her face.

LESLIE

Congrats, Sherry.

SHERRY

Thank you, Leslie.

DR. SHENKER

Leslie, you're fired.

Leslie eyes the courtesy candy bowl for a beat, then--

SHOVES it off the counter. It lands on the floor with a THUD. Mints SCATTER.

Sherry GASPS.

SHERRY

You're an animal.

Ginger Troublemaker smiles and gives Leslie a thumbs up.

EXT. DR SHENKER'S OFFICE - STREET - DAY

Leslie stomps down the street. Her gaze lands on the Subway. The same sign spinner is out front, head phones on.

EXT. SUBWAY - DAY

Leslie approaches the door. Sign spinner drops the sign again. He rages. Leslie blows passed him.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Leslie and same idiot sandwich artist Greg stand face to face. She holds out the same rejected coupon out.

LESLIE

Take it.

GREG

No.

LESLIE

Yes.

GREG

No.

LESLIE

Yes. The coupon is misleading. It's wrong to do that to people. Now do the right thing Greg and take it.

GREG

Lady, I think you have some serious problems.

LESLIE

No, I think you do. Why do you care? Does honoring the coupon effect you in anyway? Has Subway corporate done something for your life that I don't know about?

She looks up and eyes a security camera

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Are we on an episode of "Undercover Boss?" Take the coupon, Greg.

Manager Chris walks out from the back, again in Customer Service auto pilot

CHRIS

(monotone)

What seems to be the-

He realizes it's Leslie

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Oh--

Leslie turns to Chris.

LESLIE

Take the coupon, Chris.

CHRIS

Leslie you know that's not possible. Listen, why don't you just make it a meal with a drink and chips and you'll still get a good value?

LESLIE

Make it a meal?

Leslie turns to the rack of chips to the left of the register.

Chris adjusts his tone like he's bribing a small child.

CHRIS

Yeah, you can pick anyone of those chips.

LESLIE

Oh I can?

CHRIS

Yeah you can--

LESLIE

Anyone of these trans fatty, disgusting, pieces of cardboard?

CHRIS

We do have baked options without the trans fats--

Leslie reaches with both hands and grabs the rack of chips.

LESLIE

Okay Chris I'll take em-

She drags it to the counter. It SCREECHES on the floor. Then she pushes the rack over on to the counter. Chips fly.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY - DAY

Police car parked out front. Sirens flash.

Leslie sits on the curb in cuffs. A COP hovers over her.

LESLIE

(to camera)

I probably took this a little too far.

She looks up at him.

COP

Now ma'm you're being charged with two counts of verbal harassment. But you're lucky... since it was just bags of chips and those are mostly made of air, they're dropping the battery charges.

A car pulls up. Janet, John, Sam and Susie get out and stare at Leslie. The judgement is palpable.

LESLIE

Oh great.

Cop turns to them.

COP

You can meet us at the station for processing.

They all get back in the car without saying a word, until--

JOHN

(grumbles)

God damnit, it never ends with this kid--

Leslie frowns.

INT. CAR - DAY

Leslie sits in passenger seat. Janet drives.

JANET

Donald did me a favor allowing you to work there.

LESLIE

Mom, he's still pissed about high school, which who isn't?
But his intentions weren't pure, so don't feel that bad.

Janet sighs.

JANET

You're really lucky all you have is community service and anger management. But you better figure out how you're gonna pay for the lawyer, because you're father and I are done.

LESLIE

(to camera)

Can you blame them for being fed up?

(beat)

I can't... but I can blame them a little bit for my current situation. I mean, perhaps they planted the seeds that sprouted into the poor life choices that led me here? I'm just saying, it's a possibility.

JANET

I'll see what I can do for your community service. I'll talk to Gayle who runs the theater, maybe you can volunteer there.

(mumbles to self)

It's better than having a thirty-year old daughter who picks up trash on the highway.

LESLIE

I'm 29.

JANET

You'll be thirty in a couple of months.

A long beat.

Leslie laughs loud. Janet looks on in horror.

JANET (CONT'D)

It's not funny.

LESLIE

I mean, it's kind of funny

Janet shakes her head and sighs. Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I think it's funny.

INT. KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL - NIGHT

White sparse walls. Eight OLDER MEN sit in a circle in folding chairs and then there's Leslie. A SWEATY MAN speaks-

SWEATY MAN

Counting really worked today and a refocusing on my breath--

GROUP LEADER

That's great Stan. Well we have a new member today.

Leslie clears her throat. Turns to camera

LESLIE

Can you believe this?

(beat)

Hi, I'm Leslie.

ALL

Hi Leslie.

LESLIE

Wow.

GROUP LEADER

And what brings you here?

LESLIE

I was court ordered to come here because I pushed a rack of chips over at a Subway sandwich shop.

STUBBY MAN

That's it?

LESLIE

I know, right. Thank you! I thought their reaction to my overreaction was a bit of an overreaction, myself.

GROUP LEADER

No, no. Whereas that seems mild in comparison to some of the stuff we've shared... It's still not the way an adult copes with frustration.

The group grumbles.

GROUP LEADER (CONT'D)

Remember anger stems from a believe that things should be a certain way, which is inherently setting oneself up for disappointment. We talk in here about how in really it's impossible to control anything. There is no way things "should" be. "Should" is the most toxic word you can have in your vocabulary.

Leslie gives him a "you're fucking kidding me?" look.

LESLIE

So I "shouldn't" use the word should?

The group LAUGHS. Group leader purses his lips and exhales.

INT. COMMUNITY ARTS THEATER - LOBBY - DAY

Dimly lit, with permanently sticky floors. To the left of the entrance, a “box office” which in actuality is a half wall with no glass. Behind the half wall a stool

GAYLE, 50s, with a monotone voice talks with Janet.

Through the theater doors someone sings LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS. It’s painfully out of tune and annoying.

Leslie stands off to the side.

GAYLE

Janet we can’t take her.

Leslie points to the closed door.

LESLIE

How many weeks left on this?

GAYLE

One.

LESLIE

Thank God.

Gayle shakes her head and makes a face. Janet face palms, then turns back to Gayle.

JANET

Please, Gayle. I promise she won’t--

Gayle eyes Leslie, contemplating it for a beat. Leslie turns to Gayle and smiles wide in an off-putting way. Gayle turns back to Janet, leans in.

GAYLE

(whispers)

It’s too much of a risk.

Our patrons are old. An outburst could kill them.

EXT. SIDE OF LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

CLOSE ON: a sign that reads “LITTER REMOVAL 1 MILE SPONSORED BY SUBURBAN EXTERMINATING.”

Below it, Leslie, in a tan jumpsuit, picks up trash with a poker. She turns to camera. Goes to speak, when--

MAN (O.S.)
(heavy lisp)
You know shit happens... life happens.

REVEAL: A TWITCHY METH HEAD picks up trash next to her. He rambles on--

METH HEAD
And that's when my life really spiraled out of control.

He stops talking but his mouth stays open. His tongue flops out, like a Golden Retriever with a dumb smile on it's face.

Leslie stares at him for a long beat.

METH HEAD (CONT'D)
How about you?

Tongue and dumb smile return.

Leslie turns to camera. Shakes her head, looks down. On the ground a USED CONDOM. She shudders and scratches her arm, then looks up as cars whiz by. One by one.

She eyes more trash further down an embankment, turns to Meth Head.

LESLIE
I'm gonna get that area.

He nods, tongue still flapping in the breeze.

Leslie walks down.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY EMBANKMENT - DAY

Leslie, isolated in a ditch, continues to poke trash. The side of the highway, still visible uphill.

A white 2007 CHEVY IMPALA pulls over. A disheveled CASPER RANDAZZZO, 75, white hair, glasses, button down shirt with one button too many undone, gets out. He walks over to the edge of the embankment.

Leslie's back is to him. She bends down, picks up a piece of SCRAP METAL. Then--

We hear pants UNZIP, followed by a URINE STREAM. She turns to camera.

LESLIE
You've got to be kidding me.

Turns around and looks up, as Casper urinates.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Hey!

Casper looks down, Leslie holds the METAL, the reflection blinds Casper, who squints.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Pretty sure that's illegal!

CASPER

Says the ex con pickin' up trash-

He cackles and doesn't stop peeing.

LESLIE

I can see your penis!

CASPER

I'll take that as a compliment!

He turns around, zips up, and disappears.

LESLIE

Unbelievable.

Leslie turns around, takes another step... SQUISH. She looks down. It's SHIT. Looks back up at the camera, with panic-

LESLIE (CONT'D)

It's human.

She gags.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Fuck this.

She takes off the shit shoe, chucks it. Then hop/limps up the embankment.

EXT. SIDE OF LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY- DAY

The 2007 CHEVY IMPALA is still parked. Leslie eyes Casper in the front seat.

She turns, eyes Meth Head in the distance. He's spins around like Julie Andrews, "Sound of Music" style.

She walks to the car and knocks on the window. Casper turns toward her. His eyes go wide.

LESLIE

Hey, sorry about that back there and mentioning your penis. Can you give me a ride?

Casper nods slowly. Leslie walks around to the passenger side. Casper's head follows Leslie. His face is pure disbelief. She puts her hand on the passenger side door, turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm very aware that this is how people get made into skinsuits and that risk factor is definitely here. I mean, look-

-

Leslie ducks down. Casper stares at her intently.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But I'm weighing it less, for obvious reasons... I just stepped in a human shit.

INT. CASPER'S CAR - DAY

Leslie shuts the door.

LESLIE

I'm--

Casper hits the gas and peels out. Her head slams onto the head rest.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Leslie.

Meth Head waves to her from the side of the road.

Leslie clicks her seat belt on and turns her head toward Casper. He stares at her, not the road.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

You might want to keep your eyes--

She points to the windshield. Casper turns. Leslie eyes three EMPTY BEER BOTTLES on the floor and an URN in the center console.

She turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Yep... I'm in a Dateline mystery.

(turns to Casper)

So I'm clocking a few things here I feel I should bring up. See something, say something, right? There's the beer bottles, the staring, and quite possibly the most troubling... an urn. So I'm just gonna come out and ask - Are you gonna murder me? Because if so, I'd at least like a say in the manner in which I go.

Casper eyes a roadside diner up ahead.

CASPER

I could use a bite. You hungry?

LESLIE

(to camera)

If it means you'll stop the car--

(to Casper)

Yes.

Casper exits highway.

INT. DINER - DAY

In a booth, Leslie's face buried in the menu. Casper sits across and stares at her.

In between their water glasses, sits the URN.

Leslie looks up. Their eyes meet for a second, then she crouches behind menu and turns to camera.

LESLIE

Here goes nothing--

(lowers menu, to Casper)

I don't want to be rude, but there's an urn on the table, so again, I have to ask--

CASPER

It's Cecelia.

LESLIE

Ookay... and “Cecelia” is... was... hopefully not someone you met on the internet.

CASPER

My wife

LESLIE

Oh... I’m sorry.

CASPER

We didn’t meet on the internet. We met when people actually had to leave their houses to find each other.

Beat.

LESLIE

How long has she bee--

CASPER

A year.

LESLIE

And do you normally carry her aro--

CASPER

No, I was on my way back from spreading them.

Leslie nods. They sit in silence for a beat.

She diverts to the menu

LESLIE

(back to Casper)

I wonder what’s on their side salad.

She looks around at the shabby accommodations.

LESLIE (CONT’D)

Doesn’t look promising.

CASPER

Does it matter?

LESLIE

Of course it matters. The true character of any dining establishment is always determined by their side salad.

(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)

What are the dressing options? Is there cheese? Is it just lettuce with nothing else? If so, it means you're cheap and lazy. Does the dressing come on the side or on the salad? Do they give you the option? And if they don't, and you ask, is there attitude?

(beat)

Every restaurant has the opportunity to really make their mark with their side salad.

CASPER

Then what's the perfect side salad?

LESLIE

A crisp romaine -- You get the crunch of the iceberg, with the nutrients of mixed greens. Then two cherry tomatoes, shredded carrots, but not too many. Four rings of purple onion, two black olives, cucumber, and four strings of bell pepper... With the option of blue cheese dressing.

CASPER

Dressing on the side or salad? Wait... Let me guess... on the side--

LESLIE

A-ha! Most people would, but this is where I differ. If you don't give me the option, I'm assuming it's coming on the salad and I respect the take charge air of that.

Casper nods.

WAITRESS with a smoker's voice, enters. Leslie still looks at the menu--

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

What can I get you?

CASPER

Beer.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

That's all?

CASPER

Actually... make that two.

Leslie's eyes widen. Waitress turns to Leslie and lets out an ungodly hack. Leslie cringes.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

And you?

Leslie wipes a spec of spit from her own cheek.

LESLIE

I'll take the side salad with blue cheese dressing.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

Dressing on the salad, or on the side?

LESLIE

The side.

Waitress walks away.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And if they give you the choice... Always on the side. How can I trust an establishment that doesn't trust themselves to get the dressing right? You just can't.

Casper smirks.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Casper's on his third beer. Leslie picks at a pathetic side salad with browning iceberg lettuce. She throws down her fork.

CASPER

What if I told you, you look exactly like Cecelia?

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

I'd say you're drunk and lonely.

(to Casper)

Listen, I get that a lot. I think it means my face is sort of like a blank canvas and people project on to it whoever they want me to be. And you're obviously grieving and have had a few

(mime's drinking)

... just in my presence, which is fine. No judgment, but--

CASPER

Do you think I would let a stranger get into my car?

LESLIE

Well, do you have a picture?

Casper reaches into his pocket, feels around.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm guessing I'm the Madame Tussaud's wax figure version of her... like something just slightly off... always in the mouth region--

CASPER

God damn it. My wallet--

Waitress walks by, drops off the bill, lets out another hearty hack and continues on her way. Casper looks at Leslie-

LESLIE

Yeah I got nothing.

They share a look that says, "are we about to skip out on this bill?"

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND THE DINER - NIGHT

Back of the building. There's an open window. Casper's car creeps up. Leslie's in the driver's seat.

INT. CASPER'S CAR - NIGHT

Leslie stares at the open window then at the vacant parking lot. She drums her fingers on the wheel.

Finally a leg swings out the window. It's Casper's. He struggles to get himself out the window.

Leslie's PHONE RINGS. She looks down. ON SCREEN: "Mom calling." She hits ignore. Just as Casper gets in the passenger seat.

Leslie hits the gas and peels out.

CASPER

We shouldn't have done that.

LESLIE

Did you know, should is the most toxic word you can have
in your vocabulary?

CASPER

Sounds like a bunch of bullshit.

Leslie smiles. They drive into the night--

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

The impala drives up to a community of condo-like attached housing units.

INT. CASPER'S CAR MOVING - NIGHT

Leslie looks out the window, eyes an illuminated sign that reads "LEISURE VILLAGE: A
LIFETIME OF SATURDAYS."

LESLIE

(mouths)

A lifetime of Saturdays...

(to camera)

Wow.

EXT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Casper and Leslie stand at the door. He fumbles with his keys. Leslie looks over at the
apartment nextdoor. A WOMAN peers out from behind the curtain. Leslie looks. The
woman quickly shuts the curtain.

Leslie turns away. The woman reappears.

Leslie looks back. Woman shuts curtain.

Leslie turns away. She opens curtain. This goes on until Casper finally opens the door.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's a mess, but under the take out boxes and haze of cigar smoke, is a once bright
apartment with a woman's touch.

Leslie looks around. Casper walks over to the end table and picks up a FRAMED
PICTURE of a YOUNG CASPER AND CECELIA.

CASPER

This was when she was probably around your age--

He hands it to Leslie. Her eyes go wide.

LESLIE

Holy shit, that's--

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Me.

Cecelia.

CASPER

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Even the mouth--

Leslie sits on the couch, speechless.

CASPER

Told ya I'm not full of shit.

LESLIE

I'm sorry but this hasn't been the most conventional evening. I'm picking up trash on the highway, you almost peed on me, I stepped in human shit, you drove drunk, we ate at diner, ran away from said diner tab, and then you show me a picture of your wife, who is me.

Casper's suddenly panicked.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

What?

CASPER

The urn. I left it in the bathroom.

He paces.

CASPER (CONT'D)

We have to go back.

LESLIE

We can't.

He grabs the car keys.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And you can't drive.

CASPER

My wife is at a diner and I left her there. What kind of husband am I?

LESLIE

If you left your actual wife at a diner and drove off, I'd say you're not a very good husband, but you left a jar that used to contain--

CASPER

No. She was still in there. I couldn't--

LESLIE

Ooo... okay, well--

Leslie's PHONE RINGS. She looks down.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I have to-- Do you mind?

She points down the hall. Casper nods.

She holds out her hand. Casper drops the car keys into them.

Leslie disappears down the hall--

INT. CASPER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leslie sits on the bed, phone to ear.

LESLIE

Hi mom.

Leslie looks around the room. She eyes Cecelia's belongings, which are still untouched. A hairbrush. Perfume. Jewelry. A closet full of clothes.

JANET (O.S.)

Where are you?! We've been worried sick.

LESLIE

Isn't this what you guys wanted? You kicked me out--

JANET (O.S.)

We said you need to get on with your life, we didn't want you living on the streets.

In the background we hear--

JOHN (O.S.)

Speak for yourself Janet. Give me that phone.

The phone RUSTLES.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What your mom is too afraid to say is it's not like you got a job, saved money, and got your own place in the span of one day.

Leslie rolls her eyes. Gets up and exits room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Leslie creeps down the hall and peers into the living room.

Casper sits alone in his chair and nods off.

JOHN (O.S.)

I know you're up to some shit that's gonna end up costing us more money!

She turns around and walks back down the hallway into--

INT. CASPER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Leslie sits on the bed, scans the room again and lands on CECELIA'S PICTURE on a night table.

LESLIE

I'm not coming home tonight.

She hangs up. Takes a beat, then turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Guess I'm staying the night.

She shrugs her shoulders.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leslie sleeps on the couch. She still wears one shoe and the jumpsuit. We hear a beer cap POP off. Leslie's eyes open.

Casper stands over her, slugs his beer. There's some morning after stranger awkwardness, sans the sex.

CASPER

Sleep okay?

LESLIE

Yeah.

CASPER

That couch is uncomfortable.

LESLIE

It's competing with an air mattress so, works for me.

CASPER

Thanks for last night...Getting me home.

LESLIE

No problem.

Silence. Her eyes move to Cecelia's picture.

CASPER

You can shower if you want.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Leslie's hand wipes the fogged up mirror. REVEAL: Leslie with bright yellow towel wrapped around her head.

She eyes all the feminine touches in the bathroom. There's an excessive amount of doilies.

She opens up the medicine cabinet. Picks up and examines Cecelia's make up, lotions and soaps. Then takes a bottle of perfume. Sniffs it, sprays it on herself, then SNEEZES.

INT. CASPER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leslie enters, back in her jumpsuit. Casper sniffs.

CASPER

You smell like perfume scented garbage. You can't wear that.

INT. CASPER AND CECELIA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Leslie stands in front of the mirror in a pair of Cecelia's slacks and a floral blouse. The ensemble is ill fitting and unflattering.

INT. CASPER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leslie enters. Casper smiles.

CASPER

I was thinking... should we go get Cecelia?

Leslie looks over at CECELIA'S PICTURE - her identical brown hair tucked behind her right ear. Leslie tucks her hair behind her right ear, turns to camera

LESLIE

I mean, why the hell not?

Casper opens the front door, Leslie walks toward it.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

One question, you don't think I'm Cecelia reincarnated or anything weird like that, right?

CASPER

No, because with reincarnation you're supposed to get better. I picked you up on the side of a highway.

LESLIE

Excellent point.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

SHOTS OF --

-Putt Putt Golf Course

-Horseshoe Pits

-Boccie Ball

-Aerobics Studio

-Seven Scenic Man-made lakes

The place looks slightly rundown.

EXT. OUTDOOR POOL -DAY

Casper and Leslie walk in front of a built in pool, enclosed by a white gate. It's the type of pool where you can smell the chlorine from a mile a way.

An OLDER MAN, wearing a SWIM CAP and FLOATIES does laps at a snail's pace.

RESIDENTS, some super old, others just at the start of their descent into the end of their lives, walk by Casper and Leslie. They stare at her.

Leslie's eye wanders to a lifeguard stand. She makes eye contact with the MALE LIFEGUARD, in his late 20's. He looks at Casper, then shoots Leslie a skeptical look. Leslie turns away to see RESIDENTS who point and whisper.

CASPER

You can't fart under the covers without someone talking about it here.

A MAN with a plaid shirt tucked in, walks by. He greets them with a smile that's off-puttingly wide.

HELLO GUY

Hey! Hi, how's it going? Good good.

He keeps going, on to the next victim--

HELLO GUY (CONT'D)

Hey! Hi, how's it going? Good good.

He continues on and repeats this four more times. Leslie watches.

LESLIE

Wow that's--

CASPER

Enraging.

Leslie nods. They turn and see--

BRUNO (71), a leathery Italian man, with a face covered in skin cancer mole bandages, approaches. He tractor beams to Leslie and gives a kind, genuine smile.

BRUNO

Wow, it's... true.

He leans toward Casper.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Everyone's saying you ordered her on the internet.

CASPER

No. I picked her up on the highway.

BRUNO

(whispers)

A lady of the night?

LESLIE

No... just a lady of convenience.

Bruno smiles.

BRUNO

Well be careful... Ruth's pissed since she's not 55.

CASPER

She's my guest.

LESLIE

Who's Ruth?

CASPER

Neighbor.

BRUNO

Doesn't like young people. She's not the only one around here.

Bruno scratches his arm. Leslie notices.

LESLIE

Let me save you the co-pay.

She examines the scaley patch of skin.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Classic dermatitis, Cortisone twice daily.

Bruno stares at her for a beat and smiles.

BRUNO

Caring... like Cecelia.

Leslie furrows her brow, when--

TWO OLDER LADIES walk by--

OLD LADY #1

Shameful... just like Burt. Men always trade you in for a younger model--

Casper turns to the ladies

CASPER

Maybe if you didn't squeeze the life out of Burt like a boa constrictor, he wouldn't have. People don't trade in a car that runs well--

OLD LADY #2

Are you calling her a lemon?

CASPER

No... you did.

The ladies walk off disgusted. Casper laughs.

CASPER

We got some place to be.

BRUNO

I'm gonna catch some sun--

Bruno enters the pool.

LESLIE

He seems cool.

CASPER

Yeah, Bruno's alright.

In the distance, an AMBULANCE pulls up to one of the units. Leslie looks concerned.

CASPER (CONT'D)

You'll get used to that. Cecelia loved living here. She wanted to retire in a community... activities and other people. I always thought it was a fucking graveyard.

Leslie smiles.

INT. DINER - DAY

Leslie and Casper stand across from Emphysema Waitress, who stands hand on hip, behind the counter. She HACKS up a lung.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

You know I make my living on tips--

Casper and Leslie both nod.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS (CONT'D)

And when someone skips out on a check I have to pay that check. Why shouldn't I call the cops?

She HACKS again.

LESLIE

Because this is a grief stricken man. We're talking about his beloved dead wife's ashes.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

Yeah... So what? You don't think I got dead people in jars at home. Everyone has at least one dead person they loved in a jar.

(turns to Casper)

It's not my fault you carried it around and lost it.

CASPER

Lady, I'm sorry. I bought you double what the check was.

He hands her CASH. She takes it.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Now can I please have my wife?

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

Well the way I see it is... that's twenty for the actual cost of your bill.

She slams the TWENTY on the counter.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS (CONT'D)

An extra ten for tip--

Slams down a TEN.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS (CONT'D)

And then another ten for the inconvenience of me not
having enough money last night to buy a couple of cans of
Friskies for my cat, Lady Macbeth.

Slams another TEN.

LESLIE

Okay, that's fair.

EMPHYSEMA WAITRESS

What I don't see on this counter, is another twenty for the
safekeeping of the beloved urn you left behind. Which, if I
was a more heartless individual, I could've sold on
craigslist.

(beat)

A lot of freaks out there lookin' for urns--

Casper EXHALES, reaches into his pocket--

CASPER

Here's an extra forty.

Waitress smiles. HACKS into her hand. Then reaches under counter with the same hand
and places the urn on top of it.

Leslie cringes. Casper reaches for it, Leslie stops him.

LESLIE

Do you have a wet wipe?

He shakes his head and grabs the urn.

INT. SHITTY BAR -DAY

It's the sad day crowd.

Casper and Leslie walk in. Everyone's heads turn in unison, stare for a beat. Then they go back to drinking.

INT. SHITTY BAR - DAY

Casper and Leslie sit at the bar. Casper has a beer in front of him. Leslie, a water. In between the two, the urn.

LESLIE

So... what's the deal with the drinking?

BARTENDER shoots Leslie a look.

CASPER

What kind of question is that? I'm a drunk. That's what we do... drink.

LESLIE

But I'm assuming, by the excessive amount of doilies in the bathroom, that Cecelia probably wasn't happy with that.

CASPER

You're nosey, aren't you?

He stares at her for a beat. She smiles.

CASPER (CONT'D)

I got sober a month after we met, stayed that way for 48 years. Took a drink a month after she was gone and I'm gonna continue... probably until I die.

He takes a swig of his beer and eyes Leslie.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Have a drink.

LESLIE

Nah. I only drink at social events I don't want to be at. So that's a compliment.

CASPER

Just have one. It's rude to let someone drink alone.

She looks around.

LESLIE

You're not alone.

CASPER

But I'm not talking to any of these people. Come on...
what's one?

LESLIE

Jesus... with the old man peer pressure.

INT. SHITTY BAR - DAY

Casper and Leslie are shit-faced. Leslie turns to the camera.

LESLIE

I had more than one.

(turns to Casper)

Yeah... so I just took the chip rack and hurled it. Not
directly at the guy... but in his general direction.

Casper laughs.

CASPER

That's awful.

LESLIE

I know...

(beat)

But I think I can be pretty awful.

Casper stares at her for a beat. Then they both laugh too loud. Everyone in the bar watches -
they're too drunk for the other drunks.

CASPER

Besides the chip rack, what else makes you awful?

LESLIE

I'm skipping out on court ordered community service and
anger management, I've only had unsuccessful
relationships where I never really liked the other person...
like at all, yet they all still dumped me, and I sleep in my
parents' basement on an air mattress... So I have zero
ambition--

CASPER

Bullshit. Anyone that throws a rack of chips has ambition,
it's just misdirected.

(beat)

Your generation is funny.

LESLIE

(demo air quotes)

“You’re generation...” oh please. I don’t consider myself of my generation... I clip coupons.

CASPER

That just makes you a weird member of your generation, but you’re very much a member of it. You can’t help but be a product of the time your born. And for your generation... there’s all the opportunity in the world for most of you, yet you’re the most jaded. But really, you do nothing but post pictures of yourselves and think you have the right to be depressed. You didn’t earn it, like prior generations, through a series of crippling disappointments.

LESLIE

But you’re saying life is ultimately disappointing?

CASPER

Yes.

LESLIE

So doesn’t it make me smart if I know that from the onset and live my life accordingly?

He thinks, then nods.

CASPER

Guess that’s one way to see it.

LESLIE

It’s funny though, because when I was super young, I had this feeling I was special and meant for great things.

CASPER

That’s usually a sign of mental illness.

He stares for a beat, then laughs.

CASPER (CONT’D)

Special... That’s your first problem.

LESLIE

Or, maybe the only problem was that no one else agreed with me, including my parents.

Casper rolls his eyes.

CASPER

No one's parents loved them enough. Look at me. You think this is the product of unconditional love and encouragement?

Leslie laughs.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Truth is everyone can't be special.

LESLIE

Cecelia was special though? I mean, you can't even get rid of her ashes.

CASPER

Yeah... she was... special.

Beat. He turns away. His eyes water. Then he composes himself and diverts to Leslie.

CASPER (CONT'D)

But you might have to face the fact that you're incredibly ordinary.

LESLIE

But what? Ordinary people do extraordinary things every day? Thanks, but--

CASPER

No... ordinary people don't do extraordinary things everyday. They do ordinary things.

LESLIE

And I find that incredibly depressing.

CASPER

I can't say I disagree.

Leslie takes a breath.

LESLIE

See? This is why I stopped therapy.

CASPER

Same.

Casper smiles.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Maybe we're both awful?

LESLIE

Yep. Two hopeless cases.

Casper motions to the bartender-- Bartender gives the "cut off" gesture.

CASPER

Ahh, come on Glenn!

EXT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Again, Casper fumbles with the keys. Leslie turns to the neighboring window. The curtain slowly peels back. We see RUTH (66), stylish, put together, with at least one face lift. Leslie looks.

LESLIE

God, she doesn't quit.

The curtain shuts. Ruth disappears. Then--

The door swings open.

RUTH

Casper.

CASPER

Ruth.

RUTH

I've always been sympathetic to your loss but Leisure village has very strict rules. No one under fifty-five.

She turns to Leslie.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Especially internet vagrants--

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

Sherry 2.0-

Turns back to Ruth and holds out her hand.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Ruth... I'm Leslie.

Ruth doesn't shake.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So that's how we're gonna play it. I'm his guest. Is there a rule on having guests?

RUTH

Guests have all intentions of leaving. It appears from the condition that you arrived in -- which was for all appearance purposes, a mental hospital jumpsuit -- you won't be leaving anytime soon.

LESLIE

Just say I got out of a mental institution... Do you think someone of that nature needs to be outcast from a community, or welcomed with open arms?

RUTH

Rules are rules and we can't bend them for every unstable drifter seeking shelter. Our residents have had long careers and they're ready to relax in peace in the oasis of leisure the community's name promises.

LESLIE

And who says mental patients such as myself aren't seeking the same amenities? Are retirees only worthy of peace and quiet?

Ruth shakes her head and turns to Casper.

RUTH

Casper, I wish you would've attended that bereavement group I suggested. Moving someone in that looks like Cecelia isn't going to help you move on.

CASPER

I'd rather not sit in a circle and listen to people yap about losing something they'll never get back. Also, maybe I don't want to move on and that's my fucking right, Ruth.

Ruth's eyes go wide. It startles Leslie too.

CASPER (CONT'D)

And I'm surprised you have a problem with someone taking Cecelia's place. You seemed to have no problem taking hers on the Community board

Ruth turns around and leaves in a huff.

Casper feels around his coat pockets

CASPER (CONT'D)

Fuck!.

INT. SHITTY BAR - NIGHT

Casper and Leslie stand in front of Bartender Glenn.

GLENN

None of my business, but maybe next time leave the urn at home.

He slides the URN across the bar.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie, now in an old lady nightgown, makes a bed on the couch. She looks toward the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY- NIGHT

Leslie peers through the door into Casper's bedroom. His SNORES echo.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leslie turns on the faucet and fills a glass with water. She gulps a few sips, then looks around, eyes a recipe book on the counter. She opens it. The pages are filled with beautiful cursive - the old school type that only a ruler across the wrist from a nun, could produce.

She closes the book, then eyes the fridge. Under a magnet a HANDWRITTEN GROCERY LIST in the same penmanship. Leslie gulps down the rest of her water, takes a beat. Then returns to the faucet and refills the glass.

INT. CASPER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A glass of water sits on the end table.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Leslie shuts the door to Casper's room, then creeps down the hall and opens another door into--

INT. SPARE ROOM - NIGHT

A disorganized, dusty mess of Cecelia's purgatory belongings. A sewing machine, boxes of yarn, a stack of photo albums.

Leslie picks up an album. Thumbs through pictures of YOUNG CASPER and CECELIA. She puts down album.

On an end table, a small LED LAMP. On the white acrylic base it reads "HAPPY LIGHT: The original light therapy." She switches it on. It's bright. She cringes like a vampire, flips it off.

She eyes a small RED BOOK atop another pile. On the cover in gold lettering reads, "Not all those who wander are lost." She opens it.

CECELIA (V.O.)

September twenty-fifth, 2016. It's hard to believe that in all my 74 years on this earth I never kept a diary. Well here it goes--

Leslie smirks. Turns to camera.

LESLIE

Is this wrong?

She shuts the diary. Puts it under her arm. Then unplugs the Happy Light, picks it up and walks toward the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie lies on the couch, open diary in hand. The Happy Light, sits on the end table, now a reading light.

CECELIA (V.O.)

Today was pretty ordinary. I made Casper's favorite meal... same old meat loaf and it seemed to make him happy for a bit. I taught aerobics, did some light cleaning--

Leslie turns the page.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - DAY

Leslie and Casper walk toward the pool gate. Leslie's in a one piece matronly swimsuit. It's baggy and revealing for the wrong reasons. Casper in swim trunks, a cooler in one hand.

Old Swimmer does his snail laps, while other lounging residents turn toward Casper and Leslie and grumble. The LIFEGUARD (same from the previous day) HENRY 28, still cute in a boyish way, despite the white Zinc on his nose, eyes Leslie and Casper as they settle into two lounge chairs.

Casper opens the cooler and hands her a can of Coors. They crack them open in sync. It's loud.

On an adjacent lounge chair, A CRAZY WOMAN, with blunt bangs, looks up for her needle pointing. She shakes her head, turns to her STUBBY FRIEND friend--

CRAZY WOMAN

You can scan a picture of your dead wife and they match you with a hooker that looks just like her.

STUBBY FRIEND

Internet... full of filth.

Casper and Leslie turn toward each other and cheers.

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

Early retirement... who needs the whole career part?

The same Hello Guy walks by their chairs.

HELLO GUY

Hey! How's it going? Good Good.

He continues on without stopping, on repeat like the Energizer Bunny. Leslie watches, equal parts awe and disgust--

HELLO GUY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Hey! How's it going? Good Good.

She shakes her head, then turns to Casper.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So what's with that other room?

CASPER

Cecelia's junk. I don't even know what's in there. When we moved from the house she couldn't get rid of stuff. She was kind of a hoarder.

He slugs his beer. Lifeguard Henry climbs down his stand and approaches them.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Ugh, this dweeb.

HENRY

Heard that Casper.

CASPER

What?

HENRY

You know there's a rule about open containers near the pool.

CASPER

Oh wow! There is?

HENRY

That's sarcasm.

(beat)

One container was bad enough, but now it's two.

He eyes Leslie.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Why do you keep breaking the rules?

CASPER

Because I don't care.

(beat)

(MORE)

CASPER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I just can't take you seriously as an authority figure. Especially with that stuff on your nose.

Leslie laughs.

HENRY

It's zinc. Listen, I have to write you up again. Your violations are piling up. Eventually, I have to take them to Ruth.

Leslie registers this.

CASPER

So stop writing them.

HENRY

You could get kicked out.

Casper stands up.

CASPER

I have to take a piss.

He exits. Henry turns to Leslie.

HENRY

And you are?

LESLIE

Leslie.

HENRY

Surprised you didn't say "enabler."

LESLIE

Sassy.

(beat)

So how many violations does he have?

HENRY

A lot. And that's the pool alone. He's also urinated in every hole of the putt putt course and the horseshoe pit.

LESLIE

Does anyone actually still play horseshoes?

HENRY

Yes. They do.

(beat)

I'd just hate to see him get kicked out. He's already lost his son.

Leslie furrows her brow.

LESLIE

Him and Cecelia had a son?

HENRY

No, he still does, Brandon. But he stopped visiting because of the drinking. This might be fun and games for you but you're taking advantage of a troubled man because you look like his dead wife. It's wrong... And creepy.

LESLIE

I offer him friendship and companionship.

HENRY

Friends usually have your best interest in mind. You could at least try to be half the person Cecelia was... maybe he'd find a reason to stop drinking.

Henry walks away. Leslie takes this in, when--

HELLO GUY

Hey! How's it going? Good Good.

He shuffles past. Leslie shakes her head.

INT. CASPER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Casper and Leslie sit on the couch SUNBURNED. On the TV, WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

LESLIE

Should've checked the expiration date on the sunblock.

ON SCREEN: Vanna stands in front of the unsolved puzzle. No letters have been turned over. Casper slugs his beer.

CASPER

(yells)

It's "Surf City Here We Come."

LESLIE

Impressive.

CASPER

We watched every night.

BACK TO TV: There's enough letters where the puzzle answer should be clear. The WOMAN struggles to guess the puzzle--

CASPER (CONT'D)

Surf city here we come!

He EXHALES.

CASPER (CONT'D)

She's retarded.

LESLIE

Can't say that word anymore.

CASPER

Well they should at least allow it, if only to describe this woman, because--

He squints and leans toward the TV.

CASPER (CONT'D)

Calista is retarded.

Calista finally takes a guess

CALISTA (O.S.)

(confidently)

Surf Clay Where We Go.

BUZZER. Casper turns to Leslie and smiles. Leslie nods in agreement

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE CLUBHOUSE - DAY

A run down brown building - 70s architecture. A sunburned Leslie walks through the front doors.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Leslie stands face to face with, CLAUDETTE (57), wears clothing that's at least three sizes too small. She's behind a counter with the phone to her ear. She hangs up.

CLAUDETTE

It will be at least an hour. Ruth's very busy.

LESLIE

I'll wait.

Leslie eyes a DEAD PLANT on the counter.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Looks like he needs some water.

Claudette eyes burnt Leslie.

CLAUDETTE

Looks like you do too.

Leslie fake smiles and sits down. She picks up a copy of "FISHERMAN'S WEEKLY" and opens it. Unamused, Claudette picks up the phone.

CLAUDETTE (CONT'D)

(whispers)

She's not leaving.

Leslie lowers magazine and smiles at camera.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY - DAY

Microwave HUMS. Leslie's still buried in FISHERMAN'S WEEKLY.

LESLIE

Who knew there was enough riveting fishing news to fill the pages of a weekly publication?

The microwave DINGS. Claudette peels back the plastic on a STOFFER'S CHOICE.

Claudette digs her fork in and shovels it into her mouth. SMACK. SMACK. SMACK. Leslie looks on in horror, then at the wall clock as it TICKS. Leslie swallows hard, SLAMS down the magazine. Stands up and marches to Claudette's counter. Opens her mouth, when--

Claudette's PHONE RINGS.

INT. RUTH'S OFFICE - DAY

Ruth sits behind a barren oversized desk. Leslie in the chair in front of her.

RUTH

Thanks for waiting. We've just been so busy. A lot on the community agenda.

Leslie looks around the desolate office, then back to Ruth.

LESLIE

Let's just get down to it. After the other night's rude confrontation about my presence at Leisure Village, I did some research and it appears there's an 80/20 rule - 80 percent of the residents in 55 and older communities have to be over 55. I hardly think my presence is tipping the scales.

RUTH

That's where you're categorically mistaken. That's the Federal Fair Housing Act and it's just a minimum. Leisure Village sets their own rules and we require 100 percent of our residents to be 55 and older. You can of course petition for a hearing... But just so you know, I've evicted eight month olds.

LESLIE

And you're proud of this?

RUTH

No. But rules are rules. We made one exception and it was only because the person was beloved by the rest of the community.

LESLIE

That wasn't the eight month old?
(to camera)
Community? More like Lord of the Flies.

RUTH

Do you think anyone here is going to care if you get evicted? Everyone loved Cecelia, not Casper.

Leslie takes a beat, turns to camera

LESLIE

What Ruth doesn't realize is I take that as a challenge.
(back to Ruth)
Where do I file this petition?

RUTH

Here.

Ruth doesn't move.

LESLE

Okay I'd like to file a petition.

Ruth opens her drawer, takes out a FORM and slides it across the desk. Leslie smiles.

LESLIE

Do you have a clipboard?

Ruth opens her other drawer, removes a CLIPBOARD and slides it across.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

A pen?

Turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I can do this all day.

Ruth slides a pen across the desk. Leslie takes it and grins.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE - DAY

Leslie walks. Up ahead she notices a group of residents gathering around some sort of commotion.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE - PUTT PUTT COURSE- DAY

Leslie pushes through the crowd and sees Casper urinate on the eighth hole. Everyone shakes their heads with disapproval.

Leslie finally reaches him. He smiles at her.

CASPER

Just using the bathroom.

LESLIE

Yep you're definitely going to the bathroom. Come on let's go.

Leslie turns around.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

What? Like half of you aren't wearing Depends?

Turns to camera, cringes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Cheap shot, I know.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY ESTABLISHING

Casper's white impala pulls into a yellow zone.

INT. CASPER'S CAR - DAY

Leslie, in driver's seat, puts the car in park.

LESLIE

I'm gonna run in and grab a few things. Promise you won't move?

She turns to Casper, he's already passed out--

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Great.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

CLOSE ON: Cecelia's grocery list. Widen to reveal - Leslie scans the aisle for the items.

INT. GROCERY STORE /CHECK OUT - DAY

Leslie stands at the register. The CASHIER, a petite man, nametag reads "EDWIN," scans her items at a glacial pass. He stares at Leslie. She eyes the "EXPRESS" lane sign and SIGHS.

EDWIN

I'm sorry, it's just you look exactly like this older woman that used to come in.

LESLIE

Yeah... one of those faces...

She motions to herself.

EDWIN

She was just so lovely.

He stops scanning items.

EDWIN (CONT'D)

But you know what I could never understand is why she was with her husband? The things I see at this job.

He starts to scan an item, then stops.

EDWIN (CONT'D)

Been checking for twenty years now and I can tell you anything you need to know about a couple just by their minute long interaction at the register... And that ladies husband was one of those people who was just a liability.

Leslie takes an impatient breath. She turns around and sees a line form behind her. Edwin still hasn't scanned another item.

EDWIN (CONT'D)

You know difficult to the core. And she was just sweet as an apple pie. It's funny how that happens, you know?

LESLIE

What?

EDWIN

Sweet people end up with the sour folks.

LESLIE

Yeah.

He goes to scan, temporary relief for Leslie. Then he stops. She EXHALES.

EDWIN

Or maybe that's the way life works? Maybe we need both to balance each other out?

He scans. Leslie reaches into her bag, feels around.

EDWIN (CONT'D)

Or maybe, we all have a little sour and sweet within us?

LESLIE
(distracted)
Yeah... maybe...
(beat)
Aha!

She pulls out a COUPON, hands it to him. He smiles, then scans it. An ominous BEEP.

EDWIN
Now what do we have here?
(examines coupon)
Oh, would you look at that. I'm sorry, it only applies to a
specific brand--

LESLIE
But it doesn't say that on the coupon.

EDWIN
I know, I'm sorry darlin'... it's just one of those things...
what can ya do right?

Leslie looks at him-- He looks at her and flashes the sort of genuine smile that can diffuse a bomb.

EDWIN (CONT'D)
That'll be thirty six, seventy five.

She smiles, reaches into her bag, hands over some cash.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Leslie approaches the car. It's empty.

LESLIE
Goddaman it, Casper--

She does quick scan of the shopping center.

-CVS

-TONY'S NAIL SPA

-THE TATTLE TALE BAR

Bingo.

INT. TATTLE TALE BAR - DAY

Leslie enters. The place is as shitty as the name promises. Casper is just getting settled at the bar.

LESLIE

Come on, let's go--

CASPER

I just got here.

The bartender slides a beer in front of him.

LESLIE

Come on, I went grocery shopping. I'm gonna cook you dinner.

Casper stares for a beat, then CACKLES. She shakes her head, picks up his beer and turns to the crowd.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Who wants an opened, but untouched Coors?

A couple of guys at the end of the bar raise their hands. She slides the beer down the bar, toward them.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Let's go. I'm making--

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

CLOSE ON: A pathetic BURNT MEATLOAF. Casper and Leslie chew loudly.

CASPER

Not Cecelia's.

(beat)

But once you chew threw the outer layer, it has its merits.

LESLE

Thanks.

Beat. Casper sips a beer.

LESLIE

So... Henry mentioned you have a son?

He slams the bottle down, shakes his head.

CASPER

That dweeb can't mind his own business, sort of like you.

LESLIE

Is it true, he doesn't speak to you?

CASPER

Yeah, but it's not the first time. He's been a bit of a drama queen his whole life.

LESLIE

Maybe he's just worried?

CASPER

I'm the parent, he should let me do the worrying.

LESLIE

Either way, maybe some meetings aren't a bad idea? You did used to go, right?

Casper drops his fork and turns to her.

CASPER

You cook one shitty dinner and you know what's good for me? Why don't you go back home and do your community service? Or anything for that matter?

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

He has a point.

(back to Casper)

But Henry mentioned all the violations--

Casper laughs.

CASPER

They're not gonna kick me out. And don't think I don't know this is about you too. If I go, then you go.

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

Another valid point.

CASPER

Which by the way, our little arrangement here needs some ground rules. Not to use Ruth's words, but you are a freeloader--

LESLIE

It's a harsh term, but yes I am not paying rent and I have no source of income.

CASPER

I don't care about the rent. This works... Meals, Wheel of Fortune... and you know the other stuff Cecelia used to do.

Leslie nods.

LESLIE

Okay... yeah.

They both chew in silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Casper's SNORES echo from the other room. Leslie on her couch bed. She removes Cecelia's diary from the couch cushion and opens it.

CECELIA (V.O.)

Is it horrible to admit I feel trapped in my relationship with my husband? He's so stubborn.

Leslie tilts her head, surprised by this.

CECELIA (V.O.)

It's an odd thing to get to the end of your time on earth and finally see the relationship you devoted most of your life too isn't quite what you thought it was. You know, it's like when you have a light fixture in your house that's always been there... it was there when you moved in... and you know it's there, but you never actually take the time to look at it. And then one day you look at it and you realize it's actually quite hideous. Well... that's how I feel about my marriage. Thank god for step aerobics.

Leslie's eyes widen.

EXT. POOL - DAY

Henry skims the pool. Old Swimmer does his snail laps.

Leslie approaches.

LESLIE

Hey--

HENRY

Not drinking today?

LESLIE

Actually, I have an inquiry.

He stops skimming, turns to her.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

What would it take for me to teach an aerobics class here?

HENRY

You want to teach a aerobics?

LESLIE

I want to contribute to this community.

HENRY

Are you athletic?

LESLIE

I'm not unathletic--

HENRY

I'm not sure what that means.

LESLIE

It means I wanna teach step aerobics.

HENRY

Ruth took over for Cecelia. It's her class now.

LESLIE

Wow, total "single white female" thing happening with Ruth.

HENRY

Speak for yourself.

LESLIE

Touche. When is it?

HENRY

Tuesday, Thursday--

LESLIE

Thanks.

HENRY

You're welcome.

Silence - one of those where you don't know if the conversation is over or not.

LESLIE

So... what are you doing rest of the day?

HENRY

Skimming the pool.

She nods.

LESLIE

Cool.

HENRY

Not really.

She shakes her head.

LESLIE

No, it's not. I don't know why I said that.

He laughs. Leslie diverts her eyes to the pool. In the water, a large beetle clings desperately for life.

Henry notices, bends down and cups it in his hand and puts the beetle onto the pavement.

HENRY

There ya go buddy.

He stands up. The beetle crawls back to the pool and plops in. Henry scoops him out again. Leslie laughs.

LESLIE

Looks like he doesn't know what's good for him.

HENRY

Might as well be a human.

Leslie smirks.

LESLIE

Thanks for the info. See ya around.

Henry looks up.

HENRY

Yeah, no problem.

Leslie walks away. Henry watches, a slight smile on his face.

INT. RECREATION CENTER - FITNESS ROOM - DAY

Leslie enters in Cecelia's old work out clothes. FIFTEEN LADIES, ranging from 55 to upper eighties, stand in front of their steppers, and ONE MAN.

They all turn and look at Leslie. She waves.

Ruth stands at the front of the room with a headset on.

RUTH

I won't be making any adjustments to the routine for beginners. We're at a level two now, so...

Ruth turns to Leslie.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Step at your own risk.

Leslie walks over to a free stepper, turns to camera.

LESLIE

What Ruth doesn't know is I went to public school and in public school we spend one entire quarter... that's three full months, where three menopausal ladies wearing wind pants, lead 90 prepubescent girls in doing step aerobics.

(beat)

It looks like one of those flash mobs prison inmates in the Philippines do set to--

SFX: THRILLER plays. Ruth steps away from the BOOMBOX and approaches her stepper.

RUTH

Let's get those arm circles going.

Everyone does arm circles. Leslie follows along.

LESLIE

(to camera)

Arm circles? Puh LEASE.

The fitness room is encased with glass windows that see into the rest of the recreation center.

Henry walks by. He turns and eyes Leslie. He smiles.

Leslie's head turns, they make eye contact. She smiles.

RUTH

Okay now lets do some knee bends.

Leslie follows with ease, Ruth eyes Leslie, annoyed she's keeping up.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Let's really kick it up a notch--

(beat)

Repeat knee bends--

(beat)

One, two...

INT. RECREATION CENTER - FITNESS ROOM - DAY

Ruth still does knee bends.

RUTH

Twenty-five, twenty six--

Leslie isn't even winded. Ruth purses her lips.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Now we're gonna try something new, and it's a little difficult, so see if you can keep up--

(beat)

We're gonna take it... around the world.

Ruth circles the stepper. Leslie follows suit with an exaggerated arm movement.

Henry laughs. Leslie laughs.

He waves goodbye. Leslie waves goodbye, when--

A SCREAM

At the front of the room, Ruth lies on the ground.

Henry's eyes widen. He runs for help.

Ruth writhes with pain, holds her ankle, as THRILLER blares--

RUTH (CONT'D)

Step on! I'll be okay--

Ruth is not okay. Leslie sees her moment, heads to the front.

LESLIE

Okay everyone, let's regroup--

RUTH

That's not necessary--

LESLIE

It's okay Ruth. I got this--

Leslie grins at Ruth. From the floor, Ruth grabs at Leslie's ankles. Leslie shakes her off.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Ruth, do you want to leave these people burning only half the calories they came to burn?

(turns to room)

Okay everyone... Let's step in place in front of our steppers and take a nice cleansing breath.

(takes breath)

I'm Leslie, and my step aerobics philosophy is all about when and how you use the stepper. A lot of instructors overuse it--

She looks at Ruth, then back to the room.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

It's really the combo of floor moves and stepper that gets the heart rate going.. Show of hands, who here knows how to grape vine?

Half the room raises their hand.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Okay, good. It's super easy.

Henry enters with an PARAMEDIC, who wheels in a stretcher.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Try to tune out all the distractions--

Paramedic puts Ruth on stretcher. Leslie turns up the music.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Follow me. Step, over under over clap.

She claps, then moves in the other direction.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Over, under, over... double clap.

Everyone gets into it, including the same two pool ladies.

CRAZY LADY

Are you sweating?

STUBBY FRIEND

Yes. Even my groin.

CRAZY LADY

Hate to admit it, but--

CRAZY LADY

She's good.

STUBBY FRIEND

She's good.

CRAZY LADY (CONT'D)

I told you, Ruth was in auto-pilot.

BACK TO LESLIE:

LESLIE

Who here likes apple picking?

Some audible CHEERS.

STUBBY FRIEND

Fall is my favorite season.

Leslie eyes her.

LESLIE

Mine too.

She turns to the camera and winks. Then reaches diagonally upward with her right hand--

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Pick the apple. Put it in the bag.

She takes her opposite hand and lowers it diagonally across her body to "Put it in the bag."

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Pick the apple, put it in the bag.

Leslie eyes Crazy Lady, points at her.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I see that form... Exquisite.

Leslie turns. Through the glass Ruth is being carted off on a stretcher. She holds out her hands, desperate. Leslie waves and smiles.

EXT. RECREATION CENTER -DAY

Leslie exits the door. Henry sits on a bench next to a trash can his back to the front door.

She walks past, not noticing it's him

HENRY

That was pretty impressive in there.

Her back toward him, she smiles and turns around.

LESLIE

Oh yeah?

HENRY

There was definite murmurings as people filed out--

Leslie laughs.

LESLIE

Oh there were “murmurings?”

HENRY

Yes, murmurings.

LESLIE

And what did these murmurings say?

HENRY

I heard one “best class ever.”

LESLIE

Oh wow, that’s alarming.

HENRY

Looks like you’ve found your calling.

LESLIE

Step aerobics?

Leslie laughs.

LESLIE (CONT’D)

Over one hundred thousand in college debt... just to do step aerobics?

HENRY

I’m a lifeguard.

LESLIE

I mean, I’m not judging. I rejected a promotion once and then asked for it back and then got fired.

He laughs.

HENRY

You know, I don’t hate being a lifeguard. And I think statistically 70% of people hate their jobs. So that’s good at least.

LESLIE

To not be one of the masses? Yes, I’d say it is.

He smiles.

HENRY

So a lot of the younger employees here meet up at the clubhouse after hours on Fridays. We hang around, play cards-- You should come sometime.

LESLIE

Okay yeah... maybe I will.

Ruth's receptionist, Claudette, waddles out of the building, dead plant in hand. She heads to a trash can opposite them.

HENRY

Hey Claudette!

She turns.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'll take that.

She looks at the plant, then him. Then puts it on the ground beside the trash can and walks back inside.

LESLIE

You do see it's dead.

HENRY

It's not. It just needs some help. People give up on Orchids way too easily. They're actually very resilient.

LESLIE

Oh, is that so?

He smiles, nods. She smiles.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I should go.

HENRY

Well, I'll see ya around.

She walks away, smiles to herself. Turns and looks at the camera. It's like she's been caught--

LESLIE

(defensive)

What?

Turns away, continues to walk.

MONTAGE:

SHOTS OF LESLIE SETTling INTO LEISURE VILLAGE:

- Walking, smiling and waving at residents.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - DAY

Leslie on a lounge chair, reads a copy of "PREVENTION"

REVEAL: Inside the magazine is Cecelia's diary.

CECELIA (V.O.)

I find it ironic that everyone moves to places like Leisure Village so they don't have to be alone. I know I did. But I realized there's no place lonelier than a 55 and older community.

Leslie looks up from the diary. Eyes Old Man Swimmer, and several other residents who all look alone.

Her eyes move to the lifeguard stand. Henry smiles at her.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

CLOSE ON: Cecelia's Recipe box. Leslie's hand flips through recipe index cards.

SHOTS OF VARIOUS RECIPE CARDS FOR:

-Roast Pork Belly

-Stew

-Chicken Parm

-Sausage and Peppers

-Pasta Fagioli

VARIOUS SHOTS OF:

- Leslie, pulling each of these dishes out of the oven, cooked to perfection.

- Casper sits at the table, eats, wipes his mouth, drinks his beer.

INT. RECREATION CENTER - FITNESS ROOM - DAY

Leslie teaches step aerobics. She's into it and hands on with Crazy Lady and Stubby friend.

CECELIA (V.O.)

It's amazing what's inside of you if you just let it spill out.

EXT. RECREATION CENTER - DAY

On the bench, in front of a LAP TOP.

ON SCREEN: Leslie sets up dating profiles for Crazy Lady and Stubby friend.

She looks happy and friendly, and not like Leslie.

CECELIA (V.O.)

It's like this diary has opened a portal to another part of my identity I didn't know existed. Maybe, I'm not that nice?

Ruth enters slowly on crutches, hands Leslie an ENVELOPE. Leslie opens it. CLOSE ON: "Eviction hearing."

CECELIA (V.O.)

I'm just gonna say it... I hate Ruth. She pretends to be my friend, but I guarantee if anything were to happen to me she'd be the first replace me.

Ruth smirks at Leslie, then crutches away painfully slow.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

TV ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Wheel...of Fortune!

Casper and Leslie sit in front of the TV. They eat with TV trays.

CASPER

Do you mind getting me a drink?

Leslie gets up.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Leslie opens fridge. Puts her hand on a beer--

CASPER (O.C.)

Ginger ale!

Leslie smiles, grabs a can and shuts the fridge.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

VARIOUS SHOTS OF:

-Leslie clearing away a succession of dinner plates.

-Casper falling asleep on the couch, while Leslie sneaks out the front door.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - NIGHT

Leslie, on a lounge chair, reads the diary using a flashlight.

CECELIA (V.O.)

At the end of your life you're sort of forced out of hiding. You have to make peace with whatever you did on this earth and I think for most people sadly, it's not much. And I think I'm one of those people. I'm not talking about big grand things. Just being able to say I tried. I felt. I lived. I've been at most polite and pleasing. How sad is that?

Leslie looks up at the stars. Shuts the diary and jumps in the pool. She swims under water, then pops up for air.

Her eyes widen. Bruno stands by the lounge chair, Cecelia's diary in his hands.

LESLIE

Hey, that's not yours.

BRUNO

Not yours either.

He smirks. They stare at each other for a beat.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

Have a good night, Leslie.

He exits.

END MONTAGE

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Leslie pushes the cart.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CANDY AISLE - DAY

Serve yourself by the pound candy section. Casper takes a scoop of Gummy Worms and puts them in his pocket.

A pimple faced teen employee prices canned goods nearby. He eyes Casper. Casper makes eye contact with him.

CASPER

I just watched you text, tweet, twat, whatever it is you people do, for 15 minutes before you picked up your first can. Don't think I won't tell your manager that--

The kid looks away. Leslie approaches with the cart--

LESLIE

Ready?

INT. CHECK OUT - DAY

Edwin scans items like a robot, stares at Leslie and Casper like he's seeing a ghost.

CASPER

What are you looking at?

Leslie smiles.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY- NIGHT

LOUD SNORES. Leslie peaks her head into Casper's bedroom. He's out cold. She shuts the door.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Leslie opens cabinet, eyes Cecelia's lipsticks. She selects one and applies it. Shrugs at the results, hits light switch.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie flips off the Happy Light, then tiptoes to front door in the dark.

EXT. COMMUNITY CLUB HOUSE - NIGHT

Leslie approaches the door, takes a BREATH, then reaches for the handle. She stops and turns to camera.

LESLIE

These types of social interactions have never really been my forte.

She panics, turns around, speed walks away when--

HENRY (O.S.)

Hey!

She cringes, turns back. Henry greets her with a smile.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Sorry, we keep it locked. Glad you came.

She smiles.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

A GROUP OF YOUNGER STAFF, greasy hair and faces, sit around a circular table. They drink beers and play MAGIC THE GATHERING.

Henry and Leslie are off to the side. They sit on the floor and lean against the wall, each with a beer in hand.

LESLIE

When you said cards, I assumed poker.

HENRY

Nope... nerd cards.

(beat)

But it's really a game of strategy, maybe even more so than poker.

LESLIE

Oh I'm sure it is. I mean wizardry, warlocks and whatnot must have strategy whilst summoning the dark arts.

HENRY

Are you making fun?

LESLIE

Just a little bit--

HENRY

But that's sort of your thing so I shouldn't be offended.
You're one of those people that criticizes things... You're a hater.

LESLIE

I resent that. I only hate on things that deserved to be hated on.

HENRY

So everything?

LESLIE

Not my fault most things are terrible.

She smirks and sips her beer.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm surprised Ruth lets you guys hang here.

Henry averts his eyes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Oh my god. Ruth doesn't know.

She playfully slaps his arm.

HENRY

Well she doesn't not know--

LESLIE

What does that mean?

HENRY

Ruth doesn't know.

LESLIE

That's what I thought.

(flirty sing mocks)

Henry's breaking the rules.... Henry's breaking the rules.

Henry smiles. His gaze holds on Leslie a little longer, it's like they could kiss. She smiles, then turns to camera

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for this nauseating display. I am just as uncomfortable as you are with the thought of you seeing me act girly and cutsie. So, please... look away if you must.

Back to Henry.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I like rebel Henry.

HENRY

You do?

LESLIE

Yeah. You're not like--
(nerd demo)

Excuse me sir, you need to put away that beer. You more like...

(demo playing cards)

Excuse me sir, I see your one gold warlock spell and raise you a fireball from a magic gargoyle. And fuck you Ruth, I'm drinking a beer!

Henry laughs.

HENRY

That's your impression of me?

LESLIE

Yes.

HENRY

It's bad... and not how you play Magic.

LESLIE

Now who's the hater?

HENRY

You wanna know what you're like--

LESLIE

Oh you're gonna do an impression of me?

Henry laughs.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

This should be great. Let's see--

HENRY

Hi, I'm Leslie and I act tough and pretend I know everything and don't care about anything, but really I'm just a scared little girl who's afraid to grow up--

Leslie looks pained for a beat, then forces a laugh.

LESLIE

Ha... that's good. You got me.

Silent beat. They both take sips of their beers.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I should go.

She gets up.

HENRY

Wait, I made it awkward.

LESLIE

What? Come on, no.

(beat)

I just have to be up early. Casper and Cecelia do early breakfast. I really have him on a routine now. I think he's totally stopped drinking.

Henry nods--

HENRY

That's good.

LESLIE

Okay well, I'll see you around.

She gets up and walks away--

Henry shakes his head. He knows something is off.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's dark. The front door swings open. Leslie tip toes in, when--

The Happy Light flicks on. Casper sits in the recliner. Leslie jumps.

LESLIE

Jesus Christ, Casper.

CASPER

Where were you?

LESLIE

I went for a walk.

CASPER

For, four hours?

LESLIE

A long walk.

She eyes a beer on the end table--

CASPER

It was just one--

LESLIE

Doesn't smell like one.

A beat. Casper EXHALES, shakes his head.

CASPER

I... I..

LESLIE

Let's just go to bed.

Casper turns toward the bedroom, he turns back--

CASPER

Can you lay next to me for a little bit? I don't want to be alone.

INT. CASPER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the four post queen bed, Casper and Leslie both lay awake on their backs and stare at the ceiling. She looks over at him to her right, then rolls to the left toward the camera--

LESLIE

I mean what does Henry know?

Casper rolls over to the right. They're back to back.

LESLE

Or maybe he's right? Maybe I'm that transparent? Has my life thus far just been one emotional temper tantrum? Do I have to pretend I know everything in order to hide the fact that I know absolutely nothing?

She rolls on to her back. Her expression, now worried.

Casper rolls over to face her. He opens his eyes.

CASPER

(whisper)

Hey.

Leslie rolls over to face him. He takes a breath--

CASPER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Before... I got worried you left--

LESLIE

(whispers)

Like for good?

CASPER

(whispers)

Yeah... it's been nice having you around despite a few annoying things about you.

Leslie smiles.

LESLIE

(whispers)

I didn't leave. Also why are we whispering? No one can hear us.

She glances at the camera. He laughs.

They stare at each other for a long beat. He leans in, Leslie's eyes widen. He kisses her, just a peck. She freezes. Then--

He kisses her again, this time there's tongue. She kisses back but her eyes are open the entire time, panic stricken.

His eyes open, his eyes widen. As if he realizes what he's actually done. He pulls away--
Uncomfortable silence.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie sits on the couch, stares straight ahead. She flicks the Happy Light on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie sits, diary in hand.

CECELIA (V.O.)

I think today was the first time I've felt alive in decades...
Truly. Remember how I said this diary was sort of a portal
to this other part of myself I didn't know existed? And
maybe, it's a bad part? Well, I think I was right.

Leslie shoots camera a skeptical look, turns back to diary.

CECELIA (V.O.)

It's crazy...how something that you know is wrong can
also make you feel so good.

Leslie turns the page voraciously.

CECELIA (V.O.)

Today... after forty-eight years I broke the vow I thought I
held most sacred to me--

Leslie looks at the camera--

LESLIE

I should stop reading--

She shuts book.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I can't stop reading--

Opens book, dives back in--

CECELIA (V.O.)

I cheated on my husband.

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

Should've stopped reading.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Casper and Leslie sit in silence. They eat breakfast.

Leslie picks up a pitcher, fake smiles--

LESLIE

Fresh squeezed juice?

He pushes his glass toward her.

CASPER

Listen... I was drunk.

Leslie doesn't pour, instead she's deep in thought--

CASPER (CONT'D)

Hello?

LESLIE

What? Oh?

She pours juice.

CASPER

Last night when I, you know--

LESLIE

Oh, it's fine, it--

CASPER

Was a slip up. It doesn't have to make things weird--

LESLIE

No, it doesn't.

CASPER

And I think it's just I was in a bad place and you really pulled me out of it. Just like Cecelia used to, so I was confused. It won't happen again...

LESLIE

Okay... good.

Long beat.

CASPER

So the thing is... I invited my son Brandon for dinner tonight.

LESLIE

Oh.

CASPER

Yeah... well I mean it was when I had two weeks. But I don't want to cancel, so can we just--

LESLIE

Pretend last night didn't happen?

CASPER

Yeah.

LESLIE

Probably for the best all around.

Leslie eyes her bag on the counter, the diary peaks out.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But I'm gonna head to the rec center early today. Working on a new routine. Whoever said older people were creatures of habit did not examine their thirst for fresh aerobics moves--

She laughs loud, gets up and grabs bag.

CASPER

You know, even though last night was technically a relapse, I'm feeling good--

LESLIE

Good. So good... that you feel good. Good, Good good.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - DAY

Leslie rushes passed Hello Guy.

HELLO GUY

Good Good.

Leslie approaches lifeguard stand, looks up at Henry.

LESLIE

Can we talk?

He hops down.

HENRY

Yeah sure. Is it about the other night? Listen, I'm--

LESLIE

No, no it's not. It's about Cecelia.

Bruno lounges nearby. He looks over.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

(whisper)

Can we go somewhere private?

HENRY

I'm on duty.

He looks out into the pool. Only Old Man Swimmer does laps--

LESLIE

I mean he's wearing floaties--

HENRY

Fine. One minute.

INT. CLUB HOUSE -DAY

Leslie holds Cecelia's diary. Henry makes a face--

HENRY

With who?

LESLIE

That's the thing she doesn't say.

HENRY

Hmm, well maybe Casper already knows about it?

LESLIE

No way.

HENRY

Why not?

LESLIE

Because he still can't even spread her ashes. No way he knows.

HENRY

Does he even know she kept a diary?

LESLIE

I don't think so.

HENRY

Why are you reading her diary?

LESLIE

We can debate the moral implications later, but did you ever hear any rumors about her having an affair?

HENRY

No, never.

His PHONE ALARM goes off

HENRY (CONT'D)

I should get back--

LESLIE

You set a timer?

HENRY

What? I said one minute.

Leslie smiles, shakes her head.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - DAY

In the distance Leslie and Henry stare at Old Man Swimmer, who floats, completely still.

LESLIE
He's gonna move.

HENRY
I don't--

LESLIE
He's just taking a break.

Henry takes off toward him and dives into the pool.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - DAY

Ambulance lights flash. CORONER TRUCK pulls up in front.

Leslie and Henry stand next to a COP.

LESLIE
Yes, we were standing here and he stopped swimming.

COP
You both were here?

LESLIE
Yes.

Cop looks to Henry, who shifts his eyes.

Leslie nudges him.

HENRY
Yes.

STONER PARAMEDIC walks over

STONER PARAMEDIC
Looks like a heart attack.

He looks to Henry, who has his head in his hands.

STONER PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)
Honestly dude, if the instant CPR she said you performed
didn't work, no way he even stood a chance.

Henry swallows hard. Leslie smiles, pats him on the back.

LESLIE

See? We did all we could do.

COP

Yes, but I wouldn't smile about it.

STONER PARAMEDIC

Yeah... dude is still dead.

Henry shakes his head.

EXT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leslie returns. Karen and John sit out front. Leslie's eyes widen--

LESLIE

Whaaat... are you guys doing here?

JOHN

I think that's a question you need to answer first.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Karen and John sit across from Casper and Leslie.

JOHN

You're hooking?

LESLIE

And of course I'm not hooking. And no one says hooking anymore.

JOHN

Well kids used to become responsible adults, not move in with old men and dress like their dead wives... current trends mean nothing to me.

Janet puts her hand on John's arm.

JANET

What your father is wondering is why are you living with such an older gentlemen?

(turns to Casper)

No offense, it's just--

CASPER

Non-taken.

JANET

(whispers to Leslie)

Is he a sugar daddy? Because I saw on 20/20, young girls are doing this because of all the college debt--

LESLIE

How did you find me?

JOHN

Who pays your cell phone bill?

Leslie shakes her head

CASPER

Why don't you both stay for dinner? Leslie's making Pot Roast.

Janet and John look at each other and BURST INTO LAUGHTER.

DOORBELL rings. Casper heads to door,

BRANDON, 48, chip on his shoulder, opens the door--

CASPER (CONT'D)

Leslie, my son Brandon.

LESLIE

Hi Brandon.

Brandon looks at Leslie. He's slack-jawed.

She waves with an uncomfortable smile.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Silence. Loud chewing and silverware scraping. Leslie's parents stare at Casper. Brandon stares at Leslie.

Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

I should say something--
(turns to Brandon)
Well...it's nice to finally meet you.

Brandon slams down his fork--

BRANDON

I'm sorry, I can't--

CASPER

Brandon I invited you to dinner tonight because I've been
sober two weeks, just like you wanted.

Brandon eyes Leslie.

BRANDON

This is not what I wanted. This is disturbing.

LESLIE

I understand where you're coming from. But I feel I should
acknowledge that your father didn't seek this arrangement
out. This was more a product of... the universe.

Brandon makes a face--

BRANDON

Universe? So you're crazy.

John takes a sip of his water, nods.

LESLIE

I think crazy is in the eye of the beholder.

Leslie's parents' watch, riveted, their heads move in unison back and forth between Leslie,
Casper and Brandon.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But I think what your father, is trying to point out, is
however odd this is, he has been sober for two weeks,
that's pretty good start.

BRANDON

Two weeks?

He CACKLES.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

Don't tell me what's "good" about my father. What do you know about him... or my mother for that matter?

Leslie turns to camera

LESLIE

A lot more than you think.

She turns back to Brandon

BRANDON

Did you know that my mom did everything for him?
Everything... All he cared about was drinking. She had two sons her entire life and I never had a father.

LESLIE

What are you talking about?
(turns to Casper)
I thought you just started drinking again?

Brandon laughs.

BRANDON

That's what he told you?

CASPER

I had the occasional drink.

BRANDON

The sad thing is you believe your own lies Dad. Alcoholics can't have occasional drinks. Tell her the truth... that Mom helped you hide your drinking. I thought you know, maybe... Maybe after she died you would step up and be the adult. But Jesus...

He stares at Leslie, shakes his head

BRANDON (CONT'D)

This is wrong.

Brandon turns to John and Janet.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

And I'm sorry, you two are?

John and Janet hold out their hands.

JOHN
John Clemins, Leslie's father

JANET
Mother Janet.

BRANDON
You're okay with this?

JOHN
At first we were surprised and just as appalled, but if I'm being honest, this pot roast is delicious. It's the closest we've ever seen her come to being an adult.

Brandon shakes his head. He gets up walks toward the door--

BRANDON
(to Casper)
Call me when you're actually ready to be my father--
(beat, turns to Leslie)
Also, I wouldn't be too sure about that two weeks sober--

Brandon exits in a huff.

Uncomfortable silence.

John finishes his last bite, looks at his watch.

JOHN
Come on Janet, let's beat traffic--
(he turns to Casper)
She's all yours!

Janet gets up.

JANET
Oh, I almost forgot--

She smiles and reaches into her purse

JANET (CONT'D)
Here's your mail, honey.

Hands leslie a stack of envelopes. They scurry out the door.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie does dishes. Casper walks in from the other room.

CASPER

These last two weeks, before last night, I really hadn't touched a drop.

Leslie stops washing, looks at him.

CASPER (CONT'D)

You have no reason to believe--

LESLIE

I do.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie lays on the couch, diary open.

CECELIA (V.O.)

Today I looked in the mirror and I didn't recognize myself. Cecelia... the adulterer. It has a lovely ring to it, don't you think? I can't help but smile. Because whatever this thing is, it's all mine. My entire marriage everything was always Casper's. Well it's my turn to be selfish for once.

Leslie shuts the diary, eyes the front door.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Barren and tidy. By the window a wooden shelf with a lot of potted plants. They're all flowerless and on the verge of death. Leslie looks at the plants, then at Henry.

LESLIE

He lied to me. Or maybe he really thinks he was sober all those years? Maybe he's delusional. Maybe we're all delusional when it comes to ourselves?

(beat)

This is why no relationships ultimately work. It's hard enough to be by yourself.

HENRY

They don't just work--

LESLIE

They “take work?”

She rolls her eyes.

HENRY

I hate that saying too. I just think they take nurturing and some people don’t like that kind of work because most times there’s no immediate gain.

Leslie looks at the barren, budless, orchids, then him.

LESLIE

I’ve been thinking about what you said about me being a scared little girl--

HENRY

I’m sorry that was--

LESLIE

The truth.

HENRY

No, but sometimes I go too far--

LESLIE

Me too.

(beat)

But it got me thinking and I don’t think I like myself very much and I’ve just been taking it out on the rest of the world--

HENRY

Why?

LESLIE

Fuck, I don’t know. Do you know exactly how a massive pothole got in the road? No, but you know when you drive over it, there’s a fucking major hole. I don’t know why I have gaping hole in my soul.

Tears well in Leslie’s eyes. Henry registers her frustration.

HENRY

Maybe, if you don't know for sure how or why it got there and you can't remember exactly who put it there, then maybe it's not really there?

She laughs, a tear spills over. She tries to hide it.

LESLIE

Are you saying I have an imaginary hole?

He laughs.

HENRY

Yes. Everyone does. It just gets you into trouble when you keep trying to fill it--

LESLIE

Jesus, did you spend time meditating on the top of a mountain or something?

HENRY

No... but you learn a lot about people up on that lifeguard stand.

She laughs, shakes her head, wipes another tear and smiles

LESLIE

God I hate you.

HENRY

No you don't... you're just afraid.

LESLIE

I'm not afraid of you.

He moves closer to her. She fidgets.

HENRY

Yes, you are.

LESLIE

Why would I be afraid of you?

HENRY

Because you actually like me.

She shakes her head no.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Yes, you like, like me.

LESLIE

Now I really do hate you.

She smiles, leans in.

HENRY

No you don't.

She leans in.

They Kiss. It's awesome. Leslie pulls away, turns to camera.

LESLIE

He's right... I don't.

They go back to kissing... clothes come off.

INT. HENRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie and Henry lay in bed. They stare at the ceiling. He looks over at Leslie--

HENRY

Has anything ever happened between you and him?

Leslie's head whips toward him-

LESLIE

What? No. I mean, he's 75.

HENRY

Well, I'm just thinking, you've spent a lot of time together.
And even abducted people develop feelings for their
captors

LESLIE

I don't have senior citizen induced Stockholm Syndrome.

He smiles, pulls her close. They kiss.

EXT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Henry and Leslie approach the door. They hold hands.

He smiles. They kiss again.

The curtain peels back in Casper's window. Casper appears and watches Leslie and Henry kiss. He gives a death stare. The curtain closes, then--

In Ruth's apartment, the curtain pulls back. Ruth appears. She shakes her head.

INT. CLUBHOUSE - DAY

Community sanctioned event. A picture of Old Man Swimmer on an easel. A sign below reads, "In Loving Memory of Vern Phillips." Next to picture, a podium.

An annoyed Casper sits next to Leslie. Ruth approaches the podium, on crutches. She moves slow and takes way too long.

Casper lets out an exasperated breath.

Ruth finally reaches the podium and adjusts the completely unnecessary microphone.

RUTH

Vern--

Microphone feedback SCREECHES.

Ruth evil eyes Henry, who mans an audio booth. He adjusts the levels.

Leslie eyes Henry, they share a smile. Casper notices this and crosses his arms, annoyed.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(clears throat)

Vern was a fixture at the Leisure Village pool and he was a symbol of what this community strives to represent for all of us... a place where we can swim the final laps of our lives.

Leslie makes a face.

CASPER

(mumbles to self)

Oh for fuck's sake--

Bruno sits behind and shakes his head at Casper.

RUTH

Would anyone else like to say something?

Henry raises his hand. He walks over, takes microphone.

Casper grumbles.

HENRY

To echo Ruth's sentiments, I'll just say a few words about what Vern meant to me. Sometimes, while immersed in the day to day, we lose sight of what's important in life. We search for identity in material things, careers, and other people. And we can get tired on this search. We can think... well what's the point of swimming all these laps without any guaranteed destination?

CASPER

Horseshit.

Leslie elbows Casper.

HENRY

Vern knew the answers were in the act. The essence of the daily ritual that mattered - not it's purpose or why? The mere action of showing up. The care and precision of each arm stroke.

Casper raises his hand.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Yes, Casper.

CASPER

How many people here actually spoke to Vern?

A beat of silence

CRAZY LADY

I offered him a towel--

CASPER

No, had a conversation with him?

Everyone looks around at each other. No one raises their hand.

RUTH

Casper I don't see--

CASPER

So basically we're just deciding for this man what swimming meant to him? We really have no idea who this person was. He could've been a pedophile and maybe swimming is the only thing he did to stop from hanging out at playgrounds--

LESLIE

Jesus Casper--

BRUNO

Calm down, buddy.

He puts his hand on Casper's shoulder. Casper shrugs it off. Bruno shakes his head.

CASPER

This is all bullshit, isn't it? People find meaning in whatever makes them feel better at the time.

HENRY

And what's wrong with that? You seem to find meaning in drin--

Leslie stands up.

LESLIE

Okay well, lets not move away from celebrating Vern... I'm sure whatever his reasons for swimming laps were, they deserve to be honored... Unless yeah, it was to curb his love of children, which, I mean he wasn't hanging out on playgrounds then... so I guess there's a scenario where that's noble?

Everyone cringes.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Yeah no, I rescind that statement... Nothing noble about it.

RUTH

Enough. Let's carry on. Refreshments-- outside near the pool.

(beat)

Henry!

Henry rushes to Ruth's aid. Casper shakes his head--

CASPER

Because that makes so much sense too. Vern's dead, lets
drink fruit punch--

Casper storms off.

EXT. LEISURE VILLAGE POOL - DAY

Everyone has splintered off into groups.

Leslie stands with Henry. Henry mimes drinking.

LESLIE

No, I don't think so.

HENRY

Did he find the diary?

Beat.

LESLIE

No. No way--

In the background at the refreshment table, Ruth struggles to balance her crutches and pour
herself a drink.

RUTH

Henry!

Henry emits a frustrated EXHALE. Leslie smiles.

LESLIE

I think that's the first time I've seen you remotely pissed.

HENRY

And you're smiling?

LESLIE

I can't help it.

HENRY

Well, Ruth's been on me lately.

RUTH (O.S.)

Henry!

Henry exits. Leslie's eyes shift toward the entrance. Casper returns, zips up his fly.
She moves toward him. Then Bruno pops into her path.

BRUNO

Sad about Vern.

She tries to get passed. Bruno moves to block her.

LESLIE

Yeah it is sad.

Leslie looks at Casper, who stands at the snack table. He bites a cookie, makes a face, then puts it back on the tray.

BRUNO

I give you credit. He's not exactly a walk in the park, eh?

LESLIE

Well, I'm not really either. I mean is any fully rounded human being one?

BRUNO

No. But Casper's selfish.

Leslie furrows her brow.

LESLIE

I thought you guys were friends?

BRUNO

We were but--

He leans in.

BRUNO (CONT'D)

He never appreciated Cecelia... But I think you know that.

He stares at Leslie. She stares back. Her jaw drops.

LESLIE

(whisper)

It was you.

Leslie looks over Bruno's shoulder. Her eyes lock with Casper's. He moves toward her. She turns toward camera

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Uh-oh.

CASPER

It's not polite to hit on people at memorials.

LESLIE

What? He wasn't--

BRUNO

What do you know about memorializing anyone? You couldn't even memorialize your own wife.

CASPER

That's none of your business.

BRUNO

No, it is my business. I've stood by long enough and said nothing.

(beat)

You were my friend Casper but you're an asshole and you were always an asshole to your wife. This should be her memorial.

Everyone in the room begins to notice.

LESLIE

Let's all calm down.

BRUNO

No. Cecelia was special and you never gave her what she deserved.

CASPER

How would you know?

LESLIE

I really think we're moving off top--

BRUNO

Because I did.

GASPS.

LESLIE

Oookay.

Casper laughs, but he's nervous.

CASPER

You're losin it buddy.

Leslie and Henry exchange worried glances.

BRUNO

Why don't you ask Leslie? She's been reading her diary.

Casper turns to Leslie.

CASPER

Cecelia didn't keep a diary.

Leslie's eyes widen.

BRUNO

Again, maybe if you got your head out of your own ass you would've known this about your wife of forty eight years.

Casper looks to Leslie.

She GULPS.

CASPER

Is it true?

Her face says it all.

LESLIE

Listen... it's complicated.

Henry moves beside Leslie, puts his hand on her shoulder.

CASPER

I guess you are really just like her.

He eyes Henry.

LESLIE

What? This? Casper... it's nothing.

Henry turns to Leslie.

HENRY

Sleeping with someone is nothing?

More GASPS. Casper laughs.

LESLIE

No, it's.. That's... not what I meant.

She turns to Casper.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And we were never together.

CASPER

Yes, we were.

LESLIE

No we weren't--

CASPER

We kissed.

Henry's head whips toward Leslie.

HENRY

You kissed?

LESLIE

(to Casper)

You kissed me.

CASPER

You kissed back--

LESLIE

For like a second--

CASPER

You used me--

LESLIE

And you used me--

(beat)

But... we both used Cecelia.

Silence. Casper and Leslie stare at each other.

It's silent. Too silent. Casper whips around and PUNCHES Bruno, who falls back into pool.

GASPS of horror.

Henry looks at Casper, shakes his head.

HENRY

You're pathetic.

He gives Casper a light shove. Casper stumbles back.

LESLIE

Jesus, Henry!

CASPER

That was pathetic. At least punch me.

Henry turns to Leslie.

HENRY

That would make you happy, right? If I punched him?

Ruth crutches over, gets in Leslie's face.

RUTH

See the damage you've done. Leisure Village had none of this trashy drama before you arrived.

Leslie looks around the room. Blank stares greet her.

LESLIE

Bull shit. All this drama was here... everyone just lied about it. So let's just get it all out in the open. I can admit it. Sure, I snooped around... I read Cecelia's diary. Casper and I kissed, and yeah, I slept with Henry shortly after. But Casper allowed me to replace Cecelia. Henry invited me out...

(turns to crowd)

And about that, did you all know Henry drinks at the clubhouse on Friday night's with the staff?

Crowd MURMERS. Ruth's head whips around.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

(beat)

Actually maybe you two--

(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)
(motions to Casper and Henry)
Have more in common than you think.
Oh and since this event is about Vern, lets tell the truth
about Vern and his passing. Did Henry leave the lifeguard
stand unattended when Vern died? Yes.

GASPS. Henry shakes his head.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Did I help him lie to cover it up? Yes. But he didn't stop
me?
(turns to Henry)
So it was convenient for you to use my deceptive, awful
ways, when it suited you, didn't it?

HENRY
You're unbelievable.

LESLIE
Well, did you or didn't you let me lie for you?

Henry says nothing.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
So I think it's more that I'm very believable.

Henry looks confused. Leslie turns to camera

LESLIE (CONT'D)
I'm aware that last part makes no sense, but I'm grasping at
straws here--

Casper and Henry stare at Leslie, then look at each other.

CASPER
She's all yours.

HENRY
She's all yours.

They both walk away in separate directions. The rest of the crowd files out.

Leslie hangs her head and plops down on a lounge chair. Turns to camera.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
Damn it, Leslie.

After a beat, Bruno gets out of pool.

BRUNO
You can stay at my place. I have an air mattress.

She turns back to camera.

LESLIE

Don't even--

INT. BRUNO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie uses a cheap hand pump to inflate the mattress. As soon as she makes progress the pumps slips and it deflates.

She tosses the pump aside and blows into the opening--

INT. BRUNO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

In the dark, Leslie lies on the completely deflated air mattress, scratches her stomach.

She sits up, eyes her bag and reaches inside--

INT. BRUNO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Leslie reads Cecelia's diary.

CECELIA (V.O.)

I'm not sure what I had with my husband was ever love. I always thought sacrifice was a part of love. I think I misunderstood that idea. Love should make you feel alive. Loving someone who can't take care of themselves is death. And since their own miserable existence isn't enough, because deep down they believe they're not enough, they'll try to stuff you in that hole with them too... until you can no longer breath. Being in a relationship with someone doesn't mean you get two lives. I'm not sure my husband ever realized this and I'm not sure I ever realized my part in it too.

Leslie shuts the diary and takes a breath.

INT. CASPER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Leslie creeps in. She hears a THUD. Down the hall she sees various items fly through the open door from Cecelia's junk room. She walks to the door and stands outside.

LESLIE

Casper... Can we talk?

More silence.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I'll take that as a yes. Listen... I didn't know how to tell you. Honestly, I shouldn't have even read it.

Silence.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But I've been thinking and I know the knee jerk reaction to someone cheating is "Ahh, I hate you! How could you!?" But maybe, you know, if we come at this from a different angle, Cecelia had her reasons.

Movement from inside the room. Casper walks to the doorway.

CASPER

Reasons? What reason is good enough to justify cheating on someone?

LESLIE

I'm not saying justify it, just...
Maybe she was tired--

CASPER

Tired? When your tired you take a nap. You don't sleep with someone else. She married me. You marry the good and the bad parts of someone.

LESLIE

But 48 years is a long time to be with those bad parts...
Especially when there's no interest in changing them.

Casper stares for a beat.

CASPER

Get out--

She shakes her head and walks toward the door--

LESLIE

It can't always be someone else's fault. I think it's why you and I ended up where we're at.

Leslie reaches in her bag and puts Cecelia's diary on the table. Casper eyes it. She pushes it toward him, turns around, and walks to the door.

INT. CLUB HOUSE - DAY

Ruth hobbles to podium. No more crutches, instead an oversized ankle boot/air cast.

Leslie sits in a chair. Henry sits two seats down. They make brief, cold, eye contact.

Ruth finally reaches the podium.

RUTH

First order of business... The misconduct charges facing
Henry Williams.

Henry stands up.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Henry do you have anything you wish to state?

HENRY

No, just that I apologize.

Ruth nods.

RUTH

Great... You're still suspended.
Now for the eviction case of Leslie Clemins.

Leslie stands up.

RUTH (CONT'D)

As you know the decision comes down to this jury of my
peers--

Ruth motions to the community board, which is just Claudette.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Would you like to make any last plea?

LESLIE

Yes... I would.

RUTH

(eye roll)
Not surprising.

LESLIE

I deserve that. But I don't know if what I have to say is a plea, it's more just something I have to say.

Ruth's face is still stone.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And congratulations on the air cast, Ruth. Must be nice to be done with the crutches.

Ruth purses her lips.

RUTH

It is. Thank you.

LESLIE

You're welcome.

(beat)

So it's been a month since I started staying at Leisure Village. When I came here I was looking to escape my life, because honestly, I sort of couldn't see much purpose in it all. You do a bunch of things and then you die.

Everyone nods.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

And I think that's still true. But I think I sort of used this as an excuse to not do anything, and to not care for anyone, except myself. I think I thought this would keep me safe. But you can end up hurting a lot of people trying to protect yourself.... A lot of good people that might even for some reason care about you.

She looks at Henry. He doesn't react.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

So... yeah, you can try to hide from life and maybe for a little bit you do skate along, but no matter how well you hide from others, you can't hide from yourself. I dunno, maybe I had to retire early in order to get a second chance at my life, but I'm glad I did. All I know is, I'm grateful for my time spent here.

(beat)

And I don't think I've been grateful for anything in my entire life, until now.

Ruth tries not to be touched.

RUTH

We'll notify you of the decision within the day.

She wipes a tear.

LESLIE

I don't need a decision. I'm leaving Leisure Village on my own accord--

Crowd MURMURS. Henry looks surprised.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

It's time for me to go home and face my--

COP busts in.

COP

Leslie Clemins, you're under arrest for evading parole and failing to show up to court

Cop cuffs her, she turns to camera

LESLIE (CONT'D)

For the record, I was gonna turn myself in.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Leslie stands in front of SCARY JUDGE. John, Janet and Leslie's brother and sister in law sit in the row behind.

Leslie turns, smiles and waves at them. John shakes his head.

SCARY JUDGE

Ms. Clemins you disregarded what I thought was a very lenient sentence. You attended only one anger management class and you accomplished

(looks down at his paper)

One hour of community service. Do you care to provide a reason for this?

LESLIE

I have no reason, other than the fact that I wasn't ready to take responsibility for my life--

SCARY JUDGE

Well I hope you're ready to now. I'm sentencing you to a month at Queensboro Correctional facility, and following that month you will complete the rest of your community service.

He hits the gavel.

LESLIE

Excuse me your honor.

SCARY JUDGE

Yes?

LESLIE

What about the anger management?

Judge bangs the gavel, again

SCARY JUDGE

And a month of anger management.

The BAILIFF leads Leslie out. She looks to camera--

LESLIE

I always imagined prison to be something like sleepaway camp. And silver lining... it's one month I don't have to pay rent while I figure some stuff out.

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - PRISON WARDEN OFFICE - DAY

Leslie sits across from a stone faced PRISON WARDEN. Leslie turns to the camera.

LESLIE

Sherry 3.0

PRISON WARDEN

Let me get this straight. You want to create a prison greenhouse?

LESLIE

Yes.

PRISON WARDEN

Why?

LESLIE

Because I learned a lot about the human spirit and taking care of each other from someone who took care of dead plants. I feel like these are lessons that would serve my fellow inmates well--

Warden nods, thinks

Leslie scratches her arm. Warden notices.

PRISON WARDEN

Okay, you can make the greenhouse.

Warden scratches her arm.

PRISON WARDEN (CONT'D)

Now get to the infirmary.

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - INFIRMARY - DAY

The PRISON DOCTOR examines her.

LESLIE

I'm itching here... here and here.

Leslie points to three distinct locations.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

I think it could only be--

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Scabies.

PRISON DOCTOR

Scabies.

Leslie turns to camera, grins.

PRISON DOCTOR

Rampant in these parts. Here's a pesticide cream. Strip down and apply it to every square inch of your body.

INT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - VISITING ROOM - DAY

Leslie waits at the table. Henry enters. Their eyes meet, they smile at each other.

LESLIE

Thank you for coming.

HENRY

You look good--

They hug.

LESLIE

Thanks. I just got treated for Scabies, so I'm feeling a little better.

Henry makes a face, scratches his arm.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. Pesticide kills them on the spot. Listen, I'm sorry. You know what we had meant a lot, I was just... I freaked out.

His eye wanders, to a line of Orchids on the window ledge.

HENRY

Prison Orchids?

LESLIE

Yeah, well... I implemented this program where we keep a greenhouse. The counselors say it's really helping... But anyway, I get out Thursday.

Henry smiles--

HENRY

So I guess I'll see you Thursday.

Leslie smiles, nods.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Any plans after?

LESLIE

I have some apartment listings lined up. And believe it or not, my old boss is gonna let me temp for him for a bit.

HENRY

Didn't you throw a candy dish?

LESLIE

Yeah, but Sherry has gallstones, so he's desperate. It's great until I figure out something else.

HENRY

Well also you getting me temporarily suspended has sort of made me reassess my own situation. We'll figure it out.

He smiles at her. Leslie turns to camera.

LESLIE

The odd thing is nothing's actually gotten better in my life. You could make the very valid argument that I'm in a worse off position than where I started... I'm here.

She looks around the visiting room.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

But I dunno, it feels different. I feel, dare I say... hopeful? That's gotta count for something. I mean, how often do we really get to control our circumstances? How we view them is all we really have.

Henry grabs her hand.

LESLIE (CONT'D)

(still to camera)

And there's this.

She motions to Henry and her.

EXT. CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

Leslie exits the prison to find Casper waiting for her. He looks good and cleaned up-- She smiles.

CASPER

I hope you don't mind if I stand in for Henry on this one?

Leslie smiles, nods. He smiles.

CASPER (CONT'D)

There's one last thing I thought we should do together before we really get on with it.

He opens the passenger side door, Leslie gets in the car--

INT. CASPER'S CAR- DAY

Casper gets in, shuts the door. Leslie eyes the URN in the center console. He turns to her.

CASPER

I'm sorry I lied.

LESLIE

It's okay. Everyone's a liar sometimes. I don't think we can help it.

CASPER

But I realized... it's the lies we tell ourselves that are usually the worst.

Leslie nods.

LESLIE

I know... why is that?

CASPER

Because one of those is a thousand lies to everyone else.

He points to his key ring. There's an AA chip "30 days."

CASPER (CONT'D)

For real this time. No more bull shit.

He puts the keys in the ignition and starts the car.

EXT. LONG ISLAND EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Side of the highway, near where Leslie picked up trash earlier Cars whiz by. Leslie looks around. Casper holds the urn.

LESLIE

This is really where she wanted her ashes to be spread?

CASPER

Not sure, but it's where I proposed to her.

He points down in the embankment.

CASPER (CONT'D)

She had to pull over the car so I could vomit. I did and then I asked her to marry me.

LESLIE

Fitting.

Casper shakes his head.

CASPER

Both kids. She grew up... I never did.

LESLIE

So I guess you forgive her then?

CASPER

There's nothing to forgive. I just hope Brandon can forgive me.

LESLIE

He will. Honestly, I think Cecelia would be proud.

Casper smiles, looks around.

CASPER

I don't think it stops... you know?

LESLIE

What?

CASPER

Growing up.

LESLIE

You mean I'm gonna have to keep doing this?

CASPER

Yes. But lucky for me, this is probably my final growth spurt.

LESLIE

Or only one.

He laughs.

CASPER

Shall we?

She nods. They walk downhill.

EXT. HIGHWAY EMBANKMENT - DAY

Casper and Leslie stand side by side. He opens the urn and turns it over. A small PUFF OF DUST plops onto the grass. It's empty.

They look at each other and smile. Casper laughs.

CASPER
I'm glad she has another secret.

LESLIE
Me too.

They both stare at the ground and smile.

CASPER (CONT'D)
Goodbye Cecelia.

LESLIE
Goodbye Cecelia

They turn around and trudge uphill--

CASPER
You hungry?

LESLIE
Yes... but I still don't have any money.

Leslie turns to the camera, smiles.

LESLIE (CONT'D)
What?

FADE OUT.