

(Name of Project)

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EXT VICTORIAN HOUSE

A charming Victorian house sits on the end of a New England street. Faded pink paint, black shutters--very picturesque.

INT HOUSE-LIVING ROOM

Seven college students sleep, scattered throughout the living room--some are nestled on the sofa in pairs, others are passed out in front of the TV. Bottles, strewn clothes and general mess give evidence to last night's festivities. Morning light sifts through the window and lands on the eyes of one sleeping brunette, a beauty with a furrowed brow. LAURA (22) opens her eyes.

LAURA

Shit.

She turns to the boy curled up beside her on the sofa.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Shit. Tom. Wake up.

TOM (22) is a muss of bed-head and puppy-ish green eyes. He opens his eyes, smooths the frown on Laura's forehead, kisses it, then falls back asleep.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Li, wake up.

A cascade of blond hair heralds the awakening of LILA (22).

LILA

What time is it?

Laura stands, stumbles across the room, finds a clock buried under a pair of jeans.

LAURA

HOLY SHIT. Everyone. Wake up.
It's ten after nine.

Fourteen eyes are now wide open.

WEESIE

Oh my God.

LILA

Ok, we're totally fine. There's gonna be singing, filing into chairs. It won't start til nine thirty tops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Seven bodies bolt from sweet slumber to full-blown panic.

WEESIE

Shit. Shit. Jake, Trip, Pete.
Graduation started ten minutes
ago.

They scatter and divide--all seven dash in seven
different directions.

INT STAIRS

We follow Laura as she sprints up the stairs. Lila is
close behind.

LILA

I call the shower.

LAURA

Fuck that. You don't need one.
Where are the gowns?

LILA

I thought you picked them up!

INT BATHROOM

Laura and Lila arrive in the bathroom, furiously brush
their teeth. Lila puts toothpaste on both toothbrushes,
while Laura ransacks a cupboard for mouthwash. Standing
side by side, the two girls betray their intricate
chemistry. They are yin and yang, control and chaos, two
halves of one whole.

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LAURA

I haven't written a word.

LILA

You haven't written a word?
(hiding her concern) Well, that's
when you're best. Off the cuff
and from the heart.

LAURA

Six thousand people, parents
included.

LILA

Probably eight thousand if you
count grandparents.

Laura shoots her a look. Lila finishes flossing, hands
Laura a piece of her own.

*
*

INT BEDROOM

WEESIE (22) somehow looks pulled-together even in pajamas. She races to her room to find the outfit she laid-out last night. Skirt, blouse, shoes.

WEESIE

Fuck. Shit. Fuck. Shit. Fuck.
Shit.

She falls over herself, putting it on.

TRIPLER (22), a red-head with a raging hangover, staggers in wearing a purple teddy.

Weesie trips over herself while she rushes to get dressed. Frustrated, she bursts into tears.

TRIPLER

What's wrong?

WEESIE

Nothing. Just mourning the death of my youth.

TRIPLER

Ah Weez, come on. Repeat after me. This is the beginning--

WEESIE

This is the beginning.

WEESIE AND TRIPLER

Of our glittering future.

Tripler finds a graduation cap on her desk, puts it on. She's now wearing the purple teddy and the cap.

TRIPLER

I'm ready.

Weesie shakes her head.

WEESIE

What? I'm obviously gonna wear the gown.

INT HALL

JAKE (22), shaggy-haired, a modern-day Victorian poet, waits outside a bathroom, clutching his stomach. Someone is showering inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE
(to the door) Hurry up, dude. I'm
hurting.

He is fighting nausea.

Weesie strides out of her room, fully dressed.

WEESIE
Oh sweetie, you okay?

JAKE
Yeah, I'm great.

She throws her arms around him, they kiss for a moment,
but nausea overwhelms Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Oh God.

The door opens. PETE (22) emerges from the bathroom in
his towel, a handsome, athletic specimen. Jake pushes
past Pete, slams the door shut. Pete and Weesie squelch
a laugh as they hear gagging sounds.

INT BEDROOM

Lila and Laura are now fully dressed, totally
transformed. These girls are like beautiful fraternal
twins.

*

LILA
How do I look?

LAURA
Never worse.

Lila smiles.

LAURA (CONT'D)
Totally and completely revolting.

LILA
Thank you. You look ghastly too.

They smile. They've just exchanged a compliment.

LILA (CONT'D)
You ready?

LAURA
Definitely not. You?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA
 For our glittering future? Hell,
 yes.

A charge of excitement. Deep breath, then they exit,
 slamming the door behind them.

*

INT STAIRS

As Laura and Lila race down the stairs, Weesie and Tripler pick up the rear. Tripler falls behind, slips into a bathroom.

INT BATHROOM

Tripler grabs a pill bottle from a top shelf, pours several into her hand, crushes them, inhales.

WEESIE (OS)
 Trip, hurry up!

TRIPLER
 (shouting) Just taking my
 vitamins. Be right there.

Jake emerges from the shower. Tripler's busted. She shrugs.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)
 Want some?

JAKE
 No thanks.

TRIPLER
 Suit yourself.

They rush out the door.

INT KITCHEN

Pete opens the fridge, grabs a carton of orange juice, downs it. Tom arrives. Pete hands him the carton. Tom chugs. From the fluidity of this dance, we get the sense they've done this before. Lila arrives as the boys finish. She has four glasses balanced in hand. She pours and distributes juice to the girls, the consummate den mother.

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 *

LILA
Ladies...

*
 *

INT LIVING ROOM

Downstairs, all seven are nearly assembled, pulling on last articles of clothing, brushing hair. Tom turns to face Laura. There's that frown again.

TOM

You're doing it.

She smiles and relaxes at his cue.

LAURA

I'm so nervous.

TOM

You're gonna be great.

She smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

Scratch that. You already are.

They kiss. And as quickly as they woke up, all seven sprint out of the house.

EXT STREET

They race down the leafy New England street, running in single file.

EXT QUAD

Now they're running seven abreast on a grassy campus, towards the camera. Somehow, they look formidable, like seven superheroes about to take flight.

EXT GRADUATION

But they stop suddenly, alarmed by a distant sound--a swell of applause. They look up to find a sea of BLACK CAPS rise into the air. They've missed their own graduation. They watch, crestfallen.

Tom puts his arm around Laura.

TRIPLER

Does that mean we have to stay here another year?

PETE

Nah. Just for the rest of our lives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEESIE

Fine by me.

Laura is wide-eyed, totally shocked.

LILA

Well, at least you don't have to worry about your speech...

WEESIE

Lila!

LILA

What? It's true.

Laura stares, shakes her head. They stand in silence until somebody laughs. Pretty soon, they're all laughing.

TOM

(holding up an imaginary glass) To our glittering future.

EVERYONE

To our glittering future!

These friends are not quite ready to graduate--much less, grow up.

*
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DISSOLVE TO:

THIS SAME IMAGE, NOW METICULOUSLY FRAMED, HANGS NEATLY ON A BEDROOM WALL.

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PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

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INT LILA'S BEDROOM

*

The framed photograph is surrounded by other vibrant black-and-white images. Together, the photos create a living collage that tells us as much about the photographer as her subject.

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Lila Hayes, now ten years older, taps one of these photographs into place. It was crooked, but now it's perfect. Satisfied, she continues through her room with the cheerful ordinance of a marching band conductor. Just before she exits the room, we land on a BULLETIN BOARD. It is delightfully laden with colorful SWATCHES and TEAR-SHEETS. BLUE AND GREEN RIBBON, WHITE PEONIES, AN ENGRAVED INVITATION IN BROWN INK--a symphony of planning. It's Lila's wedding day.

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INT CAR-DAY

Four more of the magic seven sit in a BEAT-UP VOLVO. *
 They look older than last we saw them, of course, but *
 more noticeably, they look a little less optimistic.
 Tripler and Pete sit in the front. He's driving; she's
 fidgeting with the window. Up. Down. Up. Down. He
 shoots her a look. She stops.

Jake and Weesie sit in the back. She's sleeping with her
 head on his shoulder while Jake reads a book.

EXT FERRY

The volvo is parked among many other cars on a ferry off
 the Maine coast. The car door opens and we follow
 Tripler as she walks to the deck. She looks out to a
 vista of pine trees, rocky coast, and sparkling ocean. *

INT HAYES LIVING ROOM-DAY

LILA HAYES (30) floats through a grand living room, *
checking for imperfections--fluffing pillows, *
straightening books, making this perfect world even more *
perfect. Her mother, Augusta (60) and younger sister, *
 Minnow (28) sit on a tufted sofa. They sit in tense *
 silence. A finger taps, a foot twitches. *

Suddenly, a knock. All three race to the door. Lila
 wins and seizes the expected PACKAGE. She opens it with *
 her bare hands with the grace and speed of an ambulance
 worker. Finally, the box gives way. A white satin dress
 emerges. Then, it's gone again as Lila dashes upstairs.
 Minnow trails her but a door slams in her face when she
 reaches the attic.

EXT DIRT DRIVEWAY

A REARVIEW MIRROR reveals a familiar furrowed brow.

An I-PHONE's map reveals the driver has reached her
 destination: 'you are here". So why isn't she moving?

Laura (30) sits in a parked car at the end of a long dirt
 driveway. She checks her reflection, sighs, and smooths
 the crease on her forehead. She rearranges a messy *
 middle part. She checks it, hates it, replaces the
 original look. A honk interrupts her meditation.

The VOLVO pulls up to her left, so that both fenders are
 even.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

You lost?

LAURA

God, yes. How do I get to New York?

TRIPLER (OS)

Pete, don't move. I'm getting in.

Two golden legs extend from the car as Tripler (30) wriggles out and climbs into Laura's window.

INT. LAURA'S CAR

Tripler settles into Laura's car, grabs Laura's bag, frantically rifles through it.

TRIPLER

Had to get out of there.
Desperate situation.

LAURA

What's wrong?

TRIPLER

I ran out of cigarettes in Portsmouth.

Tripler empties Laura's bag--money, pens, lip gloss flying. Laura watches with amusement.

LAURA

Trip, I haven't smoked since college.

TRIPLER

Fuck off. You've got to be kidding.

She locates a box of TIC TACS, empties the whole box into her mouth.

LAURA

You didn't pass any gas stations in the last hundred miles?

TRIPLER

Pete wouldn't let me stop. He wants me to detox before we start trying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA

Trying! Holy shit. That's so exciting.

TRIPLER

Please. The only thing I'm willing to nurse is a hangover. *

Laura wrinkles her nose.

LAURA

Maybe work on that one.

They burst out laughing, then pause and get a good look at each other.

TRIPLER

Oh my God, I'm so happy to see you.

LAURA

I'm so happy to see you too.

They hug, pull back, stare at each other some more.

TRIPLER

You okay?

LAURA

Yeah. Really good.

TRIPLER

Wow. That bad?

LAURA

What?

TRIPLER

This must be torture, agony. I can't even imagine.

She pauses, strokes Laura's cheek.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

Do I look like I'm ninety? Tell me the truth.

LAURA

Oh God, we're gonna start this already?

TRIPLER

Just tell me. The truth. You can't lie for shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA

You look revolting. Head to toe.

Tripler smiles. This is the highest of compliments.

TRIPLER

Really?

LAURA

Totally and completely.

TRIPLER

So do you.

They laugh and hug. Laura starts the car.

EXT DIRT DRIVEWAY

The car heads up the long dirt drive. And we pass a grand elm tree. The tree is tacked with a sign: TOM AND LILA'S WEDDING.

TRIPLER (OS)

At least our dress is pretty.

*

LAURA

You like it?

*

*

TRIPLER

(sarcastic) Lila does everything beautifully.

*

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LAURA (OS)

It's just the color. I can't decide if it's gray or silver.

*

*

TRIPLER (OS)

It's tin. Tin to match her heart!

*

*

LAURA

Trip!

*

*

TRIPLER

What? You were thinking it. I just said it.

*

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INT VOLVO

Weesie, Jake and Pete follow in their car, survey the enormous estate with admiration. Trees, endless grass, ocean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

Damn. Not too shabby.

PETE

Not at all.

JAKE

Safe to say Tom has us beat again. *

WEESIE

Honey, you didn't do so bad.

Pete eyes Jake. You're in for it, buddy.

JAKE

Sweetie, the day we met--

WEESIE

It was night-time, honey.

JAKE

Two a.m. on September 18, 1996, when you asked if you could borrow the ketchup at the Tasty, was the luckiest day--sorry, the luckiest night--of my life, a night that will be surpassed only by October 5 of this year when you finally accept my hand in marriage. *

Weesie smiles, satisfied. Pete eyes his friend. Nice save.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

The cars continue up the long dirt drive. Elms form a canopy overhead and then, without warning, sunshine. And an unobstructed view of the ocean.

EXT THE HAYES ESTATE DAY

The cars roll to a stop in front of Lila Hayes' family's formidable seaside estate. It's a white dove of a house on a plum piece of land that slopes down to the water. All is abuzz as the house is prepped for the wedding.

Car doors open. Passengers stumble out. Lila emerges from the house, resplendent. She is the ultimate hostess--sunny, welcoming, and confident. *

LILA

You're here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA

We're here!

LILA

Hooray!

Hugs, smiles, kisses all around.

TRIPLER

It's Pete's fault we're late. He
drove like my grandmother.

PETE

Trip's just bitter 'cause her
license got revoked.

TRIPLER

It didn't get revoked! It expired.

WEESIE

(to Lila) They've been doing this
for the last eight hours.

LILA

Glad to see nothing ever changes.

The girls surround Lila and commence the ritual
assessment of each other's looks.

TRIPLER

(to Lila) You disgusting whore.

LAURA

Completely vile.

WEESIE

Every wretched inch.

TRIPLER

You've never looked worse in your
life.

WEESIE

We're talking like freshman fall.

LILA

(delicious smile) You think?

*

TRIPLER

We know.

LILA

Really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA

You look beautiful.

Lila smiles, bashful, pleased. *

TRIPLER

Yeah, yeah. We'll have plenty of time to kiss your ass at the rehearsal dinner.

Laughter, more hugs. It's perfectly clear these friends are happiest when they're together. *

Lila springs to help the guests with their bags, but the boys rush to attention. They hoist the bags to their shoulders while the girls link arms and head onto the lawn. Laura and Lila fall behind so they can catch up in private. *

LAURA

Li!

LILA

Lo!

They stop, hug, stare at other for a moment. These girls share a powerful bond, the telepathy and intensity of sisters.

LAURA

So...

LILA

So...

LAURA

So, how's it all going?

LILA

Piece of cake. I don't understand why brides get so worked up.

Laura smiles at Lila's nonchalance. Clearly an act, but endearing nonetheless.

LILA (CONT'D)

Did you pick up your dress?

LAURA

Yes, of course.

LILA

And you wrote a good toast?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA

I think so.

LILA

And you remembered something blue? *

Laura touches a SAPPHIRE STUD in her ear.

LILA (CONT'D)

Thank you. And you didn't want to bring the new guy?

LAURA

Neh. It's so much more fun just us.

Lila checks Laura's eyes. They smile, walk a few steps in silence.

LILA

I confess I've been worried about the bridesmaids.

LAURA

Why?

LILA

I just want you guys to feel beautiful in your dresses.

LAURA

How could we not feel beautiful in such a flattering color.

Laura pauses.

LILA

That was passive-aggressive.

LAURA

And your comment was...

LILA

Totally innocent!

They take a couple steps in silence. On any other day, this might turn into a spat. But today, all is forgiven.

Lila stops, takes it all in.

LILA (CONT'D)

My God. It's like time hasn't passed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LAURA

I know..

But this means something different to both girls.

LILA

I'm so glad you're here.

LAURA

I'm glad I'm here too.

LILA

You are? Honestly? Truly?

LAURA

Yes! Of course.

*

Lila stares at Laura. A fraught moment passes.

*

LILA

Good. Because I couldn't do this without you!

LAURA

Are you kidding? You're gonna have to throw me out of the car when you guys leave for...where are you going...Bora Bora..

They squeal, hug. Laura's doing her best. But we can see it in her eyes. This ain't easy.

EXT DARK HARBOR TENNIS COURT-DAY

Tom (30) stands at the baseline of a manicured tennis court, playing a cut-throat game of doubles. The puppy-ish cutie has grown into a gorgeous guy--tall, athletic, debonair, and illogically unsettled.

*

*

His doubles partner is Minnow. Their opponents are Lila's father, William (60) and Lila's brother, Chip (25). Tom misses an opportunity to win the point, thrashing the ball into the net. Did he do it on purpose?

TOM

Sorry, Minnow. My bad.

CHIP

Tom, you're bringing my poor sister down.

MINNOW

What's with you today, Champ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
 Sorry, guys. I'm distracted.
 Just thinking about my toast.

MR. HAYES
 Wise man. You've got a tough act
 to follow.

CHIP
 Fingers crossed, Dad, that you'll
 tell the story of how Lila learned
 to ride a bike.

MINNOW
 Can I serve!

Minnow serves and the point begins. Tom returns
 gracefully.

CHIP
 (while playing) Minnow, if you
 play your cards right, I'll sneak
 you some booze tonight.

MINNOW
 Oh wow. That would be a first.

TOM
 Glad to see you're still
 contributing to the corruption of
 minors.

CHIP
 At least I'm contributing to
 society.

MINNOW
 Chip, stop talking. I know what
 you're up to.

Tom sets up for a volley but 'accidentally' hits it out.

MINNOW (CONT'D)
 Tom!

CHIP
 Game and set.

TOM
 Well-played, Gentlemen.

Tom begins to pack up his gear. He has intentionally
 thrown the game in order to excuse himself. Minnow
 glares at Tom--she's onto him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHIP

But it's only one all.

TOM

I should go. Got some 'grooming'
to do.

Minnow rolls her eyes at the joke.

TOM (CONT'D)

Sorry, Minnow. You understand.

Tom swats her butt playfully with his racket and makes a hasty exit.

CHIP

(calling after Tom) Rest assured
your toast will never surpass
mine.

TOM

I'm counting on you to mortify the
guests.

CHIP

Your backhand sucks.

TOM

You know what they say. You're
only as good as your opponent.

Tom heads onto the nearby golf green, walking very quickly.

EXT GOLF GREEN

Tom hurries across the golf course, the quickest route to the road.

EXT WATER STREET

Tom rushes along a country road as manicured greens give way to dense woods.

INT GRAVEYARD

Then he's running--propelled by his anxiety. He ducks into an ancient graveyard, follows the central path. The headstones are chalky and crowded. Many bear the Hayes name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He breaks from the path, heading into brush. As the brush gets thicker, he moves more frantically, deeper into the foliage. But he stops suddenly--he's been scraped and his arm is bleeding. Through the leaves, he can just make out the glittering bay and the last ferry pulling out of the harbor.

EXT HAYES LAWN

CU A BOTTLE OF BOURBON as it is placed in the hutch of an OAK TREE. Augusta strides away from the tree after placing the bottle at its center.

EXT PORCH

The wedding party is assembled on the porch, enjoying the weather, catching up. The girls lounge on chairs while the boys toss a ball on the lawn. *

WEESIEE

(watching Augusta) What is she doing?

LILA

Ancient family tradition. To ensure a sunny wedding day. She's got booze stashed in every tree on this lawn.

TRIPLER

I'll take it off her hands.

Augusta reaches the porch.

WEESIE, TRIPLER, LAURA

Mrs. Hayes!

AUGUSTA

Girls! What a sight. This porch has not looked so grand in years.

TRIPLER

Wish I could say the same of myself.

AUGUSTA

Nonsense. You look exactly the same. Now, quickly, I need updates on everyone. How's the movie business, Trip?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRIPLER

Oh, you know. Fast-paced,
impossibly glamorous.

AUGUSTA

And the hospital, Dr. Baker...

WEESIE

I start my rotations in the fall.

AUGUSTA

My goodness. Already! Wonderful.
Laura, I read your story in the
The New Yorker last month.

*
*

LAURA

Oh, thanks.

An awkward pause. No compliment follows. Augusta turns
to the boys.

AUGUSTA

Jake, how's the Great American
novel coming?

JAKE

Very slowly. One page at a time.

AUGUSTA

I understand you're switching
professions. Very wise. An MBA
never goes out of style.

JAKE

Actually, I changed my mind.
Think I'm more cut out for the
Law.

AUGUSTA

Even better. Please expect my
call. And Pete, my goodness,
congratulations. Again.

JAKE

Yeah, Pete. You got any openings
over there?

PETE

I don't think you'd like working
for me, buddy. My employees are
expected to show up for work..

JAKE

Ouch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Augusta smiles and takes command again.

AUGUSTA

I'm putting you all at the
Getty's, right across the field.
They're cousins of William's and
they've generously offered the
house to the wedding party.

She waves majestically at a house just down the coast, a
smaller, more modest version of the Hayes'.

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)

It's a strange house, but a sweet
house nonetheless. But it's
clean, it's close, and the view is
nice. Oh and, it's haunted, just
like ours.

LILA

Mom!

AUGUSTA

(to Lila) What? It's only fair to
warn them.

LILA

(to her friends) Just nod and
smile.

AUGUSTA

(to the group) Once, William was
run out of the house. He was up in
the attic one cold December night
when all of a sudden--

LILA

Mother, you've made your point.

AUGUSTA

He heard loud and furious
footsteps. He took this as his
cue that he had overstayed his
welcome. And there was that time
he saw his grandmother sitting on
the roof.

Shrieks and giggles from the crowd.

PETE

Sounds like the makings of an
interesting night.

LAURA

We'll be sure to watch our backs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

AUGUSTA

Oh, they don't bother family members. On the contrary, they protect us.

TRIPLER

(joking) Maybe Pete and I will stay in that bed-and-breakfast in town.

LAURA

Can I come too?

Augusta stops laughing, eyes Laura.

AUGUSTA

You will all be fine because you're all family.

PETE

Phew!

TRIPLER

(whispering to Laura) I think she meant everyone except you.

LILA

Alright, you guys. I'll show you your rooms. That is if you'll still stay..

*
*

A gracious smile from Lila. Warm laughter from the group. They start toward the house. Laura lingers, then follows.

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*

INT GETTY'S HOUSE--LAURA'S ROOM

Laura drops her bags in her guest room, surveys the breezy quarters. The decor is quintessential Maine--faded furniture and dusty sunlight. Then she sees it--a wrapped present on the bed. "I'm so proud of you. Love, Lila". Laura opens it. The masthead of the New Yorker--her article, framed and matted. Laura smiles, totally moved. Lila does everything beautifully.

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She wanders to the window to assess the view: the Hayes' grand estate and the surrounding water, then Lila--in the distance.

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*

Laughter in the hall jars Laura and reminds her of her task: her toast.

LAURA

Lila Hayes is not my friend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Long pause.

LAURA (CONT'D)

She is my sister.

No, this won't do.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Lila and I have shared many things
over the years: rooms, clothes,
colds, study notes, boyfriends.

This won't do either. Perhaps, sincerity.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Lila Hayes is, quite possibly, the
most graceful girl in the world. *
Beauty, intelligence, a killer *
backhand--she is graced with all *
of these things.

She pauses, comforted. She has found the right tack.

LAURA (CONT'D)

But in addition to her good
fortune in said areas, Lila is
perhaps most graced in love. *

She trails off again.

LAURA (CONT'D)

She's marrying the best guy in the
world. And he is marrying her. *

INT BATHROOM-GETTY'S HOUSE

Tripler and Weesie stand in the bathroom, grooming, their
heads in towel turbans. Tripler sprays perfume and steps
into the mist.

WEESIE

What was that!

TRIPLER

It's just perfume!

WEESIE

Could you try not to spray it in
my nose?

Weesie looks up to find Laura has joined them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEESIE (CONT'D)

There you are!

LAURA

I'm screwed for my toast. I haven't written a word.

WEESIE

You always say that and then you give the best one.

TRIPLER

You have an unfair advantage, Miss Published Writer.

*

Laura smiles.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

But tonight you've got competition.

She points to a stack of index cards on the sink.

WEESIE

Your signature rhyming ode?

TRIPLER

Guaranteed to bring down the house...

Weesie pries her eye open and applies eyeliner. Tripler applies lipstick. Laura splashes cold water on her face.

WEESIE

(to Laura) You okay?

LAURA

(snapping) Why does everyone keep asking me that?

TRIPLER

Hmm, I wonder..

LAURA

Sorry. I woke up really early. Such a long drive.

TRIPLER

Cut the bullshit, Lo. It's us. When's the last time you saw him?

LAURA

Saw who?

Laura plays dumb, continues washing her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRIPLER

When's the last time you saw Tom.

LAURA

Oh God. I don't know.

TRIPLER

You don't know? You dated the man
for four years.

WEESIE

Five.

Laura shoots Weesie a look.

WEESIE (CONT'D)

But you guys have stayed close.

LAURA

Yeah, we are. I mean...we were.

TRIPLER

When?

WEESIE

Tripler, leave it alone.

TRIPLER

No, I want to know.

LAURA

Around when they got engaged.

TRIPLER

A year ago?

LAURA

I honestly don't remember...

Tripler raises an eyebrow.

TRIPLER

Before he proposed?

LAURA

Around then, I guess.

TRIPLER

You guess?

LAURA

Fine, Trip. The day before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WEESIE

That's sweet. He called to tell
you first?

LAURA

No.

TRIPLER

But you spoke to him?

LAURA

Yes.

TRIPLER

On the phone or in person?

WEESIE

Back off, Trip.

LAURA

In person.

TRIPLER

So you knew before Lila?

LAURA

Actually, he didn't mention it.

TRIPLER

He didn't mention it!?

LAURA

Nope.

WEESIEE

So when did you hear?

LAURA

When Lila called..to ask me to be
in the wedding.

ANNIE

And then..

LAURA

And then nothing..

TRIPLER

Nothing?

LAURA

We haven't spoken since.

Long pause as Tripler and Weesie digest this information.
Awkward silence scored by running water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

WEESIE

Oh sweetie.

LAURA

Please, you guys. It's ancient history. I couldn't be happier for them.

For the first time, Tripler has proven herself right. Laura is a terrible liar.

EXT FIELD

Showered and dressed, the friends traipse across the lawn to the Hayes' house. Everyone breathes a bit more freely on this perfect August afternoon.

EXT HAYES ESTATE--LAWN

A crowd is assembled around Augusta. Lila stands apart, greeting guests. Laura approaches gingerly. Then, the moment she's been dreading: Tom.

The sight of him is startling, then comforting, like the sight of a childhood home. And the confusion she feels--elation followed by sadness--nearly brings her to her knees.

Tom notices Laura and stops in his tracks. He seems nervous, ill-at-ease. They stand for a moment, staring at each other, until Tripler grabs Laura's elbow.

TRIPLER

I need you to tell me if this is funny. I'm gonna say: Lila, this is your last chance to have Pete.

She pauses.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

No? Not funny?

Laura stares at Tripler, mute.

Just in time, Augusta takes command.

AUGUSTA

Ladies, Gentlemen, I hate to interrupt but cocktails beckon us tonight. Lila, Tom.

They grasp her arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)

Let's do this quickly, shall we?
So we can toast this fabulous
pair.

Tom takes his cue and performs a scheduled kiss, but a moment too late, like an actor who has forgotten a line.

Laura watches intently. What's wrong with this picture? Without warning, Chip sneaks up from behind and grabs her by the waist.

CHIP

I knew it. I still make you weak
in the knees.

LAURA

Chip! (softening her tone). You
nearly took me down.

Augusta eyes Laura, a reprimand for her volume.

AUGUSTA

We'll do one walk-through of the
procession. Members of the wedding
party, I need you to break into
pairs. Husbands with wives,
fiances with fiances, sisters with
brothers. Oh, and Laura, you'll
walk with Chip.

The group break into pairs, theatrically clutching their pairs. Laura stalls, bristling at the command. Finally, she walks, followed by Chip who pokes her waist like a schoolboy.

CHIP

Oh boy, tonight's the night.

LAURA

The night you finally drink
yourself into a stupor.

CHIP

The night You finally fall for me.

LAURA

It's such a shame about the age
difference.

CHIP

No, no. It makes it easier for me
to have my way with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AUGUSTA

Family members last. Flower girls first. Kathy and Tim, you'll walk together. Minnow, you'll walk with the bridesmaids, after Tripler, but before Laura. I'll walk with Chip. Lila will walk with her father. And Tom will stand with Reverend Bartlett.

Everyone stands still, too intimidated to move. Finally, they begin with halting steps.

JAKE

(to Pete) You would think it's your first time walking.

PETE

I wouldn't talk, Frankenstein.

One by one, each pair completes the journey.

LILA

Mom, I think we've asked enough of our guests.

JAKE

We'll exact our punishment tonight. At the rehearsal dinner.

Laughter, hoots and whistles. As the group grows restless, we settle on Tom. He looks like he's about to puke--or sprint.

JAKE (CONT'D)

If we drink enough...

PETE

If you drink your usual amount, you won't be standing when it's your turn to toast.

Finally, Tom joins in--he's waking from a trance.

TOM

If I drink enough, both of you may live to see me get married tomorrow.

Laughter and raucous applause from the crowd. Laura puts on a brave face. Tom and Lila join hands and kiss stiffly. At the moment, they seem more nervous than in love.

*
*
*

EXT YACHT CLUB--REHEARSAL DINNER

*

The scene is high WASP--a ramshackle house on a picturesque bay, women in pastel, sparse appetizers. A blue and white awning rustles as clouds gather overhead. The wedding party have formed a human blockade at the bar.

Laura stands at the end of the huddle, drink in hand. She wears a lovely, if slightly funereal BLACK SHEATH WITH A BLACK SASH. A server passes with a TRAY. Laura takes a STUFFED MUSHROOM, pops it into her mouth. She wanders into an empty spot. But it's the wrong move--she walks right into Augusta.

AUGUSTA

My heavens! Everyone's in black.

Laura follows Augusta's gaze into the crowd but finds a sea of colors instead.

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)

Well, you certainly are a city girl.

Laura smiles, chews, mortified.

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)

Now, what is that perfume?

LAURA

Isn't it the marsh?

AUGUSTA

No, no. Yours.

Augusta stares past Laura, searching the crowd for another guest.

Laura gulps, swallows her food.

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)

Anne Wilcox. There you are!

Another smile signals the end of this painful exchange. Augusta moves toward the next guest. Laura stands, shaken.

INT YACHT CLUB TENT

Guests file into a crowded tent toward seated tables. Peach-colored ribbons hang from a tent pole, clashing wildly with neon green table cloths.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is immediately clear that the McDevons are the hosts of this event. Augusta watches with increasing anxiety. She finally locates Lila and grabs her arm as she passes.

AUGUSTA
(whispering) She might as well
have done a picnic on the grass.
Served ribs on paper plates.

LILA
Mom, you're a guest tonight.

AUGUSTA
Honestly, it looks like a disco
parlor. I told her I'd do it for
her.

LILA
Everyone's having a wonderful
time. You should try to do the
same.

Augusta sighs. Then, regaining composure, she steps back and grasps Lila by the shoulders.

AUGUSTA
You look stunning, sweetheart.

LILA
Thank you, Mom.

AUGUSTA
Now, if we can only find your
groom.

Together, they scan the crowded tent, but peach ribbons obscure their view. Augusta spots Tom first. Tom stands at the edge of the lawn, staring at the water.

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)
Isn't that funny?

LILA
Isn't what funny?

AUGUSTA
The way he's standing over there.

LILA
What's funny about it?

AUGUSTA
Oh maybe funny is the wrong word.
Strange, It's strange. Isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILAWhat about it is strange?AUGUSTAI don't know, just the way he's
gazing out at the sea like a
lovesick sailor.Lila rolls her eyes. She will not engage.LILAHe's a groom. Grooms get nervous.AUGUSTAOf course.LILAMother, please don't do-But she stops talking suddenly as she watches Tom throw a
coin into the harbor. He DOES look like a lovesick
sailor!LILA (CONT'D)What is he doing?AUGUSTADarned if I know. He looks
positively morose.LILANo, he doesn't.But she agrees in spite of herself. Tom looks terribly
sad. And this makes Lila terribly angry.AUGUSTAYou know what I think.LILAYes, I know what you think.AUGUSTAThen perhaps you'll permit me to
say it.LILAI know you will do so regardless.AUGUSTAHe has to love YOU more.LILAMore than what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Augusta seals her mouth.

LILA (CONT'D)

More than whom?

Augusta says nothing, gives her best performance of ignorance.

AUGUSTA

More than you love him, darling.
It's the only way marriage works.

Lila pauses, considers her mother's claim, then dispenses with the thought.

LILA

Leave him alone.

But Augusta has gotten to her. Lila breaks away, ducks out of the tent and approaches Tom.

EXT YACHT CLUB LAWN--DUSK

Lila arrives behind Tom and slips her hands in his pockets. His body tenses, then relaxes.

LILA

Honey?

TOM

So quiet.

LILA

Yes, much better. It's awfully loud over there.

Tom doesn't turn, just continues staring at the water.

TOM

We're going to have a good life.

LILA

Yes, we are.

Lila stands for another moment then, annoyed, removes her hands and steps to his side. Finally, Tom takes notice. He pivots her shoulders to face him, remembers her beauty, kisses her.

TOM

How's your mother doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

She'll be fine after a few
cocktails.

She flutters her lashes in a bid for another kiss.
Tom smiles and obliges, and relaxes just a little.

*

INT YACHT CLUB TENT-LATER

The wedding party is assembled at their own table,
already happily drunk. At the sound of the first
clinking glass, they rise to attention. They are the
self-appointed judges of tonight's festivities.

The first toast of the evening is given by Lila's
paternal grandmother. She stands and clinks her glass.

GRANDMOTHER HAYES

Tom McDevon is quite a catch, a
Summa graduate, a Championship
swimmer, a PhD candidate in
English, rather easy on the eyes.
Lila is somewhat clever herself, a
brilliant lawyer, a devoted
daughter, and the greatest beauty
in all of New England. So let's
raise our glasses to two perfect
catches. Perfect catch, perfect
match!

The wedding party smile warmly then lower their voices to
exchange scathing commentary.

TRIPLER

I would like to congratulate the
McDevons on getting one to the
other side. I would like to offer
my condolences to the Hayes.
There goes the bloodline.

She guffaws.

PETE

Trip! Stop it.

Next up is Tom's very drunk grandfather, Timothy
McDevon (63). He rises from his chair, clinking his
glass so violently that nearby guests brace for broken
glass.

MR. MCDEVON

Hear, hear!

The guests watch with concern. Timothy is off-balance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MR. MCDEVON (CONT'D)
When Tommy told me he was marrying
Leila.

An audible gasp from the crowd. At the Hayes' table, Augusta rises to stand, but William steadies her in her seat.

MR. MCDEVON (CONT'D)
I said to him...

RELATIVES
(first whispering, then louder)
Lila. It's Lila.

Mr. McDevon pauses, confused by the commotion.

MR. MCDEVON
I said you lucky son of a bitch.

Hearty laughter from the crowd.

MR. MCDEVON (CONT'D)
I mean Tom, I said, how in the
Hell did you bed a woman like
that?

More laughter.

We get a better glimpse of the Hayes table: Mr. Hayes is drunk; Augusta is panicked; Minnow is grinning, Chip is wasted. Mr. Hayes rises to speak as soon as Timothy falls to his seat.

MR. HAYES
What a joyous occasion.

He scans the crowd in a regal fatherly way..

MR. HAYES (CONT'D)
Lila and I have always been tight.
Ever since she was a little girl.
I'll never forget the time she
learned to ride a bike, a bright
pink Huffy with handlebars and a
basket.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT TENT-LATER

Toasts continue in a dream-like blur as the guests grow more and more drunk. Laura watches with increasing anxiety. It's high time she speak up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Snippets of toasts continue in jump cuts.

MINNOW

I'd like to end with a heartfelt plea to my parents that you finally convert Lila's bedroom into the clubhouse I've been promised.

CUT TO

JAKE

As everyone knows, Tom was unmatched in the swimming pool.

CUT TO:

PETE

As everyone knows, Tom was unmatched on the soccer field.

CUT TO:

WEESIE

And how can we ever forget that time on the ferry to Martha's Vineyard...an incident involving a hot dog and a boy who shall forever remain nameless, so help me God.

She giggles and hastily sits down.

CUT TO:

TRIPLER

(Rhyming couplets. Something pretentious and awful.)

The wedding party is slumped in their chairs, eyes glazed over.

Finally, Laura gathers her nerve and stands.

LAURA

Lila..

She surveys the crowd in search of a comforting smile. But she finds only wide expectant eyes. Typically, words rush in at this moment. Now, her mind is cruelly blank.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Lila and I were assigned to each other the fall of freshman year.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA (CONT'D)

It was touch and go for a few days there. She was extraverted and I was shy. She was brunette; I was blond--okay, not really, but still. She was from Boston. I was from New York. She was tidy. I was messy. Cue Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. But then we discovered our shared love of the Kinks and suddenly everything changed. We quickly pooled our CD collections and discovered our differences made us killer study partners and even better friends. By sophomore year, we were inseparable..totally in love, so much so that we earned a nickname. La-la, they called us... It stuck.

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She looks to her friends. Weesie smiles and nods. Then Tom catches her eye. He is staring at her with the strangest combination of concern and admiration. Lila catches this and clears her throat, feigning obliviousness. But Tom disengages.

*
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LAURA (CONT'D)

Our group of friends got a nickname too. They called us 'the Romantics'. It was a nod to our incestuous dating history, the fact that we'd all dated each other by sophomore spring.

Pete yells from the crowd.

PETE

Sophomore fall!

*

LAURA

Thank you, Pete. But when you think about it the name was truly apt. We were in love with each other. All of us. That's what best friends do. They fall in love. Then they fall out of love. And they do this again and again for the rest of their lives.

Laura trails off for a moment. Where was she going with this? She finds herself staring at Tom. He's staring at her. Lila witnesses the exchange. She's not happy. Laura rushes to conclude.

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(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA (CONT'D)

That Tom and Lila fell in love is, of course, no surprise. They are both exceptional people and they are going to have an exceptional life. I wish them all the joy in the world. (raising her glass) To your glittering future..

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*

Laura collapses into her seat, folds and unfolds the napkin in her lap. She turns to Tripler for moral support.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Did I seem like I was overcome with emotion or on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

TRIPLER

Maybe a little bit of both..

A clinking glass spares Laura further discussion. Chip rises to speak. He nearly knocks down his own chair. He is totally and completely wasted.

*
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*

CHIP

Let's face it. My sister is perfect. Everyone here knows that.

The crowd hushes to attention.

CHIP (CONT'D)

If you're a chick, you've spent your life fighting the urge to kill her in her sleep. If you're a guy, you've spent your life trying to sleep with her.

A rogue hoot and cheer.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(turning sharply to Jake) Admit it, Jake!

Weesie turns to her husband in shock. Jake recoils, defiant.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(to weesie) Don't worry, Weesie. He never got anywhere.

Enraged, Weesie inches her chair away from her husband.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHIP (CONT'D)

Tom McDevon ain't too shabby.
Lila's friends can attest to that.
Let's just say those weren't tears
of joy when Laura heard about the
engagement.

Laura watches, strangely composed, braced for Chip's
next joke. Augusta is nearly standing, ready for an
emergency removal. Lila glares at her brother. Tom
holds her hand and strokes it. *

CHIP (CONT'D)

Mom, Dad, I know it's been hard to
embrace the new in-laws. But
don't worry. We only have to see
them on Thanksgiving and
Christmas. (poltergiest voice)
Every year for the rest of our
lives.

A rebellious chirp of laughter from an increasingly
somber audience.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Wait a second. Do Irish people
celebrate Christmas? Or Chanukah?

The joke is met with silence. The guests look back
uncomfortably.

CHIP (CONT'D)

In closing, let me just say one
last thing. Tomorrow is going to
be fantastic.

He pauses, riding the crescendo.

CHIP (CONT'D)

If it's not, my mother's going to
bust a nad.

He laughs. No one else does.

CHIP (CONT'D)

That is, if they even make it to
the altar.

He whips his head around to face the wedding
party, singling out Laura, then falls into
his chair.

A hacking cough. Clearing of throats. It's not until the
fourth, maybe fifth bite of chocolate cake that the
guests resume conversation.

INT YACHT CLUB TENT-LATER

Lila weaves through the disbanding crowd in search of an exit. She is still fuming over Chip's toast. *

EXT YACHT CLUB LAWN

Lila heads into the parking lot. But Tripler intercepts.

TRIPLER

You didn't think you could escape
that easy?

Lila turns, but barely stops.

LILA

Can you believe him?

TRIPLER

Who?

LILA

Chip!

TRIPLER

I don't even remember what he
said.

Lila shakes her head.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

Stay. Have one drink.

LILA

I can't. I need hours, maybe days
of silence.

TRIPLER

Boring!

LILA

I'll see you at midnight.

Tripler stares back, blank.

LILA (CONT'D)

Remember? You guys said you'd
come tuck me in. Remind the
others. Don't forget.

Tripler salutes. Lila disappears.

INT YACHT CLUB TENT

The wedding party straggle out of the club in a boisterous, joyful mood. Jake and Pete smuggle alcohol from the bartenders. Jake distracts while Pete grabs bottles and shoves them into his pockets. He emerges looking like an inflated balloon.

INT HAYES HOUSE

Lila enters the darkened house and hurries toward her bedroom. This is our first good look at the interior of the house and it surpasses even the grandest expectations. We track Lila as she hurries past yards of perfect chintz, ample buoyant pillows. She starts up the stairs and ascends quickly.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

She lands in her bedroom, a perfect museum of her childhood: trophies, horse show ribbons, rosebud wallpaper. Without stopping, she walks to a book-case, locates a timeworn thesaurus, then opens it to reveal a hollow box, holding a row of airplane-sized BOTTLES and CIGARETTES. Grabbing both, she proceeds to the window, jacks it open and squeezes through just in time, it seems, to avoid jumping out.

EXT HAYES ESTATE--LAWN

A large group stumbles down the lawn, heading toward the water. They are laughing, singing, having the time of their lives--never freer, never happier. The whole wedding party--Jake, Weesie, Tripler, Pete, Laura, and Chip--are in tow, with Tom bringing up the rear. Clouds have risen overhead but, from everyone's mood, it might as well have gotten warmer.

WEESIEE

(singing--badly) Girl, I want to
be with you in the morning.

PETE

All day. And all of the night.

WEESIE AND PETE

Girl, I want to be with you all of
the time.

TRIPLER AND CHIP

All day and all of the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Loud, off-tune, hilarious signing. They are at that stage in drunkenness when you think everything needs to be shouted.

TRIPLER

Movement to go skinny-dipping.

WEESIE

Oh God. You always do this.

Chip sprints to catch up.

CHIP

I'm game and so is Tom. I guarantee he wants one more glimpse of ass before his wedding day.

PETE

I think he got his fill at his bachelor party.

TOM

Please. The last time I saw you that night you were surrounded by naked women.

TRIPLER

Pete! You filthy pig. (to Tom) Tell me right this second. Do I need to divorce my husband?

TOM

Sadly, no. The stripper wouldn't have him.

PETE

Trip, come on. He's lying.

He takes a running start at Tom. But Tom hears the footsteps, and picks up his speed. The two circle round the group, breathless and laughing. Pete runs, squealing, into Tripler's arms. Tom, out of breath, falls behind and walks, finding himself close enough to Laura that not talking is just too weird. They walk in silence for an awkward moment.

TOM

I liked your speech.

LAURA

Thanks.

Awkward silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA (CONT'D)
Congratulations.

TOM
Thanks.

More silence.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

LAURA
It's fine. It was necessary.

TOM
It was for the best.

LAURA
Totally.

TOM
Who am I kidding? It was torture.

Laura stops, thrown by his honesty. But she doesn't trust it.

LAURA
It was easier than I expected.

TOM
It was harder than I thought it would be.

Was that a compliment or an insult?

More silence. Grass crushing under their feet.

TOM (CONT'D)
Have you missed me?

LAURA
Not for a second.

TOM
I think about you all the time. Not a day goes by. An hour. A minute.

Another pause.

TOM (CONT'D)
I don't know if I can do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

How dare he keep messing with her? Luckily, she converges with her friends at just this moment and folds into the group. They are teetering down a wooden pier that leads to the water. At the bottom of the pier is a wooden FLOAT that's attached with rope. *

INT LILA'S BEDROOM *

Lila sits on her window ledge, smoking. A knock at the door interrupts. She stubs out the cigarette, madly fans the air. She doesn't like to be surprised. *

LILA *

Mom? *

Minnow enters sheepishly. *

MINNOW *

It's me. *

LILA *

Oh, hi. *

MINNOW *

Hi. *

LILA *

Something wrong. *

MINNOW *

Just nervous, I guess. *

LILA *

I'm the one who's getting married, silly. *

MINNOW *

I know. *

Lila smiles, chides herself for snapping, softens her tone. *

LILA *

What are you nervous about? *

MINNOW *

You know. Nothing. Everything. *

Lila smiles. *

MINNOW (CONT'D) *

I'm worried Mom's gonna go psycho after the wedding. *

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MINNOW (CONT'D)

You know how she gets when she finishes a project, all up in your grill 'n shit.

LILA

'Up in your grill 'n shit'?

MINNOW

You know what I mean. I just don't want to deal with all that attention.

LILA

I see.

Lila nods knowingly. But it's clear to her that Minnow is worried about just the opposite. This is Minnow's way of saying she's afraid of losing her big sis.

LILA (CONT'D)

I think you'll be spared. I bet she'll be testy for a week or so then she'll hatch some elaborate plan for Christmas. Then before you know it, Chip will do something idiotic and she'll be totally consumed by him.

Minnow smiles. She appreciates the attention.

MINNOW

What about you? Are you nervous?

LILA

Nope.

MINNOW

I don't know why I asked. Nothing phases you.

LILA

That's not true.

MINNOW

Well, if it does, you never show it.

Lila smiles, thinks for a moment, then suddenly, a confession.

LILA

I'm terrified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MINNOWYou are?LILAYup. To the bone.MINNOWWhat about?LILAI just have this terrible feeling.
I'm not sure Tom will...I'm not
sure Tom can...I'm not sure Tom
is...Minnow is rapt. Her sister has never spoken this
candidly with her before.MINNOWYou're not sure he's what?LILAI'm just not sure..Minnow pauses. She feels out of her league. This is a
very grown-up conversation. But she takes a deep breath
and rises to the occasion.MINNOWDoes he make you feel loved?LILAYes, yes he does.MINNOWDoes he make you feel beautiful?LILAYes.MINNOWDoes he make you feel safe?Lila pauses.LILAMost of the time.MINNOWDoes he make you feel special?LILASpecial?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MINNOW

You know...like you're the most interesting person in the world, the one he wants to talk to more than anyone in the room.

Lila takes her time to answer this one

LILA

Yes, he does. He does. You know what. This is silly. Ignore me.

But Minnow has taken Lila seriously.

MINNOW

Does he wake up in the morning thinking about you? About what would make you happy?

This one stumps Lila.

MINNOW (CONT'D)

Because that's what you need to marry someone and that's what you deserve.

Lila nods. She is grateful--and impressed by Minnow's maturity.

MINNOW (CONT'D)

Do you want my opinion?

LILA

Yes, I do.

MINNOW

I don't think he does.

LILA

(snapping) You don't think he does what?

MINNOW

I don't think he wakes up thinking about you. I think he wakes up thinking about himself--and goes to sleep thinking about himself too. And, if you want to know the truth, I think he spends a little too much time thinking about someone else. Did you see how he was staring at Laura during dinner? I mean, come on, it was embarrassing,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Lila halts, dumbfounded.

LILA

What the hell are you talking
about?

MINNOW

I was watching him during the
rehearsal dinner. I'm sorry. It
was messed up.

LILA

Don't be an idiot.

MINNOW

You said you wanted my opinion.

LILA

I take it back.

MINNOW

Look, don't shoot the messenger.
If your own sister can't be
straight with you--

LILA

Straight with me? You're just
trying to kick up a fuss. You
don't know what you're talking
about. Now get out. And take
your childish theories with you.
I've had my fill of your advice.

Minnow stalls, wounded.

MINNOW

God, you asked me.

LILA

And now I'm asking you to leave.

Minnow doesn't move. Lila struggles to contain herself.

LILA (CONT'D)

Now!

Furious, Minnow storms from the room. Lila marches to
the window and, more anxious than before, lights another
cigarette.

EXT WOODEN PIER

The group file down the pier, single file.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRIPLER

Let's all get on and unmoor it.

PETE

That thing was built in 1954.
We'll sink it in ten seconds.

CHIP

The float is moored to the dock.
And it has been since I was three.
But for the real excitement, let's
get naked and go crabbing!

GROUP

EIW! Chip! Gross.

JAKE

Hey Chip, who invited you?

WEESIE

Shut up, Jake. He lives here.

CHIP

Listen to your wife, or I might
have to enlist the famous Hayes
ghost against you.

Another moan of exasperation. But soon enough, the plan becomes a motion. One by one, they file down the PIER and assemble on the FLOAT.

EXT FLOAT

They arrange themselves around the perimeter of the FLOAT, laughing, singing, joking. Everyone but Tom and Laura is carefree. They are universally drunk and happy.

CHIP

Tom, you didn't give a toast tonight.

JAKE

Yeah, what's wrong. You scared of Augusta?

TOM

No. I was having too much fun watching you guys make fools of yourselves.

Boo's, hisses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Well, how about giving one now.

TRIPLER

Yeah!

JAKE, PETE, WEESIE

Speech. Speech. Speech.

TOM

You want a speech. Fine, I'll give a speech.

JAKE

This should be interesting.

PETE

I want to hear this.

Tom takes a long, dramatic pause.

TOM

As I gaze at this assembly of friends and family on this momentous occasion, only one thing comes to mind..

Long pause.

TOM (CONT'D)

I love you middle-aged fuck-ups.

Laughter, cheers.

PETE

Here, here!

WEESIE

We love you too, you thirty-year-old!

Tom bows.

TOM

Thanks a lot for coming, you guys.

PETE

We wouldn't miss it for the world.

JAKE

(teasing) Well, maybe for a few things.

TRIPLER

Finish the speech.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TOM

You're the best friends a guy
could ever have. That's all I got
to say.

A pause.

TOM (CONT'D)

Oh, and I'm still fifty-fifty on
this whole wedding thing. At this
very moment, I couldn't tell you
if I'm going to show up tomorrow.

Tom looks very serious. Then, he breaks and smiles.

Silence as the group struggles to discern his tone.
Laura watches, unmoved. This is typical Tom, a ploy
for laughs and attention. Nothing more. Or, is it?

JAKE

Can you imagine Augusta's
reaction.

PETE

How would she do it?

WEESIEE

She'd run him down with the Volvo.

JAKE

Knife to the back.

TRIPLER

She'd bludgeon him with the bottle
of Bourbon.

The debate rages on until it suffers competition from a
chorus of very bad singing.

GROUP

Here we are now. Entertain us. I
feel stupid. And contagious.

Sound and images blur to reflect the group's extremely
drunken state.

We focus on Laura and Tom. Though they're sitting
on opposite sides of the float, but they're totally
aware of one another.

TRIPLER

Okay, okay. Let's vote on the
best toast of the night. I'm
gonna venture to say mine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JAKE

Sorry, Trip. Chip won, hands down. Grandpa McDevon came in second.

WEESIE

Oh my God, that was amazing.

Above, the sky has grown menacing. The wind has picked up and churned the water. Then, someone looks up.

TRIPLER

Wait a second. Weren't those lights closer before?

WEESIE

Very funny.

TRIPLER

No, I'm serious.

The others follow her gaze toward the house. The lights have drifted significantly. Or rather, the FLOAT has drifted. Consensus is followed by dread.

EXT OPEN WATER

The FLOAT drifts in the open bay, about half a mile from the house.

TOM

Chip, you little shit.

*

CHIP

Dude, it wasn't me.

PETE

Dude, calm down. We're not that far out.

WEESIE

I can't swim right now.

TRIPLER

Here, I'll swim with you.

WEESIE

Oh great. Then we'll both drown.

TOM

Alright, everyone. We're gonna use the buddy system.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He points out pairs in the group. And as quickly as they panicked, they settle on a plan, ducking off the float and beginning the swim back to shore.

EXT WATER

The group swim steadily, anxiously. We follow them as they go. Laura swims back on her own. Tom is nearby, moving in slow confident strokes. He seems to be watching out for her.

EXT SHORE

The swimmers arrive, tired and breathless. They assemble dutifully in pairs. Jake begins a head-count.

JAKE

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven...

PETE

(in a scary voice) It's the curse
of the Ghost of Northern Gardens.

Laughter.

But Jake is struggling. He starts again.

JAKE

One, two, three, four, five, six,
seven.

PETE

(ghost sounds) Ooooh oooooh.

More laughter.

JAKE

Hey, wait. Shut up.

PETE

You shut up.

JAKE

No, asshole. We're short by one.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

*

Lila finishes a cigarette, stubs it out, and climbs back in her window. A row of butts reveals she has smoked several. She glances at her watch and climbs into bed.

EXT SHORE

Everyone mills about on the shore. The mood has shifted from revelry to controlled panic.

WEESIEE

Where could he be?

JAKE

I bet he's passed out on the lawn. He was loaded back there on the float.

WEESIE

I can't believe we let him swim.

JAKE

Chill out, you guys. This is Tom McDevon, Inter-Collegiate champion.

WEESIE

But why would he bolt without saying goodbye?

CHIP

The current was rather perilous tonight.

Laura eyes Chip. Enough.

PETE

It's weird that we didn't see him come out. He's not that much faster than me.

JAKE

(teasing) You used to beat him in Butterfly by half a second. What's happened to you, Champ?

WEESIE

Jake, stop it.

JAKE

Come on. This is a prank, you guys. He loves shit like this. I bet he's hiding in the attic right now, waiting to pounce. (waving at the attic) We see you up there, Tom.

TRIPLER

Maybe he wanted some time alone to work out his wedding-day jitters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEESIE

But that thing he said on the float. What if that was some sort of threat?

PETE

Guys, get a clue. Did you see Lila tonight? If he has half a brain in his head, he made a break for her room.

They pause, gaining confidence in this theory, but doubt creeps in again. Laura hangs back, listening to her friends, drawing her own conclusions.

WEESIE

I think we should call the cops, let them do a proper search.

CHIP

(egging them on) But what if it's something worse than drowning...

WEESIE

What do you mean?

CHIP

Drowning... on purpose.

WEESIE

Oh my God.

PETE

Alright. Enough, you guys. Let's just look for the guy. We'll stay in these pairs and canvass the place. Come on. Let's get going.

Each girl takes her place by her husband, awaiting further instructions. Laura scans the group and suddenly realizes she's been stuck with Chip.

LAURA

Oh no. We need some time apart.

Chip does a pantomime of heartbreak, receiving an arrow to the heart and falling to the ground.

Weesie eyes Laura, concerned, tries a solution.

WEESIE

I know! Why don't we mix things up. Switch partners. Like a dinner party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Tripler pauses to consider, then pounces. She steps away from Pete, toward Jake.

TRIPLER

Dibs on Jake.

Weesie freezes. She doesn't like this idea anymore.

PETE

Fine by me. Weesie?

Pete takes a step toward Weesie.

Weesie smiles--it's too late to make a fuss. She looks to Laura, shrugs--I tried.

Laura stares at her friends, annoyed.

CHIP

(to Laura) Oh come on. I'm not that bad.

Laura stares at Chip, then looks back to her friends. Giving up, she heads down the lawn.

TRIPLER

Wait. You can't leave until we're clear on the plan.

Laura keeps walking.

Chip sprints down the lawn after her. As he runs, he makes a battle-cry, making wide figure eights, as though he's trying to destroy the greatest amount of grass.

The group watch the spectacle.

WEESIE

Maybe we should take her with us.

TRIPLER

Neh, she'll be fine. They're like brother and sister. They just like to mess with each other.

They watch for another moment, then re-focus.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

Jake and I will search the main house.

WEESIE

Pete and I will do the Getty's.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TRIPLER

(yelling so Laura can hear) We'll meet on the porch at ten of midnight. Remember, we promised Lila.

The pairs disperse.

INT AUGUSTA BEDROOM

In the most immaculately decorated bedroom in the house, Augusta lies awake. The room mixes elements of classic wasp with more exotic touches: a fern print sofa, a sisal rug, and batik pillows. William lies asleep next to Augusta. She stares at him with hatred.

AUGUSTA

William.

No answer.

AUGUSTA (CONT'D)

William, wake up. I'm in a panic.

WILLIAM

What's wrong.

AUGUSTA

I think it's going to rain.

WILLIAM

Augusta, come on.

He falls back asleep.

AUGUSTA

William, wake up this instant.

WILLIAM

I'm up.

He's not.

AUGUSTA

You're not.

WILLIAM

I'm up.

He is for a moment, and then he's back asleep.

Augusta stares at her husband, indignant. Then, suddenly, she is out of bed, pulling on a bathrobe.

INT HALLWAY

Augusta rushes down the hall.

INT STAIRS

Augusta darts down the stairs.

EXT HAYES LAWN

*

She bursts out of the house, marches across the porch, down the lawn, and arrives at the OAK TREE. She checks the bottle, finds it full, just where she left it. Relief. All is as it should be.

EXT SHORE

Laura begins to breathe again as she approaches the water. She takes a few steps and stops at the edge. She jumps when she realizes Chip is behind her.

CHIP

This must be really hard for you.

Chip lies on the beach, propped up as though he's watching a movie.

CHIP (CONT'D)

You drive halfway up to the North Pole to watch the love of your life marry the bane of your existence and this is how they thank you.

LAURA

Honestly, Chip. I'm not in the mood.

CHIP

It's ironic. Asking you, of all people, to convince the groom to show up for this wedding.

Laura is silent. It takes all her strength.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I really wish I could be there for the reunion. (impersonating) Oh Tom, I thought you were lost. Oh, Laura, I was. Until I found you..

She laughs in spite of herself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHIP (CONT'D)

Personally, I don't think he drowned.
Not our intercollegiate champion.

LAURA

I heard you had to wear some sort of
ankle bracelet now.

CHIP

Ankle bracelet. That's funny. No.
They just made me do some community
service.

He bursts into hysterics and falls onto his back.

LAURA

I'm gonna walk toward the Getty's,
see if he overshot the house.

CHIP

Oh, I wouldn't do that. It gets
really rocky over there. And then
it turns to forest.

Laura stares at Chip for a moment.

LAURA

It's fine if you don't want to
come.

She pauses, daunted by the darkness, then begins to walk.
She is just beginning to breathe easier when footsteps
approach from behind and Chip tackles her to the ground.
Shock and adrenaline combine to disorient her for a
moment.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Chip, get off me.

CHIP

Oh, come on. You know you want it
too.

He tries again, pinning her on the ground, sloppily
jamming his tongue down her throat.

LAURA

Chip, get off, you psychopath.

Laura pushes him off and Chip falls to his back, laughing
hysterically. Laura gets up, brushes herself off and walks
in the opposite direction.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Asshole.

EXT LAWN

Tripler and Jake traipse up the lawn, heading towards the house. It looks different at night--gothic, creepy, haunted. The wind has picked up. It's gotten colder. Looks like its going to storm.

TRIPLER

If you were Tom, where would you be right now?

JAKE

I'd be in Lila's bed.

TRIPLER

That's her window up there, you know, if you want to take a last shot.

JAKE

Thanks anyway.

INT HAYES HOUSE-LIVING ROOM

Jake and Tripler enter the dark living room. The decor is impeccable: cream chintz sofas with a botanical print, a cashmere throw, damask fabric on the walls. Tripler throws herself onto the sofa with no caution for her wet clothes. She scans the table for an adequate surface, settles on a coaster. She produces a PLASTIC BAG filled with white powder and empties it.

JAKE

You've got to be kidding.

TRIPLER

What?

JAKE

Isn't that a little passe'?

TRIPLER

Not when you mix it with Welbutrin.

Jake closes his eyes, dismissing. When he opens them, Tripler is hunched over the table. Within seconds, he has a change of heart and moves to sit beside her.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

Hey!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tripler swats at Jake as he leans in for a sniff. But she's too late. He inhales a large amount.

Jake gets up, circles the room. He pauses at a table covered with framed pictures and picks one up to inspect. It's Lila, age 12, in a tennis skirt. Even then, she looked hot.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

You ever think there was something odd about the way Tom and Lila started dating?

JAKE

No.

TRIPLER

It was right after we came up here senior spring. Remember, we came up for some long weekend?

Jake nods, distracted. The thought of landing in Lila's bed right now seems totally appealing.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

Don't you think it's an odd coincidence?

JAKE

Don't be retarded.

TRIPLER

He asked her out three days after we got back. Three days...

JAKE

So what?

TRIPLER

Never mind that he was dating Laura at the time. The two of them were roommates, for Christ's sake.

JAKE

You think Tom started dating Lila because he coveted her parents' fortune?

TRIPLER

You make it sound like an episode of Dynasty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE

But that's what you're saying,
right?

TRIPLER

I'm just noting the dates.

JAKE

Tom's no worse than anyone else in
this group. Everyone's got their
little act. Laura's depressed,
pretending to be happy. Weesie's
a mess, pretending to have her
shit together. Pete's a fuck-up,
pretending to be a success.
You're a geek, pretending to be
cool. I don't see the difference.

TRIPLER

And what are you?

JAKE

I'm just a miserable bastard,
pretending to give a shit.

TRIPLER

All I'm saying is I think Lila's
lifestyle appealed to Tom just
like her perfect tits appeal to
you.

JAKE

(snapping) I'm sure those appeal
to Tom as well.

Tripler shrugs and looks away. Guess she picked the wrong
partner.

EXT HAYES LAWN

Laura walks slowly up the lawn, weary but determined. As she
walks, she is mesmerized by a TREE whose branches sway in
the wind. Suddenly, the trunk seems to move, as though it's
splitting in two. Laura freezes. Is she that drunk? Then,
suddenly, she realizes.

LAURA

Tom?

He looks up, eyes wide.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Tom?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
(whispering) Laura.

She takes another step towards the tree.

LAURA
Everyone thinks you're dead.

TOM
Right now, that seems the better option.

Long pause. But she won't fall for it.

LAURA
I should go. Tell the others you're okay.

TOM
Don't go.

She starts walking.

LAURA
They're really worried.

TOM
Please stay.

For Laura, the difference is crucial.

TOM (CONT'D)
No one knows where I am.

LAURA
Exactly.

TOM
And no one knows where you are.

LAURA
Your point...

TOM
We could just hang out for a little while and no one would know the difference.

INT LILA'S BATHROOM

Lila stands at the mirror, covering her face with a blue mask. She stares at herself in the mirror, as if submitting herself to a harsh interrogation then, making a decision, she turns off the light and enters her bedroom.

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(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

Lila, her face still covered in blue, sits down at her desk, pulls out a STACK OF OLD BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS--artful ones that she snapped and developed. The photos are gorgeous dynamic shots of her friends and interesting places--Paris, Tokyo, Maine. But she's looking for one in particular. She flips through faster and faster. She finds it: a PHOTO OF LAURA AND TOM. And she inspects it as though it holds a clue. A LOUD PEEL OF LAUGHTER in the hall jars her. Annoyed, she marches to the window, peers out, finds nothing, and closes the shutters.

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EXT HAYES LAWN

Weesie and Pete traipse across the lawn to the Getty's.

WEESIE

So we've been assigned to the bedrooms.

PETE

Yup...

Weesie glances back at the house. She is clearly nervous, but trying to appear calm.

PETE (CONT'D)

You trust him, right?

WEESIE

Who? Jake? Of course.

PETE

Good, cause I don't trust Tripler one bit.

Weesie laughs and forgets her anxiety for the first time in hours. They approach the door and enter the house.

INT GETTY'S HOUSE-HALLWAY

Pete and Weesie walk down a hall, opening doors, checking closets.

WEESIE

He's not here.

PETE

Nope. Doesn't seem to be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WEESIE

Where do you think he is?

PETE

That's a very good question. One I need a drink to consider.

INT LIVING ROOM

They land in the living room. Pete collapses onto the sofa.

WEESIE

You're not worried?

PETE

Not at all. Wedding day jitters is a universal affliction.

WEESIE

Did you do freak out the night before your wedding?

PETE

I spent the night before my wedding trapped in a closet. Of course, Tripler locked me in it..

Weesie smiles. She's about to relax, but her conscience gets the better of her.

WEESIE

I hope Laura's okay.

PETE

She's fine.

WEESIE

Chip was kind of a nightmare..

PETE

No worse than usual.

WEESIE

And you don't think we should tell Lila?

PETE

Why worry her for no reason?

Weesie nods. She tries, once again, to relax.

Pete pats his pant leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE (CONT'D)

I could have sworn I had another
bottle in here.

He gets up to search the room for a bar, opening cupboards,
rattling closets.

Weesie sits, waits.

PETE (OS) (CONT'D)

So when's the big date again?

WEESIE

October 5th.

PETE

You excited?

WEESIE

Yeah. Very.

PETE

You scared?

WEESIE

Neh. I figure I know what I'm in
for. We've been together for
almost ten years.

PETE

Wow, are we that old?

WEESIE

And besides, if you and Trip are
any indication, married life is
bliss.

PETE

Aha! You do have a sense of humor!

Pete has discovered a BOTTLE of TEQUILA. He displays it
triumphantly.

PETE (CONT'D)

To your glittering future

He takes a large swig, passes it to Weesie.

WEESIE

To my glittering future.

Weesie gulps.

EXT LAWN-OAK TREE

Tom and Laura sit by the tree, comfortable, side by side. There's a new ease between them. Both look calmer than they have all night.

LAURA

You looked a little freaked during the rehearsal.

TOM

Have you ever felt Augusta's grip?

Tom laughs, stares off at something.

TOM (CONT'D)

Wait a second. She's got one in this tree.

LAURA

What?

TOM

Another bottle.

He stands and removes a BOTTLE OF BOURBON from the hutch, opens it rebelliously.

LAURA

I wouldn't do that..

TOM

Oh no?

LAURA

Not unless you want to unleash the heavens.

TOM

All the better.

Tom puts his head on Laura's lap.

LAURA

Hey! Your hair's all wet.

TOM

What do you expect. I swam halfway across the bay just for the chance to be alone with you.

LAURA

You're full of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

I'm totally serious.

Long pause. Laura looks into his eyes. Is he just being charming? Or could he mean it?

TOM (CONT'D)

I owe you an apology.

LAURA

It's okay. Let's not talk about it.

TOM

Okay.

Another pause.

TOM (CONT'D)

But you forgive me?

LAURA

Don't press your luck.

More silence, but now it's warm, intimate. Then Laura gets her nerve back.

LAURA (CONT'D)

But you know a head's up would have been nice. Nothing major. Just a quick e-mail. Like, I don't know, 'hey Laura, I know I saw you last night and countless others over the last ten years, not excluding the four years we dated in college, the year we got back together and tried again, and the handful of times we've slept together since. So anyway, you know Lila's in my life now and though I've struggled endlessly with this predicament, I think we both know the inevitable here so don't be surprised when Lila calls and asks you to be her maid of honor'.

Tom is silent.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Or here, here's another way you could have gone. Less direct but same effect. 'Hey Laura, great to see you last night. Great movie. Great meal. Great sex.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA (CONT'D)

But the problem is greatness makes me sick. See you at the wedding'.

Tom looks down.

LAURA (CONT'D)

But then again, ten years of loving friendship and sporadic, though really, very good sex, scattered with nights so fun they explain the evolutionary purpose of talking, not to mention the time we've clocked together, listening to music, driving with no destination. Do you remember when the towers went down? We just stood there on my roof for God it must have been twenty-four hours. I'm talking about a range of emotion and experience that makes certain Russian novels look painfully boring. All of this fucking beautiful mess is probably best ended without notification.

This one really gets him.

TOM

I'm sorry.

LAURA

Don't be. It was a gift. An act of cowardice so complete disqualifies a person from consideration.

Silence. Remorse or contrition?

TOM

I tried to do what I thought was right. I struggled endlessly. You know I suffered. It's not like I came at this lightly. It wasn't some carefree decision.

LAURA

Honestly, let's not go there.

More silence.

TOM

If it makes any difference, it was an accident.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA

What was?

TOM

Senior year. When Lila and I started dating.

LAURA

How exactly do you end up in someone's dorm room by accident?

TOM

I came back for you. To ask your forgiveness.

Laura's not buying it.

LAURA

And then what? You accidentally asked out my roommate?

TOM

I guess it doesn't make a difference. Maybe I should stop talking.

LAURA

Yes, I think you should do that.

A long pause.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Did the same thing happen when you proposed? You dial the wrong number?

Tom says nothing.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Wow, a single digit and everything could have been different.

A tentative silence. Intimacy, warmth slipping.

TOM

I was a lifeguard in high-school.

LAURA

I remember.

TOM

It was my favorite summer job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LAURA

You and every other guy in America.

TOM

I would sit in the chair, itching to leave, dying to get in the water. Eight hours later, my shift would end and I would make a break for it. I'd dive in and stay there hours. But the strangest thing happened when I got in. I felt suddenly panicked.

LAURA

Ambivalence is a disease, you know, an actual mental illness.

TOM

Very funny.

LAURA

Let me guess. As a kid, you'd order chocolate ice cream then immediately wish for vanilla.

TOM

Come on. That's not what I'm talking about.

LAURA

I get it. You're torn between two people.

TOM

No, it's not that at all. I'm just telling you I prefer swimming pools. I'm afraid of the ocean.

LAURA

I'll keep that in mind next time I swim on your clock.

Tom stares. They've finally reached the brink of emotional honesty. And it makes him feel wild, defensive.

TOM

You think you have a special gift for knowing what's in my heart. Did it ever occur to you that I need a woman like Lila.

LAURA

What kind of woman is that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TOM

Someone happy.

LAURA

Meaning numb.

TOM

Someone practical.

LAURA

Meaning busy.

TOM

Someone confident.

LAURA

Meaning rich.

TOM

Someone stable.

LAURA

Meaning frigid.

TOM

Someone who doesn't live and die
by her emotions.

Laura pauses. This hurt.

LAURA

So in other words, your polar
opposite.

TOM

I guess you could say that.

LAURA

Haven't you heard: opposites
attract, then they bore each other
to death.

TOM

Boring is better than maddening.

LAURA

I'd rather die of excitement.

A pause.

LAURA (CONT'D)

Remember that paper junior year?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

TOM

The Hopeless Romantics:
Misconceptions of a Movement.

LAURA

Only you could start a fifty page
paper the night before...

TOM

And still get an A-minus.

LAURA

Only because I wrote it.

TOM

Hardly...Okay, maybe half of it.

Another pause.

LAURA

I do feel sorry for them.

TOM

Who?

LAURA

All those lovesick poets.

TOM

The Romantics weren't writing
about love. They were writing
about death and religion.

LAURA

Thanks for clearing that up,
genius. We took the class
together.

TOM

They were just a bunch of confused
kids, a collection of freaks and
depressives.

LAURA

You need to think that.

TOM

No, it's true. Love and hysteria
are easily mistaken.

Laura smies, but she's not buying it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

LAURA

"Forlorn! The very word is like a bell tolling me back from thee to my sole self."

Tom pauses, mesmerized. She's reciting from John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," the poem from their college paper. No one else in the world has this power to electrify him. But it's too intense, like eating ice cream too fast. On instinct, Tom pulls back.

LAURA (CONT'D)

What's the next line?

Tom shakes his head.

TOM

I can't remember.

LAURA

Liar.

TOM

Anyone can make a big romantic gesture. The question is what happens after.

Laura looks away. Why does she feel like she's losing this argument?

TOM (CONT'D)

Do you remember what you said that night?

LAURA

I remember every song we played.

TOM

But we only listened to one song. We put "Strangers" on repeat and played it over and over.

LAURA

Oh God. I forgot. You're right.

TOM

You said it was a perfect night.

LAURA

So?

TOM

So?? What the fuck, Laura? How am I supposed to top that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

LAURA

Was I wrong? Was it not an
amazing night?

TOM

It was. One of many.

LAURA

We had so much fun.

TOM

No two people have ever had more--
been more fun. Nine out of ten
things we did together made my
list of life's greatest moments.

LAURA

So what, what was the problem with
that?

TOM

I know. It's completely nuts.
But every time we had an amazing
night, the next morning I'd wake
up in a panic. All I could think
was that we could never live up to
it the next time.

LAURA

Wow, those nuns really fucked you
up.

TOM

You try being Catholic.

Laura smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)

Let's spare each other a mundane
life of crushing disappointment.
Let's do that with someone else.

LAURA

That's the weakest excuse I've
ever heard. Just say you're in
love with Lila.

Tom sits up. He is suddenly charged, full of emotion.

TOM

Laura, what do you want me to say?
That I wish I were marrying you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

TOM (CONT'D)

That I'm about to royally fuck my
life, that I may, no, will
definitely spend the next fifty
years regretting this very moment?

Laura shrugs, says nothing. She's equally charged, eyes wide, breathless. Her brow is wildly furrowed again, a zig zag of consternation. Tom takes note and runs his hands across her brow. Laura melts--butterflies, love, sadness.

LAURA

We were supposed to be together.

TOM

But what if it sucked.

LAURA

What IF it sucked?

TOM

Some things are so precious it's
better not to fuck them up.

They sit in silence, bonded by regret. Peace, intimacy, contentment shattered.

LAURA

I better go. I need to tell the
others you're okay.

TOM

But I'm not.

Laura gets up.

LAURA

Yes you are. You chose this.
Remember?

Laura walks, heading towards the Getty's. She's forcing herself to keep moving. Finally, Tom stands and heads toward the house. She turns back, watches Tom walk away, then doubles over.

INT HAYES HOUSE MARGARET BEDROOM

Minnow tosses and turns in bed. Fed up, she throws off the covers and heads into the hallway.

INT HAYES HOUSE HALLWAY

Minnow pads down the dark hallway.

INT HAYES HOUSE STAIRS

Minnow creeps up the stairs to the attic.

INT HAYES HOUSE-ATTIC

Minnow walks into the attic, makes her way toward a closet. This is the most likely hiding spot for Lila's wedding dress. She opens the door. Jackpot. She stares, mesmerized by its perfection. She walks to the dress, extends a hand, caresses the satin. On an impulse, she reaches up and yanks it off the hanger.

INT HAYES HOUSE STAIRS

Tripler and Jake creep up the stairs, heading toward the attic.

JAKE

Are you sure this shit isn't laced?

TRIPLER

I crushed up some of my old Lithium.

Jake coughs violently.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

I'm just kidding, you wuss.

INT ATTIC

Minnow has taken the dress off the hanger and is gingerly trying it on. She is completely rapt, a religious experience. Then, suddenly, she hears footsteps. Frantic, she drags the dress in a way that would surely horrify its owner. She trips on her way to the nearest hiding spot, dragging dirt onto the train.

Tripler and Jake enter the attic. Tripler tugs a string to light a single bare bulb. A loud thud from the back of the room stops them in their tracks.

JAKE

(whispering) What the fuck was that?

Tripler freezes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRIPLER

I'll never doubt Augusta again.

They do a search of the attic, checking closets, under tables, looking for Tom. They don't see Minnow, who is hiding behind a very large trunk.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

He's not here.

JAKE

Nope.

TRIPLER

So much for your theory.

JAKE

I'll take the under on Lila's room.

Tripler sets up on an old sofa for a quick replenishment. Jake follows suit. Minnow watches, wide-eyed.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I heard you were in a movie.

TRIPLER

Yeah.

JAKE

That's cool. I'll have to see it.

TRIPLER

It actually never got released. But you can download it off Youtube.

JAKE

Cool. I will.

TRIPLER

How's the novel coming?

JAKE

You know.

TRIPLER

Better not write about me..

JAKE

Don't worry. You're not that interesting.

Tripler frowns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE (CONT'D)

But otherwise you've been good?

TRIPLER

Lately?

JAKE

Or, I don't know, since college..

TRIPLER

Eh, not amazing.

JAKE

Yeah. Me neither.

TRIPLER

Everyone seems so happy.

JAKE

No, they're not.

TRIPLER

(hopeful) Really?

JAKE

Really.

TRIPLER

Well, you people should try acting. You're better at it than I am.

JAKE

Maybe I should...The writing thing hasn't panned out.

EXT PORCH

Tom walks across the porch, enters the dark house.

INT HAYES LIVING ROOM

Tom pads across the living room, pauses at the foot of the stairs. He sits down, puts his head in his hands, desperate for clarity.

INT ATTIC

Tripler and Jake are completely wasted, talking a mile a minute.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRIPLER

At least you know you have talent.
I haven't done anything worthwhile
since I was eighteen.

JAKE

What'd you do when you were
eighteen?

TRIPLER

I got into Yale. I was headed for
greatness then. Now, I'm just
headed for a breakdown.

JAKE

Come on.

TRIPLER

(wincing) I can't even take credit
for Yale.

JAKE

Why not?

Tripler pauses. Can she admit this?

TRIPLER

I cheated on my SAT's.

Jake's mouth falls open. But he tries to soften his
expression.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

We're such horrible cliches.
Everything we say. Everything we
do.

Jake smiles, shakes his head.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

Now's where you say, 'don't be
silly, you are a great actress'.
then I say, 'your novel is going
to change the world'.

JAKE

Then I say, 'weren't we supposed
to save the world'.

TRIPLER

And then I say, 'the world's all
gone to shit. what does it matter
anyway?'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JAKE

And then we kiss in a desperate displacement of our need to connect.

Tripler pauses. Was that a pass? Taking a gamble, she leans in and kisses Jake.

Minnow watches in awe.

Jake pushes Tripler away.

TRIPLER

What? What's the big deal?

JAKE

Weesie, for one. And Pete.

TRIPLER

God, don't be such an altar boy. I'm totally wasted.

EXT HAYES LAWN

Laura heads across the lawn toward the Getty's. She's a wreck but she's pulled herself together.

EXT GETTY'S HOUSE

Laura enters the house quietly. She sees Pete and Weesie in the living room--doesn't feel like talking. She continues up the stairs, unnoticed.

INT GETTY LIVING ROOM

Weesie grabs the bottle from the floor and swigs it. These two are officially tanked. They're singing show tunes very loud and off-key. Of all three pairs, they're having the most fun.

PETE

You're actually a lot of fun.

WEESIE

Uh thanks.

PETE

No, really. You're hilarious.

WEESIE

Your surprise is disturbing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

You just seem stressed out a lot.

WEESIE

I'm married to Jake for Christ's sake.

PETE

Fair enough.

They laugh.

WEESIE

It's true. I used to be much more fun. Wilder even than Tripler.

PETE

No.

WEESIE

Who do you think inked the master plan to steal the skeleton from Skull and Bones?

PETE

Pfft. The wildest thing you've done in years is take off your watch for the rehearsal dinner.

WEESIE

Oh yeah?

PETE

Yeah.

WEESIE

Is that a challenge?

PETE

And what if it is?

Weesie pauses, racks her brain.

WEESIE

I'll race you to the porch.

PETE

Fully dressed?

WEESIE

Fuck that. Buck naked.

INT GETTY'S HOUSE-LAURA'S BEDROOM

Laura paces in her room, agitated. Is this really how it's going to end? She walks to her bag, removes her I-PHONE. She opens the internet, goes to GOOGLE, types something in. Text appears immediately, a POEM, "ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE'. The line she couldn't remember.

LAURA

Forlorn. The very word is like a
bell tolling me back from thee to
my sole self.

Suddenly, new resolve. She puts down the phone and hurries out of the room.

INT HAYES HOUSE-STAIRS

Tom is still sitting on the stairs. Suddenly, he stands, hurries up the stairs, and knocks on Lila's door.

LILA (OS)

Laura? Trip? You guys are late.

TOM

Lila, it's me.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

A knock on the door.

LILA

Finally! You guys said you'd be
here at midnight.

TOM

Li, we need to talk.

Lila registers that it's Tom, blocks him at the door. She's
still wearing her BLUE FACE MASK.

LILA

Honey, no. I'm superstitious.

TOM

Lila, please. Let me in.

Lila reluctantly opens the door.

LILA

What is it? What's wrong? Did
something happen?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom sits on the bed in silence. He's coming unglued. Lila waits, agitated.

TOM

I don't know.

LILA

You're having a pre-wedding panic attack.

TOM

No I'm not.

She sits next to him, gives him a kiss, brushes his hair off his face. Tom looks up at the framed photographs on the wall.

TOM (CONT'D)

Those are really good.

LILA

Thanks.

TOM

Why'd you stop?.

Lila inhales sharply. This cuts to the bone. But she's not about to indulge a critique. Instead, she takes command of the conversation.

LILA

Tom, you're having a panic attack. It happens to every groom. And it has for the last thousand years.

TOM

Don't patronize me, Lila.

LILA

I'm just trying to help. I'm nervous too.

Tom stares at Lila for a moment, seems to make a decision.

TOM

You are?

LILA

Of course.

TOM

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA *
We're getting married. It's kind *
of a big deal. *

TOM *
Yes, it is. *

Tom relaxes, almost smiles. *

TOM (CONT'D) *
Lila, I love you. *

LILA *
I love you too. *

TOM *
Why? *

LILA *
Because you're smart and charming *
and dangerously handsome and you *
make me feel safe and happy. And *
when I'm with you, even the most *
tedious thing is strangely, *
weirdly exciting. And sometimes, *
when I look at you across a room, *
I think you're some dapper movie *
star and then I remember, oh my *
goodness, that's going to be my *
husband. *

Tom smiles. *

TOM *
Thank you, sweetie. *

LILA *
Why do you love me? *

Long pause. *

TOM *
That's the thing, Li. I don't *
know. *

LILA *
I'm going to pretend you didn't *
just say that. *

TOM *
I'm just really confused. *

LILA *
Are you really doing this? Now? *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOMIsn't it better now than later?Lila is indignant, but Tom looks desperate so she helps him out.LILAOkay, I'll tell you why you love me. Because you don't trust yourself. Your whole life, you've never known who you are or what you want. You're like a pendulum swinging wildly between two sides. You need me to keep you still.TOMWe're so different.Lila stares into his eyes. Is she going to indulge him or not?LILAYes, we are different. And when you're not behaving like a total freak, I think that's what makes us work.TOMYou're patronizing me again.LILANo I'm not.TOMYou act like emotion is a mental illness!LILA(raising her voice for the first time) It is if you indulge every single one. We're not children anymore, Tom.Tom sighs. This makes perfect sense. Maybe he is in the wrong.Lila looks away as she attempts to control her own nerves. When she looks back, she is a changed woman, wild with emotion.LILA (CONT'D)Don't you think I want to freak out too? Don't you think I want to lose my shit? How come you get to be the one who drinks too much?(MORE)(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LILA (CONT'D)

You get to say outrageous things.
You get to be the one with wild
mood swings. You get to be the
artist! Did it ever occur to you
that these are freedoms afforded
to you by me?

Tom stares at Lila, eyes wide.

LILA (CONT'D)

Did it ever occur to you that my
emotions are just as intense. I
just work harder to keep them in
check.

TOM

But why? Why would you do that.
You should lose it. I wish you
would more. I never understood
why you stopped taking pictures.
I just thought you got bored.

LILA

Oh really? Who should I lose it
TO? My brother? My mom? You??
Take a look around you, Tom.
Someone's got to keep their cool.

And with this, she finally does the opposite--as though
she's about to implode. She lets rip a loud, furious, oddly
adorable scream.

LILA (CONT'D)

AHHHHHH!

She has come undone--tears streaming, hair a mess. She has
finally let emotion overwhelm. Then, just as quickly as she
allowed herself to 'lose it', she puts herself back together
again.

Tom is suitably cowed.

TOM

I'm sorry, Sweetie. I've been an
ass.

LILA

Yes, you have. You really have.

TOM

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

LILAI just need you to hold it
together for twelve more hours.
Can you do that for me?TOMYes. I think I can.LILAGood, now go find Jake and Pete
and have a good talk before you
cause us any more bad luck.Tom smiles.TOMI'm sorry.LILADon't be. I love you.TOMI love you too.LILANow shoo!He gets up and leaves the room. The sight of Lila, wild
with emotion, in a BLUE FACE MASK no less, is funny, human
and, in some way, weirdly beautiful. Realizing this, she
picks up her camera and SNAPS A SELF PORTRAIT. She smiles.
This feels good.

INT GETTY'S HOUSE

Pete and Weesie stand at the front door, wearing TOWELS.
Are they really going to do this?

PETE

We don't really have to do this.

WEESIE

Yeah, let's not.

PETE

Funny idea though.

Long pause.

WEESIE

No way. You're not getting off
that easy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She grabs his TOWEL and drops her own. And suddenly, they're sprinting across the lawn, buck naked, shrieking and laughing.

INT ATTIC

Tripler and Jake make their way out of the attic. Minnow watches from behind the TRUNK, heart pounding. Then, suddenly, bad luck: a SNEEZE. She tries to suppress it but no use. ACHOO! Tripler and Jake freeze then approach the noise. They are greeted by an eerie image: a tiny figure, dwarfed by a wedding dress several sizes too large. At first glance, it looks like a ghost, risen from the grave. In the commotion, the figure trips and falls, ripping the WEDDING DRESS by accident.

Jake turns, bolts down the stairs.

EXT HAYES LAWN

Weesie and Pete lie in the grass, laughing hysterically. Pete's TOWEL is nearby on the ground. Suddenly, Weesie sits up.

WEESIEE

Oh God. What time is it? I was supposed to be in Lila's room at midnight.

PETE

Well that's convenient.

She runs up the lawn, enters the house through the porch, grabs a THROW off the living room SOFA.

Pete lies naked on the lawn just as Jake sprints out the front door.

JAKE

What the fuck?

PETE

Dude.

Jake points and laughs.

PETE (CONT'D)

Shut up and give me your shirt.

He complies and the two start back across the lawn. They make quite the pair as they traipse back, one without pants, the other without a shirt.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

Lila finishes washing the BLUE MASK of her face. She exits the bathroom and enters her bedroom.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

She looks at her watch. Her friends are over an hour late. Now, she's completely stirred up. What could they be doing?

INT THIRD FLOOR LANDING

Tripler retreats from the attic, totally shaken. She will have to pass Lila's room.

LILA
Hello? Who is that?

Tripler remains still, trying to mute her breathing.

LILA (CONT'D)
Laura, Tripler. You guys are late.

The door swings open.

TRIPLER
Just me.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

Tripler enters Lila's room. Lila is consumed with suspicion.

LILA
You said you would be here at midnight.

TRIPLER
I'm sorry. We're assholes, druggies, losers..

Lila says nothing, takes a seat on her bed. Tripler stands awkwardly.

LILA
Where is everyone?

TRIPLER
We all had so much to drink. I doubt they're still standing.

CONTINUED:

LILA *
How drunk was Tom when you left him? *

TRIPLER *
Completely. *

LILA *
And Laura? *

TRIPLER *
No worse than the rest. *

LILA *
Well where is she now? *

TRIPLER *
Hell if I know. Probably passed out *
on the lawn. That girl can't hold *
her liquor like she used to. *

Lila nods slowly. It's worse than she thought. None of *
this bodes well. And woman's intuition tells her Tripler's *
not telling the truth. *

A knock on the door. It's Weesie. She enters the room,
naked but for a THROW. *

WEESIEE *
I'm so sorry. *

LILA *
It's fine. Where's Laura? *

Weesie looks to Tripler. What has she said? *

WEESIEE *
(lying badly) God, I don't know. *

Tripler eyes her instructively. *

WEESIEE (CONT'D) *

Oh wait. I saw her heading for *
the house an hour ago. Said she *
was gonna turn in early. *

Lila nods. Suspicion has turned to panic. Something is *
definitely amiss. Tripler tries to change the subject. *

TRIPLER *
(to Weesie) So, what's with the *
toga? *

WEESIE *
Don't ask. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The girls finally acknowledge Weesie's half-naked state and burst into hysterical laughter. But Lila can't relax. What are her friends hiding?

*
*
*

EXT HAYES LAWN

Laura traipses across the lawn, heading for the OAK TREE. Maybe he's come back for her? Unlikely, but worth a shot.

EXT HAYES LAWN-FURTHER UP

Tom leaves the house with new purpose. He won't make the same mistake twice.

EXT LAWN-OAK TREE

Laura stands by the tree, waiting, looking. But she second-guesses herself. This is crazy. She turns to go back to the Getty's, disheartened.

*
*

But then she hears faint music. It's "Strangers", by the Kinks. Tom's got it playing on his I-PHONE. Here's his Big Romantic Gesture. Then, he tops it.

They run to each other. Kissing, crying, passion.

Tom whispers the rest of the poem in Laura's ear. Extreme close-up.

TOM

Forlorn! The very word is like a
bell to toll me back from thee to
my sole self. Adieu. The fancy
cannot cheat so well as she is
famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu, adieu, thy plaintive anthem
fades past the near meadows, over
the still stream, up the hillside
and now tis buried deep in the
next valley glades. Was it a
vision or a waking dream? Fled is
that music--do I wake or sleep?

They pull apart for a moment.

TOM (CONT'D)

(whispering) I'll love you
forever. Will you love me
forever?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA
(whispering) I'll love you
forever.

More kissing, crying, passion.

They pull apart and Tom heads for the tree, seizes the
BOTTLE OF BOURBON. He takes off the cap, they both take a
sip, then turn it upside down.

Finally, the clouds make good on their promise. At
the first drop, Tom and Laura rush to each other,
kiss passionately.

*
*

As they hold each other, Laura's BLACK SASH comes off and is
cast to the side, unnoticed.

*

EXT GETTY'S LIVING ROOM

Weesie and Tripler enter to find Jake and Pete on the sofa.

PETE
Any luck?

WEESIE
No. You?

They shake their heads solemnly.

PETE
All hope rests in Chip and Laura.

WEESIE
That's not good.

JAKE
I'm sure Chip and Laura have found
him by now.

WEESIE
If they're even still together.

TRIPLER
Lila's going to kill us.

Finally, the inevitable explosion.

PETE
We're telling her now.

TRIPLER
No way. She'll freak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

That would be an appropriate response.

WEESIE

Why are you trying to cover your butt?

TRIPLER

Cover my butt? I did nothing wrong.

JAKE

Chill out, you guys. I say we wait until dawn. Give Tom a few more hours. There's no point in getting Lila worked up if we can avoid it.

The group is silent.

TRIPLER

All those in favor of telling her now.

Pete and Weesie raise their hands.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)

All those in favor of waiting.

Jake and Tripler raise their hands.

WEESIE

Fine, let's just wait until it's light.

Resolved, the girls join the boys on the sofa.

EXT HAYES LAWN-NIGHT

Chip wakes up in pouring rain. How and when did he get here? *
Staggering, he makes his way up the lawn. But he stops in his tracks as he passes the OAK TREE, sees Tom and Laura. Laura looks up and they make eye contact. Chip keeps walking.

EXT HAYES LAWN--MORNING

The camera surveys the toll taken by the storm. One of the tent poles has come unearthed, causing the tent to sag in the middle. A few table cloths have scattered on the lawn along with a BOTTLE OF BOURBON.

But the clouds are gone and the sky is bright. The lawn has turned from mint to emerald. The storm has magnified the beauty of the house. Augusta could not have planned it better.

EXT OAK TREE

Laura lies asleep, contented, wakes up to the sound of a bird. For a moment, she's confused. Then it all comes back.

Tom's gone. But where is he?

She grabs her things and starts back toward the Getty's, trying to make sense of her night. As she peers ahead, a figure emerges: her four friends, silhouetted by the water. They meet in the middle.

TRIPLER
Have you seen him?

Laura looks down.

WEESIE
Us either. We're telling Lila now.

They continue walking.

LAURA
Wait a second.

They stop.

WEESIE
What is it?

Laura says nothing.

TRIPLER
Where were you anyway?

LAURA
Where were you?

Tripler stares, suspicious.

TRIPLER
Oh my God. You saw him.

WEESIE
Trip, leave her alone.

TRIPLER
What? She did.

WEESIE
Why do you think that?

TRIPLER
Because Laura can't lie for shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Laura stares at her friend, silent.

TRIPLER (CONT'D)
Where did you sleep? Fess up.

LAURA
Where did you sleep? Or should I
say whose husband did you sleep
with?

They stare at each other for a moment. Finally, Weesie takes command.

WEESIEE
We don't have time for this right
now.

She starts walking again, heading toward the house. The others linger, then follow.

EXT HAYES LAWN

Augusta emerges in a silk bathrobe. She marches to the tree, checks the BOTTLE, finds it empty. Enraged, she scans the lawn for the culprit. Then, she sees Laura's BLACK SASH. Little harlot.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

Lila awakes in a confusion of emotion: elation, terror, relief. She emerges from bed, faces herself in the mirror. She removes the photo of Laura and Tom from the drawer, rips it in half, and throws it in the garbage. *
*
*

She exits the room, making a beeline for the attic. She is *
suddenly consumed by a burning need to see her wedding dress.

INT HALLWAY

Lila hurries across the hall.

INT STAIRS

Lila climbs up the stairs to the attic.

INT ATTIC

Lila sees her dress and sighs with relief. It is as beautiful as she remembers. Even as she gets closer, she fails to notice the damage. But as she examines it, the dress reveals a hideous rip. It is torn at the seam between bodice and skirt. She immediately knows the culprit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA
Minnow!

INT AUGUSTA BEDROOM

Augusta jumps, startled.

INT MINNOW BEDROOM

Minnow sits up in bed, panicked. She darts from her bed and sprints up the stairs.

INT HALLWAY

Augusta heads towards the attic.

INT ATTIC

Augusta arrives to find Lila hovering over the dress. *

LILA
Look what she did. *

Augusta embraces Lila. *

AUGUSTA
It can be fixed. There's still
plenty of time. *

INT STAIRS

Minnow overhears and freezes.

INT ATTIC

Lila hears the footsteps and starts toward the door, screaming threats, arms flailing. Augusta restrains Lila just long enough to give Minnow a healthy lead. But Lila escapes within seconds and starts down the stairs.

INT STAIRS

Minnow sprints down the stairs, only a pace ahead of Lila.

Lila catches a piece of her sister's nightgown. But gravity conspires with Minnow, propelling her down with a small advantage.

INT KITCHEN

Minnow speeds through the kitchen, trailed by Lila.

INT LIVING ROOM

Minnow sprints through the living room, trailed by Lila.

EXT PORCH

Minnow emerges on the porch, where the wedding party is gathering.

She disappears into the throng while Lila faces her friends. *
The group stand on the porch awkwardly, waiting for the right *
time to talk.

EXT LAWN

Minnow lights out across the lawn, hooting and gloating. *
Everyone watches, trying not to laugh. *

EXT PORCH

Lila is doing her very best to regain composure. She is *
succeeding but her struggle is apparent. Tripler steps *
towards Lila.

TRIPLER

Li, there's something we have to tell
you..

LILA

Don't tell me it's going to rain. *

TRIPLER

Nope.

She nods cheerfully at the sky as though she alone arranged *
for the weather. *

LILA

What is it?

Tripler looks to Weesie for help. Lila scans her friends.

PETE

Tom's missing.

LILA

What? No, he's not.

WEESIE

Yes, Li. Listen.

TRIPLER

After the rehearsal dinner, we went
down to the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAKE

Pete smuggled booze from the club.

PETE

Dude, we did it together.

TRIPLER

Someone got the idea to get on the float. We hung out there for a while, drinking, being stupid. All the sudden, we looked up and realized we'd drifted out.

WEESIE

So we broke into pairs and swam back to shore. And when we made it back...

Long pause.

TRIPLER

Tom didn't.

WEESIE

We need to call the police. Before it gets any later.

Lila stares at her friends while she digests the information.

*

LILA

Guys, this sounds like quite an adventure and I hate to ruin the ending. But I saw Tom.

WEESIE

What?

JAKE

I knew it.

LAURA

You did? When?

Laura is clearly more shocked than the rest.

LILA

In my room. Last night.

LAURA

What time?

LILA

I don't know. Pretty late.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LAURA

Oh.

WEESIE

Are you kidding me? That's great.

Laura smiles, but she's obviously heartbroken. Everyone else is laughing, relieved--huge deep breath.

WEESIE (CONT'D)

But where is he now?

PETE

Don't even start.

JAKE

He can fend for himself from now on.

LILA

There he is.

The group follows her gaze down the lawn.

EXT LAWN

And there is Tom, approaching slowly, backlit by the sun. He greets the crowd with a dapper wave, like a magician emerging from a box.

EXT PORCH

Everyone watches, eyes narrowed, as though beholding an apparition. *

Lila smiles and sprints to meet him. Laura watches in disbelief.

EXT LAWN

Lila reaches Tom and throws herself into his arms. They pull apart and head toward the porch, arm in arm.

Laura stares at Tom. He avoids her eyes. Finally, he looks at her--it's almost imperceptible--then looks away. But the look speaks volumes. *

LILA

I told you he went for a walk.

A hearty laugh from the group.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WEESIE

Oh no! It's bad luck for you guys
to see each other before the
wedding.

TRIPLER

Shut up, Weez.

ANNIE

Yeah, shut up.

And with that, the subject of Tom's disappearance is
permanently dropped.

EXT HAYES PORCH

Lila arrives on the porch, carrying the damaged wedding dress *
in her arms like a wounded soldier. A massive sewing box *
balanced on her lap, she begins mending the rip. Even with *
pins and needles tucked between her teeth, she still looks *
calm and graceful. Lila is renewed in her confidence. This *
is what she's best at: solving problems, restoring order. *

EXT HAYES LAWN *

The group wander back toward the house, weary from the *
night's events. *

Weesie catches up with Jake and grabs his hand.

Pete puts his arm around Tripler.

JAKE

Group pact? To forget everything
that was said and done last night.

PETE

Why? What did you do?

TRIPLER

No worse than you.

WEESIE

Good idea, sweetie.

PETE

Group pact?

TRIPLER

Group pact.

JAKE

Group pact.

EXT HAYES LAWN--FURTHER BACK, CLOSER TO THE HAYES

Laura walks by herself, totally crushed.

CHIP

Laura. Hey, wait up.

Laura turns, barely stops walking. *

CHIP (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about last night. I was out of line.

LAURA

Yeah, you were.

CHIP

Maybe I do need that ankle bracelet.

Laura doesn't laugh.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Seriously, Laur. I messed up. I'm sorry I let you down.

Laura smiles--forgiveness. She keeps on walking.

EXT HAYES PORCH

Lila sits, triumphant. The dress is mended. The sky is blue. Everything is in its place. She surveys the lawn as a trio of servers hurry across. Blue and green ribbons dance at the tent poles, marrying the lawn and the ocean. *

INT GETTY'S GIRLS' BATHROOM

The girls groom, as they did before, only more exhausted. Weesie uses the blow dryer while Tripler puts drops in her eyes. Laura takes a spot at the sink, splashes her face with cold water. Her eyes are red, blotchy. Then a peace offering--Tripler hands her the EYE-DROPS. Laura smiles. These girls can't stay mad at each other for long.

EXT HAYES LAWN

Augusta strides across the porch and begins her final scan. We follow as she canvasses the grounds. First, the parking lot where early arrivals have begun to assemble. Then, around to the lawn. Neat clumps of servers, dressed in black; assorted members of the family, dressed in pastel. Augusta's dress is a radiant red that makes her look twenty years younger.

Now, we're inside the tent, where silver is set, flowers open, resplendent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then we're out of the tent as Augusta strides past the chairs set up for the ceremony. Finally, she looks up to the house, takes in the enormity of her accomplishment. The sky is blue, the air is clear. Nothing can tarnish her triumph, not a damaged wedding dress, not the groom, not the weather.

INT HAYES HOUSE-HALLWAY OUTSIDE LILA'S BEDROOM

The girls arrive at Lila's bedroom in their bridesmaid dresses, knock on the door.

INT LILA'S BEDROOM

The door flies open, revealing Lila in bustier and heels. She has recovered herself--and then some. Whatever she suspects or has concluded, she has put it out of her head. Today is her wedding day, God damn it.

*
*
*
*

LILA

I swear to God. I forgot this thing had seven thousand hooks.

Weesie rushes to her aid and gets to work on the buttons.

As the girls stand together, Lila's color scheme reveals its magic. Together, they look like a string of pearls.

*
*

LILA (CONT'D)

How's the make-up?

WEESIE

Revolting.

LILA

The hair?

TRIPLER

Trashy.

LILA

You've seen the dress.

TRIPLER

Tacky choice.

They smile, hug, stamp their feet--feeling the excitement. Laura does her best to play along.

The moment is interrupted as the door opens, revealing Minnow.

She runs across the room into Lila's arms, joining the huddle.

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILA

Shit. I left the bouquets
downstairs. Could someone grab
them?

LAURA

I will.

Laura rushes out, relieved by the chance to be alone.

EXT HALLWAY AND STAIRS

Laura heads toward the basement.

INT BASEMENT

Laura descends the basement stairs, calmed by the
darkness. She opens the fridge, the only light in the
room, and finds the requested bouquets: four small ones
and Lila's enormous one. She removes the flowers and
heads up the stairs with new determination.

INT LIVING ROOM

Lila is in the ritual stance, her dress draped over a chair
as she stands at the other end of the room. The girls hover
like hornets around a rose. A photographer follows their
every move, pretending to be inconspicuous.

LAURA

Lila.

LILA

There you are. Thank God. We were
starting to think you'd run off
with those.

Laura releases the bouquets. Lila looks out the window with
nostalgia. But a click from the camera reveals it was just a
pose.

LAURA

I owe you an apology.

LILA

It's fine. You're just in time.

LAURA

No, not about the flowers. Something
else.

*
*

Long pause. Througout, Lila remains--or feigns--total
distraction. She is consumed with the task of untangling a
necklace whose chain has become horribly knotted.

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAURA (CONT'D)

I saw Tom last night.

LILA

That's nice. Did you two get a chance to catch up?*
*

LAURA

I mean I found him when he was missing.

LILA

Good for you.

*

LAURA

What I'm trying to say is Tom wasn't lost. He was hiding.

*

LILA

Yes, he told me about his meltdown.*
*

LAURA

Let me try this another way. Tom wasn't alone last night. He was with me. We were together.*
*
*
Lila stares at Laura, finally honoring her with her full attention. But only for a moment. She won't give her the satisfaction of flinching. She proceeds, feigning nonchalance.
*
*
*

LILA

Was that before or after he came to my room?*
*

LAURA

I don't know. What time was that?

*

LILA

Must have been well past midnight. I was actually expecting you.*
*
*

LAURA

He was with me before. And after.*
*

LILA

(snapping) Laura, why are you telling me this? This doesn't concern me.*
*

LAURA

It doesn't concern you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LILA

He's a groom. I would be concerned if he wasn't a wreck the night before his wedding.

LAURA

But what if he was in love with someone else? Would that concern you?

Lila says nothing for several seconds. She speaks when she's good and ready.

LILA

You have spent the last ten years competing with me. You want what I have. This motivates you. *

LAURA

This has nothing to do with you. *

This is totally separate.

LILA

Nothing you do is separate from me. *

LAURA

Lila, I'm in love with Tom.

LILA

I know. And I feel sorry for you.

LAURA

I've lived with these feelings for ten years now. I've tried everything to get them out of my system but nothing--not time, not other guys, other cities--nothing makes them lessen at all. People say it gets better with time. But I haven't found that to be true. If anything, the more time goes by, the more I miss him. *

LILA

Aw, isn't that sweet. *

LAURA

It's out of my control. *

LILA

Unrequited love is the perfect romantic construct. It allows two cowardly people to act out a fantasy of love without any real consequences. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LAURA

He feels this way too, Lila. He always has and you know it. How can you marry him knowing he feels this way about me? Our relationship was never over when you guys got together.

*

*

*

*

LILA

All of this is certainly tragic and debatably interesting. But, unfortunately for you, it doesn't matter anymore. He's marrying me in ten minutes.

*

*

*

The photographer emerges at this moment and snaps a photo of the two friends. Lila smiles with chilling indifference then turns to face the others.

LILA (CONT'D)

For God's sake, can I move yet?

Before anyone can answer, Augusta arrives and dismisses Lila. The chairs are filling. The boys are assembled. It is time to process.

EXT HAYES LAWN--WEDDING

Seen through Laura's perspective, the wedding procession is warped and distorted. The chatter of two-hundred-fifty guests is loud, then distant. People blur and regain focus as though she's wearing faulty glasses.

The groomsmen stand outside the back door, jostling like horses. They greet the bridesmaids with enthusiasm. Then, without warning, Laura is being pushed into line. Chip appears and offers his elbow.

She is pulled towards escalating music, as sound drifts in and out. She sees chairs, faces, a kaleidoscope of color. She files into her appointed spot, forgetting her assigned position until Chip nudges her into place.

And there is Tom in a morning coat in the midst of this ghastly vision. Then the crowd hushes and all sound goes out as Lila begins her procession. Lila glides across the grass, the human embodiment of perfection. And then, out of nowhere, on her perfect bare shoulder, a RAINDROP.

EXT LAWN--NEAR ALTAR

Tripler and Weesie whip their heads around to look at one another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRIPLER

Did you feel that?

WEESIE

What?

She waits for confirmation. One lands on her arm.

WEESIE (CONT'D)

No, I didn't.

Laura feels one on her neck. She looks up to the sky. It has darkened in a matter of minutes.

Mr. Hayes lifts Lila's veil. She smiles and kisses him on cue. She takes her position next to Tom. The reverend clears his throat and begins his sermon.

REVEREND BARTLETT

When I first met Tom McDevon, it was on a day much like today. A day so glorious it provided final, irrefutable proof that God exists...Or at least, that Augusta had a word with him.

The guests resound with polite laughter.

REVEREND

Augusta had invited me over for tea and we were catching up on the porch. Tom arrived, after a long trip from New York. And let me tell you, the look on his face when he saw Lila was unlike any look--and I've seen many in my day--any look I've ever seen when a man greets a woman.

Laura scans the crowd. It's like watching a movie with her hands over her eyes.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

I've known Lila forever. Since she was a towhead running around the club. It will come as no surprise that she was an adorable child long before she was a beautiful young woman. And yet I have never seen her look more radiant, more delighted, more certain of her place in the world than she did that day as she greeted Tom in the driveway of this house.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REVEREND (CONT'D)

These two are not only graced with an abundance of earthly gifts, they have been blessed with everlasting love.

Laura keeps her eyes on the guests, anxious for their interpretation. But their smiles confirm her worst fear. They agree with the minister.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Love is like the ocean. Vast, seemingly endless.

He pauses to allow a chuckle.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Rocky, at times. Peaceful, at others. Daunting for all its unexplored depths. But a constant source of wonder and amazement.

Laura sighs. It is certain. It's really going to happen.

*
*

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Marriage is like a raft. Imperfect but sound so long as the builders continuously fortify the structure and, once afloat, strive for balance.

The guests reward the awkward metaphor with a saccharine sigh.

Laura looks on, defeated. She scans the crowd with new awareness. It's time to move on from this life, these people.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Now, if you will turn to page three-hundred-and-fifty-seven, I would like to read from First Corinthians, chapter thirteen, verse four.

A rustle of pages.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

(reading) Love is patient. Love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude, nor selfish, not quick to take offense. There is nothing love cannot face.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

REVEREND (CONT'D)

There is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance. In a word, there are three things that last forever. Faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of them all is love.

He pauses with decorous formality.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Tom and Lila have written their own vows in an expression of their creativity.

LILA

Tom, you surprise me all the time. Maybe once a day. Just when I think I know everything there is to know, you say or do something that levels me.

Tom looks up strangely at Lila. What does she know about Laura?

LILA (CONT'D)

I love this about you. You keep me thinking, wondering, alert, alive. I also hate this about you. Every once in a while, I am forced to question everything I know to be true about you. If a person can surprise you so completely...

She trails off, thoroughly disheartened, almost a surrender.

LILA (CONT'D)

But love is nothing if not a recurring act of forgiveness. No man, no woman is perfect, Tom. We will always err, stray, disappoint. The challenge is to choose the person who will lift us up, not pull us down in between these shocking and disappointing betrayals.

Tom looks down. She knows.

LILA (CONT'D)

I have chosen you, Tom. And you have chosen me. I promise to try to lift you up, And I expect the same of you.

Laura stomachs despair as Lila concludes. She has lost two loves in one night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Tom stares at the ground, ashamed, contrite. After a painfully long, awkward silence, the Reverend eyes Tom urgently. Your turn, Buster.

*
*
*

TOM

Lila, I look at you. And I'm speechless. I literally have nothing to say.

Tom pauses, stares at the ground, as though he's counting blades of grass.

TOM (CONT'D)

Words fail the depth and complexity of my feelings for you. I need canons of literature, unwritten books, an entirely new language.

Laura's heart sinks. He saved himself.

TOM (CONT'D)

But the thing is...Without words, I have nothing to offer. Words are my only riches. Words...

He trails off again, this time for even longer. He looks from the grass to Lila, breathless like a runner at the end of a race.

LILA

Maybe I should say it for you.

*
*

TOM

I'm sorry. I can't do this.

*
*

And then, without warning, it starts to rain. Rain pours down from the sky in sheets. A lightning bolt bisects the bay, sending horrified guests running toward the wedding tent. Augusta stands still, in defiance, like the captain of a sinking ship.

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And inside a second, the seven friends are doing what they do best: running. Weesie rushes to Lila, trying to rescue the train. Tripler follows, always game for a thrill. The boys start an impromptu race. Tom and Laura freeze, exchange a glance. Hard to tell if it's a look of disappointment or solidarity.

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Just as they weren't quite ready to graduate, these friends are not quite ready to tie the knot. These friends, these hopeless romantics, are not quite ready to be adults. And so they scatter and put it off for just one more day.

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*

The wedding photographer catches this moment in a beautifully chaotic image.

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(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

It might as well be the same photo snapped on graduation day. In it, everyone is caught--ironically--in a state of flight.

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THE END

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