

Suit Girl
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

And a bright one.

First day of a brutal summer.

Sun beats down on a sandy wasteland.

Inhospitable desolation in every direction.

A lone little figure wanders down an aging highway.

Dirty hair, tiny frame wrapped in dull, colorless clothes, a crummy jacket with black tee, caked with dust.

SUIT GIRL.

A small sweetheart about fourteen years old with the saddest eyes you've ever seen.

She wipes the sweat off her brow and gazes into the distance.

The heat hammers her.

She stumbles.

Can't keep going.

Sound of an engine.

She glances into the distance.

A van appears over the horizon like a mirage.

She winces. It's really there.

Suit Girl takes off to the dirt and finds a place to hide, laying flat on the ground.

She waits, keeping her head down.

The van effortlessly breezes past.

She pokes her head out and watches the van disappear into the horizon.

She checks that the coast is clear and pulls herself out of the ditch.

Returns to the empty street.

She huffs and starts trudging again.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Worn-down but still running. Rusting metal signs dangle in the wind.

Suit Girl approaches.

She eyes the establishment.

She passes an empty parked car. State Troopers. She keeps a wide berth.

INT. GAS STATION MART - DAY

Door swings open. Jingling bell.

Suit Girl creeps in, but stops in the doorway.

She shuts her eyes. Air conditioning overhead.

She practically melts under it.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT

Get out of the door!

Suit Girl steps in and looks around.

Two state troopers loiter near the front desk. Suit Girl avoids eye contact and makes a beeline for the back.

She finds a water fountain. Hits the button. Water sprays. She starts drinking eagerly, keeping an eye on the troopers.

Door jingles again.

A young man enters. College aged, texting with one hand, decked in unremarkable clothes, cheap sneakers, leather cuff on his wrist.

His name is SAM. He waves to the cashier.

SAM

Hey, I got twenty bucks on pump two, okay? I'm going to look around.

Sam passes Suit Girl and smiles. She wipes her mouth and tries to wave back, but he's already looking away.

Wall of freezers. Suit Girl checks no one's looking, then opens the door and shoves her face in.

Sam pokes through some shelves and spots her. He approaches, opens the neighboring door, and shoves his face in, too.

SAM (CONT'D)

Smart.

She grins. They share a moment.

Sam's cell phone rings. He pulls his head out, hits a button and begins one half of a conversation.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hey. I'm still a couple hours away. I didn't get out as early as I thought.

Suit Girl spies on him.

SAM (CONT'D)

I don't know, probably after dark. No no, start without me, I don't mind.

She glances over to the pumps.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, I have my keys, why wouldn't I have my keys?

Suit Girl sneaks past the troopers and heads out.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Sam's car. Older than he is. Four doors, loaded with stuff, fading parking permits and dulled paint.

Suit Girl approaches the old auto.

She glances back to the store windows. No one's looking.

She tests Sam's doors. Unlocked. She opens the back.

She slithers into Sam's car, nestling between random belongings, and shuts the door behind her.

A second later, Sam exits the market with a bag, carrying a six pack of soda with one finger.

He opens his door, tosses his bag into the passenger seat.

He takes the pump handle and starts filling his tank.

Numbers start rolling up. Reaches 20 in no time.

He looks away from the car, long enough to miss Suit Girl resettling amongst his things.

Sam places the pump back in the cradle.

Screws the gas cap back on, wipes his hands on his pants, and slips into the car.

The door shuts.

Ignition.

The car drives off.

EXT./INT. DESERT/SAM'S CAR - DAY

Sam drops his cell phone into an empty cupholder.

He drives, bored.

He pulls his visor down, revealing a CD holder.

Suit Girl peers out from behind the seat.

He catches a fleeting glimpse of Suit Girl in the mirror.

Sam glances back. Nothing there.

Shakes his head. Never was.

Back to the CDs. He pulls one, slides it into the stereo.

He looks back a second time. Nothing.

He pulls a soda can from the plastic rings and tosses it gently into the back. It bounces off Suit Girl's head.

SUIT GIRL

Ow!

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

Sam's brakes scream, the car skids to a stop.

Sam bursts out the front door, backing up nervously.

He's yards away before he calms down enough to actually look back.

He nervously approaches the car, reaches for the back door handle, and flings the door open.

Suit Girl slips out of the back, wide eyes locked on Sam.

SAM
What the hell are you doing in my
car!?

SUIT GIRL
I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

SAM
How did you even get back there?

SUIT GIRL
I'm sorry!

She briskly walks away, avoiding eye contact with him.
Dumbfounded and flustered, Sam takes off after her.

SAM
Hey... HEY!

He catches up to her. He turns her around and crouches
to get a better look.

SAM (CONT'D)
Who are you... where did you come
from?

Suit Girl writhes out of his grasp and walks away.

SAM (CONT'D)
Wait!

She stops and turns.

SAM (CONT'D)
I remember you... I remember you,
you were in the gas station! What
are you doing here?

She stays quiet as he approaches her.

SAM (CONT'D)
Well... okay, you know what, let's
just... let's just call your
parents and tell 'em what happened
and figure out a place where we
can--

SUIT GIRL
NO!

SAM
Look, someone has to be looking
for you...

SUIT GIRL
No one's looking for me!

SAM

God damn, I gotta... how the hell
do we find the police out here?

SUIT GIRL

No! No police! Just... don't,
okay?

SAM

Why? What did you do?

SUIT GIRL

Nothing!

Sam groans annoyed. He crouches, trying to think of what
to do. Suit Girl nervously approaches him.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Can I go now?

SAM

Where are you going?

SUIT GIRL

I don't know.

SAM

You don't know?

SUIT GIRL

I'll know when I get there.

Suit Girl steps away from him.

He watches her walk away, then takes stock of the desert.

Wide, hot, empty. No end in sight.

He's not even thinking when he blurts out...

SAM

You want a ride?

Suit Girl arches a brow, suspicious.

SAM (CONT'D)

Look... if you keep walking out
here, dressed like that... you'll
probably get heat stroke or pass
out and die or something. So...
you want a ride?

SUIT GIRL

A ride?

SAM
Yeah. And if you see where you're
going, I can drop you off.

SUIT GIRL
Really?

SAM
Sure.

Suit Girl approaches Sam's car, inspecting the curves.

SUIT GIRL
Okay.

SAM
Uh... I'm Sam, by the way.

She gives him a small angelic smile as she opens the car door.

SUIT GIRL
Hi.

She shuts the door behind her.

SAM
(to himself)
"Hi."

EXT./INT. DESERT / SAM'S CAR - DAY

Sam shuts his door. Suit Girl pulls her seatbelt on.
They're both glazed from the heat outside.

SAM
Brutal out there.

SUIT GIRL
Yeah.

Suit Girl pulls her knees close.

Sam puts the keys back in, trying to think of what to say.

He glances at her shoes, the treads dig into the seat fabric.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)
Sorry... bad for the seat, right?

SAM

Don't worry about it, sit how you like.

Suit Girl clutches her legs tight.

SAM (CONT'D)

Trust me, this car's taken a lot more abuse than you could dish out.

She curls back up.

Ignition kicks in.

Sam reaches for the A/C knob. Suit Girl instinctively tightens, scooting away from his hand.

She keeps her eyes on him.

SAM (CONT'D)

Um... the air conditioning, I was turning on the air conditioning...

She doesn't move.

Sam moves his hand away. She keeps tight.

SAM (CONT'D)

I was just trying to...

Sam groans.

SAM (CONT'D)

Forget it.

Long silence. Doesn't sit well with either of them.

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY

Sam's car glides down the empty desert.

INT. SAM'S CAR - DESERT - DAY

Suit Girl watches the desert pass.

She adjusts in her seat. Eyes on the horizon.

Sam stares straight ahead. One hand on the wheel.

His attention drifts back to Suit Girl.

SAM
 (softly)
 I can't do this...

He sits back.

SAM (CONT'D)
 You thirsty?

SUIT GIRL
 Yeah.

SAM
 I, uh, got the wrong soda back
 there. Why don't we find some
 place to pull in, get you
 something to drink?

SUIT GIRL
 Okay.

EXT. BLOCK OF STORES - DAY

The kind of store that sits at the ass end of a town no
 one visits.

Sam's car parks in the almost-empty parking lot.

INT. MINIMART - DESERT - DAY

Sam and Suit Girl stride into the big, crummy store. Sam
 tries to hide his face from the cameras.

Sam nudges Suit Girl off.

SAM
 Go look around, see what you want.

SUIT GIRL
 Okay.

Suit Girl steps away from him.

Sam starts poking around. He keeps an eye on the door.

Suit Girl glances about the shelves, fingering through
 plastic packets.

Sam slowly creeps backwards, inching towards the door.

Suit Girl peels open a Smiley Pie, shoving the whole
 thing into her mouth, crumbs of cake and filling dribble
 down her cheek.

MANAGER

Hey! Gotta pay for that!

She grabs another one and rushes towards the door

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Hey! Get your ass back here!

Sam steps in front of her, blocking her in.

SAM

It's okay, I'll pay for it, okay!
Look, I... I told her to get
whatever she wants and I'll pay
for it, I think she just...

Sam pulls out his wallet, counts out some bills, places
them hard on the counter.

SAM (CONT'D)

Just, uh... down payment and we'll
add on to that.

EXT./INT. DESERT/SAM'S CAR - DAY

Suit Girl shoves another smiley pie into her mouth.
Stops. Cake sticks out of her mouth.

Sam gets in, slamming the door.

Suit Girl shrinks, and glances at the wrapper.

SUIT GIRL

...did you want one?

Sam shifts the car into gear.

SAM

No.

She puts her finger against the cake and slowly pushes
the rest into her mouth.

Sam drives.

Tries to speak. Can't think of what to say.

Suit Girl keeps to herself, contorting in her seat.

They ride in uncomfortable silence.

SAM (CONT'D)

Okay, this... this isn't working
out.

SUIT GIRL

...did I do something wrong?

SAM

No, no, it's just... I think we're going about this the wrong way.

SUIT GIRL

What do you mean?

SAM

Okay, I figure you don't like questions, so how about this? If you want to tell me something, go ahead. I won't push you or anything. I do want to know, but you... you tell me when you're ready, okay?

Suit Girl nods. Sam smiles.

SAM (CONT'D)

And relax a little, okay? I'm not going to let anything happen to you.

Suit Girl meekly smiles back.

She sits back in her seat. Exhales.

Sam unrolls his window.

Suit Girl unrolls hers.

She stretches in her seat, seeing how far her little legs can reach.

Sam drums his fingers on the steering wheel.

Suit Girl watches, hint of affection in her eyes.

She cranes her head back, wind from her open window rustles her hair.

She sticks her hand out the window and watches it cut through the air, flying over the landscape whipping past.

She wiggles her fingers, red sunset peeks through.

Sun sets over the purple-tinted desert.

EXT. PERRY HOUSE - NIGHT

Two storey house with a small lawn sitting among similar houses.

Only streetlights, no signs of life.

Sam's car pulls into driveway.

EXT./INT. PERRY HOUSE/SAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Sam shifts into park, shuts off the headlights, pulls the keys out.

He glances over. Suit Girl lies slumped in her chair, snoring softly.

SAM

Hey, um...

Sam nervously reaches over and gently nudges her. He stumbles over what to call her.

SAM (CONT'D)

Hey... Suit Girl, come on, wake up.

She stirs.

SUIT GIRL

Whuh? What?

SAM

...we're home.

SUIT GIRL

Home?

EXT. PERRY HOUSE - NIGHT

Suit Girl has to step briskly to keep up with Sam as they head to the front door.

SUIT GIRL

What about your things?

SAM

I can unpack tomorrow.

Suit Girl lazily nods as Sam unlocks the door.

INT. PERRY HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Door opens with a creak.

Sam lets Suit Girl into the dark house and carefully shuts the door. He steps out of his sneakers as Suit Girl inspects the place like it's an alien world.

She peers into dark rooms, curiously touching anything in front of her while Sam tosses his keys into a bowl.

Sound of paws on hard wood. A large dog eagerly approaches the two.

SAM
(quietly)
Bexley, hey guy, how are you
buddy?

He showers affection on his beloved dog. Suit Girl watches.

SAM (CONT'D)
You been takin' care of everyone
while I've been gone, huh? Good
boy...

Suit Girl crouches down nervously.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to Suit Girl)
This is Bexley. I've missed him
like crazy.

Suit Girl scratches behind Bexley's ear.

SAM (CONT'D)
Hey, he likes you... he never
likes strangers.

She holds Bexley tenderly, curiously studying his face.

SUIT GIRL
Nice to meet you, Bexley.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Cozy. Moonlight seeps in from a windowbox.

Sam babbles nervously while Suit Girl lazily leans against the wall.

SAM

Well, if you need to go to the bathroom, it's that door over there...

Suit Girl starts blinking out.

SAM (CONT'D)

The other doors are bedrooms so don't go in there, everyone else is asleep, we'll just take...

SUIT GIRL

(barely awake)

Samm...

Suit Girl slips off the wall.

Sam catches her in his arms.

She's asleep. He's surprised.

She's already starting to snore. He sighs.

SAM

Why don't you take the bed?

Sam kneels, scooping an arm under her legs and carries the limp girl into his room.

EXT. PERRY NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

Sprinklers spurt to life. Newspapers thrown on the walk.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Sunlight peeks through blinds into the dark.

Suit Girl lies flat in the bed, carefully tucked in. She presses her cheek against a pillow.

Soft. She smiles, lazily nuzzling it.

Her eyes flitter, barely for a second.

Beat.

Her eyes fly open. Panic mode.

She bolts up, covers fly off, she scrambles backwards until she hits the wall behind her. Her wide eyes survey the room.

Little fan whirs away on the nightstand. Her pants and jacket slung over an office chair. Her boots on floor, socks poking out of the top.

Relief creeps onto her face, but slowly turns to a worrying concern:

SUIT GIRL

Where am I?

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Sam's door opens a crack. Suit Girl peers out. Hallway's empty. She sighs, creeps out, back in her suit.

She sneaks down the hallway, spotting framed photos on the wall.

SUIT GIRL

Nice family.

She glances over them with sad, curious eyes. She comes across a photo of Sam.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Thanks for the ride. Let myself out.

Another door opens.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Sam?

Surprised, Suit Girl darts back into Sam's room, shutting the door behind her.

The other door reveals CLAIRE, Sam's mother. Lovely, young for her age, dressed in an old shirt and pajama bottoms. Loose cotton robe dances to her breezy walk.

CLAIRE

Sam? Mitch?

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Suit Girl presses her back against the door, keeping it shut. She sinks to the floor.

Knocking on the other side.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Anyone in there?

Suit Girl balls up against the door. No one's getting in.

CLAIRE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't sleep all day, okay?

Suit Girl listens to the footsteps as they fade away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

None of the furniture matches, none of it is stylish, and none of it is new.

Sam sleeps slumped on the sofa, still dressed, thin blanket haphazardly pulled onto him.

Claire strides downstairs.

CLAIRE
Sam?

She approaches her son and gently pushes his shoulder.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Honey?

Sam stirs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What are you doing down here? I thought you were in your room.

SAM
I, uh...

He sits up.

SAM (CONT'D)
We got in pretty late...

CLAIRE
We?

Sam's drowsiness wears off long enough for him to remember what happened.

SAM
Ugh. I was really hoping that all would turn out to be a dream.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Claire and Sam approach Sam's door.

SAM

Look, don't... just don't over-react, okay? Try to keep it together, don't scare her, she's just shy.

CLAIRE

"She?" Who is in there?

Sam knocks on the door.

SAM

Hey, um, are you decent in there?

SUIT GIRL (O.S.)

(not understanding)

Am I decent?

Claire steps back, surprised by the young voice.

SAM

Um, if you're dressed... can you come out here, please?

Door cautiously opens, Suit Girl peers out.

SUIT GIRL

Yes?

Sam stumbles, trying to think of something to say.

SAM

Um... you sleep good?

SUIT GIRL

Your bed's really soft.

CLAIRE

(hushed, to Sam)

What was she doing in your bed?

SAM

She was just sleeping, it's fine.

Claire turns to the girl peering through the door.

CLAIRE

Will you leave us alone for a few minutes, please?

Suit Girl stays pressed against the door.

SAM

Look, Suit Girl, why don't you go downstairs, get some breakfast?

Suit Girl nods, slips out of the door and heads down the hall at a brisk pace. Claire can only watch in astonishment.

CLAIRE

Sam... you had better have a damn good explanation for whatever the hell is going on here.

SAM

I, uh, met someone on the way home from school.

INT. FRONT HALL - MORNING

Suit Girl clambers downstairs and heads right for the front door.

Her fingers touch the handle.

She pauses, debating whether or not to open it.

Bexley ambles by her side. She releases the handle.

SUIT GIRL

(to Bexley)

I can't stay here.

Bexley insistently sits, right between her and the door.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

I don't know these people, okay?
What if they don't want me? What
if they send me back?

Bexley looks into her eyes.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

You wouldn't understand, I'm
better off on my own.

Bexley plops down. Suit Girl groans.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

I'm trusting you, okay? You gotta
protect me.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Claire searches angrily for the right words to say.

CLAIRE

Why was she in your bed?

SAM

She was just sleeping, she had a long day, she fell asleep in the car and I just thought--

CLAIRE

Why was she in your CAR? Sam... honey, you have to know how bad this is, right?

SAM

It's not that bad.

CLAIRE

This is kidnapping, Sam! You took a little girl and drove off. That's BAD. They give people the CHAIR for that in Texas!

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

A boy Suit Girl's age sits casually slumped at the table. MITCH. Attention on a small TV on the counter, full cereal bowl in his hand, bare feet propped on another chair, oozing summer lethargy.

Suit Girl trudges in lazily. Startled at the sight of the boy, she accidentally steps backwards into the wall.

The clatter gets the boy's attention. He turns, their eyes lock.

Suit Girl nervously raises a hand up.

SUIT GIRL

...Hi.

Mitch nods. Same smirk as Sam. Suit Girl tries to smirk back.

MITCH

You, uh, the reason for the yelling upstairs?

Suit Girl nods.

SUIT GIRL

I should go.

MITCH

That would not be smart.

Mitch sits up, then pushes the empty chair towards Suit Girl with his foot. Suit Girl just looks at the chair.

SUIT GIRL

Why?

MITCH

Why would you want to cheese off
someone who's already screaming?

Mitch nudges the chair with his foot.

MITCH (CONT'D)

So, you, like, a robber or
something?

Suit Girl shakes her head no.

MITCH (CONT'D)

So what are you doing here?

SUIT GIRL

Sam said I should go downstairs
and get some breakfast.

MITCH

You want Crunchy-O's?

Suit Girl nods.

Mitch downs his Sunny D and stands.

Suit Girl finds herself staring and averts her eyes
nervously. She quickly sits in the seat.

MITCH (CONT'D)

So you're not a robber. What are
you?

Mitch pours her cereal then douses it with milk.

SUIT GIRL

I'm no one. What are you?

He plops a spoon in it and carries it to the table.

MITCH

I'm a philosopher.

Mitch sinks back into his seat as Suit Girl winces,
inspecting her cereal, poking it with the spoon.

SUIT GIRL

Really? I never met a philosopher
before.

Suit Girl lifts the spoon to her lips and tastes.

Wugh.

MITCH

No good?

Suit Girl starts picking bits from her cereal, making a pile on the table by her side.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - MORNING

Claire and Sam's argument has become more explosive.

CLAIRE

Why can't you ever THINK before you act? What are we going to do with her?

SAM

Ah... I don't know! I jus... I couldn't leave her out there!

CLAIRE

Where did she come from Did you just grab her off the street?

SAM

She stowed away in my car! I don't know how long she was in there!

CLAIRE

She's not a lost dog Sam, she's a little girl! We can't take care of her! What were you planning on doing once you got her home?

SAM

I don't know!

CLAIRE

What if someone's looking for her? What if you get charged with kidnapping?

SAM

I didn't kidnap her! I just... I don't know, it happened so quick I didn't have time to think.

CLAIRE

It seems to me between then and now you had plenty of time to do some serious thinking. Have you?

Sam groans angrily.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

This is so typical Sam, you're not taking this seriously at all. You don't know anything about her, for all you know, you let a killer into our house!

SAM

Do you have any idea how crazy you sound? All I did was try to help a scared little girl I found dying in the desert!

CLAIRE

Look Sam, I know you mean well, but whatever you were thinking, it's not going to happen.

SAM

Mom, look--

CLAIRE

Don't start this, she can't stay and that's final.

SAM

Fine. I want you to tell her.

CLAIRE

Sam...

SAM

YOU try and tell her.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Suit Girl lifts the bowl to her lips and drinks. Milk escapes off the sides, trickling to the floor.

Mitch watches, grinning and dumbfounded.

MITCH

Wow!

She finishes the bowl and wipes her mouth.

MITCH (CONT'D)

That was awesome!

Claire leans in the doorway. Sam steps past her.

CLAIRE

You and I need to have a little talk, okay?

Claire tries to pull on the Suit Girl's arm. The kid tries to shrug her off.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Come with me.

Suit Girl won't budge.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm not going to hurt you, I just want to talk to you, okay?

SUIT GIRL

No. Sam...

SAM

It's okay. Go with her.

SUIT GIRL

You sure?

SAM

It's fine, don't worry.

Suit Girl stands and walks out, keeping her eyes on Sam's.

Mitch grumbles as the ladies leave. Sam wraps his arm around Mitch, kissing his head. Mitch returns the hug.

SAM (CONT'D)

How are ya, little buddy?

MITCH

Mom's gonna make her leave, isn't she?

SAM

Yeah... probably... I dunno.

MITCH

Sam? I like her.

SAM

Me too, buddy.

INT. SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM - MORNING

Not roomy, not modern, but clean, bright, and stocked.

Claire pushes Suit Girl in gently.

CLAIRE

I'm gonna examine you, okay?

SUIT GIRL

Examine me?

CLAIRE

I've taken care of every bruise
and scrape two growing boys can
get. I want to make sure there's
nothing broken.

SUIT GIRL

Okay.

CLAIRE

Take off your jacket and trousers
and sit on the tub.

Suit Girl obeys. Claire sits in front of her on a stool.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Let's take a look at you.

Claire reaches again. Suit Girl lets her touch.

Claire tries to run her fingers through Suit Girl's hair.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Your hair is a mess...

Suit Girl fidgets.

Claire places a hand gently on Suit Girl's shoulder as
she continues trying to straighten out the tangled hair.

Suit Girl glances at the hand on her shoulder. She tilts
her head to the side and tries to enjoy the attention.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Sam said you don't like questions,
but I'm going to ask you a couple,
okay?

SUIT GIRL

Okay.

CLAIRE

Who are you?

SUIT GIRL

Who are you?

CLAIRE

My name is Claire.

SUIT GIRL

Claire. Nice to meet you, Claire.

Claire smiles to her, then begins inspecting the child.

CLAIRE

How long were you on the road?

SUIT GIRL

I... I dunno exactly. Couple weeks.

CLAIRE

I don't know how you could stand it.

SUIT GIRL

I guess I know how to take care of myself.

CLAIRE

You're tough. How are your legs?

SUIT GIRL

They're okay.

CLAIRE

Sure? You don't want to get shin splits, Sam got those when he joined the track team, felt like his legs would fall off.

SUIT GIRL

I'll be careful.

CLAIRE

Do you have any cuts or bruises you need me to take a look at?

SUIT GIRL

No.

CLAIRE

So... I think I know the answer to this, but... you don't have a home, do you?

Suit Girl shakes her head no.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I thought so... you run away?

SUIT GIRL

Yeah. I had to.

CLAIRE

I remember Sam wanted to run away when he was ten...

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I don't remember why, some silly reason, I'm sure. He didn't leave because he knew how upset and sad I'd be if he left.

SUIT GIRL

Sam wanted to leave?

CLAIRE

No, he was just upset. He's a great kid.

SUIT GIRL

I know.

CLAIRE

Let me ask you... why did you stow away with Sam?

SUIT GIRL

He smiled at me. No one ever smiles at me.

CLAIRE

I find that hard to believe... you made everyone in the house smile in less than ten minutes. I can see why Sam was so quick to defend you.

Suit Girl smiles meekly. Claire continues inspecting her, dreading what she has to say next.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You know you can't stay here, right?

Suit Girl retracts from Claire's hold.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Look, I'm real sorry, you're nice, you're really a sweet little girl, but I can't take care of you, we can't take care of you...

SUIT GIRL

I don't need you to take care of me, I can go!

CLAIRE

You need help. Real help... you need the police...

SUIT GIRL

No...

CLAIRE

Social workers-

SUIT GIRL

No, no one else...

CLAIRE

Look, you need people who can actually... we can't take on this kind of... burden.

SUIT GIRL

I'm a burden?

CLAIRE

...in the best possible sense. If there is one.

SUIT GIRL

What are you going to do with me?

CLAIRE

I don't know, sweetie. But you can't stay here, okay? We're going to get you the help you need.

SUIT GIRL

I can just leave, I told Sam I could leave, you don't have to... I understand, I can just leave...

CLAIRE

No. You're not running away again, okay? Just--

Claire holds Suit Girl's shoulders firmly.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Look... don't panic, we'll figure this out, okay? You're not going to solve your problems by running away.

She gently massages Suit Girl's arms, trying to soothe her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What you need to do right now though is take a bath.

SUIT GIRL

A bath?

CLAIRE

Honey, you stink. You're coated in grime, you're all... You need to relax, clear your head... I'll wash your clothes, you'll get clean, you'll feel like a million bucks, trust me.

Claire stands and cranks the faucet on. Hot water pours into the tub.

Suit Girl pulls her shirt off. Beneath, her back is covered with marks. She's been beaten.

Claire catches a glimpse. The color drains from her face. She attempts to regain her composure as Suit Girl's head pops out of her shirt.

Suit Girl tosses her shirt to Claire, who nervously catches it.

Claire tries to look away as Suit Girl pulls off her briefs.

Claire blinks at the sight of the skinny child.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Uh, there's a...

She tries not to stare. Fails horribly.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Bathrobe on the door hook when you're done, towels, uh...

Claire nervously steps out. Suit Girl shuts the door and locks it.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Claire lets out a long, angry exhale, resting her head against the door. Sam has been waiting outside.

SAM

Mom?

Claire waits before finally gets enough breath to say...

CLAIRE

Make up the window box for her, get clean sheets... something soft, okay?

SAM

Yeah. Sure. Thanks, mom.

CLAIRE

Don't thank me. You are in so much trouble for this.

SAM

I don't care. But don't ever call her a burden again.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Steam fills the room, fogs the mirrors. Suit Girl lies in the tub, up to her chin in bubbles.

She gently collects foam in her hands and blows it into the air with a playful huff, the sky filling with bubbles.

She lets out a loud excited giggle and submerges her head underwater.

A beat.

She emerges, laughing. She kicks her feet with a playful squeal, splashing water into the air. It rains down, spattering all over.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Claire trudges in behind Mitch and lazily slings her arms over his shoulders, and plants a raspberry on his cheek.

MITCH

(laughing)

Mooooooooom!

Claire sinks to her knees, resting her head against his.

CLAIRE

Mitch? Go easy on her, okay? She's not rough and tumble like you.

MITCH

Sure, ma.

Claire exhales deeply, hugging her son tightly.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Mom?

CLAIRE

Just let me hold you for a second, okay?

MITCH

Sure.

She closes her eyes and holds him.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Suit Girl smugly strides out of the bathroom, wrapped in the white bathrobe.

Sam carries a bag over his shoulder to his room.

SAM

You were in there forever.

Suit Girl wiggles her fingers for him.

SUIT GIRL

I'm all prune-y.

SAM

Well, at least my ma said you can stay for a while.

SUIT GIRL

Thanks for changing her mind, Sam.

SAM

Look, I'm sorry about what she said to you... she had no right to say something like that.

SUIT GIRL

It's okay. I heard worse.

SAM

It's not okay. She was just a little shocked, this is a lot for her to take in.

SUIT GIRL

Same here.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Sam throws his duffel bag onto the recliner.

Suit Girl plops onto the bed and watches as Sam starts to unpack. Neither says anything.

Mitch peers through the door frame.

MITCH

Oh Saaaaam...

SAM

Yeah?

Mitch grins, whips out a large Nerf gun and starts cranking shots.

SAM (CONT'D)

Dude, come on, not yet!

Suit Girl watches with raised eyebrows.

SAM (CONT'D)

(acting)

You're a philosopher! A man of peace!

MITCH

To make peace you must prepare for war!

He produces a small ball. Grenade! Pulls the pin, tosses, and ducks. It bonks off Sam's head.

SAM

Oh, you're dead now, bro!

Sam throws a ball off his shelf at Mitch before reaching under his bed. He pulls out his own nerf gun and starts firing back.

Now it's Mitch's turn to shield himself.

MITCH

Sam! Come on!

Sam hands the gun over to Suit Girl.

SAM

Come on, keep firing!

Suit Girl positions herself between Sam and the gun and starts pumping missiles.

MITCH

Stop it!

SAM

(to Suit Girl)

Tell him to say peanuts!

SUIT GIRL

Say peanuts!

MITCH

Okay, peanuts, peanuts!

Sam and Suit Girl stop firing.

Sam takes the gun, presses the muzzle against Mitch's forehead.

SAM
You give up? Unconditional
surrender? Can I finish unpacking
without being attacked?

MITCH
Yes, yes, yes...

SAM
You promise?

MITCH
I swear!

Sam pulls the gun away.

SAM
Why don't you two runts go camp
out in the living room?

MITCH
What about you?

SAM
I'm busy and you're in my way.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Mitch lies upside-down on the sofa, hair dangling, hands
planted on the floor.

MITCH
I am so strong. Check it out.
One hand.

He lifts one hand off the ground.

MITCH (CONT'D)
One hand. Army guys can't even do
this.

Suit Girl appears next to him, dangling upside down.

He smiles at her. She grins back.

SUIT GIRL
How did you become a philosopher?

MITCH

When I was ten, we went to a Chinese restaurant and got fortune cookies at the end, those folded treats with paper inside. They all said different things, little pieces of wisdom. And I looked at all the other tables and all the other cookies and realized they ALL said different things, and I wanted to read 'em all.

SUIT GIRL

Uh-huh.

Her hands rest on her belly.

MITCH

I was askin' dad every day to take us back, we ate so much rice an' curry we got sick. I don't even like the stuff.

Sam walks in. He sees them and sits upside down off an opposite chair.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Anyway, once dad figured out why I wanted to go, he bought me this book on Chinese proverbs and sayings, he said that's where all the fortune cookies came from.

SUIT GIRL

...that's a really nice story.

SAM

Hey, Suit Girl? Your clothes are done. They're in the drier, you can go change in my room if you like.

SUIT GIRL

Thanks.

She rolls off the sofa.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Mitch leads Bexley out the back door.

MITCH

Okay Bexley, outtie.

Mitch closes the door.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Mitch, wash your hands before
coming into the kitchen.

MITCH
Okay!

Mitch wipes his hands on his pants before joining the others.

Claire loads plates, Sam sets the table, Suit Girl lingers against the wall.

CLAIRE
Sam, this is yours. Mitch, pass
this to Suit Girl.

Mitch hands Suit Girl the plate. She takes it and walks away.

She sits on the floor in the far corner, balances the plate on her knees and starts eating.

MITCH
Guys...

Sam peeks out the door. Surprised, he steps towards Suit Girl.

SAM
Hey, Suit Girl, sweetie...

She glances up, holding her food protectively.

SAM (CONT'D)
Um, join us at the table, okay?

Suit Girl stands, approaches the table and sits.

Claire enters.

CLAIRE
You started already? Should have
waited for us.

SUIT GIRL
Sorry.

CLAIRE
It's okay.

The family sits and unceremoniously starts eating.

Suit Girl makes sure everyone else has begun, then shovels food into her face.

One by one, the family stops and just starts watching her inhale her dinner.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

You should slow down.

She doesn't. Claire reaches over and holds Suit Girl's arm. The kid stops.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(assertively)

Don't eat so fast.

They stare at each other. Claire moves her hand away.

After the briefest of pauses, Suit Girl resumes, as fast as before.

Claire groans.

SAM

You really should slow down.
You'll get sick if you keep eating
like that.

Suit Girl looks at Sam, then down at her food, then slowly resumes eating.

Claire sighs and pokes at her own food with her fork.

The family eats in silence.

Suit Girl reaches for her water and drinks half the cup in one gulp.

CLAIRE

Do you want some more water?

Suit Girl continues eating. She takes a roll and tears it apart with her teeth, disemboweling it.

Mitch grins, watching her, amused.

Claire fights back a scowl. Not amused.

SAM

Pass me the rolls, please?

Suit Girl takes the plate of rolls and hands them over.

SAM (CONT'D)

Thanks.

SUIT GIRL

(mouth full)

Welcome.

Claire sighs.

CLAIRE
(under her breath)
What is your problem?

SAM
Mom?

CLAIRE
What is your problem? Why do you
listen to him and not to me?

Suit Girl continues eating.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Answer me.

SAM
Mom...

CLAIRE
No Sam, I want to know. Tell me
why you're not listening to me,
I'm trying to help you.

SUIT GIRL
(under her breath)
You don't want to help me.

CLAIRE
What was that?

Mitch stops eating.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What did you say to me?

Suit Girl says nothing.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I think you've had enough. Go to
your roo-- go upstairs. Go.

Suit Girl leaves silently.

The table stays silent. Claire begins to eat again.

Eventually, Sam and Mitch join.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - WINDOW BOX - NIGHT

The large windowsill has been turned into a makeshift
bed. Suit Girl sits listlessly.

Mitch passes and waves. Suit Girl meekly waves back.

Sam passes. Suit Girl quickly appeals to him.

SUIT GIRL

Sorry again, Sam.

SAM

Things are weird, it's just going to take us a little while for us to get used to it. Don't worry about it, okay?

SUIT GIRL

Okay.

SAM

Night, Suit Girl.

SUIT GIRL

Night, Sam Perry.

Sam slinks into his room and carefully closes the door.

Suit Girl starts to pull her blanket on.

Claire approaches. Tray in hand.

CLAIRE

I, uh...

Claire sits down next to the child.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I was sure you were still hungry, so I... heated this back up.

She slides the tray onto Suit Girl's lap. Crowded plate of piping hot leftovers.

SUIT GIRL

Thank you.

CLAIRE

Listen, about all this... about you staying here and all... look, I'm really sorry about your situation, I really am, but you have to understand, I just can't give you the kind of help you need.

SUIT GIRL

I know. I know I don't belong here...

CLAIRE

I don't know if I could rest easy if I knew you were out there all alone again. But I can't take care of you, alright? Not forever. But... until I know what to do with you, I will. Okay?

SUIT GIRL

Really?

CLAIRE

Yeah. And that means while you're here, I want you to LISTEN to me. Trust me when I say I'm looking out for you.

SUIT GIRL

Okay.

CLAIRE

I probably acted too rough at dinner, I'm sorry. I'm just not used to this. You didn't deserve that. I want you to feel welcome while you... visit here, all right?

SUIT GIRL

It's okay.

Suit Girl nods.

CLAIRE

When you're done, just take the tray down to the kitchen and put it in the sink.

SUIT GIRL

All right.

CLAIRE

Good girl.

Claire rubs Suit Girl's hair, then heads to her room. Suit Girl starts to eat her leftovers. Nice and slow.

FADE OUT.

TOWN STREET - DAY

Sam and Suit Girl walk down the sidewalk.

Mitch lags behind, tongue hanging out, playing tired.

MITCH

Couldn't we have parked closer?

SAM

Come on, lazy bones, exercise. It won't kill ya.

MITCH

No, but the heat will, I'm baking like a potato here!

SAM

Be sure to poke holes in your head to keep it from exploding.

Around the corner, a trio of girls around Suit Girl's age loiter.

ELIZABETH, CASSIE and REGAN. Nicely dressed. Texting, talking, bored..

ELIZABETH

...are taking forever, I mean, did they even need to drag us out here?

Mitch sidles up.

MITCH

Hi, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

Oh. What up, Perry?

MITCH

Hanging out.

Regan nods to Sam.

REGAN

What up, scrumptious?

Sam wrestles out an uncomfortable murmur as he tries to pass.

MITCH

So, um... do you wanna do something together at the community bonfire?

ELIZABETH

That's in, like, three weeks. I dunno. I always see you there, right?

MITCH

Yeah.

ELIZABETH

Well, we'll think about it then

SAM

Dude, can we go already?

MITCH

Right, sure. Later.

Mitch passes the girls.

SAM

You like her?

MITCH

Maybe?

SAM

She's stuck up, self-absorbed, and it looks like she has an entourage, I can't tell you how strange THAT is.

Elizabeth takes interest in Suit Girl. New subject to torment.

ELIZABETH

This is new.

Suit Girl tries to pass through.

SUIT GIRL

(meekly)

Excuse me.

ELIZABETH

Nice clothes. Who dressed you this morning, Hugo Boss?

Her friends join in.

REGAN

Why would you be wearing something this heavy? Are you retarded or something?

Mitch sprints back to catch up.

MITCH

Hey, you coming?

ELIZABETH

Oh, hey Mitch. You seen her yet?

MITCH

Yeah, she's staying at my place
for a while.

CASSIE

Why? She homeless?

Suit Girl doesn't answer.

ELIZABETH

You speak?

MITCH

She doesn't talk much.

ELIZABETH

Good. What's her story, exactly?

MITCH

She's our, uh, cousin, she's
visiting over the summer.

SAM

Guys, come on!

Mitch leaves. Suit Girl stays.

ELIZABETH

You got a problem? What are you
looking at?

SUIT GIRL

Nothing.

ELIZABETH

Then get lost.

Suit Girl follows after Mitch and Sam.

Elizabeth smirks and rests her back against the wall,
returning her attention to her phone.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Freak family just keeps on gettin'
bigger.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Sam lazily doodles spirals onto a legal pad.

Suit Girl slouches in the recliner.

SAM

You all right?

SUIT GIRL

I was just thinking.

SAM

Okay. Anything about?

SUIT GIRL

I thought you weren't gonna ask me questions.

SAM

You're right. I'm just concerned about you, is all.

SUIT GIRL

Sam... what if I said I wanted to stay? I mean, what if I didn't want to go back where I came from? If I asked. What would happen?

She leans forward on the armrest.

SAM

I don't know. I mean, if you were absolutely sure you didn't want to go back, I guess you wouldn't have to, but...

Sam thinks.

SAM (CONT'D)

Well, I guess we would try to hook you up with a family that would want you.

SUIT GIRL

Another family?

SAM

Yeah. A great family.

SUIT GIRL

What about your family?

SAM

We're hardly a great family.

SUIT GIRL

What if I asked to stay with you guys? What would happen?

SAM

If you asked?

SUIT GIRL

Yeah.

SAM

I dunno. But you haven't been here very long. You should probably wait before asking something big like that. That's a really big wish.

Suit Girl nods.

SAM (CONT'D)

But... if you DID ask... If you gave it lots of thought and you absolutely decided that was what you wanted... I'll do whatever I can to help you.

SUIT GIRL

Thanks.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Suit Girl lies in window box.

She pushes off her blanket with a huff.

She turns on her side, resettling.

She reaches her arm out, wrapping it around thin air, pretending a person is there.

She slowly pulls the invisible figure close. She ends with her arms wrapped around herself.

She opens her eyes for just a moment.

SUIT GIRL

(softly)
Good night, Sam.

She holds herself tight.

INT. SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM - MORNING

Shower. Steam.

Sam groans, craning his sore neck.

Gauze wrapped around his wrist.

Curtain flies open. Suit Girl stands there, eyes open in surprise.

A beat. Sam covers himself. Suit Girl turns, surprise still on her face. Sam pulls the curtain shut.

SAM
Are you still here?

SUIT GIRL
Yes?

SAM
...why?

SUIT GIRL
Need to pee.

SAM
Can you wait till I'm done?

SUIT GIRL
Yeah.

SAM
Outside?

SUIT GIRL
Oh. Right.

SAM
Hey.

SUIT GIRL
Yeah?

SAM
I'm gonna run out for a little
while. You and Mitch be okay on
your own?

SUIT GIRL
Sure.

EXT. PERRY HOUSE - DAY

The cars are gone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Suit Girl and Mitch sit upside down in the chairs. Mitch holds the remote. Keeps hitting the button.

Channels jump on the screen. Daytime programming. Garbage.

Mitch looks over to Suit Girl. Both visibly bored, sweaty, listless.

MITCH
You wanna see something?

EXT. PERRY HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Suit Girl stands against the house.

Mitch sets a 2 liter plastic coke bottle on the ground.
He carefully opens a package of Mentos.

He pulls off a long strip of sticky tape and lines Mentos
down the line. Sticks the tape over.

He's methodical, like a bomb disposal expert.

Teetering on his feet, he drops the strip in and runs
away.

The bottle bursts. Aquatic explosion. Soda spouts into
the air.

Bottle knocks aside, sprays in a hard circle.

Both kids are hit. Can't stop laughing.

MITCH
Oh DAMN!

SUIT GIRL
This is so gross!

Suit Girl tries to wipe the soda off her skin. Mitch
nabs the hose and kicks the valve.

Water spurts from the loose connection. Hose bursts to
life. Mitch thumbs the stop and sprays Suit Girl.

She squeals with glee.

Mitch chases Suit Girl with the hose.

Suit Girl trips on the bottle, lands on her butt.

Mitch rushes up to her. She takes the bottle and shoves
it, pouring the remaining drink in his face.

The running hose hits the ground.

She grabs it, turns it on Mitch. He slips and hits the
ground too.

MITCH
Peanuts, peanuts!

He wallows through the mud, trying to reach the faucet.

He keeps slipping.

Suit Girl keeps laughing with him.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

High speed creaking and rattling of a big metal fan.

Mitch and Suit Girl gaze through the whipping blades.

They lie on their backs on a towel. Still soaked. Most of the mud scraped off. Wet clothes cling to their skin.

The fan. Creaking. Rattling. Whirring. Loud. Strangely peaceful.

Bare arms touch.

Mitch glances over. Suit Girl shuts her eyes and cranes her neck, taking in the fan's artificial breeze.

He studies her profile. Nose, lips, chin, neck. All slick.

He nervously swallows. Never been this close to a girl.

He looks away. Tents his fingers on his chest. Closes his eyes. Breathes out his nose. Meditation mode.

Suit Girl's eyes stay locked on the whirring fan. She's in another world.

Then snaps back into ours, laughing her ass off. Giggling to the point of tears.

Bexley is licking at the grass stuck to her feet.

She curls up into a ball, laughing, trying not to kick the dog.

She beckons Bexley closer and sits up. She scratches him affectionately.

Mitch rolls away.

SUIT GIRL

Hey Bexley.

She sighs as she strokes his wet fur.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

You smell a little.

MITCH
 (through fan)
 Soooo dooooo youuuu.

Suit Girl looks back. Sees Mitch grinning through the metal blades. She crouches down to match.

SUIT GIRL
 What are you doing?

MITCH
 (modulating voice)
 Talking through the fan. It changes your voice. I sound like a robot.

SUIT GIRL
 (imitating)
 Hellllllooooo Mitch. When do Sam and Claire come home?

MITCH
 (modulating voice)
 Are you bored?

SUIT GIRL
 No. This is much better with someone else. Do you want to do anything?

Mitch leans in. He watches her run her finger between her lips. She bites her bottom lip, bored.

Mitch's focus changes from her to the steel blades between them.

He looks away.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)
 Mitch. You know how to read?

MITCH
 Yeah.

SUIT GIRL
 Show me?

MITCH
 Now?

She eagerly nods.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Mitch and Suit Girl lie on their sides, heads resting on each other's legs.

Mitch pours over Tezuka's "Phoenix" while Suit Girl struggles to read an illustrated "20,000 Leagues."

SUIT GIRL

(reading, stilted)

The year 1 8 6 6 was marked by a strange uck-uhr-ensie. Seveeral ships had repurted sigg-ting an "enor-moose thing..."

Mitch follows her eyes on the page.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

(reading, stilted)

...larger and faster than a whale and oh-kah-see-oh-nah-llie puh-hos puh-hore-skent...

MITCH

Um... "phos-phor-sent"

SUIT GIRL

What does it mean?

MITCH

It means, um... like a phosphor... um... it's not important.

Front door opens, startling the two children. The two stand as Claire walks in, paper bags.

CLAIRE

Where's Sam?

MITCH

He went out... to pick up some stuff.

CLAIRE

What are you two up to?

SUIT GIRL

Reading.

CLAIRE

Why are you both wet?

MITCH

We were playing outside.

CLAIRE
Get dressed. Both of you.

They nod and scurry upstairs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
In different rooms!

She hears a pair of doors shut.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
(sighs)
Like raising wild animals.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Sam and Claire talking.

SAM
I just went on a few errands,
Mitch has been on his own before,
he's home, he's not alone, he was
fine. You left me home alone at
that age all the time.

CLAIRE
Not with a girl! I found those
two-- and by the way, I don't want
you filling her head with the idea
she can stay here, okay?

SAM
Okay! I know...

CLAIRE
Don't take that tone with me.

SAM
Well I'm sick of you implying that
I'm a fucking idiot.

CLAIRE
I'm not saying...

SAM
You certainly fucking think it,
it's completely condescending. I
mean it's like you don't trust
that I can't think through a
decision.

No response.

SAM (CONT'D)
Do you trust me?

CLAIRE
No.

SAM
"No!?"

CLAIRE
No, I don't.

SAM
Unbelievable.

Sam turns.

CLAIRE
Sam...

SAM
What? What the hell can you say
now? You don't trust me, you
never trusted me, did you?

CLAIRE
Oh yeah? What are you going to do
about Suit Girl?

SAM
Forget that I was deluded enough
to think I might actually have a
say in her well being the second
we stepped into this house. And
once whatever happens with her
happens, I'm out of here for good.

CLAIRE
Right, another great decision!
You going to pay for school by
yourself?

Sam turns to leave.

SAM
I dropped out.

CLAIRE
WHAT!?

Sam heads down the stairs.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Sam Perry, you are in so much
fucking trouble when you get back
here!

SFX: Front door closing.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Suit Girl lounges on the sofa.

Claire enters and plops down on a chair.

CLAIRE

I thought you were gonna change.

Suit Girl glances down at her clothes.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Right, sorry... forgot.

They share an awkward silence.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

How are you doing?

SUIT GIRL

You gonna yell?

CLAIRE

No, I'm done yelling.

SUIT GIRL

Sure?

CLAIRE

I don't even like to yell. I was just upset.

SUIT GIRL

I know.

CLAIRE

Look, Sam is... I don't need this now, you don't know him like I...

SUIT GIRL

You hate him.

CLAIRE

He drives me crazy. He drives me up the fucking wall sometimes, but I don't hate him. I can't.

SUIT GIRL

Why not?

CLAIRE

Sometimes he can just be a thick-headed idiot, but I love him. I can't help it.

SUIT GIRL

You'd scream like that at someone you love?

CLAIRE

I shouldn't. I mean, there's a difference between screaming and hate... I don't hate him, but I have to get through his thick skull sometimes, you know?

SUIT GIRL

Where's he going?

CLAIRE

Where he always goes, blowing off steam for a few hours. He'll be back. Don't worry about him.

SUIT GIRL

What do I do?

CLAIRE

Do what you want, I don't care... go play with Mitch. Just keep your pants on.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Suit Girl hangs in the door frame.

Sam approaches from behind.

SAM

Oh hey.

SUIT GIRL

Hi. Better now?

SAM

Sure.

He slips past her and throws himself onto his office chair.

SUIT GIRL

You wanna be alone?

SAM

We can be alone together.

Suit Girl wanders into the room.

SUIT GIRL

Never been alone together before.
Sounds... better.

Suit Girl closes the door.

SAM

Alone together... we don't have to
explain ourselves to anyone but we
don't have to be lonely while we
do it.

SUIT GIRL

I hate being lonely... and I hate
explaining myself.

SAM

Same here.

Suit Girl flops onto her back on the bed. The two
converse without looking at each other.

SUIT GIRL

Did you decide what you were gonna
do? Where you're gonna go?

SAM

I don't know. I don't know what's
out there.

SUIT GIRL

Neither did I. I just bolted. I
can show you how.

Sam scoffs. Suit Girl turns onto her belly.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

What? We'll just drive like
before, right? You said nothing
would happen to me.

SAM

I'm leaving after we send you on
your way.

SUIT GIRL

You're getting rid of me?

SAM

No! Well... I don't know, I mean,
I dunno if you can stay here, but
once we figure out what, w-we'll
make sure you're taken care of,
we're not going to send you back
to the street or anything like
that, but...

SUIT GIRL
You're getting rid of me.

SAM
We're gonna do what's best for
you.

SUIT GIRL
Why? You never--

SAM
I never-- what did you think was
gonna-- look, the only reason
you're here is because you didn't--
you fell asleep in my car and when
I got home, I had to bring you in!
I-- this, all this, you being here
with us, that was NEVER my plan,
never my idea, it just sort of
happened!

She protests loudly, defiantly stating...

SUIT GIRL
I want to stay!

SAM
I understand, but--

SUIT GIRL
You don't understand! You said
you'd help me if I said I wanna
stay, well, I wanna stay so that
means YOU have to stay!

SAM
That's not... ENTIRELY... what I
was trying to say...

Suit Girl crawls close to Sam.

SUIT GIRL
Sam, please...

SAM
I can't, you gotta understand...

SUIT GIRL
Don't abandon me, please Sam, not
you...

SAM
I'm not abandoning you...

SUIT GIRL

Sam please, everybody hates me,
nobody wants me, I don't care if
you don't love me, just please
don't abandon me...

SAM

Don't talk like that.

Suit Girl kisses Sam, a pathetic emulation of a
passionate embrace. Sam's eyes go wide, he pushes her
away. She tries to stay close.

SAM (CONT'D)

No, don't do that.

SUIT GIRL

What?

SAM

Don't do that... it's not... I...
I'm so sorry, if I led you to
think...

SUIT GIRL

You didn't, I swear I really feel
like this, I really...

She grasps him tight, trying to kiss him again. He
recoils as best he can.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

I promise I do and it's okay if
you don't cause I swear it doesn't
matter, we can just stay alone
together, I can pretend to be your
wife or girlfriend and we can do
grown-up stuff...

SAM

You're just a kid, you're
confused...

SUIT GIRL

I'm NOT confused!

SAM

You... you're a kid, you don't
know what you're doing.

She glares at him.

SUIT GIRL

I know more than you think.

SAM
I'm sorry. You don't.

SUIT GIRL
Good night, Sam.

She storms out and slams the door.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - EVENING

Suit Girl angrily jumps onto the window box and pulls the blanket over herself. She crosses her arms and stares out the window.

Mitch approaches. He sits on the floor in front of her.

MITCH
You okay?

SUIT GIRL
Fine. Never better.

MITCH
What is it?

Suit Girl rolls over, lying on her side.

SUIT GIRL
I dunno. I jus- I don't want Sam to leave.

MITCH
He just got back. Why would he leave?

SUIT GIRL
Why would he stay?

MITCH
Us?

SUIT GIRL
Us is good. Good don't last. Mitch, good only exists to make sure when we're sad that it hurts so much more.

MITCH
I don't believe that.

SUIT GIRL
Maybe you're the one who doesn't know everything.

Mitch gets up and silently walks to his room.

Suit Girl curls up on the sill.

Mitch glances back at her.

MITCH

Hey, still feel like crap at one
A.M., meet me in the kitchen.

SUIT GIRL

Why?

Mitch cracks a grin and steps into his room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mitch anxiously looks through the freezer. Visible
breath pours from his mouth.

MITCH

Nothing. Not even a Fudgesicle.
Where does all that grocery money
go?

Mitch opens the fridge. Suit Girl tries to peer over his
shoulder.

Mitch pulls a paper towel off a bowl.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Bread rolls. That's not dessert.

Suit Girl takes one and tries to bite. Too hard.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Eggs... ketchup, cream cheese...
yeah, this is a party.

Suit Girl peers over his shoulder.

SUIT GIRL

What's that?

MITCH

Stale and gross.

Mitch shuts the fridge door. Kitchen goes dark, except
for one plug-in night light.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Maybe we could just do chips or
something.

SUIT GIRL

It's okay Mitch, I'm not that
hungry.

MITCH

Sure? You keep holding your stomach.

SUIT GIRL

I'm fine.

Mitch looks through the cupboards.

MITCH

Yesss... now we're talking!

Mitch pulls out a small bag of cookies. He opens it and offers it to Suit Girl. She takes one out and bites.

SUIT GIRL

Mitch? You think Sam will leave?

MITCH

He won't leave me.

SUIT GIRL

But... he did leave you, he was in college.

MITCH

He was away. That's different.

SUIT GIRL

Will he leave me?

MITCH

I dunno.

SUIT GIRL

He could.

Suit Girl eats her cookie.

MITCH

I don't know how much it means, but... I won't leave you.

Suit Girl gets close to Mitch.

MITCH (CONT'D)

I'll protect you. If no one else will, if mom gets fed up or Sam does leave or if you're driven away... I'll stay with you. I'll protect you.

Suit Girl kisses Mitch's cheek tenderly.

SUIT GIRL

(softly)

I don't want you to. You're too sweet.

She wraps her hands around his shoulders and holds him.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

You can still solve your problems with cookies. I'm so so so so jealous.

Mitch's heart sinks, his arms drop. He rests his chin on her shoulder and lets her hold him.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAWN

Suit Girl sleeps in the window box.

She tenses up. Hands grab at her belly.

She's sweating. Light panting. Enough to pull her from her slumber.

She groggily rouses with a loud gurgle.

She moans. She clutches her belly tight.

Sharp pain right in the gut. She clutches herself.

She rolls off her flat little cushion and rushes to the bathroom.

INT. SECOND FLOOR BATHROOM - DAWN

Suit Girl locks the door, flips the lid up and sits on the toilet. Briefs hit her ankles.

She gasps, half-awake. She groans and strains.

She closes her watering eyes.

SUIT GIRL

(softly)

Oh god... oh god oh god oh god...

She exhales with a shudder, her hands clutch the side of the tub and the wall. She grimaces, gritting her teeth.

Pain. Massive.

Her little legs jerk uncontrollably.

She tries to breathe normally. She can't.

She pants. Can't keep it steady.

She exhales hard. A long, empty groan.

She cringes, tears streaming from her eyes.

Still making that low, unholy sound.

It slowly dies away. Her body relaxes.

She wipes her sweaty face, panting like a marathon runner.

She stands, slips her briefs back on, and looks into the bowl.

She's horrified by what she sees.

But just for a second.

Her hand holds her stomach again, the cupping gesture slipping into a flat hand against her belly. She breathes a sigh of relief.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Oh god...

Both hands lie flat on her stomach. She starts to tear up again, but manages a weak smile.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Oh thank god.

She slides to the ground and holds herself, arms crossed against her belly.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Thank god thank god thank god
thank god...

She stands up again and approaches the toilet. She glances in again. She shudders at the sight.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Poor thing. You poor
poor poor poor thing.

She nervously reaches for the handle.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Please flush please flush...

She tilts the handle down. Watery whoosh. Suit Girl watches the bowl empty, and sighs with relief.

She keeps a hand flat on her belly and runs the sink, splashing water on her face. She catches her reflection, and presses her cheek against it.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

It's okay now... you're okay now.
It's all over, my little dove.

She kisses her reflection lovingly.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Now he really is gone. Every last bit of him. You don't have to remember him, you don't have to worry about him. You don't have to worry about anything.

She touches her reflection. Studying it.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

(surprised)
You are such a...

She swallows.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

You're so small.

She sinks to the floor.

FADE OUT.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Calender on the fridge. Days crossed out.

Shopping list. Evidence of many more midnight snacks.

Claire clears out a cupboard, tossing items into a waiting trash bag.

Sam sloughs in. Ferocious bedhead.

CLAIRE

Afternoon.

Sam manages a half-grumble/half-smile.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Community bonfire tonight. We're all going. Together.

Sam nods. He glances down to his arm.

Forgot his leather cuff. He hides his wrist.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Sam...

SAM

Yeah, I'll... I'll get showered
and everything, I'm just...

CLAIRE

What's wrong?

SAM

I'm just feelin' a little run-
down, is all.

CLAIRE

You've been run down since you
came home. Are you okay?

SAM

Yeah, yeah...

He tries to walk away. She stops him.

CLAIRE

Sam. What's wrong?

SAM

It's just... it's nothing, okay?
Don't worry about it.

He tries again. She stops him again.

CLAIRE

Why are you hiding your wrist?

SAM

I'm not, it's just in my pocket.

She roughly pulls out Sam's wrist.

CLAIRE

What is this?

SAM

It's nothing.

She yanks his wrist out, revealing a big, ugly stitch
right over his vein.

Suicide scar. Claire almost goes white.

CLAIRE

It's not nothing, what is this?
How did this happen, why didn't
you tell me about it?

SAM
Don't... look, it was just a
stupid... it was stupid...

She chokes up.

CLAIRE
God damn it, Sam. Just... when
did you do this?

SAM
Three months ago, look, it was...
it was stupid, I was in just... I
called the hospital the second
after I did it.

CLAIRE
Why didn't they tell me?

SAM
I told them it was an accident,
that I'd cut myself while trying
to cook!

CLAIRE
Oh god Sam, you are going to see a
psychiatrist...

SAM
I don't NEED to...

CLAIRE
SAM!

SAM
I'm not going...

Claire grabs Sam and holds him tight.

CLAIRE
You don't know how much you scare
the life out of me.

SAM
I'm not going...

CLAIRE
I want you to talk to someone
about this...

SAM
I don't want to... I don't want to
think about it, I want to forget
about it... I was weak and stupid
and now my body is mutilated
forever and I want to forget it.

CLAIRE

You can't just try to forget this stuff.

SAM

I don't want to think about it. I'll never do it again, I promise, the second that blade pushed through the skin, it was like an electric shock back into reality.

CLAIRE

Sam, you've been in a bad place for months, I can barely see you when I look in your eyes, how can I trust you that you won't try something that stupid again?

SAM

Cause it scared the shit out of me. And as lousy and as worthless as I feel, it's nothing compared to the pure dread and adrenaline once I started bleeding.

CLAIRE

You tried to ki-

MITCH (O.S.)

You tried to kill yourself?

Sam and Claire turn. Mitch hangs in the door frame.

SAM

Mitch--

Mitch approaches Sam. Angry, flushed.

SAM (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, brother--

CLAIRE

Wait for us outside, Mitch--

He doesn't listen to either of them. All he does is wrap his arms around his older brother.

Everyone stays silent.

MITCH

Promise me you'll never do that again.

SAM

I won't.

MITCH

Promise me you'll never feel
worthless or lousy again.

SAM

I can't promise something like
that...

MITCH

You're not. So you don't have any
reason to feel that way.

Mitch takes a look at Sam's mutilated wrist.

MITCH (CONT'D)

That's it? This frightened you?

Sam nods.

MITCH (CONT'D)

You're a total wuss.

Sam grins.

COMMUNAL BONFIRE - NIGHT

A gathering held in a wide, open space. Cars clutter the
outer edge, and people gather around tables as a large
bonfire is stoked.

Suit Girl steps onto the grass. Simple white dress, just
beyond vintage.

She likes it, tries to keep it billowing as she walks.

She glances to the ground. Her plain bare feet step
through the grass.

Sam smiles, watching Suit Girl wade towards the
gathering.

He glances at his wrist. Leather cuff.

Mitch wanders up behind him.

MITCH

Mutilated for life, huh?

SAM

This is just... so... simple.

MITCH

The really funny thing about
wisdom is that once you get the
hang of it, it's really simple.

SAM
You're too young to be wise.

MITCH
What am I old enough to be?

SAM
A smart-ass. Go have fun.

Mitch scampers off, eager to join the fun. Claire follows.

SAM (CONT'D)
You gonna look around?

SUIT GIRL
Yeah, will you be okay?

SAM
Yeah, just gonna walk around,
stretch my legs. You'll be able
to spot me.

SUIT GIRL
And you'll be able to spot me.

She turns in her dress.

SAM
(teasing)
You big flirt.

He rustles her hair and walks away.

Suit Girl smiles and starts wading through the dispersed crowd.

Families bonding, friends talking, plastic cups and hand-held refreshments.

There's already litter on the floor. She carefully steps around it and accidentally steps into Cassie.

CASSIE
Hey, watch it!

Suit Girl looks up.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Hey, it's you. What was your name
again?

SUIT GIRL
Suit Girl.

CASSIE

Yeah, that's right. Come over,
talk to us.

Elizabeth waves Suit Girl over.

ELIZABETH

New dress?

SUIT GIRL

It's Claire's.

She proudly shows it off a little.

ELIZABETH

So, we just wanted to say that we
don't think we gave you a fair
chance or a formal welcome before,
so we prepared something just for
you.

SUIT GIRL

You didn't have to do that.

ELIZABETH

I know... now, this is still a
little rough, so go easy on me,
okay?

Elizabeth clears her throat.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(on the fly)

"Once there was a girl so lame,
she made everyone want to hurl,
and she never said her name, so we
call her Suit Girl."

The girls cackle.

Suit Girl sneers and walks off.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

Come on back, we're just teasing
you. Can't you take a joke?

Suit Girl stops and turns.

SUIT GIRL

How can you be so mean? Mitch
likes you, why would he like you
if you're all so terrible?

ELIZABETH

Mitch is such a queer.

SUIT GIRL
...he's a philosopher.

ELIZABETH
Exactly!

CASSIE
That's so gay.

Suit Girl keeps walking.

The girls scoff and head off in the opposite direction.

ON SAM

Sam passes the fireside, examining his leather cuff.

White handwriting on the back. He reads it.

SAM
"We'll always love you. Mitch,
Claire, Suit Girl."

He smirks.

SAM (CONT'D)
I could stand to see this every
day.

ON SUIT GIRL

Suit Girl approaches a table. She's approached by a
SLEAZY SIXTEEN YEAR OLD boy.

SLEAZY 16
Cute dress.

SUIT GIRL
Thanks.

He scoops a drink into a plastic cup, slips the drink
into her hand, and grasps her arms.

SLEAZY 16
Shouldn't wear white out here,
can't sit on the grass, your butt
will get all green.

SUIT GIRL
I won't, then.

He pulls close to her.

SLEAZY 16

If you want, I'll let you sit on
my lap.

SUIT GIRL

No thanks.

She slips out of his hold and walks away.

Sleazy 16 tosses an ice cube against her leg and she
slips, drink hits her in the face and she stumbles, she
hits the ground.

Sleazy 16 grins, proud of himself.

She groans and stands. Grass stains and punch smeared
down her front.

Sleazy 16 approaches and offers his hand. She swats
angrily at it and pulls herself up.

Sleazy 16 cops a feel of her ass. She slaps him.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

You ruined my dress!

She slaps him again. Sleazy 16 shields his face.

Her slapping gets attention.

Elizabeth's mother grabs her wrist.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

What's going on?

SLEAZY 16

She's nuts, I tried to help her up
and she started hitting me. I
mean, she's a girl, I can't hit
her back...

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Go, I'll deal with this.

Sleazy 16 winks at Suit Girl and walks off proudly.

SUIT GIRL

He made me trip and ruined my
dress!

SLEAZY 16

It was an accident!

SUIT GIRL

It's not even mine, it was the first gift I ever got and you ruined it!

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Calm down! Stop hitting!

SUIT GIRL

Don't tell me what to do!

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Who are you? What adult is responsible for you?

SUIT GIRL

Claire.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Claire?

SUIT GIRL

Mrs. Perry! Now let go of me!

Suit Girl pulls herself out of the grip.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

Leave me alone!

She huffs off.

Elizabeth's mother approaches her daughter.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Who is that?

ELIZABETH

She's Mitch Perry's loser cousin or something. She's totally uncool.

ON SUIT GIRL

Suit Girl tugs on her dress, trying to keep it from sticking to her skin.

Suit Girl bumps into a wandering Sam.

SAM

Hey, your dress... you okay?

SUIT GIRL

Some jerk made me spill punch all over my dress.

SAM

What jerk, where?

She clutches his hands gently.

SUIT GIRL

I'm fine, just... just stay with me, please?

SAM

Sure.

Sam holds her hand. They walk through the crowd.

ON ELIZABETH

...who has returned to her friends.

ELIZABETH

Oh my god, she's holding hands with Mitch's yummy brother.

CASSIE

Maybe he's got a thing for whiny skinny sluts.

ELIZABETH

Bet she goes down on him, only reason someone his age would stick around with her.

CASSIE

Oh my god, she does! How else would her mouth get so big?

They cackle, proud of themselves, not realizing that a crushed Mitch has been listening the whole time.

MITCH

How can you say that? She's my friend.

CASSIE

Friend? I thought she was your cousin!

ELIZABETH

Oh. My. God. You LIKE her! YUCK!

MITCH

No!

CASSIE

So, are you a sicko with the hots for your cousin or what?

MITCH

No!

ELIZABETH

Wugh! Do me a favor and don't have a crush on me anymore, I don't need that kinda attention on my life.

Cassie laughs.

MITCH

You're disgusting.

ELIZABETH

I was thinking the same thing about you.

MITCH

I don't mean like that. I mean: You. Are. Disgusting.

He lets the daggers sink into them before walking away.

ON BONFIRE EDGE

Sam sits on a log. Suit Girl sits between his legs, clutching his hands softly. They watch the fire.

She leans back against him. His arms cross over her.

ON CLAIRE

Elizabeth's mother approaches Claire.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

I want your family to leave.

CLAIRE

Why?

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Your little... cousin has no right to be here. She's not even part of this neighbourhood.

CLAIRE

She's behaving herself. She might be the only one here who IS, I might add.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Your son has his paws all over her, it's completely indecent!

Claire turns to see. Sam cradles Suit Girl in his arms.

Claire crosses her arms and walks forward.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

You should hear what people are
saying about those two.

CLAIRE

I don't want to hear it.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

I wouldn't want to either.

Suit Girl whispers into Sam's ear. He chuckles.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

No mother wants to hear that their
worthless son is a pervert.

CLAIRE

He's sensitive.

ELIZABETH'S MOTHER

Yeah, that's what they always say
about the creeps on the news.

ON BONFIRE EDGE

Mitch joins Sam and Suit Girl. He offers his plate to
the two.

Suit Girl takes the plate and samples the food.

INT. FRONT HALL - EVENING

Front door opens. Lights switch on.

Claire pushes Suit Girl in. Mitch and Sam follow.

CLAIRE

Change out of your dirty dress
then come back down, I want to
talk to you.

SAM

Ma--

CLAIRE

We'll talk later.

SUIT GIRL

I'm sorry about your dress.

CLAIRE

It's not about the dress... we just need to talk about some things.

SUIT GIRL

What about?

CLAIRE

You'll see. Upstairs. Change. And Sam?

SAM

Yeah?

CLAIRE

Stay away until we're done.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Suit Girl pulls her jacket on as she putters in. She's back in the suit. Claire waits on the sofa.

CLAIRE

Sit.

Suit Girl sits opposite her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I saw you getting close to my son at the bonfire.

SUIT GIRL

So? We didn't do anything wrong.

CLAIRE

You promise?

SUIT GIRL

What do you mean?

CLAIRE

You slept in his room. You two spend a lot of time alone... and I have no idea why he was so insistent on bringing you here.

SUIT GIRL

What do you mean?

CLAIRE

What... EXACTLY... is your relationship with Sam?

SUIT GIRL

We didn't do anything wrong, I swear. I-- I kissed him... he didn't like it, I promise, I didn't try anything again, I swear, I just thought...

CLAIRE

You just thought what?

SUIT GIRL

He was taking such good care of me, I thought... I thought he was gonna send me away and I...

CLAIRE

How far was this going to go?

SUIT GIRL

I... I dunno, I was just gonna see what happened, I just thought that if... well, if we... he would have wanted to keep me if he thought--

CLAIRE

What the HELL were you thinking?

SUIT GIRL

I was scared, I- I didn't know what to do about my bab--

CLAIRE

BABY?

SUIT GIRL

I--

CLAIRE

You're PREGNANT?

SUIT GIRL

I was, I... a couple days ago it... it was so tiny, it was barely there, like, I dunno, an unfinished thought. It never had a chance.

CLAIRE

Oh god... when did you find out?

SUIT GIRL

It was before I met you guys, I promise, Sam didn't do anything wrong, but... he was so nice and sweet and strong and caring I thought...

CLAIRE

You had better not have thought what I think.

SUIT GIRL

It was stupid, he was so nice and sweet...

CLAIRE

It was BEYOND stupid. It might be the stupidest, most irresponsible, most horrendous thing I've ever heard of.

SUIT GIRL

Bexley said I could trust you!

CLAIRE

You didn't trust us, you used us! You lied to us! You were... you were going to let MY SON think... what is wrong with you? You were trying to ENTRAP him?

SUIT GIRL

No, I-- I was scared!

CLAIRE

Oh, I bet, believe it or not, I've been terrified ever since you got here! I should have sent you away the day you arrived, gone to the police or just dropped you off someplace... I should have gotten you the hell out of my house, I KNEW what would happen if you stuck around!

SUIT GIRL

Claire--

CLAIRE

Be. Quiet. Don't speak. You have NO right to say ANYTHING. God, you have... you have no idea what you were going to do to my family, do you?

SUIT GIRL

It was just--

CLAIRE

It wasn't "just" anything... this would have ruined us.

SUIT GIRL

I was desperate! I wanted Sam to stay!

CLAIRE

I am SICK of people lying to this family. They can say whatever the hell they want out there, I don't give a shit, but when someone tries to MANIPULATE me...

SUIT GIRL

I'M SORRY!

CLAIRE

I bet you are.

SUIT GIRL

What am I supposed to do?

CLAIRE

Get out of my house. Go... infect another family, go to an orphanage, find someone that will ACTUALLY help you. Lie, tell the truth, I don't give a shit anymore, but if you care about Sam and Mitch, you won't ever mention them or this house. Just go and forget this whole summer ever happened.

Suit Girl backs away.

She turns and runs out. Door slams shut behind her.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Claire enters. Sam isn't paying attention.

CLAIRE

Sam...

SAM

Oh. Hey.

CLAIRE

We need to talk.

SAM

I... I don't want to talk about it anymore, I thought we left this on a good note.

CLAIRE

No, Sam, I--

She sits on his bed and holds his shoulder.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Don't stand up.

SAM

Huh?

CLAIRE

Just listen. Just listen to what I have to say and accept it, okay? Don't lose your head, don't get angry with me...

SAM

Where's Suit Girl?

CLAIRE

She left... she's gone, she just walked out.

SAM

What!?! We have to go find--

Claire holds him down.

CLAIRE

No... NO. Sam. She has to go, she can't stay here with us, okay? It was wrong of us to hold onto her. She... she needs REAL help.

SAM

We can take her to GET help--

CLAIRE

No, Sam, we can't have anything to do with her... we're still kidnappers, you have to stay away from her... Sam, she'll destroy this family if she stays...

SAM

Destroy... what are you talking about? How can you SAY that?

CLAIRE

What were you thinking would happen, Sam?

SAM

I dunno, I thought... I thought you liked her...

CLAIRE

I did. Sam, I did.

SAM

I guess... I guess I thought we could make it official...

CLAIRE

Sam, we could never adopt her. We don't have the money, we have a bad history, no one would go for it. Sam, I know you mean well, but you HAVE to let this one go.

SAM

Have you told Mitch yet?

CLAIRE

No.

SAM

Don't.

Sam gets up and finds his coat.

CLAIRE

Sam. Do not bring her back here.

SAM

I have to at least talk to her.

CLAIRE

Sam, don't. Please don't.

EXT. TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Lights are out. Practically a ghost town cloaked in night.

Suit Girl wanders under sickly streetlamp glow.

She catches her reflection in an empty storefront. Face flushed, eyes puffy, nose red.

SUIT GIRL

I hate you.

Her reflection talks back.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

I hate you so much. You don't deserve Sam after everything you did to him. You're a stupid little fucking fool, just like everyone said.

She glares at her reflection, seething with rage.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

You cost me every chance I ever
get at happiness. And I don't
want to be you anymore.

PARK - HILL - NIGHT

Suit Girl wanders off the barely-lit path into the dark.

Grass crinkles underfoot. She wanders out and plops down
on an arbitrary spot.

She pulls her arms out of her jacket sleeves, turning it
into a blanket and wraps it close around her.

Sam approaches her.

SAM

Can I sit?

She nods. Sam sits next to her.

SUIT GIRL

There's no stars.

SAM

Light pollution.

SUIT GIRL

In the desert at night there were
a buncha stars. It was cold but
it was pretty.

SAM

Well, this is ugly but lukewarm.
And kinda humid.

SUIT GIRL

Feels like the flu.

SAM

Yeah, it does... never thought of
that.

SUIT GIRL

...why did you help me?

SAM

Are you mad?

SUIT GIRL

No... maybe... just... why did you
help me?

SAM

Cause I'm a screw up. I can't help but do the wrong thing.

SUIT GIRL

That's my excuse. Not yours.

SAM

Let me tell you a story. A couple years ago, before I headed off to college, I was supposed to pick up Mitch from the Y. I didn't. I was getting wasted with a couple friends.

SUIT GIRL

Wasted?

SAM

I wasn't a drug addict or anything, it was just something I did every once in a while... Anyway, Mitch had to walk home, and not ten minutes in, these older kids, real tough guys, jumped him and robbed him. They beat him up, yanked his shirt off, smashed his phone, took his cash and stole his sneakers.

Suit Girl leans in.

SAM (CONT'D)

And, you know, what could he do? He walked the whole way home, twelve miles, barefoot in the middle of summer. He almost burned the bottom of his feet off.

Sam adds in a small, impressed laugh.

SAM (CONT'D)

I can't believe he actually forgave me. He didn't blame me, he wasn't even MAD at me, he was so cool... it kinda broke my heart, you know?

SUIT GIRL

Wow.

SAM

If I ever had any doubts that I was a shithead, that...

SUIT GIRL

You're not a shithead, Sam. I know a ton and you're not like 'em.

SAM

Thanks.

SUIT GIRL

Is that your big, dark secret?

SAM

Not even close. But it's probably the most important one.

SUIT GIRL

You need to know an important one?

SAM

I already know a big important one.

SUIT GIRL

You know?

SAM

Mom told me. About...

SUIT GIRL

I'm so sorry, Sam.

SAM

No, I'm sorry. She's sorry too, she started telling me and burst into tears... I am so sorry that you were so desperate and couldn't tell us. I'm so sorry that you had to endure that alone... especially when we were all so close by.

SUIT GIRL

I don't belong with you.

SAM

You belong with people who care about you, who worry about you... who get scared when you're lost and alone in a strange place.

SUIT GIRL

I'd fuck it up again.

SAM

If they care about you, it won't matter. Take it from a professional fuck-up.

SUIT GIRL

How will I know if they care about me?

Two sets of legs appear behind them.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

They'll insist on coming after you in the middle of the night, even though every fiber of their being tells them they shouldn't.

Sam and Suit Girl turn in surprise.

Claire approaches. Mitch lags a step behind.

Sam rises, Suit Girl follows.

Mitch rushes up and clutches Suit Girl tightly. She returns the hug.

Claire draws Suit Girl away from Mitch. Sam holds his brother's shoulders as the two ladies share a private moment.

SUIT GIRL

You told him?

CLAIRE

Yeah.

SUIT GIRL

And you cried?

Claire kneels in front of her.

CLAIRE

When you told me, I was so mad because I was so frightened for Sam, for what could have happened to him... and when I told him, all I could think about was you... being that scared, that hopeless, that alone... and to be so little, to have no one to confide in or to cry to...

SUIT GIRL

You want me to cry to you?

CLAIRE

I want you to stop doing stupid things out of fear. I want you to stop being afraid. And I want to tell you...

She clutches Suit Girl.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I want you to know that I am so, so, so sorry.

SUIT GIRL

No you're not.

CLAIRE

I AM. I promise... I was scared of what your presence might do, but you... god damn, you are the bravest, strongest little girl I've ever met. I want you to have what you deserve because you've been deprived for SO long and have suffered SO much and you didn't deserve a single SECOND of it.

SUIT GIRL

What do I deserve?

CLAIRE

To be happy. To do what you want.

SUIT GIRL

I wanna go to bed.

CLAIRE

Okay. Good idea.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mitch clutches a cushion tight. Suit Girl sits next to him, Indian style.

Sam sits close-by. Claire faces them.

CLAIRE

So what are we going to do? You know that if she stays here, everyone will keep talking. Whispering, gossiping.

SUIT GIRL

About us?

MITCH

Be glad you didn't hear it.

SAM

Why can't we run away?

CLAIRE

What?

SAM

Her family's gone, right? No one's looking for her. We could just move, find a new place to live, say she's our sister or something...

CLAIRE

No. Absolutely not.

SAM

Why not? What's here?

CLAIRE

Our LIFE is here.

MITCH

Our life sucks.

CLAIRE

Mitch...

SAM

You heard how everyone here talks about us. There's nothing for me here, you hate your job... why can't we just leave?

CLAIRE

What about Mitch? His whole life is here, his school is here!

MITCH

I don't care. I'll be fine.

CLAIRE

God damn it Mitch, you don't need to be so fucking selfless... you're a kid, you're allowed to get angry, to be greedy, to want things, to... don't you want ANYTHING?

MITCH

I want to do this.

Claire scoffs.

MITCH (CONT'D)

This might be the only decision I ever make that'll ever mean something, I want to do it!

CLAIRE

Mitch, you don't understand, you'll be leaving everything behind.

MITCH

You guys are everything.

CLAIRE

Damn kid.

MITCH

Look, in the movies, they always run away at the end to a tropical beach or another country and live happily ever after!

CLAIRE

That's just a dream, a fairy tale... nobody does that in real life!

MITCH

And they're all miserable! I'm sick of seeing you all miserable! You want me to be selfish, okay, THIS is what I want!

CLAIRE

No one ever solved their problems by running away.

MITCH

(under his breath)
Speedy Gonzales did.

Claire exhales and plops down on a chair.

CLAIRE

You're all serious.

They nod.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I don't suppose you all have an idea of where we could GO?

SAM

No.

CLAIRE

Think about it. Give it some serious thought, I don't want you all complaining about where we end up.

They're knocked back.

SAM

...you're serious?

MITCH

We're actually gonna do this?

CLAIRE

No one ever has, right? We'll do it, but we have to do it right. We're not going to just run off like convicts in the night.

MITCH

When?

CLAIRE

Before we come to our senses. Pack light, we're only taking the two cars. Everything else we'll sell or give away. I'll call my financial people and see what our options are, and start looking at real estate listings.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Mitch opens the hall cupboards.

MITCH

Definitely gotta take one of these old quilts, I love these. It won't feel like home without them.

SAM (O.S.)

Just one, there's too many and we never use 'em.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON - CONTINUOUS

Suit Girl lounges on Sam's recliner, watching Sam sort through his clothes.

Mitch enters, plopping the folded quilt on the bed.

MITCH

I heard Utah's nice. Monument Valley. We can be cowboys.

SUIT GIRL

New York. We could live in the Empire State building.

MITCH

Austin. Total party down there.

SUIT GIRL

Florida. Disneyland.

SAM

You two might want to put more thought into this.

MITCH

We could put up a map and throw darts at it, where we hit is where we live.

SAM

You're terrible at darts, you'll probably send us to live in Cracktown in Methsylvania. Go look something up on your computer.

MITCH

Can't I use yours?

SAM

No, I'm packing, I need some space. Shoo.

Mitch smugly pulls his headphones on and heads out.

Sam returns to sorting through his clothes. Little that he likes.

Suit Girl watches him.

SAM (CONT'D)

You gonna pack?

Suit Girl shrugs.

SUIT GIRL

I don't have anything.

SAM

Okay, you wanna figure out how we're gonna take that chair with us? It's the only thing I have left of dad.

She surveys the chair under her.

SUIT GIRL

You should leave it behind.

SAM

We don't leave people behind in this family. No matter what.

SUIT GIRL

...it's a nice chair.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Claire holds her arms as she looks over the photos on the wall. Happy moments.

She presses her forehead against one of the photos.

CLAIRE

I hope you guys forgive me.

Knock on the door. Claire sighs.

She approaches the door, peers out the peephole. She opens the door.

Social workers, two of them.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Give me a moment, okay? This is gonna be hard. And... I don't want to scare her.

They nod. She clears her throat.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Suit Girl? Can you come down and help me?

Suit Girl shuffles downstairs.

SUIT GIRL

Yeah?

Claire beckons her close.

Suit Girl nervously approaches, and Claire holds her.

CLAIRE

(softly)
Please don't think I'm doing this
to be mean to you or to hurt you.

SUIT GIRL

What?

CLAIRE

(softly)
This is the only way. You have to
be strong for a while, things will
work out, I want you to have faith
in me now, okay?

Suit Girl glimpses over Claire's shoulder.

The social workers step forward.

SUIT GIRL

No, Claire, no no no... please
don't, Claire...

They take Suit Girl by the arms and pull the girl away.

CLAIRE

I'll call you, I'll make sure
you're okay.

SUIT GIRL

Claire!

CLAIRE

I'm sorry, it's the only way.

SUIT GIRL

Please!

CLAIRE

I have to look after my family.
You'll understand.

Sam and Mitch clamor downstairs in time to catch Suit
Girl being dragged outside.

SAM

What's going on!?

Claire shuts the door.

Sam and Mitch try to get to the door, Claire blocks their
path.

SAM (CONT'D)

What did you do?

CLAIRE

We couldn't run away, Sam.

SAM

Mom... we agreed...

CLAIRE

No. God, Sam, sometimes you're... you still don't understand that the real world doesn't work like that.

SAM

I thought we didn't care.

CLAIRE

I care about you too much to ignore the world outside. Even if I hate what it has to say every bit as much as you do.

Sam groans.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

They won't press charges, they won't ask questions, we're just going to forget, okay? We're just going to live our lives like we used to.

SAM

We can't... how can we pretend? You can't expect Mitch to just...

CLAIRE

We have to try. This is going to be so hard, Sam, this is going to be the hardest part of this whole thing.

SAM

We don't abandon people in this family!

CLAIRE

I know.

SAM

How could you do that? You didn't even warn her...

CLAIRE

I didn't want her to run away again.

SAM

We were ALL going to run away together. I thought we agreed!

CLAIRE

We can still run away if you want... if you and Mitch still want to go, we'll go.

SAM

We don't want to go ANYWHERE with you.

INT. ORPHANAGE - AFTERNOON

Cold and old. Run-down, peeling wallpaper.

Suit Girl closes her jacket as she is escorted down the hall.

Crucifix on the wall. Jesus in twisted pain. Suit Girl shrinks at the sight of it.

She's shown into a room full of other girls. They don't care for her. She feels the same way.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Kids clog the halls. "Welcome back students" banners on the walls.

Mitch sullenly carries his books.

Elizabeth and Cassie snicker at him.

CASSIE

Hey Perry, thought you were outta here!

ELIZABETH

Yeah, thought you were gonna run off and live with yer kissin' cousin!

Mitch ignores them, accidently walking into a wall of older students. He's shoved off.

INT. ORPHANAGE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Suit Girl sits at the bottom of the stairs, trying to read a textbook.

Two girls pass by. One bumps the book, it hits Suit Girl in the nose.

INT. BOXMART - DAY

Sam follows behind a store manager, who points out various this-and-that. New employee orientation.

Sam glumly nods, hands shoved in his pockets.

He looks away. A young kid peeks into a display freezer.

Sam smirks.

INT. ORPHANAGE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bedtime. Bunkmates gossip, hand magazines to their friends. They all avoid Suit Girl.

Suit Girl curls up on her bunk, wrapped in her blanket. She holds herself gently.

Lights go out. Suit Girl tightens into a ball.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - WINDOW BOX - NIGHT

Mitch sits in the box, wrapped in the blanket, staring out the window.

Sam dangles in his doorway before approaching Mitch. He holds his brother tenderly and sits next to him.

CLAIRE

I don't think we can stick around here anymore.

Sam glances up at her.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Do you still want to run away as a family?

Sam nods.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I've been looking all fall. I found a place.

MITCH

Will we be happy?

CLAIRE

I dunno, honey. We gotta make our own happiness. And I know we can't make it here anymore.

MITCH

She won't be able to find us. We'll never see her again.

CLAIRE

We're not allowed to see her anyway, Mitch. Honey, sweetie... this is for the best.

MITCH

But this will be all official, it'll be real.

CLAIRE

I think it's time we all started being real.

EXT. PERRY HOUSE - DAY

Sam and Mitch carry crap to the cars. Boxes, garbage bags, and anything big enough to not need either.

They cram it in there nice and snug.

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

The two Perry cars roll down the street.

INT. SAM'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Sam drives with one hand. Cell phone rings. He answers.

SAM

Hey.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

(through phone speaker)

Let's pull in and get a bite.

EXT. PATTYWAGON - AFTERNOON

Fast food restaurant. Sam and Claire park their cars.

INT. PATTYWAGON - AFTERNOON

The Perrys sit. Map sprawled open on the table. Mitch leans against Sam, tired.

They eat and discuss their next move.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

The cars drive into the distance.

EXT. ORPHANAGE - EVENING

Suit Girl wraps herself up in a thin coat and walks out onto the terrace.

Scattered girls litter the yard, some talking, some sneak smokes.

Suit Girl stands and solemnly watches the sunset.

She closes her eyes. She clutches an imaginary hand at her side, and takes a breath.

She stays that way as the sun settles.

Sky grows dark. She keeps her eyes shut.

She swallows.

Releases the imaginary hand.

She opens her eyes and watches the sun disappear.

She's left alone in the growing dark.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW PERRY HOUSE - EVENING

Dark grey sky cut by leafless branches.

Old dirty snow on the ground, dirty clumps on the side of cleared roads. Cars half-buried by snow.

Amber streetlights try to pierce the fog.

Small houses crammed close together.

INT. NEW PERRY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Dismal Christmas decorations. Framed photos on the mantel, the Perry family.

Mitch wanders into the living room, small frame wrapped up warm, headphones and walkman. Mind somewhere else.

He unscrews a jar of jelly beans and pops one.

Knock on the door. Mitch flops onto the sofa.

MITCH

Mom! Door!

INT. NEW PERRY HOUSE - SAM'S ROOM - EVENING

Cramped, far from cozy.

Sam enters with a groan, cheap work clothes hanging on his body.

He pulls his tie off and throws it away carelessly.

Claire knocks on his door, hanging halfway into the room.

CLAIRE

Long day at the office?

Sam pulls his dress shirt off.

SAM

Don't know why we have to wear suits in a call center.

He starts dressing.

CLAIRE

Found someone to take the spare room for a while, will you come down and meet them?

SAM

Another loser?

CLAIRE

Hope not.

SAM

Last guy was a real asshole.

Claire steps into the room.

CLAIRE

Sam... look, I want you to know,
I'm... I'm proud of you. You've
been... well, I know this has been
rough on you, but... you've been
handling this so well...

She holds his wrist. He still has the leather cuff on.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I'm glad you're here with us. And
I think you were right, I think
this... this will help us. I know
it's not quite what you wanted...

SAM

It's NOT what we wanted. You lied
to us... to her.

CLAIRE

I didn't. Sam, you can be mad at
me as long as you want, for the
rest of your life if it'll make
you feel any better...

SAM

It won't. But I will.

CLAIRE

Please don't.

Sam groans and stands.

INT. NEW PERRY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The new arrival waits impatiently on a wooden chair by
the door. Bags rest by cloth boots.

Claire leads Sam in.

CLAIRE

Sam, I want you to meet Joanna
Lefler.

He's knocked back by what's waiting for him.

Suit Girl wrapped in a warm coat. Radiant smile.

Sam sprints across the room and snatches her up in a
giant bear hug.

SUIT GIRL

Sam!

She grins and clutches him.

SUIT GIRL (CONT'D)

I missed you so so so so much.

SAM

How are... what are you doing here? I thought you were in an orphanage...

CLAIRE

I got her emancipated, we started the process the day she left. I was on the phone almost every day with her social workers.

SAM

Emancipated? So we're not adopting her?

CLAIRE

I told you before, they'd never let us adopt her. She's free, legally on her own.

SAM

Oh god, thank you mom, thank you so much...

SUIT GIRL

Thank you thank you thank you...

CLAIRE

We couldn't run away, Sam. We would have been caught. We were kidnappers. She had to CHOOSE to be with us.

MITCH

You gonna let go of her?

SAM

Never never never.

MITCH

Come on!

Mitch wraps his arms around Suit Girl. She hugs him back tightly.

SUIT GIRL

I've been waiting for this the whole time, I missed you all so so much. I didn't even have a picture!

Mitch holds Suit Girl close.

MITCH

What was the orphanage like?

She nuzzles his cheek.

SUIT GIRL

It was worth it. Every awful second, it was worth it.

MITCH

It's over now.

SUIT GIRL

Yeah, it's over.

SAM

It's not over.

SUIT GIRL

What do you mean?

SAM

This is just the beginning. Everything is going to change, things will be so great. You can have a normal life, get friends, play outside with Mitch and Bexley all day all summer, all fall, all winter...

SUIT GIRL

You mean it?

SAM

Yeah.

Suit Girl glances at the cuff on Sam's wrist. She touches it gently.

SUIT GIRL

How can you say that... how can you believe that... and still be as sad as you are?

SAM

...I can't.

Sam cracks a smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

I... I really can't.

Suit Girl mirrors his smile.

SAM (CONT'D)

Has anyone told you how beautiful
you are? Your smile makes we want
to cry.

SUIT GIRL

Now you know how I felt when I
first saw you.

CLAIRE

Guys? Give her air. You think
maybe you can take her stuff to
her room?

Mitch and Sam jump to their feet.

Mitch grabs the brown paper bags, Sam grabs the duffel
bag. They take them upstairs. Suit Girl watches with a
smile.

Claire kneels down to Suit Girl and holds her gently.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I missed you too. More than I
thought I would.

She whispers into Suit Girl's ear:

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Welcome home, my little dove.

Suit Girl clutches Claire tight.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I can call you that, can't I?

SUIT GIRL

I was hoping you would.

She keeps her arms wrapped around her.

They hold each other.

Mother and daughter.

FADE OUT.

MONTAGE:

Suit Girl's first day at school.

MITCH (V.O.)
 Philosopher Joseph Campbell said
 "Before you create, you must
 destroy." Suit Girl did destroy
 our family, but she helped build a
 better one.

Suit Girl chattering to her friends. They can't get a
 word in edgeways.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Don't think it was a happy ending,
 though. There were bad times...

Sam in group therapy. Chats up a girl during the break.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Rough times... We would fuck up
 the simplest things...

Sam and Claire scream at each other.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But we would sometimes get the big
 things right.

Suit Girl and Mitch have more midnight snacks.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 There was heartbreak...

Suit Girl. A handsome boy her age. Her real first kiss.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Some missteps...

Mitch with his friends. One offers him a beer. He tries
 it. Makes him sick.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Yelling, screaming...

Claire flirts with a gentleman her age.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Crying.

Family gathered over Bexley's grave.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Hugging, laughing...

Surprise party for Suit Girl. Streamers, noisemakers,
 the whole nine yards.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It was good, it was hard, it was
painful. But life is like that.

Sam sweeps Suit Girl off her feet.

Later. Party has died down. Mitch takes a handful of
leftover cake.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That one was mine. Someone else
mighta said it, but I said it from
experience.

Sam dozes off on the sofa.

Suit Girl curls up next to him.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Oh, and Suit Girl was wrong. The
bad is only there to make sure
when we're happy, it feels so much
better.

She plants her head on his shoulder and falls asleep.

Sam rouses just enough to notice her there.

He smiles softly, then falls back asleep.

MITCH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Rookie mistake. But that's okay.
She's still young.

Mitch plops down next to Sam and lies against him. He
cozies up and rests his eyes.

Claire enters.

She plants a kiss on each of their heads.

She leans over and switches off each of the lamps.

The room darkens in steps until the screen

Finally

Goes black.

THE END