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The House on Jordan Road

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THE HOUSE ON JORDAN ROAD

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Master's Program in Creative Writing

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Dedication

This (and just about everything I do now) is for my daughter, Ava, who was born three weeks early the first time I tried to finish this and who is teething with her seventh and eighth tooth as I finish now. You make me many things I've never been and the most important of those things is better. You make me better.

THE HOUSE ON JORDAN ROAD

by

ANGELA JOANNA MARIE RIDLEY, B.A.

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at El Paso

in Partial Fulfillment

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Preface

When I began the online MFA program in Creative Writing at UTEP in 2011, my passion for writing was for love poetry and very little beyond that. Because of the rich experiences I've earned at my time at UTEP, I've since developed a passion for a vast variety of styles in creative writing in my journey as a writer. I'm now a writer of poetry in all subjects, a writer of fiction- including short stories and film script, a creative non-fiction writer, a writer of humor and even a technical writer. Because of my struggles with the structural components of screenplay, "The House on Jordan Road" proved to challenge me more than any other fiction or non-fiction work I've ever created. In identifying the areas I struggled with the most, I gained a greater understanding of my own style of writing which assisted with navigating the challenging process of revision.

"The House on Jordan Road" began as a project in Professor Bush's Advanced Screenwriting course in Spring 2014. As a new genre of writing, the entire foundation of screenwriting was completely foreign to me. Initially, I sought out to create a suspenseful work of fiction beyond the scope of my usual imagination that I could continue to expand on due to the reality of the amount of effort and dedication that would need to be designated toward finishing a screenplay. It was going to take time and dedication- lots of it! Field described the art of writing a screenplay to be comparable to "...an amazing , mysterious phenomenon filled with joy, frustration, sometimes even sorrow" (238). Because of my lack of experience and ignorance to the structure and discipline of screenwriting, what I ended up with was a story that lacked the foundation of what a screenplay truly is, " a story told with pictures, in dialog and description, and placed within the context of dramatic structure" (Field 2-3).

In my journey in making “The House on Jordan Road” structurally sound, I had to restart my writing approach from the beginning of the creative process of writing a screenplay in order to identify and dissect the areas in which I struggled with the most. What’s most interesting about creating a screenplay is that as a writer, you have the advantage of being able to use your transferrable skills to apply to writing a screenplay. Conversely, writing a screenplay isn’t completely like any other form of writing except the basic components of having a beginning, middle and end- which may very well be scrambled in order of presentation depending on what the writer is trying to convey. Have you ever seen a movie where the end is shown at the beginning and the story rewinds in time? Have you ever seen a movie that travels back and forth in time?

To begin with, I had to explore what components made a good screenplay. How do you begin to write a screenplay? What do you have to do or accomplish to be a good screenwriter? According to Samaroo, screenwriters, no matter what background they come from share some qualities and traits that include but aren’t limited to: curiosity, perceptiveness, brevity, adaptability and vision (22-24). Field realized that a screenplay “...is a story told with pictures. It’s like a *noun*; it has a subject, and is usually about a *person*, or persons, in a place, or places, *doing his/her thing* is the action” (12). Any good screenplay is made up of elements “expressed dramatically within a structure that has a definite beginning, middle, and end, though not necessarily in that order” (Field 12). How many persons or places did I need to make Lola’s story relatable? Believable? In what order and with what elements could I develop a screenplay that embodied a successful screenplay? Could I subtract from Lola Page’s story by creating so many different settings in “The House on Jordan Road” or is a variety of settings necessary in showing all my character’s relationships to Lola in their entirety?

How much character development did I need to make a character multi dimensional?
How much background information did I need to give about a character in order to give them depth and create a connection amongst other characters? Whose story was I telling? What was that person looking to gain? What was their need and how did they overcome that need? In creating “The House on Jordan Road,” I wanted to develop the story of Lola Page, a young woman whose lapse in judgment at a moment of desperation and vulnerability in her life cost her her life. What was it that made her desperate and vulnerable? Did her desperation and vulnerability come from one source and/or one event or multiple sources and/or events? What was her purpose or premise? How did her purpose or premise mold and/or create her desperation, if at all? How did that translate into her interactions with other characters? Did Lola’s story have aspects that my readers could relate to? Could they relate to any of my characters at all?

Identifying Lola’s premise was especially crucial for her character development as well as the development of “The House on Jordan Road” because “every good play must have a well-formulated premise” (Egri 6). Have you ever been desperate? What motivated that desperation? Did your desperation have limits and/or boundaries? According to Field, if you know your character’s dramatic need, you’re able to create obstacles to that dramatic need and “then your story becomes your character, overcoming obstacle after obstacle to achieve his/her dramatic need” (25).

Lola was careless in her desperation. Her need to fill a void after a breakup clouded her judgment far too gravely. Lola’s desperation transformed her. In her carelessness, her lack of judgment led to her demise. *Careless desperation can lead to demise.* How did it lead to her demise? Once Lola’s desires were revealed, there came the challenge to elaborate on the notion that her careless desperation led to her demise and then proving that notion in details. Although

one should never mention their premise in the dialog of their screenplay, Egri states that "...the audience must know what the message is" and whatever that message came to be "...you must prove it" (15). Was Lola's need that great that it was worth her life? Or did she fall victim to someone else's need(s) trying to fulfill her own?

One of my greatest struggles that prevented "The House on Jordan Road" from having the foundation it needed to support the premise was my lack of effectively creating ways to show my audience all I wanted them to know about my characters. There were also scenes in which I provided too many details that weren't necessary to tell Lola's story. In an introductory scene to Detectives Grim and Cook, who led the investigation of Lola's missing person's case, I went into great detail about the interior design of the restaurant they ate at. I also gave details about Detectives Grim and Cook's personal struggles. How did it relate to Lola's story? It didn't. What I had to realize was that too many details that didn't add to Lola's story or my efforts to portray her desires and premise were just a distraction.

While Samaroo advises writers to make each character's voice a distinct one, there's no point in having additional characters unless they're adding to the story. "Make sure each character is arcing. As your protagonist goes on a journey, the other characters go on a journey, too. Their journeys have to be less complicated, as they will get less screen time" (Samaroo 117). Another thing I hadn't realized in relation to effectively creating ways to show my audience all I wanted them to know about my characters in "The House on Jordan Road" is the fact that building the screenplay and writing the screenplay are two different processes according to Field. "You know your story from start to finish. It should move smoothly from beginning to end, with story progressions..." (Field 214).

Although having my readers know all my characters on an intimate level would've been interesting, it added nothing to their character development in relation to Lola's story. "To tell a story, you have to *set up* your characters, introduce the *dramatic premise* (what the story is about) and the *dramatic situation* (the circumstances surrounding the action), create obstacles for your characters to *confront* and overcome, then *resolve* the story" (Field 3).

The craft of screenwriting is a learned creative process. How could I learn to correct my lack of detail in writing the story of Lola's desperation? In some creative works like that of poetry, you can write in such a way that leaves the entire poem open to interpretation. The poem can make sense to you in one way and make sense to someone else in a completely different way. In a poem, I could simply tell my readers that Lola was uncomfortable and insecure. However, screenwriting is about "choosing the right tidbits, the ones that will tell the viewers the most" and those details provided in the beginning, middle and end could then be open to interpretation (Samaroo 32). Therefore, I had to learn to dig deeper and rewrite scenes in a way that would *show* my readers the source of Lola's desperation and the depth in which the source affected her.

In Lola's three year relationship with Cassidy, she wanted more of a commitment from him than he was willing to give. The pressure that Cassidy felt from Lola led to the termination of their relationship altogether. My goal was to connect how the termination of that relationship affected her interactions with those around her in a *show* approach verses that of a *tell* approach. "The more you can show the audience instead of having to have a character tell them, the better" (Samaroo 24). My readers received tidbits through major details like Lola searching for comfort in alcohol and acceptance from other people as well as through minor details like demonstrating

her levels of discomfort within herself by something as simple as the constant readjustment of a purse strap.

As I continued to focus on revision, I realized that what I knew about my characters didn't translate well on paper. My lack of attention to detail, description and dialog made it nearly impossible for what I created in my mind to be equivalent to what I wanted to convey on paper. Some of my scenes were cut short too soon or missing certain details necessary to tie the next part of the story together. Additionally, there were areas in which I cut scenes that served no purpose in demonstrating Lola's desperation. "In a play, dialogue is the chief means by which the premise is proved, the characters revealed, and the conflict carried. It is vital that the dialogue be good, since it is the part of the play which is most apparent to the audience" (Egri 254).

Character development was another important component of revising my screenplay throughout "The House on Jordan Road." Field believes the best way to make characters multi dimensional, real and believable is to separate the characters' lives into "...three basic components- their professional life, their personal life, and their private life" (51). The most beneficial thing about knowing these aspects of a character's life is the notion that "...you have something to cut away to; if you are writing your screenplay and don't know what happens next, you can go into the professional, personal or private aspects of your character's life and find something to show to move the story forward" (Field 54).

While sometimes it's necessary to have your character react to a situation, "...you can't have your main character constantly reacting only to things that happen to him. If that happens, he disappears off the page, and your story appears soft, without an edge" (Field 55).

Additionally, Field reminds writers that a character is what he/she does. Film is considered a

visual medium and it's my responsibility as a writer to chose an image, or picture that "cinematically dramatizes" my characters.

My main character, or pivotal character/protagonist Lola, seemed to be your everyday young, happy go lucky twenty something on the surface. She was the girl you'd see happily running errands or the confident girl at the bar having a good time. What was lying beneath the surface was someone who wanted a greater commitment from those around her. She wanted her boyfriend Cassidy to take their relationship more seriously and to a newer level of commitment. She wanted her friend Harmony to assess a greater value to their friendship by keeping her word, being dependable and respecting Lola's time.

Lola's character didn't just merely desire something. She wanted it so badly that she was unknowingly willing to be destroyed in her desperate attempt to feel seen, wanted, appreciated and loved. Lola overlooked the warning signs in Charles' behavior when she decided to befriend him because he was so willing and able to entertain her at her will and on her terms, something she didn't have. "A pivotal character *must have something very vital at stake*" (Egri 111). The one course of action that changed Lola's life forever was the moment she decided to visit with Charles at his home. A pivotal character "never becomes a pivotal character because *he wants to*. He is really forced by circumstances within him and outside of him to become what he is" (Egri 112). That small decision that Lola made in her moment of desperation transformed her life forever and put that "something very vital at stake"- her life.

When I created Charles LaMontagne, I envisioned him as a multi dimensional character. I wanted Charles to represent two drastically different people in order to attract and connect him to Lola's needs. Charles lived in a world where he was interesting and important in the lives of those around him- something Lola wasn't. Charles was multi dimensional at surface level

because of the complexity of his personal life and the numerous roles and responsibilities that existed in his life- biohazardous materials worker, respected photographer, caretaker for his mother, former Marine etc. How could he fulfill Lola's needs?

As I developed these aspects of Charles' character along with Charles' relationship with Lola and his relationship with other characters around him, I decided to abandon my initial character trait of Charles suffering from schizophrenia. I knew that dissociative identity disorder would better suit the storyline as something that existed beneath the surface related to his past-struggles with PTSD from his time in the military and dissociative identity disorder. In creating mental illnesses and disorders in Charles beneath the surface of what Lola saw in him, I believe it enhanced her desperation due to the fact that she chose to overlook many unusual/inappropriate/strange aspects of Charles' behavior.

Charles' role in Lola's life was similar to what Vogler describes as the "shapeshifter." Charles' character changed in "appearance or mood" and he made it "difficult for the hero and the audience to pin down. They may mislead the hero or keep her guessing, and their loyalty or sincerity is often in question" (59). Lola often questioned Charles' motives and sincerity in his presence. Lola was well aware of the peculiarity of Charles but chose to ignore it because of her desperation. Interestingly enough, what Lola was subconsciously aware of was the fact that Charles and Victor, the unkempt "creep" from her job were the same people. The main difference between Charles and Victor was that Charles presented himself to Lola in a way that appealed to her desires better than Victor could. When Lola came to the realization that Charles and Victor were the same person, it was too late for her.

Furthermore, although they weren't "real" partners, Charles' shapeshifter persona allowed Lola to fall into a place where she didn't see Charles clearly. Vogler describes it as the

moment when one “may fall into relationships in which we have not seen the partner clearly. Instead we have seen the anima or animus, our own internal notion of the ideal partner, projected onto the other person” (60). Many aspects of Charles’ multi dimensional life didn’t exist in “real” life. They were figments of his imagination with a great deal of it being nonexistent in “real” life. In developing Charles’ character, I focused on making a lot of things and events in his life real to him and to my readers, although they turned out to only be a part of his imagination. “The animus and anima may be positive or negative figures who may be helpful to the hero or destructive to him” (Vogler 61). Lola’s existence in Charles’ complex imaginative world is what ultimately caused her destruction, her demise.

In my first few drafts, Cassidy, Lola’s ex boyfriend existed only in passing conversations. He existed in the background as a character that had an impact on Lola’s life without having an impact on my readers. I never allowed my readers to be introduced to Cassidy or see Lola’s interactions with him. That was a mistake. The development of Cassidy’s character gave all shape and form to the premise of Lola. Cassidy ignited and awakened Lola’s insecurities. Cassidy ignited and created Lola’s inability to be comfortable within herself and most importantly, Cassidy created the desperation in Lola’s life that transformed her and lead to her demise.

When creating the opening scene of their anniversary dinner in “The House on Jordan Road,” I wanted to create something that effectively demonstrated the nature of the relationship between Lola and Cassidy. In Lola’s mind there existed a new level of commitment that had yet to be discovered between she and Cassidy. For Cassidy, there was no need to discover it. That created the most conflict in the scene. Lola’s pressure angered him. What started off as a joyous occasion ended in a separation that proved to be Lola’s downfall. The dramatic tension was

necessary in the telling of Lola's story, especially since it was the reason behind Lola's story. The conflict was most certainly needed, according to Field. "All drama is conflict. Without conflict, you have no action; without action, you have no character; without character, you have no story; and without story, you have no screenplay" (Field 25).

Because of the nature of Charles' character, my readers were easily able to develop an inclining suspicion against Charles in relation to his involvement with Lola. My readers knew more than my characters. "Besides what they can guess, the audience might have gained a superior position, the term for when the audience knows more than the characters do. The job of the screenwriter then becomes making the audience forget what they know, so they can be surprised" (Samaroo 187). My readers gained a superior position. Because of that superior position, I wanted the introduction to Cassidy to place doubt in the minds of my readers, even if only for a moment. Why was Cassidy angry? Why was he violent? Why was he so numb/nonchalant to the possibility/reality of Lola being missing? Did he have something to hide? Did he have something to gain? Did he hurt Lola as a result of being rejected by her after she rejected him?

Fleshing out other characters to have a greater connection with the readers although they may not have had such a large role in "The House on Jordan Road" also proved to be an important aspect of the story's development. All of the characters in "The House on Jordan Road," played a role in telling Lola's story and contributed to it as well. I wanted my readers to have knowledge about the role that all of the characters had in Lola's story. Besides Lola, who had the greatest role in telling her story? Was it Charles who appealed to Lola's desires? Was it Victor who capitalized on his own desires at Lola's expense? Was it Cassidy who had the

greatest role in creating Lola's desperation? Or could it be someone like Detectives Grim and Cook, Carrie or Kristen who played a role in helping find Lola?

Giving a voice to all of my characters both verbally and non-verbally was the next greatest step in revision after developing character and fleshing out relevant details. As I stated earlier, I came to a realization that too many details, especially those not relevant to Lola's story was simply clutter on the page and a grave distraction for my readers. "Too much dialogue can hamper a script. In real life, especially these days when we spend most of our time texting and emailing, actual words exchanged between people are few and far between" (Samaroo 200).

At one point during my revisions, Professor Chacon recommended that I read *The Silence of the Lambs* to understand the depth of a character. In thinking about the way a screenplay translates to film, I watched the movie as well. It gave me a better idea on how to focus on minor details such as the tone of a character's voice or their body language. I began to watch movies from a different lens. I was watching movies from the perspective of a writer. I would look at an action of a character and think about the way in which the writer described the actions of that character. "What your characters say with their body language is just as important as what they say with words. You do not want to write a long series of stage directions..." (Samaroo 195).

Envisioning the way a screenplay translated from paper to big screen was especially important for enhancing the connection between Lola and other characters and what she was willing to accept as her desperation transformed her. Lola's interactions with other characters set the tone in that "The activity your characters are engaging in can influence the mood of a scene" (Samaroo 186). What good is character development and effective dialogue without the most effective formatting? Another way I aimed to improve "The House on Jordan Road" was by focusing more on the technical aspect of screenplay writing. Transitioning from scene to scene,

the flow of dialogue between characters, correct scene headings and descriptions- were all extra steps in ensuring “The House on Jordan Road” was logically formatted. “Dialogue must reveal character. Every speech should be the product of the speaker’s three dimensions, telling us what he is, hinting at what he will be” (Egri 255).

Did my readers truly understand what I was aiming to convey in a scene? Did I correctly show the silent tension in a scene? Did I give all the details needed for the external environment of a scene? Did I give enough detail of the background surroundings in an internal scene? What was the best way to show Lola’s desperation in her interactions with other characters without explicitly saying “please love me!?” These were all necessary questions I had to ask myself when presenting Lola in the screenplay to ensure the story was being shown where it needed to be shown and told where it needed to be told.

Lola’s story was mainly told through the perspective of Charles, who appealed to Lola’s desires in such a way that she overlooked his own struggles that later revealed his battle with mental and emotional illnesses and disorders. The most important thing in creating “The House on Jordan Road” was telling Lola’s story in the best possible way that I could for my readers. I made sure to focus on using the right verbs, zooming in on a scene to show the bigger picture of Lola and every other character’s existence- from the tapping of a fingernail to the pressing together of their lips- every detail mattered in *showing*.

I wanted my readers to see my characters the way I imagined them and even more important, I wanted to make sure “The House on Jordan Road” had the right details to allow room for interpretation of my reader’s own imaginations. Creating Lola’s story from Charles’ point of view was a gamble. Charles perspective consisted mostly of fantasy/imaginary events intertwined with some true events that Charles altered to benefit himself. What was real? What

was fantasy? How much interest and time did Lola really invest in Charles? How long had Charles been communicating with a deceased version of Lola? Was he really communicating with her or was it his conscious? How did Lola die? These are questions I left unanswered in order for my readers to develop their own interpretations of how Charles' mental and emotional illnesses affected him after he was presented as being seemingly "in control" of his mental and emotional state in the beginning when Charles met Lola at Harry's Pub.

In the final scenes of "The House on Jordan Road," Charles reveals he and Lola's truth. Charles reveals the truth about himself as well as the truth about Lola's demise. My goal in the final scenes was to reveal the internal struggle Charles battled with about the truth of himself. Who was he? How did he come to that point? Was it something he could control? Was it something that controlled him? Who knew the "real" Charles if he himself didn't know? Likewise, the final scenes revealed Lola being her own hero in many ways. She shows my readers that although she destroyed herself in her desires, she also was able to reveal her truth in her demise. Charles and Lola's truth, the truth of Lola's story and the truth about what really occurred in "The House on Jordan Road" was revealed through the usage of other characters as well.

In the future, I plan to revisit and possibly expand upon "The House on Jordan Road." I think it would be beneficial for the story to expand more on Charles' life and the everyday battles and struggles he endures with the mental illnesses and disorders he faces. I'd like to focus more on his relationship with John both professionally and personally. There are details about John that I didn't include in "The House on Jordan Road" because I didn't deem them necessary to Lola's story. Perhaps in a revision I could make the story Charles' story and include the family

history with John. I would expand on the background info about his father and dive deeper into the illnesses that his mother, June suffers from as well.

Finally, the most challenging aspect of completing “The House on Jordan Road” had nothing to do with the technical aspect of writing or revisions at all. The challenge was simply being me. Being Angela. Writing and balancing home and work life has been very difficult for me. My daughter, Ava just turned one almost seven weeks ago. I got through the first eleven months of her life caring for her alone because my husband worked the night shift. By the time I fed and bathed the both of us and put Ava down for bed after working nine hours, I was beat. I barely had any energy to put forth into thought to process the day, let alone have energy to edit and compose. Many days I didn’t know how I would make it through, especially when Ava was sick. I did as much as I could and the best that I could. The next day came. And the next. And the next. I got through every day alone and finally a month and a half ago my husband’s schedule changed!

Living alone in the DFW area with all of our loved ones a thousand miles away in Chicago didn’t help either. Since becoming a mother, I truly have a newfound respect for working parents- male and female, single and married, co parenting or single parenting. It’s hard! I’m blessed that my husband is home most evenings now. My new challenge is taking care of all three of us and incorporating him into our routine since Ava and I did things together alone for so long. No matter how difficult this has been for me in virtually every aspect of life, I’m blessed to have made it this far. I’ll be able to say I did it. I did it when I didn’t want to. I did it when I didn’t think I could. I did it when I didn’t think I should.

What I found both comforting and funny was the fact that Field mentioned the difficulty of being a woman and being a writer. “Women with families have a more difficult time than

others. Husbands and children are not always very understanding or supportive” but I think being a writer can be difficult for anyone, especially when you don’t have the time to dedicate to it (Field 241). Maybe I’m making excuses. Maybe there’s nothing to it but to do it. Maybe making excuses is a part of the process, like Field said. “We all do it. We’re masters at creating reasons and excuses not to write; it’s simply a barrier to the creative process” (Field 244).

Perhaps it would’ve been easier to create my thesis on a certain writing style I’m more familiar with, but that would’ve taken away from my journey to be here, at the final stage of completing my MFA in Creative Writing with “The House on Jordan Road.” What have I learned? Anything difficult can be tackled in parts. The imagination is a powerful toll that keeps us young. People can really destroy themselves when they have no control over their own desires. I’m grateful for all of the courses and Professors that have challenged me and made me a stronger writer. “Writing is an experimental process, a learning process involving the acquisition of skill and coordination, like riding a bicycle, swimming, dancing, or playing tennis” (Field 243). “Writing is a learned coordination; the more you do the easier it gets” (Field 244). Writing is definitely a skill that I feel can constantly be improved. Like riding a bike, I hope that no matter how much time passes before I pick up a pen (or a keyboard) that it comes to me like I never stopped.

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THE HOUSE ON JORDAN ROAD

A SCREENPLAY BY

ANGELA RIDLEY

FADE IN:

INT. MACARTHUR'S STEAK HOUSE - MID JUNE -LATE EVENING

LOLA PAGE sits at a table near the window with her boyfriend, CASSIDY PROSPER wearing a blue floral dress. Her black hair is pinned up in a bun, high on the top of her head. She's wearing pearl earrings. Cassidy sits across from her in a white short sleeve button up shirt with a royal blue tie. A half empty bottle of red wine sits in between them on a table covered in white linen.

LOLA
Thanks for a lovely dinner.

CASSIDY
(sarcastic)
I don't think I had a choice. Just like this trip to Mexico. You just tell me where to be and I'll be there.

LOLA
That's what I like. Maybe one day soon we'll be celebrating something greater.

Lola wiggles her ring finger toward Cassidy. She smiles at him. Cassidy clears his throat and looks away.

LOLA
Everything ok babe?

CASSIDY
(uninterested)
Yep. Just tired and ready to get back now.

LOLA
(confused)
Ready to get back? You have something to do?

CASSIDY
(uninterested)
Going to sleep would be nice.

LOLA
(annoyed)
Oh I'm sorry. I didn't realize

celebrating three years of dating was such a chore.

Cassidy SUCKS his teeth.

CASSIDY
Well whatever. I'm tired.

LOLA
Um I thought we were having a good time? What just happened?

Cassidy reaches for his wine glass. He quickly drinks the rest of his wine.

CASSIDY
(serious)
We were having a good time until you started jumping down my throat with this marriage crap.

LOLA
All I said was that one day we might be celebrating something even greater, like maybe an engagement or a wedding anniversary.

CASSIDY
(annoyed)
Well today isn't that day, damn it!

LOLA
No shit, Sherlock.

Their waiter comes over to their table with a menu in his right hand. He wipes his left hand on his smock before holding the menu out in between Lola and Cassidy. Lola looks up and smiles.

WAITER
(friendly)
Could I interest you two in an anniversary dessert to finish the night off with?

LOLA
(curious)
Sure. What do you sugg-

CASSIDY
(interrupts)
No thanks. We'll take the check please.

The waiter looks at Lola who looks at Cassidy and then down at her plate of half eaten salmon, mashed potatoes and broccoli. Cassidy's plate is full of only broccoli. She quickly looks back up at the waiter.

LOLA
And a small to-go box, please.

WAITER
Ok. I'll be right back.

LOLA
Thank you.

Lola looks around the dining room slightly embarrassed. Cassidy refills his wine glass. Lola reaches for her wine glass and takes a sip. She looks down at the pink lipstick ring on her glass.

CASSIDY
(annoyed)
Why did you wear that stupid lipstick if you knew it would get all over your glass?

The waiter returns and hands a small box to Lola. She opens the box and transfers her food from the plate to the box. The waiter sets the check close to Cassidy, who's drinking wine.

WAITER
Thank you for joining us today at MacArthur's. I hope you enjoy the rest of your anniversary.

LOLA
Thank you. Have a great evening.

Cassidy quickly drinks the rest of his wine and holds his empty glass up toward the waiter. The waiter slightly nods his head and walks away. Cassidy brings his glass back down and pours the rest of the wine into his glass while holding it in his hand.

LOLA
(annoyed)
You were right. It's definitely time to go. I guess I'm driving.

Cassidy sets his glass on the table and reaches in his pocket. He takes out his wallet and sets it on the table. He reaches back in his pocket and hands Lola his keys. Lola stands.

CASSIDY
(slightly mumbling)
Best idea all night.

Cassidy loosens his tie. The deep blue glistens on his brown skin. He opens his wallet and sets cash on top of the check. Cassidy drinks all of the wine left in his glass. Lola turns to walk away.

CASSIDY
(under his breath)
Here we go ladies and gentlemen.

Cassidy stands and follows behind Lola.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIDY'S CAR - PARKING SPOT 10115 - NIGEL APARTMENTS - MID JUNE - LATE EVENING.

Lola turns off the car. Cassidy sits in the passenger seat asleep. Lola takes the keys out the ignition and throws them at Cassidy's chest. He wakes up quickly, startled. He looks around and sits straight up.

LOLA
What a waste of a night.

CASSIDY
Couldn't agree more. Thanks for getting me back in one piece.

LOLA
Why are we still doing this? We're not kids anymore. You could've told me a long time ago if you didn't want to do this.

CASSIDY
You always make something out of nothing.

Lola turns toward Cassidy and talks pointing her right finger at him.

LOLA
I could've saved this dress for a good time. I could've worn this anywhere with anyone including one of

your friends.

Cassidy grabs Lola's wrist with his left hand. He squeezes it and pulls her close to him.

LOLA
(squeals in pain)
What the? Cass, you're hurting me!

CASSIDY
Don't you ever disrespect me like that! I'll hurt you if I ever hear about you messing around on me!

LOLA
(yelling)
Cass you're hurting me!

Cassidy lets go of Lola. She holds her wrist with her left hand. They stare at each other wide eyed.

CASSIDY
I can't do this with you. I need a break.

LOLA
What do you mean a break?

CASSIDY
Between you and everything else I got going on, I can't catch a break. Go home, Lola. Just go home.

LOLA
Tonight? Now?

Cassidy ignores her. Lola stares at Cassidy. She reaches in the back seat and quickly grabs her purse. She gets out of the car and SLAMS the door behind her. Lola takes off her heels and walks barefoot toward visitor parking. She gets in a black sedan and drives away. Cassidy punches the dashboard of his car before sitting back and sinking into the seat behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. TELLER LINE OF ACER BANK LOBBY - MID JUNE - EARLY EVENING

Lola counts her teller drawer for the final time before closing Acer Bank with her supervisor, AVERY MARKS, who's counting and auditing all of the cash in the vaults and recording the numbers

on a clipboard. Lola looks up at the clock on the back lobby wall. 5:50pm. She kicks off the black heels she's wearing and throws them to the side of her work station. Lola looks up at an armed guard standing by the door. They smile at each other.

LOLA
(slightly excited)
Av, we have ten minutes until we're out! If I wasn't so tired I'd be headed straight to Harry's Pub after this to down this week in a fishbowl sized margarita.

AVERY
(points clipboard toward Lola)
Well tell me when you're going so I can meet you there.

LOLA
(teasing)
I'll dive in an extra fishbowl in your honor. Any particular flavor?

Avery rolls his eyes.

LOLA
That's ok. The flavor won't matter if I'm drunk enough. I could use a good night that doesn't matter.

AVERY
Oh don't I know it! How you been holding up? Have you heard from Cassidy at all?

LOLA
Not since the other day when he decided we were too serious. I guess the space will do us some good.

Lola SIGHS.

LOLA
(CONT'D)
Being so serious so young can ruin things. Or at least that's his excuse.

AVERY
What are you going to do about your

vacation?

LOLA

I'm still taking my days. I'm not sure if Cassidy still wants to go. Maybe I'll go to Charlotte to visit my mom or go to a few museums.

AVERY

(matter of fact)

Some time to yourself would be good. He'll be missing out on a good thing.

LOLA

(disappointed)

Doesn't feel that way. How can you tell someone they're too serious when you're the one always so serious?

AVERY

(optimistic)

It may be nice to meet new people and date. Maybe you'll meet someone famous or someone with lots of old money.

LOLA

(rolling eyes)

Have you seen these deposits? It won't be here, that's for sure.

They both LAUGH. Lola smiles as she rocks from side to side, shifting her weight from her right foot to her left foot. She counts two thousand dollars in one hundred dollar bills. Lola's small frame sways side to side revealing the imprint of her rounded hips and butt.

Lola's red lipstick is almost completely faded. She licks her dry lips and presses them together. Her left dimple peaks through her cheek. Lola rubber bands the dollar bills and places them neatly into her cash drawer. She tilts her head back and shakes it gently to get her long, black curly hair out of her face.

AVERY

(playfully
optimistic)

Yeah you may be right about that.

Avery counts quietly to himself.

AVERY

Thirty seven thousand, five hundred.
One, two, three thousand. Forty
thousand, five hundred.

Avery logs the dollar amounts on his closing paperwork on his clipboard. A car door SLAMS outside in the parking lot. He looks out of the side window. Avery SUCKS his teeth in annoyance. He rolls his eyes to the ceiling as he tugs at his sandy brown tie and loosens it a bit.

AVERY

(annoyed, slightly
yelling)
Won't be on time today!

GUARD

(looks outside)
Sure won't.

Lola leans forward over her station to look out toward the lobby doors. She shakes her head.

LOLA

(annoyed)
Ugh! Damn you! Last minute jerk.

Avery walks to the side of the vault and sees Lola tripping over her feet trying to put back on the shoes she just kicked to the side.

Lola looks toward the door again and sees VICTOR walking into the lobby. Victor walks to the teller line. Lola looks at her dress and pulls down on it so it rests just at her knees. When she looks up again, Victor's at her station staring at her.

LOLA

(dryly)
Hi. You made it just in time.

Victor's bushy brownish blonde eyebrows are twisted upward. His thick, oversized lenses are covered in dirty fingerprints. He looks at Lola from over the top of his glasses. His eyes are bloodshot red. Victor chews at the dead skin on his pink lips. There's chocolate in the corners of his mouth. His beard is long and unkempt. Lola tries to hide her irritation and annoyance.

VICTOR
(slightly
seductive)
Lady in red. I love red.

Victor LAUGHS and SIGHS at the same time under his breath. There's a piece of green vegetable stuck in between his two front teeth. He pulls down at his faded blue hat with the Acer Bank logo on it.

LOLA
(dryly)
How can I help you?

VICTOR
One deposit, please. Do you guys have anymore blue hats?

LOLA
(unapologetic)
Sorry, we're out.

Lola glances at the clock across the room again. 5:57PM. She TAPS her nails impatiently. Victor fills out the deposit slip. Victor finishes and slides the deposit slip and check to Lola. When Lola reaches out for the deposit slip and check, Victor touches her hand. His hands are slightly greasy and calloused. Victor's knuckles are hairy and the hair unruly- like his eyebrows. His nails are short and tainted yellow. Lola jerks back quickly.

Victor slightly bites down on his lips.

Victor
(whispers)
Soft like when you get a baseball and you rip out the inside.

Lola looks at the name on the check and the deposit slip and scans them on her computer without replying. She glances at the clock while Victor's receipt prints. 5:59PM. Lola forces a smile and slides Victor his receipt.

LOLA
(insincere)
Thank you, Victor. Have a good evening.

Lola opens her station drawer, pulls it out and walks away from her station before Victor can say anything else. After placing

the cash drawer in the vault, Lola paces back and forth as she watches Victor walk toward the door. The guard walks over to Lola.

GUARD
(concerned)
Are you ok?

Lola shakes out her hand dramatically and wipes it on her dress.

LOLA
(disgusted)
Is he gone? He touched me. His hands were clammy.

GUARD
(concerned)
Did he hurt you?

LOLA
No. He just scared me. He said really creepy things.

AVERY
He's walking out now. Everything's counted and balanced. We just have to sign the logs and we can leave.

LOLA
(calmly)
Good. I'm ready to get this weekend started since I'll be off.

AVERY
Just keep rubbing these vacation days in.

LOLA
You approved them.

AVERY
And you're lucky I don't take it back.

Lola smiles and initials all the closing paperwork and logs. She and the guard watch as Avery close and lock all the vaults before they head out to the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. ACER BANK PARKING LOT - EVENING

The sun sets down on the almost empty parking lot. Lola, Avery and the guard walk toward the only three cars left in the lot. The guard stops at his car first and watches Lola and Avery as they continue to walk.

Avery and Lola stop in the middle of the lot in between both their cars.

AVERY

Is Harmony going with you to Harry's?

LOLA

She better meet me there. You know she's a big flake.

AVERY

We keep telling you to leave that girl alone. Is Carrie bartending tonight?

LOLA

(sighs)

I know, but I've known her forever. Yeah, Carrie will be there the whole weekend I think.

Lola adjusts the strap of her purse on her left shoulder.

AVERY

Ok call or text me if you need anything. I'm sure I won't be up to much. Have fun and be safe.

LOLA

Ok thanks. I'll try. I'll see you soon.

AVERY

(joking)

If you decide you want to come back early, let me know.

LOLA

I definitely won't but thanks for the offer.

They both turn to the guard and wave. Lola gets in her car and starts it. She pulls down the visor mirror. She turns her head to the right and then the left again looking at her reflection.

She quickly slams the visor to the roof and pulls out of the parking lot.

While Lola drives, her cell phone RINGS. She answers it on speaker.

LOLA
Hey Harmony.

HARMONY
Hey Lola. Are you ok?

LOLA
Yeah I'm just getting off work I'm gonna go home and have some wine and call it a night.

HARMONY
Are we still on for tomorrow?

LOLA
Heck yeah.

HARMONY
Good. I promise we'll have such a good time you'll be like "Cassidy who?"

LOLA
I'd like to see that.

HARMONY
You will.

LOLA
Ok then I'll see you tomorrow.

HARMONY
Ok I'll text you later. Bye.

LOLA
Later.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - HARRY'S PUB - MID JUNE - EVENING

Lola sits at the bar sipping the blue fishbowl sized margarita CARRIE, the bartender made for her. Lola looks down at her cell phone as she texts. There are two empty stools next to her.

CARRIE
(deep, teasing
voice)
Honey, why are you sitting over here
alone?

Carrie smiles and leans in to talk to Lola over the bar MUSIC. Carrie's wearing a v-neck shirt that exposes her cleavage. Her blonde pixie cut is combed over to the right side of her face. There's purple eye shadow on her eyes.

Lola SUCKS from the straw in her left hand while scrolling through her texts with her right hand. She SUCKS her teeth before looking up at Carrie.

LOLA
(annoyed)
Ugh! She flaked on me again!

CARRIE
(confused)
Who?

LOLA
(holing up cell
phone)
Harmony of course! She just sent a
text!

CARRIE
(annoyed)
She ditched you through a text?

Carrie rolls her eyes as she POURS a shot into Lola's drink.

LOLA
Yes. I've been having the craziest
week. I almost came here yesterday
too but this customer came in last
minute and touched me. He creeped me
out so bad I went straight home.

CARRIE
(alarmed)
Wait. Touched you? What do you mean
he touched you?

LOLA

Just my hand but his hands were clammy and he said off the wall things about me that was just too much.

CARRIE

(relieved)

Oh! A real creeper. We got a few of those around here.

Carrie gestures her eyes toward the end of the bar to a man staring at her. He has long black curly hair on the sides of his head but is bald in the middle. They both LAUGH.

Lola's cell phone RINGS.

LOLA

It's Harmony.

CARRIE

Let's see what excuse she gives.

LOLA

Hello? Yes, I got your text. Again? Really? You know what kind of week I had. I thought you said that I would have such a good time I'd forget about Cassidy?

Carrie rolls her eyes.

LOLA

Ten to fifteen minutes? Ok I'll wait. I swear to God if you don't come I'll- Ok. See you soon.

Lola hangs up her cell phone.

CARRIE

Don't hold your breath. Hell, don't let your ice melt.

LOLA

She said she's coming.

CARRIE

I told you- you need to come out with me and my girls when I'm not behind here.

LOLA
(annoyed)
I need to do something! I mean I'm
only out now since Cassidy isn't
around.

CARRIE
Of course. You shouldn't be stuck in
the house with a broken heart.

LOLA
No, not that. I mean, he, never mind.

CARRIE
(concerned)
He what? Don't tell me he broke up
with you *and* had the nerve to say you
can't see other people?

LOLA
No. He got really angry when I
mentioned seeing other people.

CARRIE
(serious)
How angry? Did he hit you?

LOLA
He grabbed my arm kinda tight. It was
after dinner. He got drunk and was
already tired and upset.

CARRIE
(serious)
Listen. I deal with drunk people for
a living. Most of them are honest
about how they feel and who they are.

LOLA
I don't think he meant it.

CARRIE
(concerned)
Just be careful. Wait, weren't you
guys going on a trip soon?

LOLA
I'm not sure if I'm going. I'm
distancing myself. We haven't even
talked much.

CARRIE
Good. It'll all make sense one day.

I'll be right back.

Carrie walks to the other side of the bar to serve drinks to the other customers. A few seats down from Lola toward the end of the bar in walks CHARLES LAMONTAGNE, tall with freshly clean cut, shiny hair combed to the back. He sits in between two male customers. Charles notices Lola and begins to stare at her. She doesn't notice him.

Carrie stands in front of Charles.

CARRIE
(friendly)
What are you drinking tonight?

CHARLES
A tall one on tap, please.

Charles smiles at Carrie as he pulls up the sleeves on his shirt. He continues to discreetly look over at Lola while pretending to adjust his eye glass frames.

Carrie sets the beer in front of Charles.

CARRIE
Here you go brown eyes. Those frames
make your eyes glow.

Charles rubs his freshly shaved beard nervously.

CHARLES
(surprised)
Why thank you. Miss-?

CARRIE
Carrie. Just Carrie. You must be new
around here.

Charles hands Carrie a ten dollar bill.

CHARLES
I'm usually here earlier in the week.
Keep the change.

Carrie winks at Charles before placing the ten dollar bill in her register and stuffing a single dollar bill and a five dollar bill into her tip jar. She continues making drinks and walks back over to the other side of the bar where Lola is.

Charles pulls out his cell phone and quickly snaps a few pictures of Lola while no one is looking. He looks to the left

of him and notices the man sitting next to him has three empty shot glasses in front of him. The man downs two more shots.

CHARLES
(under his breath)
I guess I'm not as adventurous as
you.

Charles looks around the bar again and notices a mirror in the direction of where Lola's seated that allows him a closer look at her without her seeing. Lola's drinking and texting on her cell phone. She looks unhappy. Charles frowns his face trying to get a closer look.

Carrie walks back and forth making drinks and chit chatting with customers. She walks back to the side of the bar Charles is sitting.

CARRIE
(friendly)
Everything ok over here?

Charles raises his mug and GULPS down the last of his beer.

CHARLES
I'll take another please.

Carrie grabs the mug, refills it and sets it in front of Charles. The guy next to Charles taking shots has walked away to talk to someone he knows.

CARRIE
What a time to be alive.

CHARLES
I'd be dead if it were me taking all
of those shots. I can't hang.

They both LAUGH. Carrie looks over at Lola aggressively stirring her straw around in her drink. Carrie walks closer to Lola and stands in the middle between Lola and Charles.

CARRIE
Hey brown eyes, would you tell my
lovely friend over here that she's
too good to be getting stood up?

Charles looks over at Lola. Lola looks up at Carrie and then over to Charles who smiles at her.

LOLA
(slightly
embarrassed)
I bet I look like a fool by myself
with this fishbowl.

Charles grabs his beer and walks toward Lola. Carrie watches Charles until he stops two seats away from Lola and sits down. Carrie walks away to help other customers.

CHARLES
The only fool is the guy that stood
you up.

LOLA
Girl. But I didn't get stood up.

Charles smiles.

CHARLES
I'm Charles.

LOLA

Lola.

Charles extends his hand to Lola. She looks down at his hand and slips her hand into his.

CHARLES
Can I buy you something else, Lola?

Lola gently rubs the hand Charles touched on the left sleeve of her shirt.

LOLA
Oh no, thank you. I'm actually
waiting until my friend gets here
before I order another round.

Lola tilts her head and squints her eyes while looking at Charles.

LOLA
(CONT'D)
Have we met before?

CHARLES
I'm afraid not? I would remember if
we had.

LOLA
I guess you remind me of someone.

Carrie walks over from the other side of the bar and stands on the side closest to Lola.

CARRIE
(smiling)
Everything ok over here?

Charles raises his mug again and gulps down the last of his beer.

CHARLES
I'll take another please.

Carrie grabs the mug, refills it and places it in front of Charles.

LOLA
I'm good.

CHARLES
So what do you do during the day,
Lola?

LOLA
I work in banking. You?

CHARLES
I work in a science lab with
hazardous chemicals and waste. I also
have a photo studio if you ever need
a photographer.

LOLA
(intrigued)
Photography? I've always wanted to
get into photography.

CHARLES
(confident)
I've been doing it a long time. As a
boy, the first thing I ever worked
for was a Polaroid camera. I must've
mowed a thousand yards for ten years
for that camera.

They both LAUGH.

CHARLES
I really got into it when I was
overseas in the service.

LOLA
(intrigued)
The military? What branch?

CHARLES
(confident)
Yes. The brave, the proud, The
Marines.

LOLA
Thank you for your service. How many
years?

CHARLES
Just eight. Two tours in Iraq
convinced me not to retire military.

LOLA
Sorry to hear that.

CHARLES
No regrets. I'm doing what I love now
anyway.

LOLA
(curious)
Wait. How does science and
photography relate to one another?

CHARLES
I studied photography so much I was
fascinated with the chemistry and the
physics of it.

LOLA
(teasing)
That doesn't sound too fun.

CHARLES
(points above
Lola's head)
When I sat down I noticed the light
reflection off your glass into your
eyes. It's the perfect amount of
light for proper exposure in a photo.

LOLA
Well I-

Lola's cell phone RINGS. She looks down at her cell phone and
holds up her index finger.

LOLA

Excuse me.

Lola walks away from the bar and looks toward the door. She answers with her left hand and covers her right ear with her right hand.

LOLA

Hello? I'm standing up by the bar.
Can you see me?

Charles turns to watch Lola.

LOLA

(loudly, annoyed)

What? What do you mean you're not coming? I've been here waiting for you! Fine, whatever.

Charles leans in closer to try to listen to Lola.

LOLA

(CONT'D)

You're treating me just like Cassidy.
You know I needed you and you bailed.
I'm going home.

Lola hangs up and looks at the time on her cell phone. She walks back over to the bar.

CHARLES

Where's your friend? Is everything ok?

LOLA

(disappointed)

My friend won't be making it after all. I'm sorry. I should get going.

CHARLES

Are you sure I can't buy you another drink before you head out?

LOLA

Maybe next time?

CHARLES

I'll hold you to it.

Lola looks at the time on her cell phone again. She sets her cell phone on the table close to her drink as she reaches in her purse. She signals to Carrie.

Carrie stacks dirty shot glasses on top of each other and walks back over to the side of the bar where Lola is.

LOLA
I'm out Care Bear.

Lola hands Carrie fifteen dollars.

CARRIE
Ok thanks. I'll text you later.

Carrie walks away to tend to other customers at the opposite end of the bar.

LOLA
Goodnight Charles.

CHARLES
Goodnight Lola. Hope to see you next time.

Charles watches Lola walk toward the door until he can't see her anymore. He looks around the bar. There's a couple taking a shot. Charles watches a woman dancing alone off beat. He looks back to his left and notices Lola's cell phone sitting by her drink. Carrie has her back turned making a drink. Charles gulps down as much of his beer as he can and sets a ten dollar bill under the mug before grabbing the cell phone and heading to the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARRY'S PUB PARKING LOT - MID JUNE - EVENING

Charles watches as Lola drives out of the parking lot. He runs to his car. Charles follows behind Lola onto I-84 three exits down. He continues to follow Lola until she parks in front of a three story condo building.

Charles pulls up close behind Lola and parks. He watches as she exits her car and HONKS his horn. His driver side window is rolled down and he waves his left hand out of the window before turning off his car and getting out.

CHARLES
(urgent)
Lola! Sorry, I hope this isn't too weird.

LOLA
(confused)
Oh my God. Charles? Did you follow
me?

Lola's cell phone RINGS inside of Charles' pocket. He quickly
pulls it out and waves it for Lola to see.

CHARLES
I did. I couldn't catch you in time.
You left this. Someone named Cassidy
keeps calling.

Charles holds his hand out with the cell phone in the palm of
it. Lola steps forward and grabs the cell phone. She stuffs it
in her purse covered in flower brooches and shiny lipstick
pins.

LOLA
Thank you. I didn't even notice I
didn't have it. I guess I was in such
a hurry. It's been a really long
week.

Lola's cell phone rings again. Charles looks down at Lola's
purse.

CHARLES
I understand. It's no problem at all.
Cool pins. I have a gallery of
lipstick shots at my studio.

LOLA
(curious)
Lipstick shots?

CHARLES
I studied smiles for the entire
summer one year. I did a photography
series where I photographed people
smiling on cue. Then I complimented
them and rephotographed their
natural, unscripted smile.

LOLA
So you only photographed women?

CHARLES
Not at first. The first six weeks
into the project I noticed the
difference in the curve of a woman's
mouth so I purposely starting asking
more women than anyone to allow me to

photograph them.

LOLA
Did anyone object?

CHARLES
Some but for the most part almost everyone was flattered. That was a long time ago but I still do a lot of lip photography to this day.

Charles reaches in his wallet and hands Lola a business card. Lola takes the card and reads it.

LOLA
31717 Jordan Road? I think I know where that is.

CHARLES
I'm always around if you ever want to check it out.

Lola's cell phone RINGS from her purse.

LOLA
(looks down at her purse)
Ok great.

CHARLES
(awkwardly looks down)
I'll let you get to it. Goodnight.

LOLA
Goodnight. Thanks again.

Charles waves and heads back to his car. Lola reaches in her purse and grabs her cell phone as she walks toward her building.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE - MID JUNE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Charles steps out on the front porch halfway closing the black door behind him. He's wearing a navy blue collared shirt with dark blue jeans and white socks with grey patches on his heels and toes. Charles turns his back to the street and reaches into the worn brown mailbox bolted on the wall to the left of the door. He pulls out and shuffles through a few envelopes when he

hears a dog BARK behind him. He turns around quickly and smiles.

JOHN CHERRY, Charles' neighbor stands at the bottom of the stairs wearing a white golf shirt and khaki shorts holding his Dachshund's, Tiger's green leash. Tiger BARKS again and wags his tail as Charles walks down the stairs of his porch. Charles stuffs the envelopes under his right arm pit and stops at the second to last step as John and Tiger come closer to him.

CHARLES
(excited)
Good morning, boys!

Charles takes a seat on the step and Tiger jumps in his lap. He tugs at Tiger's collar and scratches Tiger's neck while looking up at John. Charles squints his left eye at the sun glaring down on him.

JOHN
(teasing)
Still waking up I see. Too early?

CHARLES
(smiling)
No, I'm just on time for some editing and printing.

JOHN
Good thing we aren't at the office today. Are you still working on The Lip Series?

Charles blows John a KISS.

CHARLES
(proudly)
The Lip Series is almost ready for its debut!

Tiger BARKS loudly in excitement.

CHARLES
(CONT'D)
I just have a few more shots to rearrange and I'll have some for show. Are you free later today?

JOHN

I'll be around later this afternoon.

CHARLES

Come by then. Let me get to it before
I get any visitors.

Charles stands up and Tiger wags his tail.

JOHN

I will.

CHARLES

Catch you later.

John walks away down the street with Tiger. Charles walks up the stairs and stops at the mailbox to look inside for any other mail then pushes the front door open.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE

Charles hangs canvas photo pictures of women's lips on his studio wall. There's a pair of lips in red lipstick, pink lipstick and black lipstick. Charles adjusts and readjusts the pictures until they're straight on the wall. The doorbell RINGS. Charles walks upstairs.

CHARLES

(surprised)

Well I'll be damned.

Lola's standing outside Charles' door. He swings the door open as quickly as he can.

CHARLES

Lola.

LOLA

(apologetic)

I'm sorry. I didn't realize your
studio was in your home. I should've
called first.

CHARLES

(gesturing)

Please. Come in.

Charles stands to the side and extends his arm out to welcome Lola in. Lola cautiously walks into Charles' living room and sees JUNE LAMONTAGNE sitting in a recliner chair. Her frail arms dangle over the sides of the recliner. She's relaxed and looks

very comfortable. Her long salt and pepper hair is combed back and rests on her shoulders. She's watching a rerun of M.A.S.H. Lola approaches the living room and June turns toward her and smiles. Lola relaxes her shoulders.

CHARLES
Mom, this is Lola. She's here to see
some of my work with the studio.

JUNE
(softly)
Lola? How beautiful. I'm June. I hope
you enjoy Charles' work. He's crazy
about his studio.

LOLA
(friendly)
Thank you. I can't wait to see it.

CHARLES
(gesturing his
hands toward
himself)
Please come on in, Lola. My equipment
and set up is in the basement.

LOLA
(cautiously)
Basement?

CHARLES
(reassuring)
I've completed many shoots in the
basement, as well as out on location.

Charles walks Lola to the kitchen and down a set of winding stairs until they enter an open door. Charles walks in. Lola follows behind. There are rows of photo samples on a front table. Lola stops at the table to quickly look at the photos. They're candid photos of people eating, talking and walking. Lola looks to her right and notices the wall with the lip canvases. She walks away from the table to get a closer look.

LOLA
Is this what you were telling me
about? Your lipstick shots?

CHARLES
Yes. The Lip Series.

LOLA
The Lip Series? Who are the lip

models? They have very distinct lip shapes.

CHARLES
(smiling)

They're everyday women like you.

Charles holds out his hands in front of him and positions his thumbs together to make a picture frame. Lola's face is in the frame of his hands.

CHARLES
(CONT'D)

I hope you don't mind my saying so, but you have a quite uniquely shaped mouth too.

Lola looks awkwardly surprised.

LOLA
That's a first.

CHARLES
If you would ever be interested, I photograph you.

LOLA
(cautiously)
I don't know.

CHARLES
I would only take shots you're comfortable with. I can already tell which colors would match best with your complexion.

Lola looks away from the canvases to Charles and then back to the canvases. She holds her left hand up to her mouth and shyly rubs her lips. She licks them and presses them together.

LOLA

Maybe I'll give it some thought.
Where do these everyday women come
from?

CHARLES

The majority of them I've met at
photography conventions but I've met
some while buying cosmetics.

LOLA

Buying cosmetics?

CHARLES

The black lips belong to a friend of
mine who actually got an opportunity
to be a brand ambassador for Green
Cosmetics from that picture. I've
trained in cosmetology so I offer my
clients the opportunity to have their
makeup done by me in addition to
photography services.

LOLA

(surprised)

You do makeup too? Wow.

CHARLES

I can show you more.

Charles walks over to a desk drawer and opens it. He pulls out a
dark pink shade of lipstick and opens the top. Charles walks
back over to Lola.

CHARLES

This is a good shade for you. It's
called the-

Lola's cell phone RINGS in her purse. She looks down at it
slightly relieved. Charles stares at Lola. She forces a smile.
Charles steps closer to Lola.

LOLA

(regretful)

I'm sorry. I should probably get
going. I wanted to thank you again in
person for my cell phone. I shouldn't
have shown up unannounced.

CHARLES

You're not leaving so soon are you?

LOLA

Could you walk me out?

Lola holds the strap of her purse in her left hand and gently digs her thumb into her shoulder. Charles grabs her purse strap and pulls Lola closer. He grabs her face and kisses her. Her purse strap falls off her shoulder then to the floor. Her keys fall out. Lola pulls back abruptly and reaches down to snatch her purse up from the floor.

LOLA

Wait. That's not why I came here. I just got out of a relationship. You seemed nice at the bar and I-

CHARLES

We don't have to rush into a relationship.

Charles leans in closer toward Lola again. She puts up her hand to stop him.

LOLA

(nervous)

I think it's time for me to go.

Lola looks past the table covered in pictures toward the stairs. She walks around Charles and walks up the stairs quickly. June's at the kitchen table drinking a cup of tea. Charles follows behind Lola.

JUNE

Is everything ok?

LOLA

(nervous)

Everything's nice. I just have to get going.

CHARLES

Let me walk you out.

LOLA

It was nice meeting you.

JUNE

And you! Come back and see us again.

Lola looks down and heads toward the door.

CHARLES

I'm sorry if I misinterpreted the way
you-

LOLA

It's ok. Thank you again for bringing
my cell phone. Your photos are really
amazing.

Lola opens the door and walks out without looking back. She
walks down the stairs while digging in her purse for her keys.
She stops at the bottom of the stairs and looks inside her
purse.

LOLA

(under her breath)
Shit. Shit!

CHARLES

Are you missing something?

LOLA

I think my keys fell out of my purse.

Lola turns slowly to head back up the stairs. She takes out her
cell phone and looks at it. She walks up the stairs and back
inside as Charles holds the door open. He closes the door behind
her.

CHARLES

(talking fast)
Lola, really I'm sorry. I got carried
away. I'm bad at picking up cues. I-

LOLA

Really, it's ok. I was really
interested in your studio and I
shouldn't have come over announced.

Lola's cell phone RINGS from her purse.

LOLA

(CONT'D)
I'm sorry. It's probably Cassidy, my
ex boyfriend. He keeps calling me.

CHARLES

You don't want to talk to him?

Lola SIGHS.

CHARLES

How about this? Let's start over. Are you hungry?

LOLA

(curious)

Actually, I am. You cook too?

CHARLES

If I did cook I'm sure you would pay me not to.

Lola LAUGHS. Charles smiles.

CHARLES

There we go. Do you like Chinese food?

LOLA

I love Chinese food.

CHARLES

I know a really good hole in the wall a few blocks from here. I could order in while we look over some of my collections.

Lola taps her fingers on her mouth.

LOLA

Is the fried rice any good?

CHARLES

So good you don't need any soy sauce.

LOLA

Are you sure this is ok?

CHARLES

Only if you like egg rolls too?

LOLA

Do those not need sauce either?

Charles smiles.

CHARLES

I'll let you be the judge.

LOLA

How about a mango smoothie?

CHARLES

You got it. Let's go back downstairs and I'll get my cell phone to place the order.

LOLA

Downstairs?

CHARLES

A nice afternoon of food and art. Nothing else.

Charles holds up his right hand.

CHARLES

(CONT'D)

You have my word.

LOLA

Ok. Starting over.

Charles walks back through the kitchen to the basement down the stairs. Lola follows behind. Charles walks ahead of Lola and quickly picks up her keys from off the floor. He walks over to a desk with a few drawers. He opens one of the drawers and puts the keys inside. He pulls out a portfolio. Lola looks around on the floor.

LOLA

My keys have to be around here somewhere.

CHARLES

Let's look for them after we eat. Here's my portfolio from when I first started. We can sit over here.

Charles walks over to a red suede couch and sits down. There's a table in front of the couch with open magazines spread out on the table. Charles stacks them on top of each other still open. He looks over at Lola, standing by the end of couch watching. She walks over and sits next to him. She takes off her purse and places it on the couch.

LOLA

Did you do those shoots?

CHARLES

I wish. Those pages are all marked inspiration. Let me call in the order

and I can tell you more.

Charles picks up his cell phone off the table.

CHARLES

Hello I'd like to place an order for delivery. Phone number is nine-three-one, five-five-five, thirty-four-thirty.

Charles looks over at Lola. She's looking through the portfolio.

CHARLES

(CONT'D)

Yes, the house on Jordan Road. No, not Victor. This is Charles. Yes. I'd like two large orders of combination fried rice, an order of egg rolls and a large mango smoothie. Let me check. Hold on.

Charles holds the cell phone away from his ear.

CHARLES

Lola, do you want whipped cream on the smoothie?

Lola looks up from the portfolio.

LOLA

Yes, please.

Charles brings the cell phone back to his ear.

CHARLES

Yes, whipped cream. That'll be all. I'll pay with cash. How much? Ok thank you, Sue.

Charles hangs up the cell phone and sets it on the table. He moves over closer next to Lola. Lola's holding the portfolio open.

LOLA

I see you have this organized according to, um, subject?

CHARLES

Different phases of my interests, which have changed a lot. I was telling you about how I came to photograph people smiling. After that I wanted to photograph people doing things they loved, things that made

them smile.

Lola turns the page to a picture of a cake.

LOLA

Food definitely makes me smile.

CHARLES

Food unites people. Happiness? Food. Sadness? Food. Celebration? Food. There's a science to it. There's an art to it too, like photography. Everything in life is art and science, I think.

LOLA

Do you ever get bored with art or science?

CHARLES

Oh never. It's all around me. I wish I could photograph the way the vibrations of your voice dance around the room.

Lola LAUGHS.

LOLA

I like that. It sounds like something from a romance novel.

CHARLES

Except this is real and the character is you. Even your hands tell a story. Can I show you?

LOLA

Show me?

Charles walks over to a cabinet and opens the door. There are two cameras on the shelves with different sized lenses. He grabs a lens and puts it on one of the cameras. Charles walks toward Lola. She watches him confused.

CHARLES

Just be natural and keep holding the portfolio.

Charles takes pictures of Lola's hands.

CHARLES

When I'm done, I'll show you the natural curve of your hand. Similar

to your smile.

The doorbell RINGS. Charles and Lola hear FOOTSTEPS upstairs.
June YELLS down the stairs.

JUNE
Victor, Young's is here.

Charles SIGHS.

CHARLES
It's Charles, mom.

Lola looks up at Charles. He places the camera on the table.

CHARLES
I'll be right back.

Lola looks around the room confused. She sits all the way back on the couch and looks behind it. She notices a door and walks over to it. The door reads "Chase Bros." Lola turns the door knob to open the door but it's locked. Charles comes down the stairs with food. Lola walks back over to the couch.

CHARLES
Food's here. I gave one of the orders of fried rice to my mom but if this isn't enough I can grab some of the one she has because I know she won't eat it all.

Lola points to the locked door.

LOLA
Thank you. Is Chase Bros. the name of your studio?

CHARLES
I named it after my dad, Chase and his brothers. They introduced me to photography and were some of the first people I photographed.

Charles places the food on the table. Lola places the portfolio on the side of her.

CHARLES
I brought down some plates too.
Anything else you may want?

LOLA

This is more than enough. Thank you.

Charles places the food on the table. Lola places the portfolio on the side of her.

CHARLES

I brought down some plates too.
Anything else you may want?

LOLA

This is more than enough. Thank you.

CHARLES

My pleasure.

LOLA

Is your mom ok? Who's Victor then if Chase is your dad? Your brother or someone?

CHARLES

She's fine but she's actually in the beginning stages of dementia.

LOLA

Oh no I'm sorry. I shouldn't have-

CHARLES

No it's ok. I live here because I have to take care of her. I've been here about a year. I used to live alone downtown. I would come up every weekend and stay the night with her.

LOLA

That must've been hard.

CHARLES

When my dad died it made things particularly difficult on her. She asks for him sometimes but I think for the most part she remembers he's not here. Victor's the closest thing to a brother I've had. But he's bad news so I keep my distance.

LOLA

Oh I see.

CHARLES

Some days are good and normal for the

most part. I couldn't imagine not having her here so I'll be here with her until God forbid she needs full time help. What about you?

LOLA

My dad died also. My mom lives in Charlotte. I see her every few months. Either she comes here or I go there.

CHARLES

I'm sorry to hear that. Do you spend a lot of time alone?

LOLA

I live alone with my cats so for the most part yes.

Lola reaches for her smoothie. She takes a sip and holds the smoothie out in front of her to examine it.

LOLA

Oh that's good. These mangoes are very fresh. How much do I owe you for this?

CHARLES

Only your time and interest.

LOLA

(teasing)

Ok well it's about time you pass that rice I'm interested in!

Charles passes a plate to Lola. She reaches for the rice and scoops it out on her plate with a spoon. She reaches for a fork and takes a bite of the rice on her plate. Charles watches her.

CHARLES

Verdict?

LOLA

Ok you were right. No sauce needed. This is pretty good.

CHARLES

Don't forget about the eggrolls.

Lola reaches inside the bag for an eggroll. She opens a pack of sweet and sour sauce and squeezes it out on her plate. She dips the eggroll in the sauce and takes a bite.

LOLA
Oh that's good too.

She takes another sip of her smoothie. Charles opens a can of Cola and holds it up toward Lola.

CHARLES
To food and art.

Lola smiles. She brings her smoothie to Charles' can.

LOLA
To food and art.

They continue to eat. The doorbell RINGS and they hear FOOTSTEPS again.

LOLA
Are you expecting someone?

CHARLES
I'm not. Oh wait! It's probably my neighbor, John. I wasn't expecting him until a little later though.

John walks down the stairs.

JOHN
(concerned)
Hey Charles I'm here a little early because-

John looks shocked to see Lola.

JOHN
Oh! I'm sorry. I didn't realize you had company.

Lola stands.

LOLA
He wasn't expecting me.

Charles stands.

CHARLES
John, this is Lola. Lola, this is my neighbor, John.

John and Lola shake hands. Lola and Charles sit back down.

JOHN

I was coming to see how The Lip Series was coming along. I came a little early because there's supposed to be a bad storm coming later.

CHARLES

Lola and I were just having a quick bite to eat and I was going to go over some of the shots with her as well.

LOLA

(slightly embarrassed)

I'm sorry. Should I go?

JOHN

Oh no, no. I can always come back.

LOLA

Are you sure?

CHARLES

We're just about finished eating.

JOHN

Someone else can soak in some of your passion for the arts for a change.

CHARLES

Ok next time it'll be you.

They LAUGH.

JOHN

It was nice meeting you, Lola.

LOLA

You too.

CHARLES

See you later.

John walks back up the stairs.

LOLA

Did you know a storm was coming? Maybe I should get going. Could you help me find my keys?

CHARLES

It's probably nothing too serious.

LOLA
But John just said-

CHARLES
Sometimes the sound of thunder
reminds me of the sounds of war
planes. I suffer from PTSD from Iraq.
He was coming to warn me.

LOLA
That's terrible! I'm sorry.

CHARLES
I understand if you have to go. Let's
look on the floor for your keys.

LOLA
I've known a few people with PTSD.
It's manageable if you seek help.

CHARLES
It is. Thanks for understanding.

Charles walks over to the drawer his portfolio was in and pulls out two more portfolios. He takes out the keys and holds them in his hand. He bends down near the desk and pretends to pick the keys up. He stands up quickly.

CHARLES
I found your keys.

Charles holds the keys up for Lola to see. They JINGLE in his hand. She walks over to him.

LOLA
You're a lifesaver.

Lola puts the keys in her purse on the couch.

CHARLES
Here are more of my portfolios. These
are from when I first started off
with the smiling photography. It was
when I got back from Iraq.

LOLA
Was it therapeutic?

CHARLES
Very much so. John was also very
instrumental in me being well.

Lola opens the portfolio. The first picture is a little girl and a little boy standing next to each other. The girl is looking at the boy smiling with her hands partially covering her mouth. The little boy has a surprised smile his face. His smile is wide. Lola smiles.

LOLA
Was this after you told them they
were beautiful?

Charles LAUGHS.

CHARLES
It was. They're siblings. Neither of
them ever heard a male be told he was
beautiful. The sister thought I made
a mistake. I tried explaining to them
there's so much beauty around us.

LOLA
Did they take well to that notion?

CHARLES
The kids did. Their father didn't
like that I was associating the word
beauty with what he believed should
be masculine. He told his son he
would never be beautiful.

LOLA
Oh no.

CHARLES
I didn't photograph many kids after
that.

Lola turns the page to a photo of an elderly woman. She's smiling holding a framed photo of a man.

CHARLES
I was the first person to tell her
she was beautiful since her husband
died. She lived alone. He died three
months before I took the photograph.

LOLA
Wow.

Lola continues to look through the portfolio when it starts to HAIL outside. They look at each other then they look toward a window. Charles walks over to the window to look outside.

LOLA

Oh shoot, my car.

CHARLES

It's dime sized hail. You should be ok. Do you want me to pull your car in my garage?

LOLA

I think I'll just go home before it gets too bad. I have the next few days off work. Would it be ok if I came back?

CHARLES

Of course. You can come tomorrow if you like.

LOLA

That'll be nice. I can't wait to see the rest of it. Should I just leave this here?

Lola stands.

CHARLES

The table is fine. You can leave it open on that page so it'll be here tomorrow right where you left off.

Lola puts the portfolio on the table and grabs her purse. The hail continues outside.

LOLA

Thanks for the food and everything.

CHARLES

Sure thing. Let me get you an umbrella.

Charles walks to a corner and grabs an umbrella off the floor. He touches Lola's hand when he gives it to her. Her cell phone RINGS in her purse.

LOLA

Thanks. I'll bring it back tomorrow. Is noonish ok?

Lola rubs her hand on her thigh and walks up the stairs. Charles follows behind and walks her to the door. The HAIL is louder than it was in the basement.

CHARLES

Be safe going home.

LOLA
Thanks again.

Lola opens the umbrella and runs to her car. Charles watches as she closes the door behind her and drives away. He walks back down to the basement to the couch. He sits where Lola was seated and leans back and closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE - MID JUNE -
AFTERNOON

Lola parks her car in front of Charles' house. She gets out and walks around to the passenger side and opens the door. She takes out a plastic bag and walks up the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON

Charles sits in the living room with June. An alarm clock RINGS on the side table. He walks over to the table and passes June an open bottle of water. He opens a bottle of pills.

CHARLES
Here mom. Take your pill.

June holds out her hand. Charles puts the pill in her hand.

JUNE
Thank you, son.

The doorbell RINGS. Charles walks toward the door and opens it.

CHARLES
Come on in.

Charles sits in the living room with June. An alarm clock RINGS on the side table. He walks over to the table and passes June an open bottle of water. He opens a bottle of pills.

CHARLES
Here mom. Take your pill.

June holds out her hand. Charles puts the pill in her hand.

JUNE
Thank you, son.

The doorbell RINGS. Charles walks toward the door and opens it.

CHARLES
Come on in.

LOLA
Hey. I hope you're hungry. I got some more of the doesn't-need-sauce Chinese food. I got some extra for your mom too.

CHARLES
You're too kind. Thank you. Mom, Lola is here. Remember her?

JUNE
Lola? Why hello there, Lola. How's Martin?

Lola looks at Charles confused. Charles shrugs his shoulders and holds up his hands.

LOLA
(unsure)
He's doing fine. Thanks for asking.

CHARLES
Lola brought us some food.

Lola reaches in the bag and passes Charles a container of rice and a fork. He puts it on the side table near June.

CHARLES
Ready to go downstairs?

LOLA
(concerned)
Is she gonna be ok up here?

CHARLES
She'll be fine. Thank you. And thank you for what you said about Martin. I don't even know who that is.

LOLA
No problem.

Lola's cell phone RINGS. She follows behind Charles down the stairs.

CHARLES
Do you need to take that?

LOLA
It's probably just my ex boyfriend wondering where I am. He'll know where I am soon enough.

CHARLES
And it'll be too late for him.

Lola and Charles sit and eat. Lola looks around at the lip canvas pictures. She points at one. I really like that one.

LOLA
Do you have any purple lipstick?

CHARLES
I do.

LOLA
Can I try some out?

CHARLES

Of course. Can I get some shots of you?

LOLA

If they look terrible you have to delete them.

CHARLES

Deal but I'm sure they won't. Are you ready now?

LOLA

Ok. I am.

Charles removes a new tube of lip stick from a middle table drawer.

CHARLES

Could you come sit over here?

Lola walks over to Charles and sits down. He puts the lipstick on her and tucks a fake rose behind her ear. He grabs his camera and takes pictures of Lola.

CHARLES

I could take pictures of you forever.
I love the color red.

Lola's cell phone RINGS.

CHARLES

Why don't you let me just turn the phone off?

Charles walks over to Lola's purse.

LOLA

It's ok. We can just let it ring.

Charles continues to take pictures of Lola. He unlocks the "Chase Bros" door and brings out a dress.

CHARLES

How would you feel about wearing this?

Lola looks uncomfortable.

LOLA

Could you show me what we have so far?

Charles reviews the pictures in his camera. He sits next to Lola for her to see.

CHARLES
Wow. Even better than I imagined.

LOLA
You really think so?

CHARLES
You're a natural. Can we change the lipstick color?

LOLA
What color next?

CHARLES
How about red?

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

- A. Lola twirls around the room in a long, knee length skirt while Charles takes photos of her.
- B. Lola and Charles bend over a table looking at printed photos. Lola arranges them on the table according to color. Charles looks at the photos and then at Lola and laughs.
- C. Lola holds up a camera lens and looks at Charles through it without a camera. They laugh.
- D. Lola drinks a mango smoothie while sitting on the floor with photos spread out all around her.
- E. Charles opens the front door and lets Lola in. She enters with a bag of Chinese food.
- F. Lola walks up the stairs wearing a mustard green shirt.
- G. Lola walks down the stairs wearing a purple dress.
- H. Charles photographs Lola's hands holding a fortune from a fortune cookie.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - LATE JUNE - MORNING.

The silver door knob shines in the sunlight on the pearl white door of the building. The first three pages of Sunday's edition of The Daily Harold BLOWS in the wind beside the freshly trimmed bush. The sun beams down on the cars in the parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. MAIN OFFICE OF CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - LATE JUNE - MORNING.

Charles thumbs through the stack of mail at the table near the entrance with his short, pale, stubby fingers. There's dirt underneath each of his fingernails. Charles removes a few checks from the mail pile and tosses the remaining letters on the desk near a red Sharpie marker. With the mail in his left hand, Charles pushes the brim of his pale brown glasses higher on his face as he walks to the back of the funeral home.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAK ROOM OF CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - LATE JUNE - MORNING

In the back break room/kitchen area, FORREST WOODY POURS hazelnut creamer into his Styrofoam cup of coffee until the tint of coffee matches his hands, perfectly moisturized with cocoa butter. Forrest STIRS the coffee quickly with a plastic knife. He pushes the cup against his thick mustache to taste the coffee as he holds the knife to the side of the cup. After tasting the coffee, Forrest licks the knife before throwing it in the garbage can and heading to his office, where he passes Charles in the hall.

FORREST

Did you get that mail there on the front desk? Do you have the complete order for the week?

CHARLES

Good morning, Woody. I did. I have a few checks for the three outstanding invoices from the Taylor family. I have another delivery at the end of the week.

Charles hands Forrest the checks. Charles rubs his hands along the front of his chest to smooth out the small wrinkles.

FORREST

Great. Good morning.

Forrest walks to the front desk. His tall frame towers over it. His round, full belly hangs over his belt. He begins to thumb through the checks and stops to hold one up in the light before tearing the envelope open. He pulls out a lime green check for fifteen thousand dollars and immediately frowns at the amount while shaking his head. His lip pokes out.

CHARLES
(concerned)
What is it?

Charles steps forward toward Forrest. He's holding his hands together as they rest in front of him below his belt. His arms are hairy and cover his faded serpent tattoos on his forearms.

FORREST
This check is five thousand dollars short. I'm going to have to follow up on this invoice if there isn't another check in these other envelopes. Was this all the mail?

CHARLES
No, there are a few other pieces from yesterday I believe.

FORREST
Ok thanks.

Forrest turns and walks away as he mumbles under his breath.

FORREST
(slightly angry)
I don't give a damn who drops dead. I'll never work with the Taylor family and their rinky dink ass life insurance policies again.

INT. BREAK ROOM OF CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - LATE MORNING

Charles stands at the counter and POURS himself a cup of the coffee that Forrest made. Black. No sugar. No cream. Charles gulps down half the coffee too fast and burns his tongue. He touches his tongue with his index and middle fingers of his left hand. Charles then takes a silver spoon from one of the drawers and uses it as a mirror. He notices toast crumbs in his blonde beard that he wipes off. His eyebrows are more bushy than usual so he uses his index finger and thumb of his right hand and smooths them both down simultaneously.

Charles gulps down the rest of the coffee and throws the Styrofoam cup in the trash. He walks over to the sink and turns on the cold water. Charles places his hand under the water to make sure it's cold before sticking his tongue under the faucet. He turns off the water and wipes his wet hand on his wrinkled khakis before walking out and heading to the embalming room.

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - LATE MORNING

Charles enters the lab, passes ANTHONY, his co worker and heads to the embalming station. Anthony stands in front of the computer with his legs spread opened wide. His honey brown eyes shine in the computer light. His hair is combed back and his black curls sit neatly on the top of his head.

CHARLES
(exaggerates)
Anthonyyyyyy!

ANTHONY
(exaggerates)
Charley-O! My man!

CHARLES
Early enough for you?

ANTHONY
Aw man I've been here for an hour. I had my third cup fifteen minutes ago.

Anthony holds up an empty thermos and shakes it from side to side. The brown leather band on his watch is worn. The watch face isn't centered straightly on his wrist.

CHARLES
I just had my second and burned my tongue something terrible.

Charles sticks out his tongue and looks down. They both laugh.

ANTHONY
Got another delivery for us? We're low on formaldehyde.

CHARLES
Like clockwork.

ANTHONY
How was your weekend?

CHARLES
Went by way too fast. How about you?

ANTHONY
Same here.

CHARLES
I got to do some more work on my

portfolio so I was glad about that.

ANTHONY

What are you working on now?

CHARLES

Actually these were candid shots, I guess you can say. Someone I'm seeing let me take some photos of her. They came out pretty well.

Charles smiles.

ANTHONY

(surprised)

Dating? You never told me you were seeing someone.

CHARLES

It's very new but I really like her. These past couple of weeks we've been seeing each other. I think I'm going to ask her to be my girlfriend.

ANTHONY

(encouraging)

I'm sure she'll say yes.

CHARLES

I hope so. She has an ex lingering around. He calls her nonstop.

ANTHONY

Just be careful about that.

CHARLES

Thank you. I will.

Charles' cell phone RINGS. He looks down.

ANTHONY

I'll let you to it.

CHARLES

I'll see you on the next delivery.

Charles walks away to answer the phone.

CHARLES

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - OFFICE DESK

JOHN
Charles?

INTERCUT BETWEEN CHARLES AND JOHN

CHARLES
Hey John. How are you?

Charles walks to the front door and passes Forrest. He covers his phone with his hand.

CHARLES
(whispering)
Have a good day, Forrest.

FORREST
You too.

JOHN
I'm ok. Are you working right now?

CHARLES
I'm leaving out now.

JOHN
Is everything ok? I tried to see you a few times.

CHARLES
Everything's ok. Mom's fine. I've been making sure she's been taking all of her meds. I've been spending time with Lola these past couple of weeks too.

JOHN
And you? Are you taking care of Charles?

CHARLES
Yes, of course.

JOHN
(concerned)
You never told me you were seeing someone before I met her. Has she met Victor?

CHARLES
Oh heavens no.

JOHN

Good. Keep Victor away.

CHARLES

Don't want him messing this up for me.

JOHN

I want to try some new treatment options with you while Victor isn't around to influence you. Please come to my office as soon as you can.

CHARLES

Sounds good. I'll try to come by this week.

JOHN

Let me know if anything changes. See you soon.

CHARLES

Sounds good.

Charles hangs up the phone. He goes to his photo album and looks at a photo of Lola eating Chinese food. He smiles. He slides his phone in his pocket and exits the building.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION -
INTERVIEW ROOM THREE - LATE JUNE - AFTERNOON

Detectives Grim and Cook open the door of interview room three. Carrie sits next to an older woman, KRISTEN PAGE at the table. Kristen is CRYING with her head down. Carrie's hand rubs Kristen's back. When Detectives Grim and Cook enter the room, Carrie and Kristen look up and stand.

DETECTIVE GRIM

(extends hand)

Hello, I'm Detective Grim. This is my partner-

DETECTIVE COOK
(extends hand)
Detective Cook.

CARRIE
(extends hand)
I'm Carrie.

KRISTEN
(extends hand)
Kristen.

DETECTIVE GRIM
(extends hand
toward table)
Have a seat. We understand you two
are here to file a report. Let's get
to it.

They all sit at the table. Detective Grim's long, lean torso towers over the table top. Detectives Grim and Cook set notebooks on the table. Kristen folds her hands together on the table in front of her. Her blonde hair rests at her shoulders. Carrie nervously TAPS her foot under the table.

KRISTEN
(sniffles)
It's my daughter, Lola Page. No one
has seen or heard from her for about
two weeks. We usually talk about once
a week. I flew in from North Carolina
because I haven't heard from her this
week or last. What's also frig-

DETECTIVE GRIM
Before you continue, I must say we
understand you're concerned about
your daughter but as an adult she has
the right to "go missing," if you
will for some time before we're
allowed to pursue-

KRISTEN
Even if her cats were found dead?

DETECTIVE GRIM
What do you mean?

KRISTEN
Before you interrupted me I was going
to tell you that I begged the
building manager to go into her

apartment and when he finally went in both her cats were dead. He said he couldn't let me inside without Lola or the police.

DETECTIVE COOK

Could the cats have killed each other?

KRISTEN

She would tell me that sometimes they didn't get along so she kept one in a cage when she wasn't there. So no.

Detectives Grim and Cook take notes.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Where was she last seen?

KRISTEN

(sighs)

She was on vacation from work so no one has seen her there. I talked to her neighbors and they said she hasn't been to her apartment.

DETECTIVE COOK

Did they say if they noticed anything out of the ordinary?

Kristen shakes her head no.

KRISTEN

(turns to Carrie)

She's a teller at Acer Bank. Sometimes after work she goes to Harry's Pub. That's what she did the last time Carrie saw her.

DETECTIVE COOK

(looks at Carrie)

You're the last person that saw her?

KRISTEN
That we know of, yes.

DETECTIVE GRIM
When was this?

CARRIE
Sometime last month. It was about two weeks ago.

DETECTIVE COOK
Where's Harry's Pub?

DETECTIVE GRIM
(interrupts)
The pub on Harry Hines? Were you there with her?

CARRIE
Yes. I bartend there. She didn't stay long because her friend flaked on her.

DETECTIVE COOK
A male?

CARRIE
A girl but there was a man who we were talking to that was sitting nearby. I noticed he was gone right after Lola left.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Do you know his name?

DETECTIVE COOK
Or what he looks like?

CARRIE
(unsure)
It was a busy night but if I saw him again I'd know his face.

DETECTIVE GRIM
But you did notice he was gone almost right after Lola left?

CARRIE
Right. After I didn't hear from her for so long I reached out to Kristen on social media.

DETECTIVE COOK
Kristen, has Lola ever done anything

like this in the past?

KRISTEN
Not without calling or texting.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Anything we should know now?

CARRIE
Lola did mention a customer of hers
that she was bothered by. She was
pretty creeped out.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Did she say a name?

CARRIE
She didn't.

DETECTIVE COOK
And this was a customer at Acer Bank?

CARRIE
Yes.

Detectives Grim and Cook take notes. Kristen starts CRYING.
They lean forward toward her. Detective Grim passes her a box
of tissue. Kristen wipes running mascara on the tissue.

DETECTIVE COOK
I know this is a difficult time but
we're gonna do whatever we can to
find out where Lola is.

Kristen CRIES harder. Carrie places her hand on Kristen's
shoulder.

KRISTEN
She's my only child. I keep calling
her. All her phone does is ring and
ring.

DETECTIVE GRIM

We'll find her. Has she been seeing anyone? Is she in a relationship?

DETECTIVE COOK

Is there anyone you know of that would want to hurt her?

KRISTEN

No one that I know of. Her ex boyfriend had a temper sometimes. I've known him since he was a young boy though. I think he was stressed a lot lately.

CARRIE

I hate to tell you this but the day I saw her she was telling me about how he grabbed her.

KRISTEN

(shocked)

Wait, what? He put his hands on her?

CARRIE

She said he was drunk and apologetic, I think I was more concerned than she was. She did allude to him being jealous though.

KRISTEN

(angry)

Oh my God! If he-

DETECTIVE GRIM

We'll handle it. What's his name? Do you have a cell phone number or address?

KRISTEN

(shocked)

I have both.

Detective Cook slides his note pad and pen over to Kristen. She pulls out her cell phone and scrolls through her contacts. She writes on Detective Cook's note pad and slides it back to him.

KRISTEN

His name is Cassidy Prosper. All of his info is there.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Do you have a picture of Lola you

could email?

KRISTEN

The most recent in my cell phone she sent me about a month ago. I could get something from her social media if you need something more recent than that.

DETECTIVE COOK

No. The picture you have is good. Just send it over as soon as you can. We'll get you the info you need.

KRISTEN

What about Cassidy? Should I tell him I'm in town? They were supposed to take a trip for their anniversary about two weeks ago but they broke up.

DETECTIVE COOK

We'll look into that. No need to contact him. We'll handle it all. How long will you be here?

KRISTEN

Until we find Lola. I'll be at the Double Star downtown.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Ok. Stay close to your cell phone in case we need you.

Detectives Grim and Cook stand. They each hand Kristen and Carrie a business card.

DETECTIVE COOK

Pita will be back in here to get some more info from you for the report. If either of you find out anything-

DETECTIVE GRIM

And we mean *anything*-

DETECTIVE COOK

Be sure to give us a call.

KRISTEN
(unsure)
Thank you.

Detectives Grim and Cook shake Kristen and Carrie's hands and leave the room. They walk outside to the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION PARKING LOT - LATE
JUNE - AFTERNOON

DETECTIVE COOK
Where does the kid live?

DETECTIVE GRIM
Nigel Apartments.

DETECTIVE COOK
That's only about ten to twelve
minutes away. Maybe five to ten
minutes if I drive.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Exactly. That's why I think he'll
come to us. Let's grab some lunch and
call him on the way.

Detectives Cook and Grim get in their car. Detective Grim gets in on the passenger side and pulls out his cell phone. He dials the number on the paper.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Don't pull off yet.

He puts the cell phone on speaker cell phone. It
RINGS.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGEL APARTMENTS - APARTMENT 805 - CASSIDY'S LIVING
ROOM - LATE JUNE - AFTERNOON

Cassidy sits closely to a petite girl with short red hair wearing a polka dot dress on his couch. His arm is around her. There's a comedian on the TV. Cassidy's wearing a white t-shirt and black basketball shorts. There are two glasses of wine in front of them on the coffee table. Across from them, on a different couch, sits a guy and a girl. The guy is also wearing a white t-shirt with red basketball shorts. The girl is lying on

his chest. Their drink glasses are on a side table, empty. Cassidy looks over at the empty glasses.

CASSIDY
Can I get anyone some more wine?

MALE FRIEND
Most definitely. Thanks bro.

FEMALE FRIEND
Yes, please.

CASSIDY
I'm on it.

Cassidy removes his arm from the girl he's sitting next to. She turns to look at him.

CASSIDY
Can I get you something?

GIRL
I'm fine. Thanks.

Cassidy taps his index and middle finger on her knee.

CASSIDY
Don't run off, Cinderella.

They LAUGH. Cassidy's cell phone RINGS. He picks it up and walks to the kitchen. The friends in the front room are LAUGHING at the TV.

CASSIDY
Hello?

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION PARKING LOT -
AFTERNOON

DETECTIVE GRIM
Hello? Cassidy Prosper?

Detective Cook leans in toward Detective Grim's cell phone.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGEL APARTMENTS - APARTMENT 805 - AFTERNOON

CASSIDY
(curious)
Who is this?

INTERCUT BETWEEN DETECTIVE GRIM AND CASSIDY

DETECTIVE GRIM
This is Detective Grim from District
Three-

CASSIDY
(confused)
Detective Grim? Y'all make calls for
parking tickets now?

Cassidy turns back toward the living room. His friends are looking around at each other. He looks at them then looks at the floor.

DETECTIVE GRIM
I'm afraid not. I'm calling about
Lola Page.

CASSIDY
(amused)
What about? Did she rob the bank she
works at?

Cassidy LAUGHS.

DETECTIVE GRIM
(serious)
Lola's mother came in today to file a
missing person's report on Lola.

CASSIDY
(unconcerned)
Missing? Kristen came to town to say
so?

DETECTIVE GRIM
(serious)
Missing for a couple of weeks
according to her mother. Have you not
been concerned you haven't heard from
your girlfriend?

CASSIDY
(serious)
Ex girlfriend. I haven't seen her in
weeks myself. She stopped answering
my calls so I stopped calling. If I

hear from her, I'll let you know.
Should I call you back on this
number?

DETECTIVE GRIM

Actually, we need you to come to the
station for further questioning.

Cassidy paces back and forth in the kitchen.

CASSIDY

(annoyed)

Today? I'm in the middle of
entertaining.

DETECTIVE GRIM

We're only about ten minutes from
you. We need a statement for our
investigation and you can be on your
way. Otherwise, we can send a squad
car to come get you.

Cassidy stops pacing.

CASSIDY

(deep sigh)

I'll be there in about twenty
minutes.

DETECTIVE GRIM

I'll text you the address. See you
soon.

Cassidy hangs up the cell phone and SIGHS deeply again.

MALE FRIEND

(concerned)

Is everything ok?

CASSIDY

Detectives just called me about my
ex. She works at a bank and stole a
bunch of stuff or something. I have
to go give a statement and I'm coming
right back.

MALE FRIEND

(confused)

What's that have to do with you?

CASSIDY

That's what I want to know. I haven't
talked to her in weeks. Now I'm
wondering if she's stolen anything

from me. You just can't trust anyone these days.

FEMALE FRIEND
(disgusted)
That's pathetic.

CASSIDY
I know. Y'all are welcome to stay and wait on me. Like I said I won't be long. I can grab some wings on the way back and some more wine.

MALE FRIEND
I'm down. I can go for some wings.

FEMALE FRIEND
And some merlot.

Cassidy looks at the girl he was sitting next to.

GIRL
I like buffalo and honey BBQ.

She smiles.

MALE FRIEND
And extra ranch.

CASSIDY
(relieved)
Ok. I'll be back. Don't have too much fun without me.

Cassidy pulls out his cell phone and goes to his text message log. He deletes messages he sent to Lola.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION PARKING LOT -
AFTERNOON

Detective Grim texts Cassidy the address. He looks over at Detective Cook and smiles.

DETECTIVE COOK
Way too easy.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Told you. We got twenty minutes.
Drive up the street to Quest Burger.
Lunch on you?

CUT TO:

EXT. QUEST BURGER DRIVE THRU - AFTERNOON

QUEST WORKER
(friendly)
Welcome to the city of burgers. What
city are you traveling to today?

DETECTIVE COOK
Hello I'll have a double Chicago
burger meal with extra bacon and
extra mayo. Diet Cola no ice for the
drink please.

QUEST WORKER
Will that complete your order, sir?

Detective Grim looks at Detective Cook and jerks his neck back.
They both LAUGH.

DETECTIVE COOK
Just a moment please. I'm waiting on
my partner.

DETECTIVE GRIM
(playfully)
Another double? Didn't your doctor
just tell you about your cholesterol?

DETECTIVE COOK
(playfully serious)
You're the one who chose this place!
Now what do you want?

Detective Grim leans forward toward Detective Cook's window.

DETECTIVE GRIM
And a New York meal no onions with a
Lemon Lime.

QUEST WORKER
Will that complete your order?

DETECTIVE COOK
Yes ma'am.

QUEST WORKER
Second window please.

Detective Cook shakes his fist at Detective Grim. They both LAUGH as he pulls around to the second window. Detective Cook reaches in his wallet and hands his card to the young lady. She hands him his card back with two bags of food he sets in Detective Grim's lap. She then hands him a cup holder with two drinks. Detective Grim holds the drinks in his hand above the food bags. Detective Cook pulls up into a parking space.

DETECTIVE COOK
I got Diet Cola though. Give me some
credit.

Detective Grim smiles and passes Detective Cook his bag of food. He takes the drinks out of the cardboard cup holder and places them in the cup holder in between the seats. They both eat their food in the car.

Detective Cook's cell phone RINGS.

DETECTIVE COOK
(swallowing
quickly)
This is Cook.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION -
AFTERNOON

PITA, the district receptionist uses her blue painted middle finger to push up her red glasses closer to her eyes.

PITA
Hey Cook. It's Pita. Cassidy Proper
is here to see you guys. Said you
called him earlier.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SQUAD CAR - QUEST BURGER PARKING LOT

DETECTIVE COOK
Grim and I are right up the street.
We're on our way back now.

Detective Cook hangs up the cell phone and takes three big
bites of his burger.

DETECTIVE COOK
(mouth full,
mumbling)
You see, this is why I'm always
ordering so much. I never get to
finish it all. Cassidy's there.

Detective Cook takes the top off his cup and GULPS down the
Diet Coke before pulling out of the parking lot.

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION -
INTERVIEW ROOM THREE

Detectives Grim and Cook open the door of interview room
three. Cassidy sits at the table with his hands folded in
front of him. He looks annoyed.

DETECTIVE COOK
I'm Detective Cook.

DETECTIVE GRIM
I'm Detective Grim. I'm the one that
called you earlier. Thanks for coming
in so soon on such short notice.

Detectives Grim and Cook sit down with their notebooks.

CASSIDY
I didn't have much of a choice, did
I?

DETECTIVE COOK
Your cooperation is appreciated.

DETECTIVE GRIM
When's the last time you seen or

heard from Lola?

CASSIDY

I saw her on a Wednesday a couple of weeks ago. We went to dinner for our anniversary. We broke up the same night. I haven't seen her since.

DETECTIVE COOK

Did you guys have a fight?

CASSIDY

We agreed we were on different pages and decided to break up. That's all. I called her a few times and she didn't answer my calls. I haven't called her since.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Did the argument get physical?

CASSIDY

(insulted)

What? Of course not. We ended things so it wouldn't go any further.

DETECTIVE COOK

Someone told us today that Lola told them otherwise.

CASSIDY

(angry)

This is a set up. I'm being set up. If I'm not being charged with anything I'm out of here. The only way we'll talk again is with my lawyer.

DETECTIVE GRIM

No one's setting you up. We're asking based on what Carrie told us.

CASSIDY

(angry)

Carrie from the bar? She's a lesbian. She wants Lola for herself. They're probably in on this together. Too bad for Carrie Lola already moved on.

DETECTIVE COOK

What do you mean?

CASSIDY

A friend of mine saw Lola at a bar with some other guy the same week we broke up.

DETECTIVE COOK
We'll need the info of your friend to verify that.

CASSIDY
We were supposed to take a trip together and she never even showed up.

DETECTIVE GRIM
When?

CASSIDY
Last month after we broke up. I went to Mexico alone. She never showed.

DETECTIVE COOK
How long was that for?

CASSIDY
Five long days.

DETECTIVE GRIM
You stayed in Mexico alone?

CASSIDY
I thought she changed her flight to get there early to surprise me. Then I thought she missed the flight. I waited. She never came.

DETECTIVE COOK
We'll need to verify that too.

CASSIDY
Are we finished here? If I'm not being charged I'm free to go, right? I have a party to get back to.

Cassidy stands up quickly. Detectives Grim and Cook do the same.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Stay close to your cell phone.

DETECTIVE COOK

You'll be hearing from us.

Cassidy walks out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - HARRY'S PUB - LATE JUNE - AFTERNOON

Charles drives down Northwest Highway as he fumbles with the radio. He looks in his rearview mirror at his short beard and tugs at it.

CHARLES
(under his breath)
Oh I like this look, Charles.

Charles grabs a faded blue hat with an Acer Bank logo on the floor of the passenger seat and pulls it completely over all of his hair. The radio is full of static so Charles turns it off before making a sharp turn into the parking lot of Harry's Pub.

Charles turns the car off and walks into Harry's Pub. He nods to a few people and heads toward RAY, the bar tender.

Ray, looking down at the mug he's drying with his towel notices a dirt spec. As he holds the glass up high above his head to examine it in the light, he notices Charles across the room walking toward him. Ray sets the glass down behind the bar and smiles at Charles.

RAY
(animated)
Charlie, Charl! I know that's you
under that hat.

CHARLES
Hey man. The usual, please.

Charles sits down in front of Ray. Ray pushes the sleeves of his red shirt back to his elbows revealing his colorful skull and rose tattoo sleeve. He grabs the dirty specked mug he was just examining. Ray fills the mug and pushes it toward Charles.

RAY
(playfully serious)
So how was business today? Was it
dead?

Ray LAUGHS. Charles looks up at Ray and smirks as he talks. Charles pretends to be amused.

CHARLES

I see you'll never let that go.
Wouldn't be business if it wasn't,
man. How's it going around here?

RAY

The usual. Pretty steady, I guess.
Where you been hiding at?

CHARLES

I've been busy with work and mom.

RAY

How's she? Any progress?

CHARLES

She has her days. Some days she
doesn't do much talking at all. I
think she's just ready to check out.

RAY

My mom was the same way. Hang in
there, man.

CHARLES

I've been seeing this girl. I think
we're dating. She's been keeping me
company so it hasn't been that bad.

RAY

Good for you, man.

CHARLES

I hope so.

RAY

Make sure you keep good eye on her
with all that's going on around here.

CHARLES

All of what?

Charles looks around the bar cautiously.

CHARLES

(CON'T)

What's going on around here?

RAY

That missing girl that was last seen
here a few weeks ago.

CHARLES

What happened? What does she look like?

RAY

You probably didn't see her. It was on a night I don't work. She was supposed to meet a friend that never showed up or something. No one has seen her since.

Ray turns around and grabs a flyer. He shows it to Charles. There's a photo of Lola on it.

RAY

(CON'T)

They've been passing out flyers. Her name is-

Charles takes his hand off the mug of his beer and leans in closer toward the flyer.

CHARLES

(confused)

Lola?

RAY

Ok so you do know about her?

CHARLES

(shocked)

Ray, I've been seeing her.

RAY

These flyers are everywhere.

CHARLES

(frantic)

No! I've been *seeing* her.

Charles takes a GULP of beer.

RAY

Seeing her where?

CHARLES

(shocked)

Dating. She's the one I just told you about. Lola Page.

RAY

Oh shit man. When have you seen her last?

CHARLES

I think I'm gonna see her tonight!
I've been seeing her a lot.

RAY

Are you *sure* this is the same girl?

CHARLES

I'm sure as shit!

Charles takes his cell phone out of his pocket. He looks around before leaning in close to Ray. He opens his photo album and shows Ray photos of Lola.

MONTAGE OF PHOTOS OF LOLA - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE

- A. Lola looks down at the floor. She's wearing red lipstick.
- B. Lola holds her purse strap while sitting on the couch.
- C. Lola puckers her lips wearing purple lipstick.
- D. Lola looks at Charles while pointing toward the stairs.

RAY

You're right that's her alright. She looks kinda sad in the photos though. Why would she be reported missing if she's been seeing you?

Charles takes a GULP of beer before looking around again. He swallows hard. Charles holds his head in his hand. He looks around and scratches the back of his neck. He pulls his hat down tighter.

CHARLES

Your guess is just as good as mine.

RAY

(suspiciously)

Has anyone seen you with her?

Ray looks around and leans in closer to Charles. His ponytail bounces from side to side as he turns his head. He lowers his voice.

RAY

Have they?

CHARLES

I don't know. She's been to my house.
She's met my mom.

RAY

(slightly frantic)

You've got to go to the police!

CHARLES

Her ex boyfriend has been harassing
her lately. Maybe this has something
to do with it.

RAY

If she's afraid of him she needs to
be doing something other than
pretending to be missing. There are
lots of people looking for her. I'm
surprised the cops aren't here now.

Charles GULPS down the beer and swallows hard again. He
places a five dollar bill under the mug.

CHARLES

Shit. You're gonna cause a scene with
all these crazy antics. I'll see you
later, Ray.

RAY

You're leaving? What are you gonna go
do?

CHARLES

I'll let you know what I find out.
Give me a clean mug next time.

Charles mumbles under his breath as he walks away. Ray stares in
silence as Charles heads toward the door. He changes the channel
on the TV closest to him looking for a news station. Ray channel
surfs until a customer comes to sit down and order a drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE - LATE JUNE - EARLY
EVENING

Charles pulls up into the front of his house. The lights are on.
He grabs his bag from the back seat and heads up the front
stairs. He picks up a newspaper in front of his door, unlocks

the door and enters the front room. June's sitting on the couch watching M.A.S.H.

CHARLES
(slightly panicked)
Mom? Did Lola or anyone come by here today?

JUNE
(disconnected)
Victor?

CHARLES
(annoyed)
It's Charles. Did Lola come by?

JUNE
(confused)
I thought she was still in the basement.

CHARLES
I think Lola's upset about something.
I don't know what I did or said.

June's body is turned toward the TV. She doesn't turn to acknowledge Charles.

CHARLES
Sorry, I know how you are about your show. Just please let me know if anyone comes by.

The alarm clock on the table RINGS loudly. Charles walks over to the table and grabs June's water bottle and prescription bottle. He sets them next to her.

CHARLES
Medicine time. Don't forget to take your pills.

Charles hands June two pills and notices something in her hand.

JUNE
Give her this. I barely wear it. It's just been sitting here collecting dust.

CHARLES
Of course! Women love jewelry!

Charles pulls out a long, fresh water pearl necklace from June's hand. He rubs each end in both his hands with his thumbs. He closes his palm shut tightly.

CHARLES

Thanks, ma. She's going to be so beautiful. I'll keep her.

Charles kisses June on her forehead. He turns on a lamp on her side table for a night light and turns off the ceiling light before exiting the living room.

Charles walks down the hall to his room, the first door on the left. He removes his khakis and shirt and throws his clothes across the room on the floor in front of his closet door. He puts on a pair of pajama pants. Charles takes the necklace down stairs to the basement. Lola's sitting on the couch wearing a red dress.

CHARLES

(shocked)

Lola? When did you get here?

LOLA

(confused)

What? I never left.

CHARLES

(concerned)

I went to Harry's Pub today and there was a missing person's flyer with your face on it.

LOLA

They're looking for me? We have to go to the police.

CHARLES

(scared)

And tell them what?

LOLA

That I've been here with you all of this time. We have to tell them the truth.

CHARLES

(concerned)

I can't show up with a missing person saying "here's the girl you were looking for. She was with me. Have a good day." It doesn't work like that.

LOLA

That would be the truth.

CHARLES

Are you doing this because of Cassidy? You need to report him. Maybe I can take you there tomorrow but I can't talk to them with you.

Lola looks down at the necklace in Charles' hand.

CHARLES

Oh! This is for you.

Charles stands behind Lola and puts the necklace on her neck. She doesn't say a word.

CUT TO:

INT. EMBALMING LAB - CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - EARLY JULY - MORNING

Charles heads straight to the embalming lab where Anthony is working. He notices a purse with a long strap sitting on a table.

CHARLES

(teasing)

Good morning. Is that a murse?

Anthony LAUGHS.

ANTHONY

No. Actually today's prep came in with it. I'm not sure why it wasn't claimed by first of kin.

Anthony reads over his checklist on his clipboard. Lola Page is the name on the paperwork.

ANTHONY
Lola Page. DOA last night.

CHARLES
(afraid)
Lola Page?

Charles walks to embalming prep table where he sees Lola's body. He stops to examine her. He stares at her body from head to toe shaking his head in disbelief.

ANTHONY
She's the one that's been on the news lately.

CHARLES
I can't believe she's here.

ANTHONY
Yeah, the news been real hush,
hush. Probably because they ain't
found the son of a bitch who did
this.

Charles whispers to himself and then speaks louder to Anthony as he turns to face him.

CHARLES
Son of a bitch. You say she got here
last night?

ANTHONY
I think about three or four this
morning some time. Real shame.

CHARLES
I wish I could've helped her.

ANTHONY
Yeah I'm sure there were lots of
people looking for her. We should
hear something about it tonight, I
imagine. Channel Five is usually good
about that investigating stuff.

Charles COUGHS loudly, almost choking.

ANTHONY
(concerned)
Are you ok? Do you need some water?

CHARLES
(COUGHING)
Please!

Anthony steps away and Charles is alone with Lola. Charles stares at her body. He presses down on her wrist.

CHARLES
(whispers)
Oh my God what happened? Did Cassidy find you? I should've come with you.

Lola opens her eyes. Charles trips backward and looks behind him to see if Anthony's watching.

CHARLES
(whispers)
Oh my God! You need to leave immediately! Anthony was just about to take off your clothes!

LOLA
We have to tell the truth.

CHARLES
(concerned)
Are you doing this to punish Cassidy? There has to be a better way. You're gonna get him in trouble for something he didn't do.

Anthony approaches Charles with a cup of water. He chugs the water and CHOKES again.

ANTHONY
Whoa let me go get you some more.

Anthony exits the lab. Charles paces around the room and nervously wipes his forehead from left to right with his sweaty right palm. He quickly scans the room, looking at Lola and then looking away quickly with big, bulging, suspicious eyes.

Charles rubs his eyes and looks back at Lola. She's still staring at him.

LOLA

Don't you remember what happened?

Charles looks around the lab and heads toward the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - CHASE BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME PARKING
LOT - EARLY JULY - MORNING

Charles runs out the door. His keys JINGLE in his sweaty palm. The heels of his shoes BOUNCE loudly against the pavement of the empty parking lot as he rushes to his hunter green Buick parked in the third parking spot closest to the entrance door. There's a small rust patch on the passenger side rear door.

CHARLES

(nervous)

Oh shit, he found me. I have to call
John. I have to call John.

Lola runs out of the building behind Charles barefoot wearing a lab coat that isn't fastened. She holds it together with her right hand. She frowns at the junk in the back seat but quickly opens the rear passenger door to get in. She closes her door at the same time Charles closes his.

Charles mumbles under his breath. He rubs his face with his right hand and feels a scratch on his forehead. He rubs the scratch with his index finger and examines it closely in his rearview mirror. When Charles looks in the rearview mirror, he notices Lola sitting in the back seat. Startled, Charles quickly turns around to face Lola.

LOLA

I think you should drive to District
three headquarters.

Lola leans forward and places her left elbow on the back of the driver seat and her right elbow on the back of the passenger seat.

LOLA

(CONT'D)

I'm not going away. You have to tell
them where I am.

Charles starts the car and grips the steering wheel very tightly. He pulls out of the parking lot.

CHARLES
(stutters)
If, if I do this, what happens to me?

He turns to look at Lola.

LOLA
You followed me home.

CHARLES
I followed you to give you your cell
phone!

LOLA
You didn't protect me.

CHARLES
I couldn't. I don't even know
Cassidy!

LOLA
I'll help you explain it when we get
there.

Lola sits back in the seat while Charles continues to drive.
Charles pulls out his cell phone and makes a call. He holds the
phone to his ear while driving.

CHARLES
John. It's a code red. It's Victor.
I'm on my way to District Three. I'm
sorry.

Charles hangs up the phone.

CUT TO:

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION - EARLY
JULY - MORNING

Charles pulls into one of the parking spots marked "visitors"
in the District Three Police station lot. His hands are tightly
gripping the steering wheel. His knuckles are red. Charles
looks in the back seat and Lola looks back at him. There are
plain clothed and uniformed people entering and exiting the
building.

Charles opens the car door and steps out cautiously. He looks
around at all of the armed officers. Charles walks up the
stairs to enter the building. He continuously turns to look
behind him and then around him. Lola follows behind him.

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION -
RECEPTIONIST DESK

Charles enters the building and passes two vending machines, a coffee station and three offices with closed blinds and heads straight toward Pita, sitting at a desk. Lola follows behind slowly hiding behind corner walls so she isn't seen.

Pita's TYPING away on her computer looking down. Charles CLEARS his throat. Pita looks up suddenly, slightly startled. She stops typing.

PITA

Hello. I hope you weren't waiting long. My apologies.

CHARLES

Hello ma'am. I need to talk to an officer.

PITA

Sure. Can you tell me what this is regarding so I may direct you to the correct person?

Charles CLEARS his throat again. He looks around behind him.

CHARLES

I, um, have details about someone that has been missing. I met her recently, Lola Page.

Charles nervously rubs his neck.

PITA

You want to speak to Detectives Grim and Cook. They're handling the case of Lola Page. Let me see if they're available.

CHARLES

Thank you.

PITA

Please have a seat in the waiting area and someone will be right with you.

Charles walks over to three empty seats in the waiting area to sit down. His hands are in his pants pockets. He's digging his nails deep into his thighs while his hands are hidden in his pockets.

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION
- INTERROGATION ROOM FOUR

Detectives Grim and Cook are reviewing recorded video footage of Cassidy's interrogation.

Detective Grim removes his glasses and wipes his eyes as he stares at the TV screen. His forehead is wrinkled. He leans his head to left and stares at the TV screen with a puzzled look. He grabs the remote and presses pause.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Wait, did you hear that?

Detective Cook is leaning forward in his chair. His ID badge hangs around his neck and sits comfortably on his round belly. There's a small grape jelly stain in the middle of his shirt. There's a cup of coffee in his right hand. He's staring at the blue patterned tile that covers the floor.

DETECTIVE COOK

Cassidy changed his story about how long he was in Mexico.

DETECTIVE GRIM

He seemed very bitter too. Regardless of the break up, he was not at all concerned.

DETECTIVE COOK

I wonder who he was entertaining. He was reluctant to leave his apartment and anxious to get back.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Should we go for a search warrant?

DETECTIVE COOK

Not until we subpoena his cell phone records.

DETECTIVE COOK

I have to see if Lola's are back so we can ping her last known location.

Detective Cook uses his left hand to rub his balding head, starting at his forehead and ending at his neck, covered with brown and black moles.

There's a KNOCK at the door. They both turn to look at it.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Yeah?

Pita enters.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Pita, what you got for us?

PITA

I have a man in the waiting room who said he has some info about Lola Page. He seems very nervous.

They all look around the room at one another.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Go back out there and be as friendly and calm as you can. We don't want to alarm whoever he is. This may be our break. We'll be out in a minute.

PITA

Okee dokee. I'll see what I can do.

DETECTIVE COOK

Thank you, Pita.

Detectives Grim and Cook walk to the waiting room to get Charles. They walk him back to interrogation room five.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Thank you for coming in. Please have a seat. How may we help you, Mr. ?

CHARLES

Lamontagne. Charles Lamontagne.

Charles pulls out the chair and sits down at the worn, wooden table, across from Detectives Grim and Cook. There are names and obscenities and a few so-and-so was here declarations written all over the table in blue and black ink.

Charles looks over his shoulder and notices Lola outside the door. She's staring straight ahead at Detectives Grim and Cook. They're staring at Charles. They both have yellow note pads in front of them, waiting for Charles to talk. Charles wipes the sweat from his forehead.

DETECTIVE COOK

Our receptionist, Pita mentioned you have some info on Lola Page. Is that correct?

Lola paces back and forth outside the door with her arms crossed on her chest. Charles looks up and watches Lola pace back and forth. He takes a deep breath before he begins to speak.

CHARLES

Lola Page told me to come here and tell you where she is.

Detectives Grim and Cook turn to glance at one another. They both then turn back to look at Charles.

DETECTIVE GRIM

You spoke with her? You know where she is?

CHARLES

Yes, she's at Chase Brothers Funeral Home, where I work. She arrived some time yesterday in the early morning.

DETECTIVE COOK

Funeral home? I was unaware that she had been found.

Detective Cook turns to Detective Grim.

DETECTIVE COOK

Have you heard anything about her body being found?

DETECTIVE GRIM

No sir, I haven't. I'll call her mother.

CHARLES

Is she here from Charlotte?

DETECTIVE COOK

You know her?

CHARLES

No but Lola told me about her.

Charles begins to nervously twirl his thumbs around one another.

DETECTIVE COOK

Please continue. This is new

information to us. You're doing great. My partner is going to step out to verify some things with her family.

Detective Grim slides a piece of paper toward Charles.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Please write down the name and address of the funeral home.

Charles' hand shakes slightly as he writes. He passes the paper back to Detective Grim.

Detective Grim leaves the room and sits on a bench in the hall. He flips the pages on his notebook until he finds Kristen's number written down. He pulls out his cell phone and dials Kristen's number.

The phone RINGS.

CUT TO:

INT. DOWNTOWN MT. PLEASANT, TN - DOUBLE STAR HOTEL

Kristen sits on the bed in her hotel room channel surfing. Her laptop is open on Lola's social media page. Kristen sets the TV remote on the bed and looks around the room. Her cell phone RINGS. Kristen answers.

KRISTEN

Hello?

INTERCUT BETWEEN DETECTIVE GRIM AND KRISTEN

DETECTIVE GRIM

Hello Kristen. This is Detective Grim over from District Three.

KRISTEN

Detective Grim. What is it?

Her voice is low and shaky.

DETECTIVE GRIM

We were reviewing Cassidy's interrogation when a man came in voluntarily claiming to have info on Lola's whereabouts. He said that Lola's body has been at Chase Brothers Funeral home.

KRISTEN

What did Cassidy have to say? What do

you mean? A man said she's where?

DETECTIVE GRIM

I understand this is a difficult situation, but if you've been advised by your lawyers to-

KRISTEN

I wouldn't keep any info from you. Lola isn't back. She hasn't been found anywhere. What are you talking about? Has her body been found?

DETECTIVE GRIM

Kristen, I, I-

Kristen begins to CRY. She stands up and paces around the room.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Kristen, I can assure you that my partner and I will get to the bottom of this. We stand by our commitment to finding Lola.

KRISTEN

This man is there now?

DETECTIVE GRIM

Detective Cook is interviewing him now. As soon as we know something, I'll give you a call back.

KRISTEN

I'll come there now.

DETECTIVE GRIM

That's not really necessary right now because we-

KRISTEN

I'll see you soon.

Kristen hangs up the cell phone.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Shit!

Detective Grim walks to Pita's desk and slides the piece of paper Charles wrote on to her. She looks down and examines the shaky handwriting and looks back up at Detective Grim.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Search that for me, please. Chase
Brothers Funeral Home.

Pita TYPES on the computer.

PITA
Is this address something separate?

DETECTIVE GRIM
No. That's the address underneath
it.

PITA
Hmm. That's not the address it's
coming up with online.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Can you look again?

PITA
Ok it looks like the address to Chase
is completely different. I got a hit
on the address you have written down
though. It's an office building for
Dr. John Cherry. There's a website.
Let me click on it. Dissociative
Identity Disorder Treatment center.

DETECTIVE GRIM
A what center?

PITA
Also known as multiple personality
disorders. They offer psychotherapy
sessions, PTSD management and
acupuncture therapy and a few other
things.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Keep that website up. I'll be right
back.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION
- INTERROGATION ROOM FOUR.

DETECTIVE COOK

So what do you do at the funeral home?

Charles looks outside of the door behind Detective Cook at Lola.

CHARLES

I work in the lab doing various prep and preservation duties. I deal a lot with hazardous materials.

Detective Grim walks to interrogation room four. Lola walks in behind him. Detective Grim sits in the middle between Charles and Detective Cook.

DETECTIVE COOK

I was just asking Charles about what he does at the funeral home.

DETECTIVE GRIM

Who's Dr. John Cherry?

CHARLES

John's my neighbor. He met Lola when she came to my house.

DETECTIVE COOK

When was this?

CHARLES

A couple of weeks ago.

Lola paces around the room. Charles watches her nervously. Detective Cook rips off a piece of paper from his yellow notepad and passes it to Charles with a pen.

DETECTIVE COOK

Charles. Please write down the name and number of your supervisor. The address you gave us doesn't match your employer.

Charles looks confused.

LOLA

Tell him how you touched me. Tell them how you kept me.

Charles looks at Lola. Detectives Grim and Cook watch Charles turn to the wall.

CHARLES

Lola, I didn't realize what was happening. I told you I have some

challenges. I would never hurt my girlfriend!

DETECTIVE COOK
Lola's your girlfriend?

LOLA
No!

DETECTIVE COOK
Charles, there seems to be a problem. Lola's family has yet to report any funeral arrangements for Lola. They're still under the impression that she's missing.

CHARLES
She's not missing. She's been with me.

Detectives Cook and Grim lean forward. Charles wipes the sweat off his forehead. Lola leans over closer to Charles and whispers to him.

LOLA
Victor.

Charles takes the palms of his hands and roughly pushes up on his forehead. The edges of his hair are damp with sweat. He turns to face Lola.

CHARLES
I just wanted to take a picture of you. I love the color red. You were so beautiful in red.

CUT TO:

INT. TELLER LINE OF ACER BANK LOBBY - MID JUNE - EARLY EVENING
[FLASHBACK]

VICTOR
(slightly
seductive)
Lady in red. I love red.

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE - MID JUNE -
AFTERNOON [FLASHBACK]

LOLA
What color next?

CHARLES
How about red?

CUT TO:

INT. MT. PLEASANT, TN - DISTRICT THREE POLICE STATION
- INTERROGATION ROOM FOUR

Charles places his hands over his ears and rocks himself back and forth in the chair. Detectives Grim and Cook glance at one another through the corners of their eyes as they watch Charles talk to the wall beside him and shake in his chair.

DETECTIVE COOK
Is everything ok? Who are you talking to?

There's a knock on the door. Pita enters with John.

DETECTIVE COOK
Can we help you?

JOHN
My name is Dr. John Cherry. You're illegally questioning a patient of mine with diagnosed and documented mental and emotional disorders. Please cease immediately until he has an attorney present.

CHARLES
John, it's me, Victor.

JOHN
Charles, don't say another word.

CHARLES
John, it's me, Victor. I lost it. I tried to keep him at bay.

DETECTIVE COOK
Can we help you?

JOHN
My name is Dr. John Cherry. You're illegally questioning a patient of mine with diagnosed and documented

mental and emotional disorders.
Please cease immediately until he has
an attorney present.

CHARLES
John, it's me, Victor.

JOHN
Charles, don't say another word.

CHARLES
John, it's me, Victor. I lost it. I
tried to keep him at bay.

JOHN
Don't say another word.

CHARLES
I have to tell them where she is.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Where's Lola?

CHARLES
It was Victor. He made me do it.
She's home with mom. 31717. The House
on Jordan Road.

Charles paces back and forth. He looks over to the wall where
Lola's standing. He talks in a low, serious tone.

CHARLES
It was Victor! It wasn't Charles!

JOHN
He's having a psychotic episode. He
can't separate reality from fiction.
He needs to be admitted. Please call
911.

Charles removes his hands from his ears and sits up straight to
look at Detectives Cook and Grim. He wipes his nose and looks up
at them with watery eyes.

DETECTIVE COOK
Grim, let's go. We'll have Pita call
911.

CHARLES
I just wanted my mom to meet her and

she wouldn't stop screaming. It's her fault! Victor warned her!

JOHN

Please make sure someone gets to his home immediately.

Detectives Grim and Cook exit the room together and walk to the front desk.

DETECTIVE COOK

Pita call 911 and tell them you have someone having a psychotic episode. We're going to get Lola. Send backup to 31717 Jordan Road.

Detectives Grim and Cook run out of the station together. They jump in their car and speed away.

EXT. MT. PLEASANT, TN. LAMONTAGNE RESIDENCE - EARLY JULY - EARLY EVENING

Detectives Grim and Cook walk up the stairs and ring the door bell.

DETECTIVE GRIM

It's Detectives Grim and Cook from the Mt. Pleasant Police Department. Open up.

June comes to the door.

JUNE

I'm sorry. My son isn't here right now. Who are you looking for?

DETECTIVE COOK

Your son Charles sent us. We're looking for Lola. Can you let us in?

JUNE

Oh Lola. I know her. She's in the basement. Come in.

June holds the door open.

DETECTIVE COOK
Which way is the basement?

JUNE
Back through the kitchen.

Detectives Grim and Cook walk through the kitchen and down the stairs. They draw their guns and call out to Lola.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Lola, it's Detectives Grim and Cook
from the Mt. Pleasant Police
Department. If you can hear us call
out.

DETECTIVE COOK
Do you smell that?

Detectives Grim and Cook look at one another. They slowly walk around the basement with their guns drawn. They walk past a table with candid photos of people eating, talking and walking. On the top of the pile is a photo of Lola sitting at the bar at Harry's Pub.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Look right there. What's that door?

DETECTIVE COOK
It says Chase Brothers.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Check to see if it's open. I'll cover
you.

Detectives Cook turns the knob.

DETECTIVE COOK
It's locked.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Stand back.

DETECTIVE COOK
Cover yourself.

Detective Grim shoots the doorknob. Detective Cook opens the door quickly. They both begin to cough. They shield their faces with their arms. Detective Cook scopes the room.

In a corner chair Lola sits propped up wearing a dress and red lipstick. She has on a pearl necklace. There's a fake rose on

the floor beside her. A purse with a long strap hangs on a chair.

DETECTIVE COOK
Deceased female.

DETECTIVE GRIM
All clear over here.

DETECTIVE COOK
Let's call it in.

Detectives Grim and Cook walk through the house with their guns drawn.

DETECTIVE GRIM
All clear. Cook?

DETECTIVE COOK
All clear.

June sits in her front chair watching TV.

DETECTIVE GRIM
Ma'am could you come with us please?

JUNE
Where are we going?

DETECTIVE COOK
The house is now a crime scene. We have to leave so it can be processed as such.

JUNE
Where's Lola?

Detectives Grim and Cook exit the home with June. Outside the house a squad car and an ambulance pull up and park in front of the house. An officer opens the back door of the squad car. Kristen jumps out and looks around. She runs over to Detectives Grim, Cook and June.

KRISTEN

Where's Lola?

JUNE

Lola? I know Lola. She's inside in
the basement.

FADE OUT.

THE END

Vita

Born and raised in Chicago, Angela Ridley earned her B.A. from the University of Illinois at Chicago in Liberal Arts and Sciences where she majored in African American Studies and minored in Sociology. Angela worked in various customer service fields, from retail to non-profit. She currently works for Penske Truck Leasing in the DFW area where her main duties include maintaining employee files and compliance items, accounts receivables, customer invoicing and billing and fuel reconciliation. Angela earned her Technical and Professional Writing Certificate from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2015 and plans to pursue teaching in the near future.

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