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RHYTHM AND GLUE

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FLASHBACK TO 1990S: EXT. CONCERT HALL - DAYTIME

Wide view of the street outside, traffic is flowing and uncongested. Fumes pour from the exhaust pipe of a 1980s station wagon left idling in front of the ticket entrance.

INT. BACK SEAT OF STATION WAGON

CHILD JESSICA, eleven year old hispanic girl brightly decorated with wearable hand crafts and CHILD SARAH, eleven year old biracial girl, wearing simple, tidy clothes and clutching a clarinet case are sitting next to each other in the back seat comparing albuterol inhalers.

SARAH

(excited)

I'm glad your dad is taking us to see the orchestra!

JESSICA

It's no big deal. We get season tickets every year.

SARAH

Lucky!

JESSICA

(doubtful)

I guess so...

Jessica into her backpack pulling out a ridiculous paper mask, dripping glitter and feathers, made out of all sorts of household odds and ends. It rips a little. Unfazed by the rip, she tapes it back together with tape in her backpack.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Check out what I made today in art class!

She holds it up over her face making silly sounds, trying to get Sarah to laugh. Sarah laughs. The last sound is a wheezing noise (alt. Darth Vader's ho-purr noise), Sarah's expression turns thoughtful.

SARAH

I had another asthma attack last night. Dad thought Ben was watching Star Wars too loud again and yelled at him to turn down the TV. But this time it was me having trouble breathing. (nearly in tears)

JESSICA
 (consoling)
 Oh that sucks, I know how that
 feels, I have asthma too.
 (cheerfully)
 Which inhaler do you use?

SARAH
 (trying to regain her
 composure)
 Albuterol, you?

Pulls inhaler from backpack.

JESSICA
 Me too!

Pulls an identical inhaler from the backseat car pocket.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
 Have you ever tried taking more
 than two puffs?

SARAH
 (a little confused, this
 has never occurred to her
 before)
 No. Have you?

JESSICA
 Yup, One puff and nothing happens.
 Two puffs clears your airway. Three
 puffs there's not much difference.
 At five puffs you get really
 jittery. At seven puffs you get
 light headed... At thirty puffs you
 pass out.

MONTAGE

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY

Near a row of hallway lockers scattered with backpacks, CHILD JESSICA stands as a part of a group of sporty looking boys, flirting and laughing. Sarah is flirting with a nerdy group of boys. Sarah kisses one of the boys on the cheek and gives a tacit 'switch' signal to Jessica. Sarah waves goodbye to the group of nerdy boys. The girls switch circles and keep flirting without missing a beat.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSIC CLASSROOM

CHILD JESSICA and CHILD SARAH are practicing music in a small ensemble. Jessica is playing electric bass and Sarah is playing a clarinet. Sarah's music stand falls dumping over her sheet music. As Sarah's reaches to pick it up, Jessica passes her an elaborately folded note. Sarah reads it and tries to stifle her laugh.

FRONT OF SUBURBAN HOME - DAYTIME

CHILD JESSICA is jumping rope in the driveway while minding a couple of much younger children. CHILD SARAH bikes over to her, drops her bike in the yard, picks up another jump rope and joins her.

BIKE PATH UNDER A BRIDGE - DAYTIME

TEENAGE SARAH, wearing belly dance bells around her ankles, sitting under the bridge to the side of the path is kissing a boy. A pair of bikes is tumbled on the grass laid beside them with an unusually elaborate picnic (for teenagers) with fresh fruit and veggies.

INT. COFFEE SHOP (OPEN MIC)- NIGHT

TEENAGE SARAH playing clarinet and TEENAGE JESSICA playing electric bass, together are on stage in front of their peers. Jessica's music stand and case are covered in collage, with macrame guitar strap.

BIKE PATH - DAYTIME

TEENAGE SARAH is biking along, a taught rope is attached to her bike seat post and training behind her. TEENAGE JESSICA is pulled into the frame on roller blades, holding onto handlebars lashed to the other end of the rope (like jet skis). They whiz by.

INT. BUSY COLLEGE BAR - NIGHT

Sarah and Jessica are sitting in next to each other at the bar wing-man style, laughing. Their friends, STEPHANIE and LIZ are dancing nearby with partners on an already busy dance floor. Jessica signals a round from bartender, and Sarah and Jessica each drink a shot. They both point to cute guys in the crowd, approach their respective targets, drag them to the dance floor and start dancing.

EXT. COURTYARD OF SARAH AND JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAYTIME

A group of similarly aged friendly young adults, including ANDY, JOSH and MATT, are rowdily playing music together with an odd assortment of instruments. Andy, Josh and Matt are a group of bachelors in their mid-twenties, and casual apartment friends to Jessica and Sarah. They are a little like the coffee-drinking/break-room aliens from Men in Black, only they drink beer, not coffee.

A few bang on bucket drums, a few have hand percussion instruments. Jessica is playing her base guitar (plugged into the same small amplifier that was used at the open mic). Sarah is playing clarinet. Andy plays a baseline on a plastic trombone. Their sixty-seven year old grumpy, misanthropic neighbor, ROGER, walks past them hunched over and shaking his head in annoyance.

INT. SARAH AND JESSICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT, PRESENT DAY

Eating tea and toast, Sarah is sitting at the living room table typing on a laptop. Directly across from her, Jessica is crafting a bookshelf/organizer with Mod Podge and recycled jam jars. Jessica is one jar short. Noticing the gap, Sarah piles an entire jar of jam onto a slice of toast, messily taking a bite and handing the jar to Jessica. She takes it, laughing.

END MONTAGE

INT. SARAH AND JESSICA'S APARTMENT - DAYTIME

Sarah and Jessica are eating breakfast, Jessica is wearing her scrubs and is looking at a flier that reads:

Flier: Add sound to your art! Attach contact microphones to your artwork! Learn to solder! LACMA Workshop 6-9pm, fills up fast, come early to reserve you're seat. Only 13 spots available, first come first served.

JESSICA

I'll be home late tonight. There's a workshop that I'm trying to get into to learn how to solder contact microphones into art projects. I'll have to show-up early though. There's only thirteen spots and no way to register in advance. Hopefully I can run over right after work and get into the class.

SARAH

What's a contact mic?

JESSICA

It's a tiny microphone that amplifies ambient sounds, like the sound a chair makes when it creaks or the rumbles of the air conditioner dripping. The workshop is mostly a soldering class to learn how to attach electronic components to artwork. I've never soldered before and I'd really like to learn. It's a useful skill that I could apply to all sorts of things.

SARAH

Sounds like fun! After you learn to solder maybe we can work music into one of your craft projects together. We could turn the drippy bathroom sink faucet into a musical art installation.

JESSICA

(laughing)

Maybe. As long as we can turn it off at night time.

SARAH

Any coffee?

Sarah yawns and rubs her eyes.

JESSICA

Nope, we're out.

As Sarah's getting breakfast, she trips and breaks her phone case.

Jessica's mom calls her. The phone ringing, and vibrating shakes its way across the table. Jessica lets it go to voicemail.

Sarah fidgets with her broken phone case.

SARAH

A little plastic piece broke-off my phone case. Can you help me fix it?

JESSICA

Sure, if it's quick. Let me take a look.

Sarah slides it across the table to her. Jessica turns it around in her hands, looking at it.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
That's easy. It'll just take a drop of glue. One sec.

She pulls a tiny glue bottle down from the organizer we saw her making previously. She puts a drop of glue on the broken piece.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
That should fix it. Hold it still for a minute while the glue sets.

Jessica tucks a few wires from the same shelf into her scrubs pocket.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Super glue is amazing stuff for bonding materials, but when I know how to solder it will add a whole new range of materials that I can work with.

Jessica goes back to eating her breakfast. Sarah texts her boyfriend, Jose, while holding the glue in place. *Phone dings* Sarah smiles.

SARAH
Jose is coming over for dinner again tonight.

Jessica eats a rainbow cookie from a plate on the table.

JESSICA
Is he cooking again? I love his cooking... I ate the last of the empanadas for lunch yesterday. He's a keeper. I'm surprised he's not here, now.

SARAH
(dirty smirk)
He had an early class this morning, not that we got much sleep last night. I'm sure he'll cook dinner if we ask him to.

JESSICA
Don't wait up for me, but I'll enjoy the leftovers!

Jessica puts on scuffed nurse shoes, grabs her purse from a hook and runs out the door to work. As she leaves, MINI their neighbor Roger's skinny, affectionate black cat, slips into the apartment.

EXT. SARAH AND JESSICA'S APARTMENT - STREET VIEW

Jessica gets into her messy four door sedan with scuffed exterior paint. A leaky bottle of glue has stuck together a lump of clothes and trash. She digs through the pile of clutter for a connector cord and starts playing music.

UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL

JOSE, a a broad shouldered hispanic graduate student in his mid-twenties wearing jeans and a t-shirt is slumped over in his seat half asleep in a large, full lecture hall. There's a ton of math on the board. Jose exhausted and overwhelmed plays a [trendy] game on his phone.

JESSICA AND SARAH COMMUTING TO WORK - INTERCUT

Jessica's car is stopped at a traffic light. DANIEL, a tall thin, energetic young man with bright eyes in his mid-twenties catches her attention as he bikes past her towing a distinctive bike trailer full of tools. Their eyes lock for a moment. He smiles and bikes on. She watches him go with a longing look, wistful of both the cute guy and the movement through the traffic.

Sarah easily carries her bike down the stairs. She straps on her helmet, drops her purse in a front mounted bike basket. She unfolds a collapsable rear basket, puts in a rectangular tupperware. She mounts and rides off.

Jessica's gas gauge is reading past empty. Jessica pulls into a nearby gas station. There's a long line of cars in front of her, and it's moving slowly. She reads the dashboard clock, turns on some music. The cars inch forward by one car. She impatiently checks the clock again and flicks through her music, only a few minutes have past. She finally pulls up to the gas station pump, inserts the nozzle and starts filling her tank. The numbers on the gas pump meter keep going up.

Sarah is biking to work through a quiet, relaxed neighborhood on a wide, uncrowded street with lots of green in the yards to the sides of her.

The numbers on the gas pump meter are still going up. Jessica speeds off to work and the traffic abruptly stops.

She squints angrily at the rear bumper of the car in front of her.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE

Jessica hurriedly parks in a sprawling lot stretched in front of a large corporate medical office. She's stressed. She fumbles while grabbing her purse and phone from her car. She runs across the parking lot. In front of the door, she stops short, takes a deep breath to slow down and calmly walks into the office.

EXT. TECH COMPANY OFFICE

Sarah pulls up on her bike. She effortlessly locks it up on a nearly empty bike rack right next to her office door. She takes off her helmet and walks inside.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE

Jessica walks in and out of exam rooms in a clean friendly office.

In an exam room she takes a patient's vitals: blood pressure, temperature, pulse, blood oxygen and types notes into the computer. She walks out again.

JESSICA

(cheerily to the patient,
as she leaves)

The doctor will be with you in a
moment.

She walks over to the break room, which is barely a tiny counter with an old, mostly empty coffee pot on a warmer. There's a few sugar packets scattered on the counter and a worn looking canister of artificial creamer.

Jessica takes a mug down from a mug rack, fills it with what's left in the coffee pot and drinks it black.

She walks back to a desk with it and sips while she types. Her mom calls again. She glances at her phone and keeps typing. It skitters insistently, falling off the desk. She catches it and sets it back on the desk next to scattered office supplies.

INT. TECH COMPANY OFFICE, SARAH'S DESK

Sarah is typing on her computer with the screen open to Emacs. She types a few lines of code, squints at the screen adding some semicolons. She squints again and changes it back.

She looks into her coffee mug. It's empty with a little residue left from yesterday's coffee.

Sighing, she glances at her coworker Bill's desk. He's not there, his screen display is half code and half an astronomy game. He's got an old IMB keyboard and a few kids drawings of fish and planets pinned-up. Standing-up from her desk, Sarah's phone drops from her lap bouncing on the carpet, she picks it up. (alt. Catches it on a bounce)

INT. TECH COMPANY OFFICE, BREAK ROOM

BILL, a mild mannered programmer in his mid-forties with two kids, is just finishing making himself coffee.

In the large, sunny kitchen, with a well-stocked pantry and a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter. Sarah walks in with the tupperware.

BILL

Are those leftovers from one of Jose's baking projects?

SARAH

(smiles)

Yup. Help yourself.

Sarah sets the cookies and her phone on the counter. Bill helps himself to some rainbow cookies. While washing her mug in the sink, Sarah's elbow bumps the fruit bowl into the phone and they both bounce heavily down on the floor, fruit rolling everywhere. The phone is miraculously unbroken.

BILL

You're phone okay?

SARAH

It's fine. How was your weekend?

Sarah wipes the squished fruit off her phone and Bill helps pick-up rolling fruit.

BILL

I took the kids on the ferry over to Catalina. We went snorkeling.

(MORE)

BILL (CONT'D)

Sophie was pleased to see so many fish, we had a really nice time.

SARAH

That sounds like fun! I saw a concert out there with Jose one weekend that inspired me to try steel drums. How's the coffee machine working today?

BILL

Maintenance fixed it last week, worked fine for me. Have you figured out the service discovery code yet?

SARAH

No, I was just working on that.

BILL

Ok, let me know when you're done so I can check it in.

Bill walks back to his desk.

Sarah takes a carton of organic milk from the fridge, fills her mug and steams the milk on a fancy espresso machine. She fills the portafilter with fresh ground coffee, flicks the switch and...

All at once, STEAM shoots everywhere! The circuit breaker blows. And, the lights go out.

Sarah jumps back startled.

The kitchen is now soaking wet, and dark and she still has no coffee. Sarah looks annoyed at the mug of warm milk in her hand and the disastrous kitchen.

SARAH

Crap.

UNIVERSITY FARM

Jose walks through a grove of fruit trees with his classmates listening while a lecturer gives them information about the soil and irrigation. Jose picks a few leaves off a small tree, crushes them between his fingers and sniffs them.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE EXAM ROOM

Jessica walks into another exam room. An attractive male patient, also in his early twenties, is sitting on the exam table. Jessica smiles at him optimistically.

PATIENT

Hello Nurse! You need me to strip down so you can check me out?
(*winks*)

Jessica's smile becomes plastered and flat.

JESSICA

(in a practiced, polite voice)

I'm not a nurse, I'm a medical assistant. Lets just discuss what brought you in here today. How are you feeling?

PATIENT

It burns when I pee, and my balls hurt.

Jessica takes a long look at him. He's describing chlamydia, an STI. He disrobes, enthusiastically gesturing at his crotch.

PATIENT (CONT'D)

How'd you like a ride when I'm all fixed up?

Jessica doesn't answer, putting on medical exam gloves. Standing back as far away as she can from him, while still reaching, Jessica begins to take his vitals.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE

Jessica walks out of the exam room. From off-screen we hear the PATIENT call out.

PATIENT

Call me!

Up walks STEPHANIE, thirty, a work friend of Jessica's, efficient and capable but overtly materialistic. She's wearing scrubs but her nails are manicured, and she's wearing expensive jewelry.

STEPHANIE

(overhearing the cat call)
Ugh! That guy's the worst.
(MORE)

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I've seen him at least twice
before. Does he have another STI?

JESSICA
(flinches)
Yeah.

Jessica changes the subject.

JESSICA (CONT'D)
Have you seen Liz today? I could
use a little fresh air. Do you guys
want to come on a lunchtime walk
with me?

STEPHANIE
Haven't seen her yet, but the new
[current pop music] album came
out, and I'm excited to share it
with her. No time to walk though,
the insurance guidelines changed
and I have a lot of data entry to
do. There's a pilates class in the
park after work that I'm going to.
Want to join me?

JESSICA
I can't today, I have a workshop
that I am trying to attend tonight.
It's a soldering class for artists
to...

Stephanie eats a piece of candy from a dish on a nearby desk.

LIZ, mid-twenties, another work buddy, and a little harried,
interrupts. Slight and cute, her scrubs are mismatched, her
hair pulled messily back from her face and she's wearing
comfortable looking old, slightly muddy sneakers.

LIZ
Have either of you seen my huge
black Sharpie?

STEPHANIE
No, why?

LIZ
(riffing through drawers)
A few of us are going to a climate
protest at City Hall tonight. I'd
volunteered to make some signs.

STEPHANIE
Again?

LIZ

(fast political rambling)
 Yup, they passed a resolution to decrease the city's carbon footprint by 45% by 2025, but they need public support for the proposed sustainability plan for it to be adopted and carried through.

Stephanie and Jessica give her blank looks.

STEPHANIE

(trying to be helpful)
 I think I saw it over there.

Stephanie points to a cluttered desk piled high with an assortment of office supplies. Liz, tossing things haphazardly, can't find the sharpie.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

That desk drives me crazy! I've been looking around, and I think that I found the perfect desk organizer!

She shows them an open tab with a picture of an elaborate, and very expensive pink bejeweled desk organizer.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Or, what about this one...

Stephanie flicks through two more even more elaborate pictures of desk organizers. She's clearly already put a lot of thought into this, there are Amazon product comparison bars visible.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Oh, I loved this one!

This desk organizer looks like crown jewels, but with pencils sticking out the top.

LIZ

(looking skeptical)
 I agree about the clutter, but this isn't what I had in mind. Maybe something simpler?

STEPHANIE

I know just what you mean!

She opens a tab with an organizer so ridiculously modern art that it can only hold three pens. Liz looks at her incredulously.

JESSICA

I have an idea.

Jessica quickly grabs a few old soda bottles from the recycling bin. She cuts the tops off of them, rinses them out and dries them with a shake.

She wraps a few strips of colorful medical labeling tape around the tops in cheerful stripes, gathers up handfuls of pens off the desk and fills them both. Now, the desk is substantially more organized and the bottles look nice.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Problem solved.

She lifts out the huge black marker that Liz was looking for and hands it to her.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Here you go!

LIZ

Thanks!

Stephanie rolls her eyes.

STEPHANIE

(to Liz)

By the way, I meant to tell you [current music] put out a new album.

LIZ

(matches her enthusiasm)

No! Did it come out already? I've been really looking forward to hearing it!

STEPHANIE

It came out yesterday. I made you a copy.

Stephanie pulls a pair of flash drives from her scrubs pocket and hands them both copies.

Jessica's mom calls her again. Jessica walks outside to take the call.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE

Jessica talking on the phone with her mom.

JESSICA

No, mom. I don't have time to pick-up the kids today. I have a workshop that I really want to go to tonight. No, I can't do it another time. I'm sorry you're car broke-down. Can't you get someone else to do it? No. I'm really not available today. They have soccer practice and a recital! If I do that I'll never make it to my workshop. I know you don't want to disappoint Isabella. Yes, I know how hard she's been practicing.

Jessica notices Daniel's bike and trailer parked across the street piled high with tools. She fidgets longingly with some wires from her scrubs pocket.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Ok, Mom, don't cry. I'll get them after work. Yes, right after work. Yes, I'll hurry.

INTERCUT - SARAH, JESSICA AND JOSE'S COMMUTE HOME

EXT. TRAFFIC JAM

(Bouncy music playing off screen. Possibly the same album that Stephanie had just brought into the office.)

Jessica gets into her car, she pulls up Google Maps and we see her route. It's an absurdly long trip to go a relatively short distance (ex. 40min for 5mi). Jessica is stuck in traffic on a two lane corridor, the cars creep forwards. Jessica looks annoyed. As the cars pass an accident, they space out and start moving.

JESSICA

(relieved)

Finally!

She comes around a cloverleaf onto the highway. Traffic is at a near stop on a spaghetti overpass in Los Angeles, we can see the LA skyline in the distance blurred by the grey smog and heat waves rising from the cars.

Jessica is sitting inside with the windows open and music playing quietly in the background. She's sweating and bored, with no air conditioning.

She looks ahead of her to the next 'Exit' sign in four miles (how many miles?).

Jessica driving in traffic four lanes wide. Traffic is stopping and starting at very short intervals. Her mom calls again. The phone jitters vibrating off the dashboard shelf. She fishes on the floor for it as it rings insistently a second time. She pulls it up with a sock glued to it.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I know they are waiting for me. I'm stuck in traffic. I'll be there as soon as I can.

Her foot alternates between the brake and the gas. She's becoming frustrated and coughs from the accumulating fuel exhaust.

She finally reaches the exit and pulls off the highway, onto a neighborhood street. Everyone else is trying to get around the traffic jam too, the side street is just as packed.

A bicyclist is riding beside her. Her car is stopped in its lane. The cars to her left start moving forwards. She looks over at the moving cars. She's getting increasingly upset. The bicyclist passes her and is followed by a child on a tricycle.

She merges into the left lane. The left lane stops abruptly and the lane she was just in begins moving forward. She merges back to the right lane. It stops moving as soon as she's into it, and the left lane starts moving again. Now she looks really frustrated.

A pedestrian walking a giant tortoise passes her and turns into a park an entrance.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

(exasperated)
You've gotta be kidding me!

EXT. TECH COMPANY OFFICE

With the same practiced ease as the morning, Sarah drops her purse in her basket, puts on her helmet and unlocks her bike from the rack. She pauses to text Jose about groceries for dinner.

Sarah bikes out of the office complex, on her way home.

EXT. AIRPORT

Jose's phone pings on the dashboard with the incoming message from Sarah. He is stuck in traffic too, driving for Uber. The rider is sitting in the front passengers seat, eating greasy pizza and trying to adjust all of the temperature controls on the dashboard.

RIDER ONE

Can we get it cooler in here?

Jose receives a pick-up request from another rider and immediately gets an impatient call from them.

RIDER TWO

(calling)

Are you coming? How long 'til you'll be here?"

JOSE

(on the phone)

We are circling the airport now, I'll be there shortly.

Jose drops off the first rider off at the airport and exchanges him for the second. He cringes when they pull into heavy traffic wrapped around the airport.

SOCCER FIELD

Four very annoyed little kids are standing next to an empty field.

KID

You're late.

The kids clamber noisily into the car, noisily complaining about how late she is and how dirty the car is.

KID (CONT'D)

Hurry up! We have to get Isabella to her flute recital!

One of the little girls is muddy and holding a flute case.

JESSICA

You're late?! I'm late because I came to pick you up! I was supposed to go to an art workshop tonight!

EXT. TRAFFIC JAM

Sarah bikes down a city street. She passes the traffic jam that Jessica is stuck in, biking parallel to it for a block or two then bypassing it by turning down another quiet, residential street.

She stops at a farmers market and buys a variety of fruits and vegetables, including peas and oranges. She unfolds a collapsible bike basket attached to her rear bike rack, drops the produce into it and bikes away.

Sarah is biking back through the quiet neighborhood we saw her leaving on in the morning. She waves to a woman watering a garden planter as she rides by. The woman waves back.

EXT. MUSIC SCHOOL

Jessica drops off the kids and rushes off to the art museum workshop.

JESSICA

Shoo! Go! I gotta get to my
workshop!

(to Isabella)

Good Luck!

INT. LACMA CLASSROOM

She arrives at the art museum at 6:05, narrowly missing getting a spot in the contact microphone workshop. The last seat at a station with a soldering gun has just been filled by a person arriving moments before her.

EXT. SARAH AND JESSICA'S APARTMENT COMPLEX

Disappointed, Jessica arrives home. She drives around the block a few times looking for a parking spot. She parks and walks up through a U-shaped two story apartment complex with a grassy courtyard. Jessica passes Andy, Josh and Matt playing strip beer-pong with a few of their friends in a corner of the courtyard. Josh is adjusting speakers playing music. He's already turning the volume down, but a loud squeak comes out while he's adjusting it. A ball hits him in the head and the player that threw-it takes off his hat.

ANDY

(calls out)

Hey, Jessica! Want to come join us?

DRUNK FRIEND

Yeah, there's a party in my pants,
and everyone's invited!

Jessica raises an eyebrow at the drunk friend, and replies to Andy, not him.

JESSICA

(yelling back across the
courtyard)

Not tonight. Thanks though!

At the bottom of the stairwell just before she walks up is Roger, still sitting in his same cheap plastic chair outside; smoking and listening to sports on an old handheld radio.

ROGER

(complaining)

You kids are making so much god-
damned noise! It's hard to hear my
radio!

Matt narrowly misses a shot, the ball rolls down into someone's already removed shoe. Matt takes off a shoe.

ROGER (CONT'D)

(loudly heckling)

You can do better than that! You
missed by a mile!

The radio crackles. Roger readjusts the dial setting to talk radio. MINI brushes past his legs. He reaches down and pets her. It soothes him.

Andy refills cups, setting up for the next round. Andy misses his shot widely. The ball ricochets a few times and hits Roger in the chest. Andy loses his shirt.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Keep you're clothes on! This isn't
Burning Man!

Jessica smiles at the guys antics walking up the stairs to her own apartment.

SARAH AND JESSICA'S APARTMENT

Sarah and Jose are cutting vegetables next to a bowl of oranges and a couple of open beers. This is a practiced routine; they easily pass ingredients and pans back and forth as they work. Jose starts kissing Sarah on the neck.

JOSE

Why do you smell like coffee?

Sarah giggles, Jessica walks in. Sarah, between giggles, says Hi to Jessica and offers her a beer from the fridge. Jessica takes a drink.

SARAH

I'm surprised to see you home so early. Is your workshop over already?

JESSICA

No. I missed it. I'm so upset, I can't talk about it yet.

SARAH

(empathetically)

I'm sorry. There's food... You won't even have to reheat it tonight. You can just eat with us. Speaking of feeding, I fed Mini again this morning. She snuck inside as you were leaving.

JESSICA

She comes over so frequently, I wonder if Roger forgets to feed her or if she's just looking for a break from him. I passed him on my way in tonight, heckling the guys playing in the quad. He's so crotchety!

Jose slides an arm around Sarah's waist and kisses her.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

(wistfully)

I wish I could find someone whose company I enjoyed as much as you guys enjoy each other.

JOSE

(gesturing to the quad)

There's plenty of guys out there to choose from.

JESSICA

I want to date someone that I actually share interests with, not just some random guy drinking in the quad.

SARAH
(smiles reassuringly)
Don't worry. You'll find someone
you like eventually.

SARAH AND JESSICA'S LIVING ROOM

Sarah, Jessica and Jose are just sitting down to dinner. The table is set with mismatched dishes in a complementary color set. There are bowls of food on the table, including colorful vegetables, matching what Sarah and Jose were just cooking.

SARAH
I wanted to tell you, my coworkers
liked those rainbow cookies. They
disappeared really fast. How was
school?

JOSE
My morning class was boring and I
was still half asleep.
(snickering)
Not that I'm complaining. I had no
idea of about half of what the
teacher was saying. I liked walking
through the farm in the afternoon
though.

They pass bowls of food around. Sarah takes a bite of something in a cream sauce.

SARAH
This is delicious!

Sarah leans over and kisses Jose. Jessica looks away and down at her food.

JESSICA
What's this flavor? I don't
recognize it.

JOSE
(perking up)
Makrut lime. It's one of the new
trees that we learned today. They
are popular in Southeast Asian
cuisine. I picked a few leaves from
a tree I found on the farm. I
wanted to see what I could make
with them, so I tried them in the
sauce.

SARAH

(sighs)

I love the fresh English shelling peas too! Thank you for doing all of the shelling!

Jose smiles, pleased at Sarah's approval. They can hardly keep their hands off of each other.

JESSICA

Why do you have to know about farm trees? Aren't you studying economics?

JOSE

Yes, but it's the economics of farming. It still helps to know how a farm works. I love my parents' farm, but it's hard to make a living as a family farm these days. Even if the weather cooperates, it's hard to compete with the larger corporate farms for produce prices, especially as industrial farming becomes more automated. I keep thinking there's got to be a middle ground somewhere.

JESSICA

(to Sarah)

Speaking of machine automation, how was your day?

SARAH

Oh, you know, the usual. There was a lot of typing code. I couldn't figure out why my program couldn't run, and then I found a missing semicolon. After that the code worked just fine.

(deadpan)

Oh, and the coffee machine exploded again.

JESSICA

Oh, shit! Really!? What happened this time?

SARAH

It got over pressurized and sprayed hot water all over the kitchen. Oh, and the steam blew into the wires and shorted out the circuit.

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D)

It would have been funny, except I was tired and really wanted another cup of coffee.

JESSICA

You want a working coffee machine. That seems fixable at least. I want to be able to get across town. LA traffic wasted half my day. There was this one stretch where we were just sitting still on the highway. My mom had a car crisis, so I had to chauffeur my little siblings between their after school activities, and I missed the workshop! I'm disappointed because I have no idea when they're going to offer it again. If the traffic had been moving at all I would have made it!

JOSE

The traffic was awful! I got stuck in it too. Driving for Uber is helping to pay for school a little, but we don't get compensated for our time sitting in traffic.

SARAH

I passed a part of that on my way home. I took a detour around the park. Why don't you try biking?

JESSICA

(a little snarky)

I'm afraid of getting hit by a car, and I don't want to spend money to get a bike when I have a perfectly functional car.

SARAH

(sincere)

You could use my old bike and I'll show you a quiet path through the neighborhood with fewer cars.

JESSICA

We've been using it as a drying rack for so long, I'd forgotten it was there. Does it even work anymore?

SARAH

I don't see why not. I got a newer lighter weight one, but the other one should still be rideable. Why don't you try it out and see what you think?

Sarah pulls the drying clothes off of a bike hanging on the wall, lifts it down, casually brushes some dust off of it. She spins the pedals to put the chain back on and sets it next to Jessica.

Jose smiles, gets up and starts clearing the table.

JESSICA

(hesitantly)

I don't know. It's been a really long time since I rode a bike.

SARAH

Just try it out for a day. We can work out the kinks when you get home tomorrow night.

Jose pops his head out of the kitchen, juggling oranges.

JOSE

Anyone want desert?

SARAH

I dunno, maybe. What did you have in mind?

JOSE

Crepe suzette? We've got some leftover crepes...

SARAH

Hells yeah!

Sarah eagerly joins him in the kitchen. Jessica, still in the living room, warily eyes the old bike and sits down next to it to get a better look.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sarah and Jose are goofing off.

JOSE

A little orange juice cooked with butter and sugar counts as a serving of fruit, right?

SARAH
(laughing)
Right.

JOSE
I'll need a little liquor for this.

SARAH
Why?

JOSE
You set it on fire at the end.

SARAH
Okay... I don't have any fancy
liqueurs or anything. Will that be
okay?

JOSE
I don't see why not. What do you
have?

Sarah reaches into the freezer and pulls out a liquor bottle.

SARAH
Rum?

JOSE
Sure! Let's try it and see what
happens.

Jose takes several oranges out of the fruit bowl and starts juicing them.

Some orange juice sprays Sarah, she squeaks in surprise. She reaches past him to a sugar jar. She drops a handful of sugar in a pan on the stove then flicks the remaining sugar from her fingers at Jose in retaliation.

He takes her hand, sensually licking the sugar off.

JOSE (CONT'D)
(teasing)
Mmm... even sweeter.

Sarah rolls her eyes (in good humor) and turns to wash her hands.

She looks back up at Jose, and he has a wedge of orange in his mouth, like an orange smile.

JOSE (CONT'D)
 (very muffled)
 Orange you glad I came over for
 dinner?

SARAH
 Huh?

Jose takes the orange wedge out of his mouth.

JOSE
 (clearly articulated)
 Orange you glad I came over for
 dinner?

Sarah laughs at the cheesy joke. Jose looks pleased with himself for getting her to laugh. Encouraged, he rummages in a kitchen drawer. He doesn't find what he's looking for. He opens and closes a few more drawers, eventually pulling out a lighter.

He lights it playfully and unnecessarily, waving it around.

Sarah blows it out but doesn't reprimand him.

He lights it again. She blows it out.

He lights it again. She's still smiling, but a little less enthusiastically. She blows it out again and snatches the lighter away from him.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Off screen, Sarah and Jose are noisily joking in the kitchen. Sarah, still with the lighter in her hand, steps out to the living room to check on Jessica. Jessica is putzing with the old bike, wiping it with a damp rag. Her mood is subdued.

SARAH
 Are you okay?

JESSICA
 (looking nervous)
 Yeah.

SARAH
 You know you don't have to try it
 if you don't want to.

JESSICA
 I know. I'm trying to decide if I'm
 more annoyed at traffic or scared
 about trying something new.
 (MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I trust you when you pull me along on skates for fun. And, I've ridden your bike before, just never so far... I'm not sure if I trust myself. I know you've been riding forever, but I'm not sure I can do it.

SARAH

Since it'd be your first time biking to work, why don't you leave a little extra time so you don't worry?

Jessica idly spins a bike wheel.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I hear that you doubt yourself, but if I can do it with asthma, then you can do it too. You carry your inhaler for emergencies, but you don't have to use it regularly like I do. You'll be fine.

JESSICA

How come biking doesn't seem to trigger your asthma?

SARAH

It's fine as long as I don't go too far or too fast. The regular exercise actually helps because it keeps me in shape. I love the fresh air and exercise after sitting at a desk all day typing. I really do feel better when I do it regularly. It's smoke and air pollution that triggers it mostly these days.

(--)

Also, I tend to prefer residential side roads to major throughways, if I can manage. I know our neighborhood pretty well by now. I can teach you if you want.

JESSICA

That sounds like a good idea.

SARAH

While you make up your mind, why don't you come and join us?

Jessica sniffs the air.

JESSICA

It smells amazing. Just like orange candy. Have I mentioned recently how much I like Jose?

SARAH

I know.
(amiably)
Go find your own...

Sarah disappears back into the kitchen. Jessica looks the bike over one last time, gets up and follows her.

Just in time to see...

Crepes folded into a gently simmering pan. Orange peels litter the counter top. Jose is pouring in an unnecessarily large amount of liquor into the pan. Jose snatches the lighter out of Sarah's hand and sets the pan on fire before Sarah can object. The whole thing takes a split second.

FIRE lights up the stove! Flames shooting everywhere!

Everyone jumps back startled then breaks out laughing in relief as they realize it's not a major crisis.

The room is smokey, walls are splattered and there is a little ash on the stove vent, but the crepes look perfect.

The smoke from the crepes causes Sarah to start wheezing. She discretely takes her inhaler from a bowl of clutter on top of the microwave. She steps into the hallway, leans against the wall, takes two puffs from her inhaler, and stands still for a few seconds. She steps back into the kitchen unnoticed, like nothing has happened.

Jose and Jessica are already cleaning up the mess. Jose wipes the ash from the vent. Jessica is mopping the floor. Jose ducks away from the broom handle as it narrowly misses hitting him in the head. Sarah picks up a rolling beet from the counter as she joins in wiping the counter.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(cracking a nervous joke)
This sure *beets* cleaning up coffee by myself like earlier today!

Sarah joins in the cleaning, scooping orange peels into the trash.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sarah and Jose cuddle next to each other sitting on the kitchen floor. Jessica sits on the ground across from them, all eating the crepes. An orange rolls down from the counter, bounces once and rolls to Sarah's phone. The orange barely bumps the phone and the phone screen cracks.

END.

*** First scene in episode Two is of Jessica biking to work in the sunshine. ***