

POTENTIAL'S DEATH

Written by

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INT. UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC ADVISEMENT OFFICE - MORNING

Ray Penton is seated in the middle of three chairs, anxiously bouncing her leg with her head down. If you didn't know her you may think she was praying, she's not. As she lifts her head, the morning sun from the window to her right catches on her features. In the chair beside her rests the cross body backpack she's had for years. A patch of duct tape is covering an old hole in the bottom. While she tires not to eavesdrop on the current meeting, her advisor Mr. Higgins has a habit of being a little too loud and his voice carries past even closed doors.

MR. HIGGINS (O.C.)

(slightly muffled)

I understand you hate marketing
but this would be the third time
you have changed your major.

RICH SOPHOMORE (O.C.)

Okay yea but comp sci was really
hard, and so was communications. My
mom said that marketing would be
like a easier mix of two but I hate
it.

MR. HIGGINS (O.C.)

How long have you been a marketing
major?

RICH SOPHOMORE (O.C.)

Like a semester.

MR. HIGGINS (O.C.)

And how many marketing classes have
you taken?

RICH SOPHOMORE (V.O.)

I'm in two right now.

MR. HIGGINS (O.C.)

Right. So why don't you finish
these classes and we can talk about
changing you to maybe business if
you still hate it.

Rustling from inside carries to Ray - papers being organized, chairs being pushed back and inevitably the creek of the old wooden door opening. A young brunette dripping in designer clothing walked out of Higgins office, not bothering to acknowledge Ray. She watches as the brunette left.

MR. HIGGINS (V.O.)

Penton come in.

Startled, Ray quickly gathers her bag and enters the room.

INT. MR.HIGGINS OFFICE

Mr.Higgins remains seated behind his oak desk, typing something quickly on his desk top. Higgins is the type of man that could be compared to a shark but only the ones kids can feed at the aquarium.

RAY

Good morning Mr. Higgins. How are you?

MR. HIGGINS

Fine, yes. Please close the door before you sit down.

(still typing)

A moment passes while Ray settles and Mr.Higgins finishes. Ray tries her best to stay relaxed. He takes a moment before looking Ray right in her eyes.

MR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)

Right, I think we should get right to it.

RAY

Sure, Yes absolutely.

MR. HIGGINS

How are you feeling about your renewal application?

RAY

Oh well I sent out my letter of recommendation appeals this week and overall I am feeling very confident

MR. HIGGINS

(Takes a harsh breath in) I wouldn't be so confident just yet. Ms. Penton we both know how competitive the Clear Futures Scholarship is, and I've already read some of the new applications...

Mr. Higgins stops, considering the correct wording for what he is about to confess.

MR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)

I have to tell you that I am not confident in your chances of renewal this year.

The blood rushes out of Rays face, returning quickly to her sporadic heartbeat.

RAY

I'm sorry, what do you mean? I still have a 3.5, I'm following the requirements.

MR. HIGGINS

Says here you got a C last semester in Organic Chemistry. That is a 4 credit class, which dropped your GPA to a 3.42.

RAY

It was a C+ and all my other grades were A's.

(takes a moment to think)

RAY (CONT'D)

Two were an A minus but still.

MR. HIGGINS

We both know they are looking at more then GPA. Your freshman year, tell me, how many clubs were you in?

RAY

Five, I think.

MR. HIGGINS

And you volunteered too, is that correct?

RAY

Yes, occasionally.

MR. HIGGINS

You were working at that diner across town too.

RAY

I still work there actually.

MR. HIGGINS

Well it seems that this is the only extra curricular activity that has lasted.

Ray goes to explain but Mr. Higgins raises his hand just barely off the test, telling her not to waste her breath.

MR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)

Please spare me the "my courses are harder and more time consuming now" speech, it's bellow you. The truth is, your competitors are in the same exact classes and they have the extra curriculars.

RAY

But are their grades as good?

MR. HIGGINS

Does it matter? I thought you understood that this scholarship was never guaranteed. You had everything during the last few applications, but now I'm not so sure you will still be seen as a top applicant.

RAY

I only have a year left though, the board wouldn't deny me now.

MR. HIGGINS

Are you sure?

Silence carries over the office. Mr. Higgins has a point.

RAY

(sobered)

I know juniors get cut, I just didn't think it would be me.

The silence returns briefly

RAY (CONT'D)

So what do I have to do?

MR. HIGGINS

Well rejoining any club now won't do much but a perfect GPA just might. Write your essay on the importance of focusing on grades, especially for your major.

(MORE)

MR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)

That backed with a 4.0 and another stellar recommendation and you might just win the board over.

INT. RAY & CASSIE'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Ray fumbles with her key as she goes to open the door to her apartment. It is a small studio that has been heavily decorated in what is clearly her roommate, Cassie's style. Cassie is sitting crisscross on her bed with a notebook, her laptop and an assortment of colored pens spread about in front of her. Ray places her bag on her twin bed before tapping on Cassie's notebook. She catches Cassie off guard but smiles and pulls out her headphones.

RAY

Hey, I'm back.

Ray walks to the kitchenette to pour herself a glass of water. The music from Cassie's earbuds seeps quietly into the room, Ray is pretty sure she is listening to Mariah Carey's "Fantasy".

CASSIE

Hey! How was it? Was he nice or am I calling animal control?

RAY

He's never nice Cas, but this one is on me.

CASSIE

What, why?

Ray chugs down her water.

RAY

I'm gonna lose my scholarship.

CASSIE

No way! He can't do that!

RAY

You're right, he can't but the board can and they will if I don't get my ass in gear.

CASSIE

But like no one works harder than you, they know that.

RAY

Cassie I got a C+. That's practically a criminal offense as a Clear Futures student. Plus since I took on more hours at work last semester, I didn't have time for clubs which now has royally screwed me over.

Cassie giggles a little,

CASSIE

Okay but like it's one C, don't you still have a 3.5?

RAY

3.42, So no.

CASSIE

Baby, that's practically a 3.5 and the clubs are no biggie, classes are way more important right?

RAY

I thought so, but nope! Apparently all these other applicants still participate in every random club they joined freshmen year, have perfect grades and cured cancer or some shit. So in comparison my "practically" a 3.5 and my five years waiting tables at Dani's Diner looks pretty pathetic.

Ray's eyes are getting glossy, Cassie finally pauses her music, thinking maybe Mariah isn't so appropriate now.

CASSIE

Oh come on Ray, no one is curing cancer.

RAY

(huffs)
That's what you got out of that, seriously?

EXT. UNIVERSITY QUAD- FEW DAYS LATER

Ray and Cassie are walking to the library to study.

CASSIE

Why don't you just rejoin some clubs?

RAY

Higgins said the board would just see that as a last minute resume booster. He wants me to get a 4.0 instead.

CASSIE

That's stupid, who even gets 4.0s?

RAY

Cassie you got a 4.0 last semester.

CASSIE

I'm a business major, it's different.

Cassie nods towards a tree and the two move to the side, leaning against said tree. Briefly Cassie pulls out her weed pen, pulling a small hit

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Plus, we both know I have help.

RAY

Weed is not supporting you academically.

CASSIE

No, I meant my adderall dude.

RAY

Since when are you on that?

CASSIE

Remember when I found my dad with his secretary? Well I asked for it as payment for my discretion.

Cassie takes another hit, before putting it back in the Birkin she's using for a backpack.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Plus Elliot told me how great it is for like "kicking ass in class" and I want to graduate early so yea, I take speed. Its great.

RAY

Well good for you but I can't just pop a little pill to fix my grades.

CASSIE

Why not?

RAY

Cassie that shit is expensive and I can't just get a prescription for a drug I don't need.

The pair climb the steps of the entrance to the main campus library. Ray steps forward to hold the door open for Cassie as they enter.

INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

The library opened to an endless cascades of tables, most filled with other hushed students focusing on miscellaneous assignments. Cassie and Ray quickly made their way through the stacks, pushing them further away from the main area.

CASSIE

How important is this scholarship?

RAY

(not looking up)
If I lose it I will have to drop out.

CASSIE

Jesus, really? God you need these pills more than I do then.

The pair reach a small table tucked in the back corner of the library and place their stuff down on opposite sides.

RAY

I'm not taking adderall Cassie.

Ray and Cassie sit, pulling out their laptops, notebooks and anything else they may need. Ray specifically grabs a hefty Anatomy textbook.

CASSIE

Why not? It's amazing.

(realization)

What if we just share mine? My dad will literally just get me more.

RAY

No, no way. That's cheating!

CASSIE

Rude.

RAY

Sorry, no I didn't mean it that way. I just can't, my sister would kill me.

CASSIE

Didn't think you cared what Jo thought but whatever.

RAY

I don't, just...

(takes a deep breath in)

Look I will think about it. Thank you but right now it's a no. Now, I really need to study for this exam so, could we maybe just drop it.

CASSIE

Fine but know the offer still stands, can't have my best friend dropping out. Like who would I even talk to if you left?

RAY

Yea sure Cassie, I'm gonna focus now.

INT. LAB CLASSROOM - A WEEK LATER

The Teacher's assistant from 5540 Human Anatomy walks the rows of tables handing each student their latest graded exam. Reactions vary from satisfied to devastated and Ray watches them all while she anxiously picks at her finger nails. Professor G., An older woman with a blunt bob and voice that exposes her love for cigarettes, flawlessly addresses the class of about 50 while labeling the muscles in the foot.

PROFESSOR G.

Now as you receive your unit one exam grades, please remember that if you want to go over the test or if you have any questions on the material, office hours for this subject will be held today after class.

Professor G. Finishes her labeling and turns to meet the class's gaze.

PROFESSOR G. (CONT'D)

Everyone understand?

A student in the front row, looking disheartened by their exam slowly raises their hand. Professor G. Gives a light nod granting them permission to proceed.

STUDENT 1

Yes, um well I - will there be any other time to talk, or is today it?

PROFESSOR G.

Just today.

Student 1 nods, disappointed.

PROFESSOR G. (CONT'D)

Great. Let's move on.

As the lesson begins, the T.A. Reaches Ray's table, shuffling through the remaining exams before pulling hers out and briefly looking at it. He hands it to her slightly folded and upside down.

T.A.

You should really come to office hours. This was, well that's rough.

Ray turns her test around to reveal a page full of red marks. Her heart drops, as a circled 53/100 steals her attention.

RAY

Yup. I'll be there. Thanks.

He gives her a slight smile before continuing to the next student. Ray quickly places her notebook over the exam and begins to take notes on what Professor G. Is talking about.

INT. DANI'S DINER - AFTERNOON

Dani's Diner is the type of place where everything is slightly sticky no matter how many times its cleaned and one of the cooks probably has a mom heart tattoo. Jo, Ray's older sister stands behind the counter. Her hair is box dye black and growing out but somehow it works for her. She's grabbing the dirty dishes left by a truck driver, who's getting ready to go. Its as the last of the midday lunch rush. A jukebox in the corner plays what can only be considered diner music (Dion, Paul Anke and maybe Connie Francis on special occasions)

JO

Have a good one Bill.

BILL

Hey you too Doll, see ya!

Bill grabs his jacket and heads to the door in strides but before he reaches the door, Ray rushes in almost running into Bill.

RAY
Oh fuck, sorry Bill.

Ray continues past him and hurries behind the counter, while taking off her jacket.

BILL
Jesus (chuckles)
Bye girls.

The bell above the door echos through the diner. Jo, dishes still in hand, walks past Ray and into the back to drop the dishes with the buss boy.

JO (O.C.)
You're late.

Ray, putting on her apron, follows her sister into the back.

RAY
I know, I'm sorry, I had to go to office hours for my anatomy class.

Ray drops her jacket and keys next to Jo's, clocks in, grabs a guest check pad and a beat up pencil before heading back to the front, Jo following close behind.

JO
You couldn't have gone another day?

RAY
No, this was the only day to discuss the exam and my T.A. Made it very clear that I needed to be in attendance.

JO
(joking)
What you fail or somethin'?

Ignoring her, Ray pulls the rag and cleaner out from under the counter, and starts cleaning the counter.

JO (CONT'D)
Ray did you fail the test?

Ray continues cleaning

RAY

Yes, I did. But the average was a 70, so I wasn't that far behind but it wasn't good.

JO

Did you not study or something?

Her words hit Ray. She stops and really looks at her sister.

RAY

Of course I fucking studied Jo, its just hard. Just drop it.

JO

No shit its hard, you're a Biomedical major.

RAY

Don't be a dick. We both know you wouldn't do any fucking better.

JO

(chuckling) Woah! Whose the dick now? Get off your fucking high horse Ray cause remember no matter now far you go, you and me will always be the same.

RAY

Please, you dropped out of art school after a semester. I'm going to be a doctor!

The Bell above the door rings and an elderly couple walks in, all smiles.

JO

Sit anywhere that suits ya and I'll be right over!

Jo moves to grab a set of cutlery and two menus.

JO (CONT'D)

(Quiet but pointed) You know what Ray, you're right I did drop out but guess what? You and me are in the same spot. You've been working this job just as long as I have. So maybe I'm just a waiter, but at least I'm not delusional.

RAY

I am not delusional.

Jo starts to walk towards the couple but pauses, turns back to Ray, calmly and smiles.

JO
Future Doctors don't fail exams,
you seem pretty delusional to me.

Jo turns back to the couple, ready with her costumer server persona.

JO (CONT'D)
Hello! Sorry for the wait I'm Jo
and I'll be your server today.

Ray can't listen any more, leaving through the back door and grabbing her phone on the way out.

EXT. ALLY BEHIND DANI'S DINE - CONTINUOUS

The door slams behind Ray. She's muttering to herself as she pulls out her phone and dials in Cassie's phone number. Ray paces as it rings. She doesn't pick up.

CASSIE (V.O.)
It's Cassie, leave a message!

The answering machine beats, ray hesitates for a moment.

RAY
Cas, its me. I've thought about it,
and if you're still down, then I'm
in.

INT. RAY & CASSIE'S APARTMENT BATHROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Ray sits on the side of their chipped bathtub, her gaze landing on Cassie, who is finishing her hair with a curling iron. A prescription bottle sits next to the sink.

CASSIE
(Sarcastically)
Its not rocket science, it's a
pill. Just swallow it.

RAY
Don't be a dick, you know what I
mean.

Cassie pulls the curling iron from her hair and places it in sink. She quickly sprays it with too much hair spray that causes Ray to cough just slightly.

CASSIE

Does this look okay?

RAY

Please focus. What would a doctor say, or like what did they tell you when you started taking it?

Cassie, satisfied with the outcome of her hair, unplugs the iron and starts to role the cord over it's handle; the possibility of burning herself doesn't really bother her.

CASSIE

Oh darling I didn't go to a doctor, my Dad just gave it to me.

RAY

Seriously?

CASSIE

Yeah

Cassie grabs the bottle, and begins reading the side label.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

So, it's one pill a day.

She looks up at Ray

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(jokingly)

But that's only a suggestion. One's fun but two's a party, right?

Ray gives a slight laugh, more to appease than out of actual enjoyment of Cassie's joke.

RAY

(unserious)

God shut up.

Ray Reaches for the bottle and Cassie Hands it to her. As their bathroom is quite small neither of them really have to move that much.

RAY (CONT'D)

(serious)

And how much can cause an OD?

CASSIE

You making plans I should know
about there?

RAY

What?

Cassie raises an eyebrow at her

RAY (CONT'D)

OH No! No! Definite not, I'm fine.
I just want to be informed so I can
be careful.

CASSIE

Good.

Ray studies the pill bottle for moment longer before handing it back to Cassie.

RAY

So? How many?

CASSIE

I'm guessing a fuck ton

RAY

Well that's helpful Cas, thanks -

Cassie opens the bottle and picks out two small pills.

RAY (CONT'D)

I would never have thought of that!

CASSIE

Just shut up and take it.

Cassie hands her a pill while simulations swallowing her's dry. Ray gingerly grabs the offering from Cassie's palm. Cassie smiles and leaves the bathroom

CASSIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Now hurry up, Elliots' gonna be
here in Five.

Ray turns on the sink faucet, pushes the pill into her mouth and bends to drink from the tap. As Ray pulls her head up from the faucet, she stares dead into her reflection and we zoom in until her reflection fills the shot.

CUE MONTAGE - THREE WEEKS TIME FOLLOWING RAY

In the same shot, Ray is now in class, focusing on her lectures. She's taking another pill in the bathroom. She's taking an exam. Answering questions in class, correctly. She gets a day of the week pill box, we see it empty and refill a few times intermixed with graded homework, quizzes and exams being handed back to Ray. Her scores quickly improve. In the last shot we again see Ray take a pill in her bathroom, close up on her face as we cut to the same shot now in Higgins office.

INT. MR.HIGGINS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The warm tones from the overwhelming oak office is muted by the early march snow tat flutters past the window, leaving Higgins' office feeling cold yet crisp. Ray always thought this building looked better in the fall. She and Mr. Higgins sit across each other at his desk. A large stack of papers, full of Ray's test reports stands between them. Mr.Higgins is typing rather aggressively as his eyes flip between paper and screen, and his wire glasses slowing slip from his nose. Ray watches him.

MR. HIGGINS

And what did you say your expected exam average will be for 5540 Human Anatomy?

RAY

Currently it is an 88 but If I score above an 92 on all other exams within the semester, including the final it will be a 97.

He types once again, pushing his glasses back up instead of looking at Ray.

MR. HIGGINS

Would it be right to say you have done these sort of calculations for all of your classes Ms.Mention?

RAY

Yes Sir.

Mr. Higgins pulls his hands away from his keyboard and traces his eyes up till they meet Ray's

MR. HIGGINS

Well I hate to admit I'm shocked.
Clearly our last discussion landed
as I hoped. You have made some
serious improvements on your
grades.

Ray smiles brightly, Forgetting who she's with.

RAY

(too excited)
Thank you!

MR. HIGGINS

You still have three months
however, and the application is due
May 5th. You might be good now, but
don't let that get to your head. I
still see a two possibilities for
B's.

RAY

I know sir, and I am working to get
them where they should be.

MR. HIGGINS

I would hope so.

Mr. Higgins car-fully removes his glasses, folds them and places them to the side. He leans in towards his desk and takes a deep breath. Ray symutaionly pushes back into her chair, trying to regrain some distance. She bites her tongue.

MR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)

You should know that this level of work ethic is what the university expects from it's students.
Anything less will not cut it and any medical school worth paying for will say the exact same thing. So, while I don't know exactly what you changed, I urge you to keep it up.

Ray smiles lightly as she begins to gather her things. Higgins rarely says when a meeting is over, so she's learned to just know when its time for her to get out of his office. She stands to leave.

MR. HIGGINS (CONT'D)

Ray do keep up the good work.

RAY

I will.

INT. DANI'S DINER - SATURDAY

The Diner is packed, an assortment of families, older couples and teenagers fill the booths. Waiters are quickly moving about their sections and the coffee is not brewing fast enough. Something a little brighter than usual flows from the Jukebox. It mixes nicely with the conversations growing from each table. Jo is handing out drinks to a family of four and places a large stack of napkins between the parent and their overly excited toddler.

JO
(kindly)
Just in case.

PARENT
Oh Thank you. Not your first rodeo,
I bet.

JO
Not my last either.

Jo brightly moves to take the orders of an elderly couple sitting near the window. She hums quietly along to the music as she walks. She passes Ray on her way. People are coming and going, and Ray really just wants to go on break, but instead she delivers three breakfast combo plates to a group of bikers at the bar.

WAITRESS 1
Ray, when you get a chance could
you clear off table 4? I'm taking
my smoke break.

RAY
Yea, of course.

WAITRESS 1
(moving into the kitchen)
You would think some of these
people could just go to IHop or
something.

Ray smirks a little, surprised to have her own thought vocalized. She quickly moves to clean off table 4, who's previous occupants were a group of teens. The half n' half packs are stacked like a small field goal surrounded by discarded sugar packets that were folded into paper footballs. Its messy but at least they stacked their plates. She just barely gets the stack off the table when someone pulls her waste into a hug.

CASSIE
Ray!

Ray startles and drops the stack onto the table. The bottom plate breaks. She turns to see Cassie but catches Jo's eyes from across the diner first.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Oh ops, I'm sorry.

Elliot awkwardly stands beside Cassie. Elliot is a lanky boy with the completion of a flashlight and blonde curly hair. He's a few years older, and a grad student at their University. He and Cassie have been dating for a year now. Ray is not a fan.

ELLIOT
Baby I told you not to scare her.

RAY
It's okay, I can clean it. It's only a small break. Let me just move the non-broken ones and I'll be back.

Cassie nods, then looks at the messy table

CASSIE
Can we sit here anyways?

Elliot's top lip scrunches up at Cassie.

ELLIOT
Cassie, there's shards of plate everywhere and it's dirty.

RAY
Yea um maybe sit over there instead, and I will be over in a second.

Ray points to a table a few booths down, that's tucked in the corner of the dinner. She keeps walking towards the back. Jo follows her.

CASSIE
Thanks Ray!

INT. BACK OF THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ray moves to bring the plates to the busboy while grabbing a rag and a small trash can.

JO
What are they doing here?

RAY
I don't know Jo, getting breakfast.

JO
(sarcastically)
Slumming it with us common folk, I
guess.

INT. MAIN DINNING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Jo follows Ray back to the table, grabbing a spray bottle and her own rag as she leaves.

RAY
Could you be nice please, they're
my friends.

JO
Really that slice of wonder-bread
is your friend.

Jo nods towards Elliot as he points to something on the floor.

RAY
Cassie is my friend and that makes
him a friend by association.

Ray and Jo work together to clean up the broken porcelain. Ray puts the bigger chunks into the trash can while Jo scoops the smaller pieces into a pile, for Ray to push into the trash.

JO
Great Ray, you really know how to
pick them.

Jo sprays the table down and wipes off any remaining mess. Ray unstacks to half n' half and places it back in its small bowl.

RAY
Thanks Jo.

Ray looks towards Cassie. She and Elliot are arguing over something, but that isn't surprising.

RAY (CONT'D)
Could you take this? I have to go
handle them.

Ray hands Jo the rag and trashcan, Jo accepts.

JO

Sure. Oh and do remind them that we
don't offer caviar till after noon.

Ray rolls her eyes but doesn't actually respond. She makes her way over to Cassie and Elliot. The pair seem to be moving from gossip to some petty argument and back again by the time she actually stands in front of them.

RAY

Do you guys want food or are you
just here to stalk me?

CASSIE

I would love an iced tea.

ELLIOT

(Hesitantly) No I'm good thanks.
Guess I'm just stalking.

He chuckles slightly at his own joke, Cassie giggles, but Ray just kind of look at him.

CASSIE

(jokingly)
Oh my god you're terrible.

RAY

Okay then, I'll be right back.

Ray leaves but we stay on Cassie and Elliot. Cassie's smile drops, as she gets back to their earlier conversation.

ELLIOT

Don't look at me like that.

CASSIE

Come on, she'll be fine with it.
Just let me do the talking.

Ray returns with Cassie's iced tea.

RAY

Fine with what?

Cassie takes a sip before she speaks.

CASSIE

Okay Ray so we have a little
situation. My mom found out about
my dad giving me, well you know and
since she's all anti meds, they cut
me off from our supply.

RAY
(shocked and confused)
I'm sorry what?

CASSIE
Yea, I know bummer, right? But our
knight in shining armor over here
has a solution.

Cassie smiles over to Elliot, who does not match her enthusiasm.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Elliot knows a guy that has a like
Adderall substitute and he's
willing to sell.

Ray remembers she's still at work and looks around, hoping Jo or anyone else isn't watching.

RAY
Cassie, I can't talk about this
here.

WAITRESS 1 (O.S.)
Ray, table 8 - could you grab it?

The waitress gives a hand gesture in place for her lack of words. Ray thinks she means they need ketchup.

RAY
(Smiling)
On it.

Ray reaches across the table and grabs the ketchup off Cassie and Elliot's table.

CASSIE
You really let her boss you around?

RAY
Well no, I'm just doing my job.

Ray quickly moves to table 8, dropping off the ketchup and snatching an unnecessary menu from their table in the process. She returns to her friends, and Cassie continues the conversation like she never left.

CASSIE
I'm leaving for LA right after
this, remember I have my brother's
wedding? And you have an exam
Monday. So...

Cassie shifts her focus to Elliot.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Elliot.

ELLIOT
Oh yea, sorry.

Elliot pulls a used pill bottle with the label ripped off out from his jacket pocket and puts it on the table.

RAY
Jesus! What is that doing here?

Ray quickly places the menu down like a wall between the bottle and the rest of the diner.

CASSIE
(pleased with herself)
It's our new stuff! I covered this batch, but we have to split the cost next time. Ok?

RAY
No, guys what is it doing here?
Could get fired for this shit. You couldn't have left it at the apartment and called me?

ELLIOT
(thoughtfully)
Yea that might have made more sense.

CASSIE
Ray, I love you but don't overthink this. I literally already switched to these and they're great.

Cassie grabs the bottle and tucks it into one of the front pockets of Ray's jeans. Ray tries to protest but Cassie won't allow it.

ELLIOT
Take two daily, okay? The dose is different. Not bad different though, way better than name brand. Promise.

Jo is standing behind the bar as this interaction occurs, She can't fully hear but can read her sisters face as clear as day. However, a customer pulls her attention away from the trio.

RAY

Okay, fine. Thanks, now please stop talking about it and actually order something.

CASSIE

Aw wish we could but like I said I have to run and he's my ride to the airport.

Cassie finishes her tea and stand to leave, Elliot follows. She gives Ray a light hug.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Sorry for the ambush. You're gonna kill that exam and I'll see you in a few days.

Cassie looks back at the table, remember her tea. She reaches into her purse to grab some cash, but Ray stops her.

RAY

It's a tea, I got it, just get out of here.

Cassie gives her a real hug now.

CASSIE

See this is why I love you.

Cassie and Elliot leave the dinner, Ray lets out a deep breath.

WAITRESS 1 (O.S.)

Ray?

RAY

Sorry, I'm coming.

Ray gets back to work, hoping the rest of her shift goes a little more smoothly.

EXT. DANI'S DINER PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Ray pulls her car keys out of her bag; small keychains crash together with the movement. Jo is walking next to her, they don't really talk much, both equally tired from their long shift. Her car, which she names Boy about four years ago, is nothing to look at, but when has a 89' Honda civic ever been called pretty. Ray struggles to unlock her car, the key just won't go into the lock right. Jo nudges Ray out of the way and forces the key in and unlocks the car with ease. Jo moves to the passenger side and gets in, so does Ray.

INT. RAY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ray and Jo drive in silence. The sounds of the road and a rusting engine fill the space before Jo finally speaks up.

JO
So what was all that about this morning?

RAY
What do you mean?

JO
Barbie and wonder-bread had you pretty on edge there. Wouldn't you say?

RAY
Don't call them that.

JO
You're avoiding my question.

RAY
No I'm not. It was just busy and Cassie kinda doesn't get that I actually have to work.

Jo lets the silence return to the car briefly. Boy's breaks squeak relentlessly as Ray stops at a red light.

JO
Look, you don't actually have to tell me anything but I'm calling no bullshit.

RAY
That's really unnecessary.

JO
Good then just do it and it won't matter. The light turns green.

JO (CONT'D)
You safe?

RAY
Of course.

JO
Not following in mom's, footsteps, right?

RAY

(Slight laugh) Are you asking if I let a traveling musician get me pregnant?

JO

Well, did you?

RAY

(real laugh)

God no. Neither of us are that dumb.

Jo laughs a little too. The rundown buildings outside her window rush by, as Ray drives.

JO

Okay. And um last thing, whatever is going on,

RAY

Nothing is going on. Cassie has just been asking for my help with an assignment and came by to nag me about it again.

Jo doesn't buy it.

JO

Uh-huh and what class is it for?

RAY

What?

JO

The assignment, what class is it for?

RAY

Her gen-ed science class.

JO

Yea okay sure. Aren't you meant to take that you freshman year?

RAY

Most of the time but she didn't. I don't really know why.

JO

Okay, sure.

Jo pauses again.

JO (CONT'D)

I hate when you lie to me. You're
shit at it.

RAY

I'm not lying.

JO

Whatever Ray, just don't rely on
Cassie to be there for you, I mean
seriously be there for you. I don't
know what's going on and honestly,
I don't care. Lets just say it's
some stupid assignment right now,
but know that if it has the
potential of going south, those
trust funds are only gonna look out
for themselves. So I expect you to
do the same. Got it?

Ray looks over at her sister, who is deathly still and
staring dead ahead, not even wanting to give a hint of eye
contact. Ray switches her focus from her sister to the road,
trying to get a read on her while also not crashing. She
can't.

RAY

Yea okay Jo. I'll remember that.

JO

Good.

Jo moves to turn on the radio, tuning it to a station playing
80s rock but it's somewhat unrecognizable through the static.
The two don't change it. Static is better than silence.

INT. RAY'S CAR - LATER

Ray and Jo pull up to a worn down apartment building. Jo
starts to gather her things, unbuckling her seatbelt before
turning to her sister.

JO

Thanks for the ride.

RAY

Yea of course.

Jo gets out of the car, but before shutting the door she
turns back and bends down to look at Ray.

RAY (CONT'D)

What?

JO
Don't be stupid, okay?

Ray is taken aback but doesn't question her older sister.

RAY
(playfully)
Future Doctors are never stupid Jo.

JO
That's right.

Jo smiles and shuts the car door. Ray watches through her window as she enters her building. Once she knows Jo is fully inside, Ray reaches for her bag, digging till she pulls out the pill bottle Cassie gave her earlier. She rolls the bottle in her hands, her eyebrows grow tight in thought as she bites at the dead skin on her lips. In a light burst of bravery she opens the bottle dishes out a pill, then remembering Eliot's directions, grabs one more. Ray looks down at the two mystery pills before popping them both in her mouth, swallowing them dry. She closes the bottle, places it back in her bag and looks towards Jo's building before driving away.

INT. RAY & CASSIE'S APARTMENT - TWO WEEKS LATER

It's the middle of the night and the apartment is still and dark. Ray and Cassie are fully asleep but slowing as it pull's into Cassie, she gradually become more and more uneasy. She's mumbling as she tosses and turns.

CASSIE
(Quietly) It wasn't me, please.

Her nightmare gets worse, and Ray slowly awakes from the disturbance. Cassie's mumbles grow in volume quickly changing into screams.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Please! Elliot!

Ray is at her side in a second, trying to shake her awake. Cassie snaps out of it, sitting up in bed to meet Ray. Cassie is sporadic in her eyes and breath but after a second she drops her weight into Ray's shoulder. Her breathing slows as Ray pulls her into a hug.

INT. RAY & CASSIE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Ray sits at the small table in her apartment, the suns rising light covers her and the textbooks, notebooks and laptop that are spread out around her.

She looks slightly dazed, not fully focusing on the tasks ahead of her. Cassie is still laying in bed behind her.

As Ray reaches for her cup of coffee, her elbow nocks a book over and it falls to the ground, sending a loud bang through the apartment. Cassie huffs, still groggy but awake, and irritated by the disturbance

CASSIE
Could you be any louder right now?
I'm trying to sleep!

RAY
I'm sorry, was an accident.

Ray picks up her book and returns to her work only for a mere moment before getting distracted once again. She turns to fully face her friend.

RAY (CONT'D)
Cas, are we gonna talk about last night?

Cassie rolls over to face Ray, still heavily tucked in the layers of pink and white blankets.

CASSIE
What about it?

RAY
Oh I don't know, maybe the part where you were screaming bloody murder in your sleep?

Cassie sits up in bed. She's missing her normal glow, eyes tense with growing bags.

CASSIE
I think you were dreaming Ray, that didn't happen.

RAY
(confused)
What? You woke up screaming and then cried on me till you fell back asleep.

CASSIE
(serious yet sleepy)
You know you really are a shit liar and that's not even funny.

It clicks that Cassie isn't kidding and Ray shifts from confusion to concern.

RAY

You really have no memory of last night?

CASSIE

No. I was sleeping Ray like I'm trying to do now.

Cassie lays back down, adjusting to regain her lost comfort. Ray watches her for a moment.

RAY

Cassie, do you know if what we're taking has any like big side effects?

CASSIE

No and I don't care. Now shhh.

RAY

But that would explain why you don't remember!

CASSIE

(Interrupting)

Ray I swear to God.

RAY

Fine, we can talk about it later.

CASSIE

(with false sweetness)

Shut up.

INT. LIBRARY- A FEW DAYS LATER

Ray is sitting at a desk tucked into the corner of the library, it doesn't seem like anyone else is working around her. She focuses intensely on what she is reading and has her headphones on, definitely playing music a little too loud. Someone taps her on the shoulder and she jumps, quickly pulling off her headphones and looking at none other than Elliot.

RAY

Jesus, you scared me!

ELLIOT

Sorry. I tried getting you attention but you couldn't hear me.

RAY

Oh. Um whats up?

ELLIOT

Just saw you and thought I would
say Hi.

Ray looks around. This isn't a "passing by" section of the library.

RAY

I don't think I've ever seen you
hear before.

ELLIOT

Yea I know but I have a bunch of
papers to grade for the class I
T.A. for and my roommate is playing
video games so loud I can't read.
So um...

Elliot pulls one of his hands up to cup the back of his neck and light lifts up his heals before smacking them back on the creaky hard wood flood.

RAY

So you came to the library.

He smiles lightly, kind of like a little kid.

ELLIOT

So I came to the Library.

Ray pulls her lips into a tight smirk and somewhat returns to what she was reading. She expects Elliot to leave now and when he doesn't, the two just linger in the dead air of their conversation.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

Can I sit?

He motions towards the empty chair across from Ray, who is slightly dumbfounded by the request.

RAY

Oh. Um yea just let me...

She quickly makes room on the table for him, stacking some of the papers and the textbook in front of her. Elliot sits and pulls out his own stack of papers to add to the table's collection

ELLIOT

Thanks.

Ray smiles and puts back on her head phones, attempting to return to her course work.

INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY - 15 MINUTES LATER

The pair have slouched into their spots at the table, it's all very still until a pen attached to Elliot's hand is tapping the page in front of Ray. She looks up.

RAY

What?

Elliot seems nervous and doesn't meat her gaze.

ELLIOT

(unsure)

Have you seen Cassie recently?

RAY

I mean I live with her, so yeah,
but I left this morning before she
woke up.

ELLIOT

Has she said anything weird to you
then?

RAY

What do you mean?

Elliot takes a deep breath.

ELLIOT

I think she's gonna break up with
me.

Ray, expecting him to say something far more serious, returns to her work.

RAY

(dismisivly)

Yea I doubt that.

ELLIOT

Really? Cause she has been
completely ignoring me all week.

He leans forward in his chair.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

Yesterday I saw her in the quad and
she got all panicky and turned to
walk in the opposite direction.

RAY

Dude come on -

ELLIOT

No listen to me. Last time I was with her she would not look at me and she was picking at her skin, talking to herself... like it's weird!

RAY

I bet she was just exhausted or something. I don't think she's been sleeping well.

Ray looks back up at the Boy across from her.

RAY (CONT'D)

You know she did have a nightmare about you the other day. But she didn't remember it in the morning.

ELLIOT

How do you know it was about me then?

RAY

Her yelling "Elliot" was a pretty good clue.

Elliot looks hurt, as he quickly gathers his things and stands to leave.

ELLIOT

I'm sorry but I gotta find Cas. Thanks for the help though.

RAY

Yea sure, good luck with everything...

Her words are lost to the library, as Elliot is already gone from sight.

INT. CLASSROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Ray is sitting at the back left table in her afternoon class. There isn't anything particularly important going on, as the professor moves through a lecture. Ray is meant to be taking notes but instead the page in her notebook is filled with scribbles and little reminders saying, "Focus". Ray looks around the classroom, most of the other students are dutifully taking notes, even raising their hands to ask questions. Ray, however, drags her hands down her face.

PROFESSOR

When we look at the supraspinatus,
it is nessiasry to remember the
three other muscle it located by.

Ray can't take it any longer. She quietly gets up from her seat and heads to the door.

INT. CHEMISTRY BUILDING HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

The hallway is mostly empty, the sounds of a few ongoing classes lightly filling the air. Ray wanders for a moment, when she suddenly catches a figure moving at the end of the corridor heading down a different hallway. She's blonde and in a hurry.

RAY

(lightly to herself)
Cassie?

Ray quickly follows the girl and as she gets closure, it is undeniable that it is Cassie walking in front of her.

RAY (CONT'D)

Hey! Wait up!

Cassie doesn't stop or turn to look at her but instead continues on her path. She spots a bathroom door tucked away from all nearby classrooms.

RAY (CONT'D)

Cassie!

Cassie looks behind her briefly before heading inside. Ray stops for a second, her face is twisted as her confusion takes it's course. She shakes it off and continues to follow her friend.

INT. UNIVERSITY BATHROOM

Ray opens the door with enough force that it slams into the painted brick wall next to her. Two girls look up from the chipping countertop and leaky sinks and towards Ray. They are slightly off put by her entrance.

RAY

(awkwardly)
Sorry.

The two girls quickly gather their things, revealing Cassie at the end of the counter, focusing intently on washing her hands.

The two girls move around Ray to leave the bathroom, and as the door closes behind them Ray refocuses on her friend.

RAY (CONT'D)
Cassie, what the hell?

Cassie eyes dart up from the sink. The two make eye contact through the mirror. Her face is sunken but she quickly tries to cover it with a smile

CASSIE
Oh Ray, Hi, what are you doing here?

RAY
(confused)
I was in class and needed a break -
I was calling your name in the
hall, didn't you hear me?

CASSIE
(jokingly)
Obviously not.

Cassie dries her hands and finally positions herself to look directly at Ray.

RAY
What are you even doing here? This
is the chemistry building.

CASSIE
Yea I know. Elliot asked me to meet
him hear but this building is a
maze.

Ray takes a second.

RAY
He thinks you're gonna break up
with him by the way.

Cassie looks around the bathroom, noting that they are the only people in there.

CASSIE
And why would I do that?

Ray relaxes slightly, pushing her back against the counter and pulling her attention away from Cassie and instead down the short bathroom hall.

RAY

He thinks you've been acting all
strange and like ignoring him.

Cassie giggles slightly, it sounds more sarcastic than
comical.

CASSIE

I'm not ignoring him.

She pauses and drops her bag on the counter, swiftly
searching for something inside.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(to herself)

Not exactly at least.

Cassie stops digging and pulls out a pill bottle matching the
one she gave Ray. She has no struggle opening it, yet inside
blue powder has replaced the familiar pills. She quickly dips
her pinky in coating its tip in blue powder.

RAY

Honestly I don't really blame him.
I mean after what happened the
other night and -

CASSIE

Again I have no memory of what
happened so -

Cassie brings her pinkie to her nose and swiftly takes a
short breath in, pulling the powder from her finger.
Simultaneously Ray looks back to Cassie just in time to
watch. Ray's mix of confusion and shock cultivates quickly
into anger, catching Cassie off guard.

RAY

(panicky)

What the Fuck Cassie!

CASSIE

(defensive)

What? Just need a little pick-me-
up. It's the same shit we take. It
just works a little faster this way
- try it.

Cassie tilt the bottle towards Ray. Ray takes a fast step
back and forces a sharp breath out, trying to control her
anger. Cassie places the bottle onto the counter behind her.

RAY

(pointed)

Are you fucking kidding me?
We are at school and you're
snorting shit? In the public
bathroom?!

Cassie's light smile drops as her eyes grow tight and dart around the room, she lands back on Ray, who is pacing between the door and her original spot.

CASSIE

Come off it, it's fine.

Ray shakes her head, her confusion and thought are transparent on her face as she comes to a realization. She stops moving as she returns to the sinks and looks Cassie dead in the eyes.

RAY

(growing in volume)
Elliot was right. You are
absolutely insane!

Cassie meets Rays anger now equally and moves to be directly in front of Ray leaving little space between them.

CASSIE

Fuck you! Like you have any room to
judge me!

RAY

I'm not the one snorting mashed up
mystery pills.

Cassie Scoffs.

CASSIE

Oh you mean the same "mystery
pills" I watch you take two of
every morning like its fucking
communion.

With her free hand she cast's an accusatory pointer finger in Ray's direction, even going as far as to push her with it to accentuate her words.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

And the one you take after class!

RAY

That's different and you know -

Cassie turns on her feet addressing the space as if it were a courtroom filled with a all intrigued jury.

CASSIE

(Interrupting) OH and lets not forget the secret indulgence you have before those late night study sessions, as if I didn't fucking notice!

RAY

I take the pills YOU offered me but When was the last time you were even sober? At least I'm not a fucking junkie like you!

Cassie manically laughs, her hands are aggressively moving at her side and up at Ray.

CASSIE

You wanna talk about Junkies, huh.

She laughs again, unable to stand still.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(Viciously) You would know all about that wouldn't you? How's your mom doing anyways? Still down in some crack den, sucking -

RAY

(Furious) Don't you dare talk about my mother, you entitled -

Cassie stops everything, her whole body jutting back and turning as if trying to locate something.

CASSIE

SHH! Do you hear that? I think someone is coming?

The two girls both fall silent, Ray is glued to her spot, to nervous to make a single noise. They wait for maybe 10 seconds, but nothing happens. Cassie is still moving about trying to hunt the sound down. The distance grows between them.

RAY

No one is coming asshole, it's literally silent.

Cassie freezes looking at Ray only for a second.

CASSIE
(mumbling)
No, no not again, please.

She reaches back towards the abandoned bottle, and clumsily sticks her finger in the bottle, once again pulling it to her noise and sucking in the blue powder. Ray moves to stop her but doesn't get there quick enough.

RAY
Cassie Stop!

CASSIE
You don't get it, I need this!

Ray shakes her head, her anger shifts now finding it's footing in bubbling disappointment.

RAY
Yea, no. Absolutely not. This ends now.

Ray flicks on the sinks that sits between them and points at it.

RAY (CONT'D)
Dump it, or I will.

Cassie shifts her eyes between the sink and her powder a few times before landing on Ray.

CASSIE
Over my dead body.

Ray lunges forward and grabs the bottle, Cassie tries not to let go but Ray pulls harder, ripping it from her hand, as a bit of powder tips out and on to Ray's Shirt. In her loss, Cassie sputters out of balance and shuffles till her back hits the wall. Ray looks down at her shirt.

RAY
shit.

Cassie doesn't respond, as her eyes are forcefully closed despite tears escaping and her hands have found their way to her head, quickly moving to cover her ears. The muscles in her face push and pull at each other while she intensely murmurs something to quiet for Ray to catch.

CASSIE

(hushed)

Make it stop, make it stop, make it stop.

Ray watches in horror. Unsure of what to do, she places the bottle back down and calmly approaches her friend.

RAY

Hey, it's okay. It's all going to be fine.

Ray lightly touches Cassie's cheek, but it doesn't stop her chatter.

CASSIE

(Slightly louder) Please make it stop, please.

RAY

Make what stop?

Suddenly Cassie's eyes burst open as she hurdles herself towards the bottle that Ray left unguarded.

CASSIE

I have to make them stop!

Ray tries to hold her back but feels herself slipping, so she steps back and nocks the bottle into the sink. Cassie completely loses her balance and trips, smacking her head across the counter, before falling to the ground.

RAY

Holy Shit Cassie! Are you ok?

Ray drops to the ground, trying to pull Cassie off the floor. Cassie's forehead is bleeding, coating her once blonde hair. Her eyes are fluttering as she swipes her hand across her forehead, covering her fingers in blood.

RAY (CONT'D)

Cassie, I need you to sit up, okay?

Cassie brings her hand down so that she can see it, rolling the blood lightly between her fingers, she lets out a light, little laugh. Then meets Ray's gaze.

CASSIE

(deranged)

Can you hear it now?

Ray looks at her puzzled. Cassie's pupils grow significantly in a matter of seconds as they move past ray, glaring something else down entirely. Ray tries to turn and look behind her but Cassie grips her chin with her bloodied hand, pulling her face down to hers.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(whispered)
They're coming for us.

Cassie's hand drops as she fully loses consciousness and collapses in her best friend's arms.