

YOUR PLACE OR MINE

Written By

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Aggregate Films
Hello Sunshine
Lean Machine

OVER BLACK we hear CARS and AIRPLANES and we

FADE IN ON A BLUR: **DEBBIE MENK**, blowing past us.

EXT. LAX -- DAY

Debbie, 40's, smart, practical, risk-averse, carries a rolling duffel and a backpack with a paperback sticking out.

She's dressed practically: jeans, sturdy boots.

She bumps to the crosswalk and stops, obediently waiting for the light despite the fact that there is little traffic.

From the other side of the street, a voice.

VOICE

Come on, Lady!

Debbie turns to see **PETER COLEMAN**, also 40's, across the street. Peter's sly charm is detectable at a distance. His suitcase is designer and he wears a suede jacket that costs more than everything Debbie wears/is carrying.

PETER

Cross the damned street.

DEBBIE

I can't!

She points to the light -- RED -- and the sign: DON'T WALK.

PETER

Seriously, there is no one on the--

The light changes. Debbie bumps her way across the median to Peter. She's a bit flustered by the time she gets to him.

DEBBIE

I wanted to meet you at the house--

PETER

Sorry my flight was delayed, I--

DEBBIE

I had it all planned--

PETER

You? Had something planned? Shocked to hear that. Hi, by the way.

DEBBIE
 (smiles)
 Yeah, hi.

They hug. He smiles. She's still kind of uptight.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 Okay, I wanted to make sure you
 knew what to do, so I left you a
 couple notes in the house--

PETER
 Again, shock-ed--

DEBBIE
 Hey, come on, don't give me shit.

PETER
 I have to. It's kinda my job.

DEBBIE
 (grins)
 Very weird to see your face.

PETER
 Ditto, I forgot what you look like.

A beat. They gotta go.

DEBBIE
 Jack's expecting you. Gotta warn
 you, he's a bit moody lately--

PETER
 Not with me, he won't be.

DEBBIE
 Uh huh, I'm sure you have parenting
 all figured out--

PETER
 Hey, don't give me shit.

DEBBIE
 I have to. It's kinda my job.
 (starts to go)
 Oh and Peter, thank you.

PETER
 Oh don't do that, please. Gratitude
 makes me cringe.

DEBBIE
 Healthy.

Finally, they step off the median and walk in opposite directions. He watches her stop and obey the light again. And he smiles. Cause you gotta.

From the next scene, we hear some COWBELL, followed by a LEAD GUITAR RIFF, some DRUM FILL...

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET -- DAY

A figure cuts through the pedestrian crowd. Peter, singing along to VAN HALEN. An upbeat song. "Dance the Night Away."

PETER/DAVID LEE ROTH
*HAVE YOU SEEN HER?/ SO FINE AND
 PRETTY/ FOOLED ME WITH HER STYLE
 AND EASE/ AND I FEEL HER FROM
 ACROSS THE ROOM/ YES, IT'S LOVE IN
 THE THIRD DEGREE...*

He's even got the David Lee Roth squeal down pat.

Title up: **LAST WEEK**

Peter's phone RINGS. He glances down. The ID photo is a very old (circa 2006) picture of Debbie. He picks up.

PETER (ON PHONE)
 Can I help you, Ma'am?

EXT. STREET -- LOS ANGELES -- DAY

Debbie carries groceries up the steep stairs leading to her house in the not-fancy part of the Hollywood Hills.

DEBBI
 ...hey, I was thinking, I know you
 said you don't need me to bring
 anything, but do you have herbs?

Now we SPLITSCREEN, see Peter and Debbie side by side.

PETER
 Uh... herbs?

DEBBIE
 Yeah, fresh herbs. I can pick 'em
 up when I get to the city. You just
 pop 'em in your window sill--

PETER
 Window sill? Is that a thing I
 have?

DEBBIE

--then all you have to do is just add a little water and then you always have fresh basil or mint or thyme. You can eat them or just, like, smell them--

PETER

Please don't bring soil into my apartment, I'm begging you.

Peter now crosses the street, flagrantly and gracefully jaywalking, not disturbing the trajectory of even one car, though we may hear a stray, "Hey, Asshole!"

DEBBIE

Uh, did you just jaywalk? That's dangerous. STOP doing that.

PETER

Uh, I do what I want. I'm a grown ass man.

DEBBIE

Whatever. Also, wanted to mention, while I'm at your place, I'll be so busy getting my degree, being a student, all trendy and cool--

PETER

Masters in Accounting, I'm sure it's gonna be v v cool--

DEBBIE

It's a Certificate in Actuarial Sciences and I got a full scholarship, but whatever--

Debbie unlocks her gate, bumps it open with her hip, carries the groceries across a surprisingly lush garden.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

What I wanted to say is... I know you're seeing someone, so while I'm there lemme know and I can make myself scarce--

PETER

Thanks, but I think Becca and I can control ourselves for a week.

DEBBIE

I love that the woman you're seeing is named Becca.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Such a Peter girl name. It
practically comes with a little
black dress and heels--

PETER
--hey, you never know, maybe you'll
meet someone too while you're here.

DEBBIE
Ha, me? You know I'm done with all
that. My heart is nothing but a
cold hard pebble.

On the way to her door, Debbie passes a figure in the garden:

ZEN, a surfer/hippie in his 40's/50's, fit, shirtless, in a
wide-brimmed hat, gardening. As she passes--

ZEN
Debs! Getting the veggies in today!

She gives him a thumbs up, continues, still talking to Peter.

PETER
Very proud of you for going away
without Jack by the way--

Peter walks into his building, a sleek high-rise with a stark
lobby. On his way in, he nods at STEVIE, the doorman, 60's.

DEBBIE
--ugh, shush, I'm trying not to
think about it, I'm gonna have a
panic attack. He's only 13.

PETER
Oh come on. He's gonna be fine.
It's not like you're leaving him
home with a dog bowl and chew toy.
Scarlet'll be there.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE/PETER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Now they are both in their living spaces. We take in these
two very different spaces.

Debbie's small house is comfortable, stuffed with belongings
(neatly). Books everywhere, Tolkien to Melville to Morrison.

Peter's apartment (great view) is crisp and a bit barren. A
bookshelf but no other mementos or clutter.

The conversation continues and we INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN.

PETER

You ask me, Jack needs some space--

DEBBIE

You're critiquing my parenting?
You? The man whose only pet was a
goldfish that died in a bong fire?

PETER

Hey, that was 14 years ago. I'm
just saying, I read the New York
Times, I've read about helicopter
parenting, snowplow parenting. What
you do is Saran Wrap parenting,
you're so tightly wrapped--

DEBBIE

--thanks, I can track a metaphor.
Look, you're not a parent. You
don't get it. I didn't used to
either. Like in movies when people
watch their kids sleeping? I was
like... ew, weird. Now I do it.

PETER

I agree. It's ew, weird.

DEBBIE

God, I can't believe you and I will
be in the same city for a week.

PETER

I know, when was the last time we
hung out that long?

DEBBIE

Uh, 2008, when you left LA because
you were all scaredy scared about
earthquakes?

PETER

Hey, the Chino Hills tremblor was
no joke. They closed Disneyland!

DEBBIE

Scaredy Scared Scared.

Debbie unloads groceries.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Hey, btw, I'm about to send you
your birthday prezzie--

PETER

Oh, you didn't have to--

DEBBIE

Of course I did. You always buy me some fabulous Joan Didion first edition that costs a fortune and I never know what to get you, so this year I made something.

PETER

Is it a Porsche? I like the 356.

DEBBIE

K bye sending soon.

She hangs up. Peter's side of the screen disappears. Debbie continues putting stuff away, in a good mood.

Just then her son **JACK** enters. Jack is 13, but looks younger. A quiet kid to begin with, he is deep in a teenaged sullen phase. He helps her put some of the things away. He picks up a box of Pop-Tart-looking thingies.

JACK

C'I eat these?

DEBBIE

Yeah, they had gluten free this time -- SCORE!

JACK

You're in a good mood.

DEBBIE

Yeah I am! Gonna go to NYC, get that degree, so I can make some money!

JACK

Whoa boy, no.

DEBBIE

Sorry. But seriously, with an actuarial degree, I can get a better job in the school system. You know that I--

DEBBIE/JACK

Lost out on a promotion last year--

DEBBIE

Exactly. Which would have meant a better salary and really good health insurance... speaking of which, you take your antihistamines?

She indicates a case on the counter. He nods. Then he picks up the Pop-Tart thingies and leaves.

Debbie puts the last grocery bag away. Okay. She turns to her (dinged, sticker-covered) laptop which lives on the kitchen counter, sits and opens it.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

K. Birthday prezzie. Let's do this.

She grabs reading glasses from a mug with various reading glasses, used pens, etc, and peers at the laptop.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Meanwhile, Peter takes off his work jacket, presses a button on an iPad. Van Halen comes on. A more downbeat tune. "Where Have All the Good Times Gone?"

VAN HALEN

*ALL MY LIFE I'VE NEVER STOPPED TO
WORRY 'BOUT A THING/ OPEN UP AND
SHOUT IT OUT/ AND NEVER TRY TO
SING/ WONDERIN' IF I'VE DONE IT
WRONG/ WILL THIS DEPRESSION LAST
FOR LONG?/ WON'T YOU TELL ME?/
WHERE HAVE ALL THE GOOD TIMES GONE?*

He murmurs along to these lyrics as he walks over to his big window. Looks out. King of the city.

But he's alone. Feels it. Now we slide over to...

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Debbie stares at her laptop, frustrated.

DEBBIE

Jack!... Jack?! JACK!

He enters, eating. She shows him the laptop.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

There's something wrong. It won't let me send.

JACK
 (pop-tart in his mouth)
 Wow, your font is MASSIVE--

DEBBIE
 I just can't figure out how to--
 Jack presses one key. It's done.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 Oh. Thanks. Hope he likes it.

JACK
 Too late to worry about that now.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Now Peter, at his (spotless) kitchen counter, opens his (spotless) laptop, sees the email from Debbie. It says:

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, YOU OLD FUCKER. He grins.

PETER
 Well, that's not very nice.
 He presses PLAY, looks at the screen.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- DAY -- ON THE VIDEO

Debbie talks to her iPhone camera, holding it out in front.

DEBBIE
 Yeah, hi, so, first of all, sorry you're so freaking old but it's actually fine for you because, due to your whole "being a man" thing, you're gonna be able to ride a nice wave of social and sexual relevance for a very long time while I, despite being the exact same age, will be an old crone five minutes from now. So, *mazel tov* on that!

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Peter laughs. INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN between him, Debbie, and the video.

DEBBIE

So I was trying to decide what to get you and one day I was, believe it or not, cleaning out some old drawers--

PETER

You clean out things...?

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I do occasionally clean out things...

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

--and look at all the crap I found!

On the counter, she lays out a bunch of junk. Photos, papers, albums, old flip phones, Blackberries, iPhones...

DEBBIE (ONSCREEN) (CONT'D)

See, despite what you always say, hoarding has an upside! So Jack and I made a thing with all this stuff! I know you are not the sentimental type, but go with me on this journey, will you? K, here we go--

She smiles, takes a deep breath.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

First, a flyer from the day we met, yep I kept it--

A mimeographed Book Soup flyer for a reading of the Alison Bechdel book, "Fun Home."

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I was working the register, you came over and asked some--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Pretentious.

PETER

Adorable.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

--question about that Michael Ondaatje book, Divasadero, which led to us talking about poker, of course, which lead to this--

She pulls out an ancient answering machine.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

The first time you called me.

We see Jack, onscreen, fast forwarding through the ancient answering machine, tape screeching. He presses play.

PETER (ON MACHINE)
Hello, Debbie, this is Peter
Coleman. We met at Book Soup. You
mentioned you have a poker game?

DEBBIE
You sound like a--

Stud. PETER DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Chipmunk.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
And now, check this out--

Debbie picks up a photo album. Inside are photos shoved into
plastic sleeves. She points to one, a group of 20-somethings
at a table with chips, cards and beer.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Here we are. Here's Tai, Alicia
brought him, remember?

TAI is outdoorsy handsome--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Alicia looks perfect, of course.

ALICIA is effortlessly chic, wears her clothes like a model.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
--and here's me--

20-ish Debbie. Low jeans and those layered t-shirts--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
--jeans, why so low? T-shirts, why
so many on top of each other? And
oh, wait, look: who is this?

She points to a young Peter in wide legged jeans with white
stitches on them.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Don't feel bad. Stitchy jeans was a
tough moment for the entire nation.

Another photo. Just of Peter, writing.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
That night you brought a notebook.
Worked on short stories between
rounds when you weren't busy
talking about how Confederacy of
Dunces was overrated. Embarrassing?
(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
You bet. But kind of endearing.
Also endearing was how bad you were
at poker--

A photo of Debbie raking in chips.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Anyway, we know what came next. You
and I drank ALL that Jim Beam and
then THIS happened--

Debbie turns a page. Photo of her and Peter making out on a
huge chenille couch.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Remember when all the furniture on
earth was chenille? The whole world
was like sitting on a pair of soft
corduroy pants. This night was so
memorable, look what I saved.

In one of the plastic pockets, a poker chip from the game.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Thought it might come in handy for
a toast at our wedding one day. Ha.

She looks at it, a touch wistful, then--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
So, on to the wedding photos.

She flips a page. Debbie in a strapless wedding gown but the
groom is... not Peter but Tai. Tai and Debbie are gorgeous
and barefoot on a Hawaiian beach.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
By the time Tai and I got married,
thank God you and I could laugh
about our one-night stand. How you
pulled out of my driveway so fast
you hit a fire hydrant and a Saab.

Now we see a Peter at the wedding in a Hawaiian print tux.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
At the wedding, you brought the
insanely gorgeous Vanessa Morton--

Beside him is a sleek brunette who manages to look frizz-free
and not sweaty despite the tropical heat.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 --and charmed the crowd with your
 great toast.

ONSCREEN: a shaky video of Peter, holding a mic.

PETER (ON THE VIDEO)
 ...and so, I wish Debbie and Tai
 all the best things, the grown up
 love-family-and-commitment things
 the rest of us will take years to
 get around to, if we ever do...

A drunk shout from someone in the crowd: YOU WON'T! People
 laugh. Vanessa looks a bit pained too. Peter laughs along
 with everyone, though we can see he's covering.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Fair! That's fair!

Back to Debbie talking to the camera.

DEBBIE (V.O.)
 After that, well... pretty amazing
 how we've kept in touch over the
 years. I got, as they say, the
receipts!

Debbie shows pictures. First, physical photos, then photos
 taken on shitty flip phones...

DEBBIE
 Look! Here we are at Alicia's
 wedding in Sonoma, where you got
 drunk. Here we are at Tai's
 father's funeral in Texas, when you
 sprained your pelvis bull-riding
 and got drunk. Here's me and you in
 Arizona, when I picked you up from
 rehab the first time. And in
 Minneapolis, when I picked you up
 from rehab the second time. Here's
 when you came out to LA when Jack
 was born and his first birthday...
 And here's when you came back to LA
 and picked me up off the floor
 after the divorce.

(studies a photo)
 God, I got skinny. I would kill for
 those divorce hips. And you, you
 dated all these amazing women who
 made me feel small and furry, like
 a little wood-dwelling creature.

Photos of Debbie, Peter and Jack with a series of Peter's elegant girlfriends.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, so we're different. I'm a homebody. I'm boring. I make casseroles and clip coupons, you order in and pay retail... Maybe that's why we're buds. I tell you all my secrets. You are the only person alive who knows I secretly love the Twilight books and hate Hemingway. So, anyway, happy birthday from me, who will always tell you what to do, because it's kinda my job.

(leans in, fiddling)

Jack, how do I turn this--

And the screen goes to BLACK.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

We see Peter, watching the video in his (modern, neutral, crisp, expensive sheets) bed. He's smiling. The woman beside him, BECCA, is his type -- polished, sleek, brunette. She toggles through fashion feeds on Instagram.

BECCA

You love that video. You've watched it like 8 times.

PETER

I thought she might get me a Porsche, but this is kinda better?

BECCA

You having a female best friend is great. Not on-brand, but I like it.

PETER

Well, as I always say, sometimes being off-brand is what's best for your brand.

BECCA

I have no idea what that means.

(studies him)

You know, Debbie is cute in that video and you guys are besties, and if you already hooked up... what happened there?

PETER

Oh, it's not like that.

She looks at him, expecting more. But no.

BECCA

That's it? "It's not like that?"

PETER

Well, she's... her. And I'm... me.

(off her look, huh?)

We were different to begin with,
then I was an asshole to her, then
she forgave me, but yeah, we're
still really different.

BECCA

Huh.

PETER

Exactly.

Becca shakes her head, disappears into the bathroom. Peter picks up the phone and texts.

Peter: **BEST VIDEO EVER,**

And from the next scene we hear a special TEXT CHIME. It's the sound of POKER CHIPS.

INT. DEBBIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Debbie picks up her phone. In contrast to Peter's neutral bed, Debbie's is a mix of patterns, pillows and books.

We INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN. The way this is framed, they look like they are in the same bed, though they are miles away.

Debbie: **YOU REALLY LIKED IT?**

Peter: **YES! NICE RECAP OF YOUR WEIRD
HAIR/OUTFITS OVER THE YEARS**

Debbie: **BE SINCERE FOR ONE SECOND**

Peter: **NAH**

She smiles. Asshole.

Debbie: **ALL RIGHT GLAD YOU DUG IT, G'NIGHT
TO YOU AND THE SUPER COOL WOMAN WITH YOU**

Peter looks over. Becca is now lying picturesquely on her back, under-eye patches on, blowout carefully pinned up.

Peter: **THERE ISN'T... SHE ISN'T...** (he deletes) **K, SAY HI TO JACK**

Debbie: **DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO.**

Peter: **IKMJ**

Debbie looks puzzled, then SNORT-LAUGHS.

Debbie: **"IT'S KINDA MY JOB." HA.**

In his bed, Peter chuckles too. Becca looks over, lightly annoyed. In bed, Debbie smiles, turns the light off.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- THE NEXT MORNING

Sun cuts across the room. Debbie, in a robe, shoves clothes into her suitcase. Mid pants-fold, she looks over at a photo of Jack. Heart-tugging. So hard to leave.

DEBBIE

He's gonna be fine. I'm only leaving for a few days.

(beat)

I'm hugging a pair of pants.

Just then she hears, in an unconvincing British accent:

VOICE (O.S.)

(super dramatic)

"Accckkkk, don't hurt me!!!!"

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- MORNING

Jack's bedroom. An homage to his favorite thing: hockey. Posters, pages from sports magazines, etc.

Jack is with SCARLET, 20's, enthusiastic, over-the-top. She's holding script pages.

SCARLET

Wait, wait, lemme try it again.

(more super-dramatic)

"Accckkkk, don't hurt me!!!!" Is that good?

JACK

(it's real bad)

In... credible.

Just then Debbie enters, dressed for her day.

SCARLET

Hi, Deb! Stopped by to go over the stuff for while you're away--

DEBBIE

Thanks, he's got a doctor's appointment and we have to pick up that medication on Monday because, of course, insurance won't let us pick it up even one day early--

SCARLET

Got it, on it, will crush it! ALSO I came by to tell you guys my HUGE NEWS! I got an audition for a currently closed-ended but possibly-anthologized mini-series on a brand-new streaming platform!

DEBBIE

So cool! Dunno what that is but--

SCARLET

It's a TV show! About a serial killer in the 1850s. I'd play a scullery maid who gets strangled.

(super-dramatic)

"Accckkkk, don't hurt me!!!!" What do you think?!!!

DEBBIE

(oof)

Honestly? Nailed it.

SCARLET

Thanks. I probably won't get it, I don't get anything ever. Anyway, forget me, I'm excited for you, Deb. This thing you're doing. Accounting or whatever? Impressive. I'm the worst at math.

DEBBIE

You're probably not. Women are told that by teachers and their peers. I grew up doing the books at my dad's hardware store in Modesto, it's not hard. And it's actuarial science, not accounting, slightly different, it's about calculating risk--

SCARLET

I thought you liked reading and books and stuff. Woulda thought you'd do something like that.

DEBBIE

This degree is practical. That's what divorced moms have to be.

SCARLET

Oof, right, tragic.
(Jack stifles a laugh)
I mean... so inspiring.

INT. TAXI -- DAY

Meanwhile, Peter rides uptown in a taxi with Becca.

BECCA

Hey, so I've been meaning to ask you. What happens next?
(off his look)
We've been together for 6 months. That's my cutoff.

PETER

You have a--

BECCA

Listen, I'm not a spring chicken. I'm not a winter chicken either... let's say I'm a fall chicken. And it's been six months and I just feel... we are not getting any closer. I don't know much about you. I ask you questions, you answer with another question.

PETER

Do I?

BECCA

(Jesus)
If this is a waste of my time, I'd like to be notified, okay?

PETER

Hm. Define "waste."

Becca waves to the TAXI DRIVER. This is me. He pulls over.

BECCA

The last word you ever said to me
was "waste." What a waste.

And she exits the taxi, sweeping down the street, leaving
Peter stunned. A beat.

TAXI DRIVER

Where you headed?

Peter looks at him. Their eyes meet. This bubbles up--

PETER

God. Sometimes I'm not sure, I'm
really not.

TAXI DRIVER

Just need an address, Bud.

From the next scene we hear...

VOICE (O.S.)

It's just so difficult.

INT. NYC OFFICE -- DAY

Peter is in the conference room in his office, high in the
sky in Midtown, across from two CORPORATE CLIENTS -- ALEX and
SIDNEY, 30's/40's -- who look fairly devastated.

ALEX

We know our contract is up--

SIDNEY

But everything we've gotten from
you this last year, it's just been--

ALEX

--so our question is...

SIDNEY

What happens next?

Peter looks startled to hear that question again so soon.

PETER

You know what happens next. I have
to move on.

(they are crushed)

Guys, look at what we did together.
Changed your brand. Gave you a new
mission... Remember the fun we had?

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

How we nailed your strategic positioning and brand architecture template and got you ready for your big equity event?

They look misty at the mention of this. Great memories.

ALEX

Who are you going to work with now?
(almost snippy)
A client you'll like better? Haha.

SIDNEY

I'm sorry. He didn't mean that.

ALEX

It's just, um... after everything we've been through together, all this closeness, it feels like kind of a waste.

Waste. The repetition of this word hits Peter too.

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

The clients walk away. Peter watches them, thinking. Just then his boss, CHRISTOPHER, 50's, walks over. Well-dressed, confident, an older version of what Peter could turn into.

CHRISTOPHER

(a little tsk-y)
Peter...

PETER

They just wanted to say goodbye...

CHRISTOPHER

Great. Done that. Moving on. I have new clients lined up for you--

PETER

Christopher, I could use a couple days to tie up loose ends, before--

CHRISTOPHER

--and they are ready to dive in Monday.

PETER

And that's... terrific. But I go from client to client, back to back, and it's a little hard to--

CHRISTOPHER

No it isn't. Not for you. And if
there's one thing I know for sure--
(claps Peter on the back)
You will fall in love with them,
the way you do. For a while.

He strides away, leaving Peter standing there. Meanwhile--

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL -- LOS ANGELES -- DAY

Debbie and Jack walk into the modest, urban schoolyard of their local Hollywood middle school. A diverse range of kids.

Moms stand in small circles, clutching coffee in cardboard cups or those insulated to-go cups.

In this setting, it sticks out how small and young-looking Jack is. Debbie hands him his lunch. As she does, she notices him looking at a kid his age, WADE, talking to another kid, EVAN. These are bigger, stronger, heartier-looking kids.

DEBBIE

You been hanging out with Wade?

Jack ignores her, smooshing his lunch into his backpack.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Should we go over and say hi?
(off his HORRIFIED look)
You guys used to be close, that kid
has slept over a million times, he
fully peed on our sofa once--

JACK

Oh my God I gotta go. Bye, Mom.

And he walks away. She sighs, watches him go. One of those moments where you remember his whole life, back to day one.

Just then Alicia (from the photo album), sarcastic, level-headed, still ultra-chic, weaves her arm through Debbie's.

DEBBIE

(grins)

Wanna steal summa my office coffee?

INT. DEBBIE'S SCHOOL OFFICE -- DAY

Debbie's cramped office. A sign says: *Senior Bookkeeper Debbie Menk*. Alicia pours more coffee into her Starbucks cup.

ALICIA

What is it with moms and coffee? I don't even want this, I just need to have it in my hand all day.

DEBBIE

Our moms drank one small Folgers in the morning and that was it--

ALICIA

Ha. So, you packed?

DEBBIE

Not at all.

ALICIA

I gotta say, I'm so glad you're having a getaway.

DEBBIE

Well, not a "getaway." I wanna give do this to--

DEBBIE/ALICIA

--give me and Jack more financial stability--

DEBBIE

Exactly. Not kick up my heels--

ALICIA

Promise you'll enjoy yourself while you're in New York. At least a bubble bath. That's the first thing I do when I go out of town.

DEBBIE

Bubble bath. I'll consider it.

ALICIA

I wish Jack could stay with us--

DEBBIE

I know, but you'd have to kill your pets. Five minutes near Jimmy's cockapoo or Sarah's chinchilla and he'd be in the hospital--

ALICIA

I still don't get why Tai can't just come here. Did you ask?

DEBBIE

Nah. It's peak climbing season.
He's gotta be out there.

ALICIA

God, you're so nice about him. If
my ex spent 10 months out of the
year going around the world with a
hot 38-year-old with tattoos--

(off her look)

You think I do NOT Google stalk
Tai's girlfriend? What are we even
doing? Who would I even be? It's
your turn now. I really hope you
meet someone on this trip--

DEBBIE

Meet who? A man person? You know--

ALICIA

--yes, yes, I know. Your heart is a
pebble or stone or some nonsense.
Debbie, come on. You gotta be out
for yourself more.

DEBBIE

Wow, you really have my life and my
problems figured out.

ALICIA

Of course I do. We're friends. So,
obviously, I have a well-thought
out critique of every choice you
make and know the steps to fix
them. That's literally what a
friend is, isn't it?

Debbie laughs.

ALICIA (CONT'D)

And in case you DO meet a hottie on
this Manhattan adventure -- are we
still saying hottie by the way? --
sh'we go get a wax, a manicure, a
little root touch up? Spruce up?

DEBBIE

Me? I'm spruced. I'm plenty
spruced. And I promised tonight I'd
make Jack this casserole he loves.

ALICIA

Kids don't like casseroles.

DEBBIE
 Mine does. Loves them.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- EVENING

Debbie and Jack eat some kind of veggie lasagna nightmare out of a glass rectangle dish. A beat. She looks at him.

JACK
 You're staring.

DEBBIE
 I'm going to miss you a ton.

JACK
 I know.

She continues staring affectionately at him. Suddenly they hear FOOTSTEPS. Someone running. Scarlet BURSTS in the door.

SCARLET
 "Accckkkk, don't hurt me!!!!"

A beat. And then Debbie realizes.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Peter sits near the window, holding his phone.

Peter: **HEY SEND ME YOUR FLIGHT NUMBER AGAIN, OKAY? I CAN PICK YOU UP.**

He waits, no dots.

Peter: **I DIDN'T BUY ANY FOOD BECAUSE I WASN'T SURE WHAT YOU LIKE. YOU EAT ALL THAT HEALTHY SHIT I HATE.**

He waits some more.

Peter: **YOU HAVE EXCEEDED OUR USUAL RESPONSE TIME. WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHERE ARE YOU?**

EXT. DEBBIE'S GARDEN -- EVENING

Debbie on the bench. In shock. Widen to see Zen, pruning.

ZEN
 Y'okay?

DEBBIE
Yuh-huh. Yep. Great.

ZEN
Me, I'm having a little issue with
the azaleas. Stippling.

DEBBIE
Oh. Huh. Bummer.

ZEN
This a bad time? Should I go home?

He indicates a gate at the back of Debbie's garden.

DEBBIE
Nah, it's okay.

Debbie stares into space. Sad and disappointed. Trying not to cry. Then she picks up her phone. Sends a text to Peter.

Debbie: **WON'T BE NEEDING YOUR APARTMENT. SCARLET NOT AVAIL SO NO BABYSITTER. SO NYC NOT HAPPENING.**

Without waiting for a response, she pockets the phone, gets up, staggers towards the house.

ZEN
Kumquats're coming in nice!

She gives him a thumbs up without turning around.

INT. DEBBIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

She stares at the ceiling. Fuck. On her phone, IGNORED texts from Peter. Move across to:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Peter checks his phone. Nothing from Debbie. He thinks.

INT. DEBBIE'S KITCHEN -- THE NEXT MORNING

Debbie makes breakfast, trying to be cheerful.

DEBBIE
--it's no big deal. Yeah, it would
be great for us if I got that
degree, but I'll, you know,
complete the program next year.
When they offer it again.

JACK
A whole year? You're not young.

DEBBIE
Factual.

JACK
I can stay here by myself.

DEBBIE
You're 13.

JACK
Also factual.

DEBBIE
It's okay. I'm an adult.
Disappointment is a big, huge part
of being an adult.

JACK
Cool. Something to look forward to.

Just then her phone rings. She looks down. Peter.

JACK (CONT'D)
You're not answering?

DEBBIE
I'm afraid he's going to be nice.
And if he's nice, I might cry.

Phone continues ringing. Jack pokes the phone, picking up the call. Debbie shoots him a look.

JACK
Hey, Peter--

INT. PETER'S OFFICE -- DAY

Peter in his office, phone on speaker. INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN.

PETER
Hey! Hi there! Your mom around?

DEBBIE
I'm here.

PETER

Great. Listen, I land around noon. I can meet you at your house and we can go over instructions or whatever. Or not. Jackity-Jack and I can figure it out on our own.

JACK

"Jackity-Jack?"

PETER

You're right. That's probably not the right nickname. We can riff on that when I get there.

DEBBIE

Uh... wait, what?

PETER

I'll rent my own car because god knows, whatever you're driving, I don't want any part of it.

DEBBIE

Uh... wait, what?

PETER

You're saying "uh... wait, what" a lot. You sound kinnnnda dumb.

DEBBIE

Peter, come on. You... you can't drop everything and come out here to babysit. You have a job. A life. Well, dunno about a life, but you definitely have a job--

PETER

Again, I'm a grown ass man. I do what I want.

Debbie throws Jack a look, takes the phone outside the house.

In his office, Peter stands near the window. They are in separate frames but look like they are talking to each other.

DEBBIE

This is... so nice of you, but taking care of Jack is not easy. I mean, no 13-year-olds are easy, but he's allergic to a billion things, takes a mountain of meds... Scarlet knows how to do it all--

PETER

--it's insane that she is the ONLY person you'll leave your kid with.

DEBBIE

I don't have anyone else, you know that, my mom's gone and my dad visits once a year if that--

PETER

Lemme do this. Please. I owe you.

DEBBIE

Owe me...?

PETER

When my mom died, you drove from LA to OHIO for the service. You picked me up from rehab not once, but twice. You've listened to me explain why Sammy Hagar, while technically a better singer, is still no David Lee Roth, an argument I bolstered by playing you his isolated vocals from "Hot For Teacher--"

DEBBIE

Peter, I didn't do -- or put up with -- those things to get paid back in any way--

PETER

Of course you didn't, you're not a goddamned monster. But you need help. I wanna help. And I pretty much wanna get away from my boss and my job and my life, so you're doing me a favor. Okay?

She hesitates. A moment of suspended animation.

PETER (CONT'D)

Anyway, it's too late. I just emailed my boss I'm taking a week off... so get on board, Menk!

He grins, hangs up. She turns. Sees Jack in the doorway.

DEBBIE

You heard all that?

JACK
Most of it. I need to show you how
to turn down your speaker.

DEBBIE
So, what do you think?

JACK
I think: get on board, Menk.

A beat. Debbie thinks, sighs. Okay.

INT. DEBBIE'S CLOSET -- NIGHT

A jumble. Debbie packs, tossing jeans, army pants, boho blouses, and yarn-y sweaters into a duffel.

INT. PETER'S CLOSET -- NIGHT

Perfect, color-coordinated. Expensive suits, cashmere, suede. Peter puts things neatly into a Goyard.

NIGHT COMES AND GOES IN BOTH CITIES

We greet dawn by seeing Zen, in the morning magic hour, weeding a patch of flowers and then we move inside--

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- DAWN

--to see Debbie standing in the doorway, watching Jack sleep. A beat. That moment. Then she goes over, rumples his hair.

DEBBIE
Time for school.

He groans like a hibernating beast and rolls over.

EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY

Debbie drops off Jack, gives him a hug. From a distance it's a stiff teenager-y hug but there's a moment where he melts and we can tell... he's gonna miss her.

DEBBIE
So the thing about Peter is... he's great, you know that, but I should tell you... he had this goldfish once and there was a, um, incident and the fish, well, it's sad--

JACK
It'll be fine. Bye, Mom.

DEBBIE
(as he goes)
...Bye, Sweetie...

Just then her phone rings -- Peter.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
What's wrong? Can you not make it?
Did your plane crash?

INT. FIRST CLASS LOUNGE -- CONTINUOUS

Peter has sparkling water, snacks. We SPLITSCREEN/INTERCUT.

PETER
Everything's fine. My flight's just
delayed. But don't worry. I have
plenty of time to get there and
pick Jack up--

DEBBIE
--but I wanted to show you around
the house, where all his stuff is
and his pills and his inhalers and
where the extra EpiPens are--

PETER
I'm landing right before your
flight leaves. We'll say hi, okay?
Don't flip out.

DEBBIE
(slightly flipping out)
I'm not flipping out.

And now we are back to our very first scene:

EXT. AIRPORT -- DAY

Debbie blows by, pulling her bag and backpack. Stops at the
light. This time we are in her POV as she looks out and
sees... Peter, nonchalant as ever, across the street, saying:

PETER
Come on, Lady!

INT. AIRPORT -- DAY

Now we're in the terminal. It has two people movers that run in opposite directions -- arrivals and departures. Debbie rides towards the departure gates, looking tense.

INT. AIRPLANE -- LATER

Debbie boards the plane, passes a FLIGHT ATTENDANT (dry).

DEBBIE

Hi, I'm nervous.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

It happens. We get a lot of people who are afraid to fly.

DEBBIE

Oh, it's not that. Flying is very safe. If you look at probability, I'm in more danger getting my suitcase off the conveyer belt than in the air.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(already bored)

Mmm. Uh huh.

DEBBIE

It's just, I've never left my kid. And it's for a good reason but it still feels like, ugh. And the person who is taking care of him, great person, don't get me wrong, but he can't keep plants OR fish alive, so, you know--

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

(oh lord)

Folks, let's get those bags stowed!

DEBBIE

I'm sorry. When I get nervous, I talk to strangers.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

And that is... so sweet.

Finally the line moves. He breathes a sigh of relief.

Debbie bumps over her seat. Tries to lift her duffel into the overhead. A handsome MAN sees her struggle, moves towards her. She smiles, grateful as he...

...goes past her to an attractive girl, 20's, lifts her light bag. A DISTINGUISHED WOMAN (85ish) near Debbie clocks this.

DISTINGUISHED WOMAN

They start again when you're 80.

Debbie nods, copy that. She stuffs her backpack under her seat, grabs a creased well-worn paperback.

And it hits her. She's actually doing this. She's actually fucking doing this. She smiles. To the woman:

DEBBIE

I'm going on a trip.

DISTINGUISHED WOMAN

Yeah. That's how planes work.

And from the next scene we hear the first notes of the Van Halen classic, "Jump."

EXT. STREET/CAR -- LOS ANGELES -- DAY

...Peter zips into frame, sunnies on, driving his rental, a Porsche convertible.

VAN HALEN

*I GET UP AND NOTHIN' GETS ME DOWN/
YOU GOT IT TOUGH/ I'VE SEEN THE
TOUGHEST AROUND/ AND I KNOW, BABY,
JUST HOW YOU FEEL/ YOU GOT TO RO-O-
OLL WITH THE PUNCHES TO GET TO
WHAT'S REAL...*

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL -- DAY

Peter zips into the school parking lot, the Porsche turning the heads of both parents and students.

As he parks, he spots Alicia in one of the coffee circles. They wave, come together and hug.

PETER

Leesh! Been so long. Look at you.
You look great. You look the SAME.

ALICIA

I do, right? It's kinda spooky.
Good to see you. So nice of you to
come out and take care of Jack--

PETER

Ah, it's no sweat. I was between clients and it's just a little short-term project, right? That's what I do. Get in, manage a thing, no muss, no fuss--

ALICIA

Hate to break it to ya, but kids are all muss, all fuss--

PETER

Are they, though?

ALICIA

Yes.

Just then Jack steps out of the classroom. Peter spots him.

PETER

Think it might be easier than it looks. See you soon, k?

He winks at Alicia and trots away. Alicia shakes her head. Peter trots over, greets Jack with a high five.

PETER (CONT'D)

Jack-a-loo, good to see you!

JACK

Jack-a-loo is a no.

PETER

Look how massive and tall you are. You're like pro wrestler size.

He's not.

PETER (CONT'D)

(cheery)

When was the last time I saw you?

JACK

Dunno.

PETER

Last year, around Christmas, when I got you that dirt bike.

JACK

Oh yeah my Mom made me donate that.

Peter notices Jack is distracted. He tracks Jack's eye-line over to Wade and Evan, who laugh and joke, ignoring Jack.

Peter clocks this but doesn't say anything.

PETER
Ready to blow this popsicle stand?

JACK
What's a popsicle stand?

PETER
Not completely sure. C'mon.

He walks Jack over to where his convertible is parked, taking care to lead him RIGHT past Wade and Evan...

...the boys watch as Peter and Jack get into the cool car. An impressed look crosses their faces. Peter notes this.

And now we hear the grind of a heavy guitar...

INT./EXT. CONVERTIBLE -- DAY

Jack and Peter peel through the parking lot as "Panama" plays on the dope sound system.

VAN HALEN
*JUMP BACK, WHAT'S THAT SOUND?/ HERE
SHE COMES, FULL BLAST AND TOP DOWN/
HOT SHOE, BURNING DOWN THE AVENUE/
MODEL CITIZEN, ZERO DISCIPLINE...*

Everyone turns to look as they drive away.

JACK
My mom hates convertibles, you know. Says they roll over easily--

PETER
Oh, p'shaw. P'shaw, I say!

JACK
Also, there is no back seat and I'm supposed to sit in the back seat because I'm under 80 pounds.

PETER
Prol'lem is, there's no back.

Jack looks. This is true.

PETER (CONT'D)
Also convertibles are awesome, which negates the stuff you said. So, I have a question for you.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)
 (Jack looks over)
 Those kids who're blowing you off,
 what's that about?

Jack doesn't say anything.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Look, I was a 13-year-old boy once.
 And yeah, I'm pretttttty cool and
 I've got my shit together but when
 I was 13 I was a real doof,
 basically a walking Adam's apple
 with a bowl cut. And I had no dad,
 he bailed when I was 7 and died
 three years later, literally drunk
 in a ditch, so whatever it is, I've
 seen worse, you can hit me with it--

Jack looks at him, considering.

PETER (CONT'D)
 Do it, Jackson 5--

JACK
 I don't even understand that one.

PETER
 We'll get there.

Jack deliberates, but then spits it out:

JACK
 It's because of hockey.

PETER
 Okay...

JACK
 Wade and I were friends and we used
 to skate at the rink together but
 now he plays on the team and I
 can't, so he hangs out with Evan,
 who does. And then eventually we
 just stopped hanging.

Peter pulls over. Turns to Jack, who is a little startled.

PETER
 Hold on. You play hockey? Debbie
 never told me that.

JACK
 Yeah. I can't play baseball because
 I'm allergic to grass.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
Can't play basketball because I'm allergic to the gym. Dust mites.

PETER
Holy shit.

JACK
You said shit in front of a kid.

PETER
Oops.

JACK
So, my mom took me to a rink one day to learn skating just for fun and Wade came along and then... yeah, you know the rest.

PETER
So wait. I don't understand. Why can't you be on the team with Wade and his weaselly friend? I'm sorry, he's not weaselly, he just... has a weaselly face. Anyway, why can't you play on the team?

JACK
I'm too small. Mom says it's too dangerous.

PETER
So you practice by yourself.

JACK
When I can. I want to take lessons but it's expensive.

PETER
Interesting. Didn't know that. I thought Debbie told me everything.

JACK
Do you? Tell her everything?

PETER
Of course.

He starts the car again and they drive off, Peter thinking.

EXT. GARDEN -- LATER

Peter and Jack walk through, Peter carrying his suitcase. They pass a sweaty Zen, shorts showing some butt crack.

ZEN
Oh hey! Yo, Jack!

JACK
Sup, Zen.

ZEN
(to Peter)
You the dude who's gonna hang with Jack? The Debster told me aboutchu.

PETER
The... Debster. Mmm hmm.

ZEN
I'm Zen. Live through that gate. I help out with Debbie's garden. I'm independently wealthy. I surf in the ayem, rest of the day I'm here.

PETER
What about your own garden?

ZEN
I have a guy for that.

Peter looks at Jack. Jack shrugs.

PETER
Nice to meet you. I assume I should call you "dude" or "bro"?

ZEN
Both acceptable, Amigo.

PETER
Amigo. Yuh-huh.

They continue towards the door. As they do, Peter gets a call: CHRISTOPHER. Peter hits decline.

JACK
Did you know about Zen?

PETER
Nope.

JACK
Yeah so the thing where you and Mom tell each other everything...?

PETER
Well, we--

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Peter and Jack enter. They stop as they notice: the kitchen is covered in Post-it notes with writing all over them.

PETER
--holy shit.

The plastic case with Jack's allergy medication? A Post-it with a reminder. The calendar? Numerous Post-its. A Post-it on the toaster says: Level 2 for bagels, 4 for bread. One on a banana says: Jack's favorite fruit.

PETER (CONT'D)
Oh wow, your mom is nuts.

JACK
Can't disagree, really.

Just then Peter's phone rings. He pokes it, putting it on speaker on the counter. The frame slides over as we see...

EXT. NYC STREET -- DUSK

Debbie pulling her bags out of the subway onto a dusky, crowded street. A moment. She looks around. Wow. Amazing. Then she yanks her phone out of her pocket.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Peter's phone lights up. Debbie. We SPLITSCREEN/INTERCUT:

DEBBIE
You home yet? You seen my Post-its?

PETER
Uh, they're hard to miss, Deb. You put up more paper in here than a cop tracking a serial killer.

DEBBIE
Every morning you make breakfast, pack his lunch, tomorrow you go to the pharmacy, Tuesday you go to the doctor after school--

Peter looks down at one of the Post-its.

PETER
It's all on here. The one that says: Schedule -- "urgent."

DEBBIE

Also I made a list of all the things Jack is allergic to. It's near the coffee maker.

Peter spots a plastic coated sheet of paper with a list.

PETER

Laminated. Wow. This also says "urgent," by the way, so I think we're missing some of the punch of that word by repeating it--

DEBBIE

Also, I forgot to tell you where the nut-free nut butter is--

PETER

That doesn't even make sense--

DEBBIE

And Jack, don't forget, you need to work on that English presentation--

JACK

I already started it.

DEBBIE

That means he hasn't done anything. Peter, remind him to--

PETER

Debbie, Jack is good. I'm good. We're gonna figure out dinner.

DEBBIE

You don't have to. I left you dinner. Open the freezer.

Jack opens the freezer where we see a lumpy frozen casserole (sporting a Post-it with thawing directions, of course).

PETER

This also says "urgent".

DEBBIE

Jack loves those casseroles.

JACK

(shaking his head no)
Yep.

PETER

I could buy dinner--

DEBBIE

Oh, that's another thing. I know you have money, but I don't want you spoiling Jack with takeout or any other fancy stuff, okay?

PETER

Got it. Casserole, homework, no fancy stuff.

DEBBIE

Also--

PETER

Debbie. Stop. Take a breath. You're across the country on a big fat adventure. Just look around.

She does. Dusky light. Street lamps going on. Manhattan at magic hour. Stunning.

DEBBIE

Yeah.

PETER

I'm so proud of you. We both are.

A beat. Debbie glows. She needed to hear this.

PETER (CONT'D)

Enjoy it, okay? And call us later.

He pokes the phone, hanging up.

PETER (CONT'D)

No way we are eating some kinda health food casserole thingamajig.

Peter picks up the laminated list.

PETER (CONT'D)

You allergic to burritos?

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Debbie bumps her suitcase down the street, managing to get in the way of every busy, chic NYC pedestrian passing by.

DEBBIE

Excuse me, pardon me--

She checks an address on her phone, yep, that's Peter's building. She bumps towards it.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- FOYER -- DAY

Debbie approaches the door. Stevie opens up for her.

DEBBIE
Hi there! You must be Stevie.

STEVIE
Thassssme.

DEBBIE
I'm Debbie. I'm staying in Peter
Coleman's place while he's away.

STEVIE
Ah yes, he mentioned a lady guest.

He looks at her, confused.

DEBBIE
Lemme guess. I don't look like the
other women who usually stay with
him? High heels, fancy?

STEVIE
(hands her the keys)
I'm sorry, I didn't mean--

DEBBIE
Oh it's fine. We're not each
other's type.
(beat)
I did bag him one time though.

Stevie laughs. Likes this lady.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- DUSK

Debbie walks in, looks around at the vacant, un-homey,
corporate-apartment vibe of Peter's place.

She opens a kitchen drawer. Sees that Peter's silverware is
still in its plastic shrink wrap.

DEBBIE
Oh my God.

She opens the kitchen cabinet. Sees rows of glasses with the
price tags still on.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Whoa boy.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- SAME TIME

Peter and Jack are housing huge burritos.

PETER

...okay so, here's my plan.

(off Jack's look)

My job, my career, is about managing perception. How the world sees you. It's called branding. You, my friend, need a re-brand for how Wade and Edward see you--

JACK

Evan. No one my age is named Edward.

PETER

So what we're gonna do while I'm here is reshape your image, get you in with those two kids. You down?

JACK

It sounds... manipulative.

PETER

Because it is. Gonna be great. In the meantime, wanna watch a movie?

He grabs the remote, points it towards the TV.

PETER (CONT'D)

Okay. Stop. STOP EVERYTHING. This is the movie.

JACK

Alien?

PETER

A classic. Timeless.

JACK

I'm not supposed to watch TV while I eat. Or before I finish my homework. And like my mom said, I have this English project--

Peter looks at him with real pity.

PETER

You poor kid. I had no idea what was going on in this house. I would've come out way sooner.

He turns up the volume as the movie starts...

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie keeps wandering around, amazed at how stark the place is. Chilly, she pulls her jacket close, looks around for the heat. Sees an iPad on the wall with a million icons.

DEBBIE

Heat... hmmm...

She presses buttons. Instead of heat, Van Halen comes on.
"You Really Got Me."

VAN HALEN

*GIRL YOU REALLY GOT ME NOW/ YOU GOT
ME SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOIN...*

DEBBIE

Holy shit, no.

Debbie stabs every button on the iPad with her finger. The music will not turn off.

Just then the DOORBELL RINGS. Fingers in her ears because of the noise, she walks over to the door.

There, in a chic black trench with nothing under it...

...is **MINKA**, late 30's. Brunette, sleek, chic, a real Peter girl. Despite her polished exterior, though, Minka is vivacious with much personality and all the opinions.

Minka is very surprised not to see Peter.

MINKA

Oh, hi!

DEBBIE

HI I CAN'T HEAR YOU.

Debbie indicates the music. Minka nods, strides in, picks up the iPad and turns the song off. Phew.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I thought my brain was going to leak out of my ears. Thank you. Hi I'm Debbie. And you...

MINKA

I'm... very embarrassed. I thought Peter was here. I'm, um, not wearing anything but this coat.

DEBBIE

I kinda guessed that.

MINKA

I saw his apartment light on from the street and I thought he was here, I feel like an idiot--

DEBBIE

Don't. We've all done the "knock on the door half-dressed" thing once. So are you and Peter...?

MINKA

We did. We used to. We broke up. Then he started dating this woman, Becca? But through the careful study of her socials, I figured out that they just broke up. I thought I would come over and rekindle.

DEBBIE

And instead, it's me. So sorry.

MINKA

Wait a second... you said you were Debbie? Are you THE Debbie? Peter talks about you all the time.

DEBBIE

Yeah, I'm staying here for a few days while he's in LA and--

MINKA

Can I buy you a drink? No ulterior motive. I won't ask you why Peter is so broken--

DEBBIE

Ha. I'd love a drink but tomorrow's my first day of classes for this program I'm doing... another time?

MINKA

Yeah. Sure. I'll take you to the Chelsea Club around the corner. That's where Peter and I met. It's the coolest place. Literally, it's freezing in there, they spend way too much on A/C, it's like, our planet is dying, you know?

DEBBIE

Sure. So, a drink later this week?

MINKA

Deal.

Minka studies Debbie. Hands on hips.

MINKA (CONT'D)

You know, I like you. You're great.
I love this whole sexy Gen X down-
to-earth thing you have going.

DEBBIE

Aw... thank you.

MINKA

I'll let you go then. Before I go,
though... can I borrow some pants?

And from the next scene we hear Peter's voice.

PETER (O.S.)

Drinks with Minka?

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Bathroom is massive, shiny. Debbie brushes her teeth.

DEBBIE

Yeah, I met her when she stopped by
to... uh... she had left a hair
scrunchie at the apartment. And she
invited me to go out.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter and Jack. Alien has ended. Jack watches the credits,
blown away. Debbie is on speaker. SPLITSCREEN/INTERCUT.

DEBBIE

So, what did you guys do tonight?

PETER

Us? Me and Jack In The Box?

We see quick flashes: Peter and Jack whizzing through town in
Peter's convertible, dumping Debbie's casserole in the trash,
eating giant burritos while watching Alien...

PETER (CONT'D)

Nothing special. Oh hey, by the
way, are you aware there's a
shirtless gentleman in your yard
all the ding dong day?

We notice jangly guitar floating in. ANGLE through the window on Zen, strumming, singing.

DEBBIE

Oh yeah. That's Zen. Shoulda mentioned. He's great with the garden, so I let him do whatever. Did I not tell you about him?

PETER

No. You have sometimes recited entire plots of commercials that made you cry but you forgot to mention the guy in your yard?

DEBBIE

Okay, okay, sorry. Peter, I just gotta say... thanks so much. This place is so cool. So comfortable.

PETER

Is it?

DEBBIE

No, not really, it's so freaking barren in here, it looks like someone stole all your stuff--

PETER

--if they did, they brought it here because you have all the stuff, literally ALL the things...

DEBBIE

All right, say hi to Jack, find you later on the interwebs.

PETER

Bye.

They hang up. Jack looks at Peter.

JACK

That movie was SO rad.

PETER

Wasn't too scary?

JACK

No way. You know, this is gonna go even better than I thought.

PETER

Yeah?

JACK

Well, Mom always says you're kinda irresponsible. She calls you a "rolling stone that gathers no moss," whatever that is--

PETER

That's... that's what she says?

JACK

Also, you're terrible with women.

PETER

Yeah. Hmm. Haha. She's... haha.

JACK

But for me, it's good. Cause you're chill. And not a grown-up really.

PETER

Oh... well... I mean, I am--

JACK

K, I should do, like a little homework, right?

He exits. Peter watches him go, a little taken aback.

INT. PETER'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Debbie is done, about to turn on the light when her eyes land on Peter's big bathtub. A moment.

INT. PETER'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Debbie in the tub, feet up, bubbles on toes. The tub has a view of the city. She grins. Not bad.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie, in a robe, opens the fridge, looking. Very little in it -- sparkling water, eggs, an apple or two but--

...dead center is a bottle of champagne. On it, a bow and a card that says DEBBIE. She picks it up, looks at the note.

It says: "So happy for you, I went to the booze store and got you some booze. Pop this when you finish the program!"

Meanwhile --

INT. DEBBIE'S BATHROOM -- DAY

Peter walks in, holding his expensive Goyard dopp kit (matches his suitcase, natch). He stops when he sees more Post-its on the bathroom mirror.

It's a small stack. The first one says "PETER" on it.

He peels that one off. The next one says "Thank" then "you" then "so" then "much," then: "don't screw it up." He laughs.

INT. PETER'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Debbie sits on the edge of Peter's bed and picks up her phone. We SPLITSCREEN to:

INT. DEBBIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Peter tosses pillows of Debbie's bed. We INTERCUT/ SPLITSCREEN. He picks up on speaker.

PETER

Wut?

DEBBIE

I had a question.

PETER

Yuh-huh.

DEBBIE

What happened with you and Minka?
She's your type, shiny and sleek--

PETER

--she's not an otter.

DEBBIE

--but also really funny and lively
and she smells incredible.

PETER

Nothing happened. She's great, like
I said. You're more than welcome to
date her yourself...

Finally Debbie gets into the bed.

DEBBIE

Oh my god, what is with these
sheets? So crisp...

Peter meanwhile gets into Debbie's bed. Or tries to. The top sheet is ridiculously hard to move.

PETER

What is this... why is this blanket so heavy?

DEBBIE

Oh that's my weighted blanket. Helps with anxiety.

PETER

It makes you feel better to sleep under a layer of cement?

At the same time, they both turn off their lights and turn over. It looks exactly like they are in the same bed. The conversation continues in the dim light.

DEBBIE

Back to Minka... I'm just wondering how you make your life decisions.

PETER

You mean since I'm a rolling stone who gathers no moss and I'm terrible with women?

DEBBIE

Uh... what?

PETER

You should know your kid is a real sieve. Imma bout to hear every thing you've ever said about me.

DEBBIE

Oh I didn't... I didn't mean to... he probably misunderstood.

PETER

Yeah, yeah. No worries. I know what I am. Well, I should go to sleep. I got a list a mile long list of stuff to do in the morning that was left for me by a crazy person.

DEBBIE

K. Thanks again.

PETER

K. 'Night.

A beat. They roll over and away from each other, still holding their phones. A beat.

Suddenly Peter hears something. Jack YELLING.

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Peter races in. Jack is having a nightmare. Peter wakes him up. Jack looks at him.

JACK
Was having a bad dream. The alien
was coming out of my stomach.

PETER
Oh god, I'm so sorry, I shouldn't
have... That movie may not have
been right for your age group?

JACK
It's great. Great movie.
(already falling asleep)
My favorite movie.

Peter sits on a nearby chair, exhausted by that burst of stress. And about six hours later--

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- MORNING

Peter is rudely awakened by Jack's alarm, his phone playing LOUD EDM MUSIC. Jack does not move a muscle. Peter fumbles with the phone, turning it off. He shakes Jack awake.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- MORNING

Peter stumbles in, opens the shade. First thing he sees is--

--Zen, WAY too close to the window, trimming a vine, his slightly hairy lower abs inches away from the glass.

Peter raps on the glass. Come on. Zen smiles. Peter gives him a little scowl and closes the shade.

Peter now plucks a Post-it off the microwave, studies Debbie's instructions marked MORNING. Written in tiny print. More complicated than a space launch.

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- THE NEXT MORNING

Peter walks in, carrying the tray with Jack's stuff on it -- medication, neti pot, etc.

PETER
All right, let's do this.
(holds up the neti pot)
What does this do?

JACK
Flushes out my sinuses.

PETER
Gets the boogers out. Copy.

JACK
Did you make my lunch?

PETER
Not yet.

JACK
How about breakfast?

PETER
I have to do that too?

INT. FANCY DINER -- MORNING

A WAITRESS puts down pancakes in front of Peter and Jack.

WAITRESS
(to Jack)
...and gluten free for you.

Another waitress comes back with a pot of coffee. Peter nods and she pours it in his cup.

JACK
Can I have coffee?
(off Peter's look)
Check the laminated card. It's not
on there.

Jack waves to the waitress who shrugs and pours him a coffee.

PETER
Okay, let's focus. Neti pots, sack
lunches, breakfasts, let's face it,
these are not my areas of strength.
I'm here to focus on your re-brand.

Jack eats pancakes, listening.

PETER (CONT'D)

The goal of my work is simple: you wanna tell people a story about you that is better than the story you tell yourself. The stories we tell ourselves are very limiting.

JACK

What do you mean?

PETER

What's an example, someone we both know well...? Take your mom.

As Peter talks we see...

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Sun floods in as Debbie packs her backpack.

PETER (V.O.)

She could be anything. A professor or an editor, like she was gonna.

Debbie stands, looking out at Peter's city view.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE -- DAY

Debbie walks across the Brooklyn Bridge.

PETER (V.O.)

But instead she is choosing something practical, safe.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Debbie enters. Rows filling with super serious-looking students, laptops up. Debbie takes a place in the back of the room. She unpacks, looks over at another STUDENT.

DEBBIE

Exciting, right? I love school supplies so much. The smell of an eraser... chef's kiss, right?

He stares at her. She smiles. Just then the PROFESSOR enters. He looks just as serious as the rest of the class.

PROFESSOR
 Okay, everyone, welcome to
 Financial Mathematics--

Debbie lets out a little "whoa." A few looks.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
 Let's start with the tables on page
 463 of the PDF--

PETER (V.O.)
 By doing that, she's being
 responsible.

INT. CLASSROOM -- LATER

Debbie dutifully takes notes as the professor drones on. But
 across the room, through the window--

She sees someone walking into the classroom across the hall--

--a female PROFESSOR carrying a tall stack of thick novels.
 Debbie watches her disappear into the classroom.

PETER (V.O.)
 She takes no risks or chances.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

The students from Debbie's class walk away while Debbie...
 wanders to the door that she saw the woman disappear into.
 From the classroom she hears--

VOICE
 ...prepare yourself to do a lot of
 reading because in this class,
 we're reading the big novels, the
 chunky ones, the doorstoppers. In
 our class, we consider Anna
 Karenina a pamphlet--

Intrigued, Debbie peeks in and sees the professor, SHEILA
 GOLDEN, 40's/50's, vibrant, holding court.

Debbie lingers a bit, listening. Just then Sheila looks up,
 makes eye contact with Debbie. She smiles, waves her in.

Instead, Debbie darts back into the hall. A beat. Debbie sees
 something on a table near the door.

The syllabus for the class she just peeked into: "Great Novels" taught by Sheila Golden. She reaches for it the same time as another STUDENT.

STUDENT

You taking this class?

DEBBIE

Me? No. I'm in actuarial sciences across the hall, I know, boring, but it leads to guaranteed employment, while getting a job in literature is so hard, almost impossible, you might as well wanna win American Idol. Literature is an insane thing to study.

STUDENT

It's my major.

DEBBIE

And... good... for... you.

Debbie starts to walk away, then circles back, grabs the syllabus, tucks it into her bag and trots away...

INT. DINER -- DAY

Jack looks at Peter.

JACK

You don't think she should be an accountant or actuary or whatever?

PETER

I'm saying that, at one time, she could have followed her dreams but her brand, so to speak, is about responsibility and restraint.

JACK

Sounds like you think she kinda gave up. Didn't you give up? Give up writing, move to New York?

PETER

Are we talking about me?

JACK

Do you always answer a question with a question?

INT./EXT. PORSCHE -- DAY

Peter and Jack drive along, some mellow Van Halen playing.

PETER

--what I like to do at the beginning of a re-brand is what I call a "global re-alignment." A gesture that signals to the world what you have to offer. In your case, today... it's these.

Peter parks the car, pulls something out of his pocket and shows it to Jack... a pair of pre-printed tickets.

JACK

Tickets to the Kings game? I don't know... bribery?

PETER

Not tickets. A skybox. And for our purposes, let's re-brand bribery. Let's call it... incentive.

EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY

Peter clocks Wade and Evan standing with some other boys. He subtly positions Jack so he's within their earshot.

PETER

So... I will pick you up after school for the game?

JACK

(playing along awkwardly)
Uh... yeah ...okay.

PETER

We have a private box, remember. So you can bring whoever you want.

Jack nods. Evan and Wade watch this. Peter gives Jack a nod and walks away. Just then, a text.

Christopher: **GOT YOUR EMAIL BUT LIKE I SAID, CLIENTS ARE EXPECTING YOU MONDAY...**

Peter ignores this, calmly pockets his phone, subtly watching Jack, Evan and Wade. From the next scene:

DEBBIE (O.S.)

...thing is, I usually have dinner with my son, Jack.

INT. DINER -- NIGHT

Debbie, alone, studies a menu while a WAITRESS looks on. It's clear Debbie has been talking a while.

DEBBIE
You know, except in the summers
when he's with his dad--

The waitress makes the bored face we now know well.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
--and when Jack's away, I NEVER go
out to eat. Gotta save money. The
kid's meds alone... well, he's
allergic to everything and don't
even get me started on his sinuses--

The waitress looks at her. Lady. Come on.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Halibut. Side salad.

Just then someone walks over, grabs the menu. Minka. Wearing a black outfit, carrying the world's tiniest purse.

MINKA
No.

DEBBIE
No?

MINKA
(to the waitress)
She's not eating here.

The waitress walks away. Minka looks over her shoulder at Sheila's course list.

MINKA (CONT'D)
Wait, is that your class?

DEBBIE
I wish, it's a literature class...

MINKA
You mean to tell me you're about to
eat halibut and whatever a side
salad is and read the syllabus for
a class you're NOT taking... this
is too sad. No, no. Come with me.

DEBBIE
But--

MINKA
Stand up. We're going.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Minka and Debbie walk down the street.

MINKA
You're away from home, right? On
your own, no kid to fuss over--

DEBBIE
Well, yeah--

MINKA
You take a nice bath?

DEBBIE
How does everyone know about that?

MINKA
My sister has kids. She's always
talking about that. And always
drinking coffee.

DEBBIE
Oh yeah, that's a thing.

MINKA
Okay, here we are.

She stops in front of some stairs.

DEBBIE
This place isn't fancy, right?

MINKA
Not, uh, really.

And with that Minka leads Debbie down some stairs leading to
a very modest door that surprisingly opens into...

INT. CHELSEA CLUB -- NIGHT

...a beautiful, warm interior. The club is members-only,
decorated in that English-estate-meets-trendy style. Debbie
stares. To her, this is SUPER FANCY.

DEBBIE
I'm wearing the wrong thing.

MINKA
 A hundred percent, but who cares?
 Come on. Follow me.

Minka sashays past the front desk like she owns the place.

MINKA (CONT'D)
 By the way, we do NOT have to talk
 about Peter at dinner. I promise.
 Do NOT have to talk about him.

DEBBIE
 Oh okay cool.

INT. CHELSEA CLUB -- NIGHT

Minka and Debbie are now across from each other in a booth.
 The WAITER puts a sexy cocktail in front of Minka.

WAITER
 The Manhattan Maiden for you...

And another cocktail, this one massive with a huge vegetable
 garnish stuck to it for Debbie.

WAITER (CONT'D)
 And the Garden Glory for you.

Minka daintily picks up her cocktail. Debbie stares at hers,
 trying to figure out how to attack it.

DEBBIE
 What is happening here--

MINKA
 How did you and Peter meet, again?

DEBBIE
 Is this the part where we don't
 talk about Peter?

MINKA
 Yes, we've started that part.

DEBBIE
 Pretty short story. We met at a
 book store, hooked up, it was a
 disaster, we became friends, which
 is what we were destined to be
 anyway. He dated a bunch of perfect
 looking women, like you, people who
 have never had anything stuck in
 their teeth, ever.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

He went out with this one woman,
Vanessa, whose skin literally
looked like a bucket of milk with a
rose floating in it...

MINKA

And you married someone else...

DEBBIE

Tai. Steady and sane and convinced
we belonged together.... But
ultimately he needed someone to
travel the world and I wanted to be
home, take care of Jack, work a
regular job. I get my adventures
from reading books.

MINKA

Oh no, you're doing that "making
Minka sad" thing again.

DEBBIE

It's okay. It worked out. Jack has
two loving parents. Peter and I are
the friends we were meant to be.

MINKA

Wow, you are so ...mature.

DEBBIE

Old. The word is old.

MINKA

And your love life now?

DEBBIE

Uh... the sound of the wind across
the prairie... footsteps in an
empty attic... the clanging of an
old, broken bell...

MINKA

Oh, come on.

Suddenly we see Debbie looking across the room. She squints.
Feels around in her pocket. Finds her glasses. Puts them on.

DEBBIE

Oh wow, that's the professor. From
the class across the hall from my
class. Sheila Golden.

Minka looks. Indeed, Sheila Golden is sitting there, having a
drink with a very handsome MAN.

MINKA

Wow, the guy she's with is--

DEBBIE

Oh my god!

MINKA

I know! He's super hot.

DEBBIE

That's Theo Martin. The famous editor. From Duncan Press.

MINKA

Duncan Press. Is that a book thing?

DEBBIE

It's the best publisher of literary fiction on earth--

MINKA

Cool. I read nonfiction. Celebrity bios. On a Kindle.

DEBBIE

--seriously, for book dorks like me he's, like, massive.

MINKA

Also he's yummy and sitting with someone you know, so come on...

Before Debbie can respond, Minka is walking over to them, cocktail in hand. Debbie follows, taking her cocktail too.

DEBBIE

I don't really know her...

INT. CHELSEA CLUB -- NIGHT

Sheila looks up, sees Minka and Debbie.

MINKA

Sorry to barge over. We--

SHEILA

(to Debbie)

I recognize you. You walked into my class today. I don't see a lot of students your age--

MINKA

Cool that's a cute story.

(to Theo)

I'm Minka, this is Debbie. You are--

DEBBIE

Theo Martin, right?

THEO

Yes, that's me.

Theo smiles. A killer smile. And maybe a delightful accent.

DEBBIE

I've read, like, all the Duncan
Press books--

Her eyes meet Theo's. Wow. Those eyes are... is that amber?

THEO

All our books? Tell the truth. You
did not read that 870 page tome we
put out in 2012 that was set on a
pirate ship in the South Pacific--

DEBBIE

Finished it in two days. Ahoy.
(he laughs)

Seriously, I'm a huge Moby Dick fan
and thought there were some
interesting parallels there--

THEO

Definitely. Very astute.

She's staring into his eyes again. Can a man's eyes be
emerald? A too-long moment. Sheila and Minka smile at each
other, seeing what's happening.

Debbie, nervous, fills the moment with talking.

DEBBIE

This place is fun, huh? Lotta great
energy, cool people--

(oh I'm still talking)

--and look at my drink, it's huge
and it basically has an entire
crudit  platter stapled to it.

Theo and Debbie smile. Minka throws another look to Sheila.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

The four of them walk out of the club together.

SHEILA
 (to Debbie)
 You should come sit in on my class.
 Any time. I'm happy to have you.

DEBBIE
 Well that might be... thank you.

MINKA
 So nice to meet you both, maybe--

THEO
 (to Debbie)
 Can I get your number? I
 occasionally have some galley's to
 give away, signed ones, even--

DEBBIE
 Oh, I would love that.

But she just stands there, smiling, overwhelmed. Minka takes Debbie's phone out of her hand, holds it up to Debbie's face to unlock it, then hands it to Theo.

MINKA
 Here.

EXT. STREET -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Minka and Debbie walk down the street.

MINKA
 ...I'm telling you, he's into you.
 He was looking at you like this...

She imitates his look.

DEBBIE
 He was not. He was just being nice.
 I wish Peter had met him. He also
 loves Duncan Press--

MINKA
 Books. That's so cute. It's so cute
 you and Peter read books.

DEBBIE
 Yeah, yep. Like I said, we met at a
 bookstore. And back then...
 (MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 he wanted to be a writer. Hard to
 believe now but he was talented.
 It's sad. Don't think he's written
 a word since he left LA.

MINKA
 Right, right.
 (beat)
 Except for the novel.

DEBBIE
 Hmm... the... what?

MINKA
 Novel? Big thing? Massive?

Debbie looks at her.

MINKA (CONT'D)
 He keeps it in an envelope in his
 oven. I found it once when I was
 trying to make keto brownies which,
 by the way, I do NOT recommend, 2
 out of 10. Anyway, I opened the
 oven and there it was, he said it
 was his novel.

DEBBIE
 Uh, no.

MINKA
 Uh, yeah.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Minka opens Peter's oven. She points. Debbie looks in.

MINKA
 Toldja.

Debbie pulls out the envelope. Slowly.

DEBBIE
 This is a...

MINKA
 Open it?

Debbie reaches in. Pulls out a neat stack of pages. Title
 page: "Take the Bounce" by P. Coleman.

DEBBIE
 P. Coleman. Peter.

MINKA

You're good at detective-y things.

Debbie sits down, in shock.

DEBBIE

An entire book. Peter wrote. That he never told me about.

MINKA

You should read it!

DEBBIE

What? No. If he'd wanted me to, he would've told me about it. We tell each other everything.

MINKA

I mean, you don't.

DEBBIE

We do.

MINKA

Okay.

DEBBIE

Yeah, that's the thing. We tell each other everything.

And from the next scene we hear CROWD NOISE...

INT. STAPLES CENTER -- NIGHT

Peter and Jack walk through the crowd with Wade and Evan.

PETER

Gentlemen, your skybox awaits!

However, Wade and Evan are talking to each other, not Jack.

WADE

...dude, it was so funny. You ran, like, ran right into into the practice station...

EVAN

...that was not my fault, the laces on my right skate snapped...

INT. BOX -- STAPLES CENTER -- NIGHT

Peter opens the door to a box with a lofty view of Staples center. The room is PACKED with: food, swag, foam fingers.

Wade and Evan run over to the food. Jack, awkward, lingers by the door. Peter looks over at him.

PETER

By the way, all that food is NOT on the laminated list. I did research. It's all okay for you. So go nuts. Without eating nuts. Haha.

Jack watches Evan and Wade pile their plates with food.

JACK

(whispers)

They're not talking to me.

PETER

They will, they will. Don't worry.

Just then a friendly WAITRESS enters. She smiles brightly.

WAITRESS

Just checking to see if you and your son have everything you need.

PETER

Oh, him? No Jack is not--

WAITRESS

(smiles)

So sweet to see an involved father.

PETER

Yeah, I'm not his actual father. Just a friend of the family.

WAITRESS

Okay, that is... EVEN sweeter.

PETER

It is, right?

(smiles)

You know, people say taking care of kids is hard but if you come from a background in client service... it's pretty intuitive, you know?

She nods. What? Lost you there, bud. She exits.

Peter turns around. And notices. Jack is still standing at an awkward distance from Wade and Evan. Hmm.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- LATE AT NIGHT

Meanwhile, in New York, Debbie is alone now. It's late. She's looking at Peter's book. Mulling.

We move through frame and back to...

INT. STAPLES CENTER -- BOX -- NIGHT

Jack watches the game. A few seats away, Wade and Evan watch the game too. Not talking to Jack at all.

Peter notes this, growing increasingly pained. A HORN sounds, end of the period.

PETER

Kids, howza about that? How about that last rally, huh?

A beat, they turn to look at him. Jack stares at him, morose.

Wade and Evan go back to talking to each other. Peter smiles at Jack who turns away. Peter's smile dies. This is bad.

INT. CONVERTIBLE -- NIGHT

Peter and Jack ride along. Silent now.

PETER

A minor setback. We experience it all the time at the beginning of a project, we just need to pivot--

JACK

I don't wanna talk.

PETER

Gotcha. Want to listen to music?

Jack shakes his head.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jack walks through to his room. Peter stands there a minute, unsure what to do. Then he follows.

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Jack sits on the bed.

PETER

Hey, I'm um... sorry. That sucked.

Jack doesn't say anything.

PETER (CONT'D)

My problem-solving skills are... I guess they mostly pertain to the business world and um...

JACK

I have a lot of homework.

PETER

Yeah, I...

JACK

Thank you for the tickets. I enjoyed watching the game.

Oh no. He's being polite. This is bad.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter sits at Debbie's dining table, feeling profoundly stupid. A beat. His phone rings. He startles. Debbie.

PETER

(picks up)

Hey.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie is also sitting at the dining table. The manuscript sits on the table in front of her. The line between their tables goes across the screen, like they're sitting together.

We SPLITSCREEN/INTERCUT.

DEBBIE

Hi. How are you?

PETER

I'm... we're good. Yeah.

DEBBIE

Oh. You sound funny.

PETER

Nope. Nah. You? How you?

DEBBIE

Yeah, I'm good, I...
(looks at the manuscript)
...so I feel like you and I tell
each other everything, right?

PETER

...okay Debbie, before you go any
further, I have to tell you
something.

DEBBIE

Yeah?

PETER

...tonight I took Jack to a hockey
game. I didn't ask you first. We
went to Staples Center. He took his
friends, Wade and Evan--

DEBBIE

Wait... you got Wade and Evan to
hang out with Jack?

PETER

Yeah. Yes, I... yes. And he ate
pizza. Gluten free pizza, but pizza
all the same. And he's just
starting his homework now and it's
10 PM.

DEBBIE

Peter, I--

PETER

I'm not done. Debbie, we're not
gonna eat those casseroles. Ever.
And I'm driving Jack around in a
convertible. A safe, expensive one,
but nonetheless, there's NO top.

DEBBIE

That's a refreshing amount of
honesty. But I'm so impressed about
Jack and his friends, he didn't say
anything to me...

PETER

He, you know, plays it cool.

DEBBIE

I appreciate you telling me all of that but you don't have to report back all the time... I trust you. I left you with my kid.

PETER

Thank you, I--

DEBBIE

And you trust me too, right?

PETER

Of course.

DEBBIE

(looks at the manuscript)
--because if there's ever anything you wanted to tell me--

PETER

Tell you? About what?

DEBBIE

I dunno. About a... project?

PETER

You wanna hear about my projects?

DEBBIE

Point is, you can tell me anything.

PETER

Which is what I do. Always. God, you're like my walking diary or something.

DEBBIE

Right. Right. Same here. As long as we are completely honest.

PETER

Always.

Peter walks to the door of Jack's room where he can see Jack, not particularly cheerful, doing his homework.

PETER (CONT'D)

Yep.

DEBBIE

Yep.

They hang up. A beat. Then Debbie can't help it. She walks over to the box, yanks it open, pulls out the pages.

She sits on the floor and starts to read. As she does, we move past her. MUSIC UP. If you're a fan, you'd recognize the epic first notes of the later Van Halen classic, "Right Now."

VAN HALEN
*DON'T WANT TO WAIT 'TIL TOMORROW/
 WHY PUT IT OFF ANOTHER DAY?*

...we move out of frame and then back in to find her again, now in bed, reading, the pages are around her, riveted.

VAN HALEN (CONT'D)
*ONE MORE WALK THROUGH PROBLEMS/
 BUILT-UP AND STANDING IN OUR WAY...*

We move past her again and then back in to find her...

...in the closet the next morning, getting dressed, still reading, so gripped by the book that she continues to read as she puts on her deodorant, jeans...

VAN HALEN (CONT'D)
*ONE STEP AHEAD/ ONE STEP BEHIND ME/
 NOW YOU GOTTA RUN TO GET EVEN...*

We move past her, out of frame and back in again...

...and now she's in the classroom. We move past the rows of serious students to find... Debbie hiding the manuscript behind her computer, still reading...

VAN HALEN (CONT'D)
*MAKE FUTURE PLANS OR DREAM ABOUT
 YESTERDAY, HEY/ C'MON TURN, TURN
 THIS THING AROUND...*

Inadvertently, she laughs at something in the book. A few people turn to stare at her.

She looks around like, "Hey, who laughed?" We move past her and then back into frame as...

...Debbie turns the last page of the manuscript. She is FULLY WEEPING. And no longer cares that people are staring at her.

VAN HALEN (CONT'D)
*HEY! IT'S YOUR TOMORROW (RIGHT NOW)
 / C'MON, IT'S EVERYTHING (RIGHT
 NOW)/ CATCH A MAGIC MOMENT/ DO IT
 RIGHT HERE AND NOW/ IT MEANS
 EVERYTHING...*

A beat. She packs the papers back into the envelope, gets up and hustles out of class before anyone else.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Debbie ponders, pacing back and forth, looking at the manuscript. A beat, then she dumps the pages out onto the table. Spreads out the pages. The song moves to the bridge:

VAN HALEN
*THE MORE THINGS YOU GET/ THE MORE
 YOU WANT/ JUST TRADE IN ONE FOR THE
 OTHER/ WORKIN' SO HARD, TO MAKE IT
 EASIER/ WHOA GOT TO TURN.../ C'MON
 TURN THIS THING AROUND...*

JUMP CUTS NOW AS: Debbie gets scissors and tape... she moves pages of the book around... draws lines through a few things... cuts and pastes, until the book is laid out around her, slightly reconfigured and then...

...she assembles it into a pile and returns it to its envelope. A beat. The MUSIC fades.

A beat. She sits there. Then she takes her phone and dials.

DEBBIE
 Hi, it's me--

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Minka picks up the phone outside at a fabulous cafe where all the women look roughly like her.

DEBBIE (O.S.)
 Me, you, club tonight?

MINKA
 Oooh, really?!

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Debbie wears her usual outfit. Catches sight of herself in the mirror. Hmm, not quite fancy enough.

A quick thought then she goes over to Peter's closet and opens it. A row of perfect leather and suede jackets. She pulls out the most fitted one she can find.

INT. LOBBY -- NIGHT

Debbie walks out, carrying the envelope and wearing one of Peter's jackets with the sleeves rolled up.

She is fully starting to turn into Peter. As she steps into the lobby she sees... Christopher, Peter's boss, with Stevie.

CHRISTOPHER

...if you hear from Coleman at all,
please let me know.

Just then Debbie walks by, toting the manuscript. Debbie stops, hearing Peter's name. Christopher looks over at her, looking at the envelope which of course says: P. Coleman.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You know Peter?

DEBBIE

I--

CHRISTOPHER

I'm his boss. Been trying to reach
him all week but he's not getting
back to me and--

DEBBIE

Oh yeah, that's because he--

She wings this. "Winging" perhaps not her strength.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

--he went on an extreme... hiking
and... byyyiking... trip.

CHRISTOPHER

Hiking. And biking. Peter.

DEBBIE

Needed some down time, I guess. If
I do hear from him, I'll let him
know you're looking for him, k?
Stevie, catchya later.

She strides out, envelope tucked under her arm.

STEVIE

Lookin' stylish, Deb!

DEBBIE

Thank you, Steve-a-roonie!

INT. CHELSEA CLUB -- NIGHT

Debbie and Minka sit at the bar, Debbie situating herself so she can scan the whole room. The bartender pushes two drinks over to them. Minka's is a sexy pink martini thing.

BARTENDER
Pink Passion for you...

And Debbie's has lots of fruit stuck to it.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
And a Fruit Fiesta for you...

MINKA
(cracks up)
Amazing. Every drink you order is a full-on appetizer--

Debbie is barely paying attention, scanning the room. We now notice the manuscript envelope with her.

MINKA (CONT'D)
You sure Peter would want you to do this?

DEBBIE
I'm doing this for Peter. I had this flash today. I realized. That's why I'm here. Yes. I need to get my degree. Yes, I'm here to drink massive cocktails. But also... to fix Peter's life. Finally. Do all the things I've always wanted HIM to do. Don't you see? That's the whole reason this house switch happened. So things could change. It's like fate or something... oh god, here he is.

Theo walks over to Debbie and Minka.

THEO
(warm smile to Debbie)
Hi. Hey, Minka.

DEBBIE
Thanks. Hi. Yes! Hello. Thank you for meeting me. Look at you, all... you. Anyway, wanna give you this.

She holds up the envelope.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

It's a manuscript. I'm sorry, I didn't have time to scan it. I wanted to get it to you ASAP because I'm not in town for long--

Minka enjoys this, pulls fruit off Debbie's drink, eats it.

THEO

This is your book? You wrote this?

DEBBIE

Me? No, no. I didn't write it--

THEO

Right, problem is, I can't take a submission unless it comes through an agent or an editor--

MINKA

(jumps right in)
...well, that's perfect, because she's the editor. She edited it.

Debbie freezes. Minka pokes her with a cocktail umbrella.

DEBBIE

Yeah. Yep, I did. I'm a freelance... editor. And it's one of my favorites. It's the story of a boy who grows up on a farm in the 1890s and loses his father at a young age and the impact of that on his future, how he's lonely and exiled and wanders the world and--

And suddenly, weirdly, horribly, she's tearing up. Minka stares at her. But when they look at Theo, he's charmed and moved. He takes the manuscript from her with a smile.

THEO

Must admit, it's been a long time since someone hand-delivered something to me. I appreciate your passion. I will read it ASAP.

DEBBIE

Like, could you read it AS ASAP? I leave this weekend?

At this, Theo has to laugh.

THEO
Persistence. Great quality in an
editor. I will do my best.

DEBBIE
(beams)
Great. Awesome. Thank you.
You're... you are... you know who
you are, okay, thank you.

She walks away. Debbie clutches Minka's arm.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Did I just do that?

MINKA
You did. Now... when are you going
to tell Peter?

DEBBIE
Peter. Right.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

Peter sits in a room with some other parents waiting for
their kids. He's got a latte, as all the parents do. A small
little ballet of one after another sipping their coffees.

Jack comes out, holding a prescription, looking somber.

PETER
Hey there, bud!

Jack shuffles past him, still looking morose.

JACK
Pharmacy.

INT. PHARMACY -- DAY

They wait for the prescriptions. Peter walks over with the
world's hugest bag of Haribo gummies.

PETER
RIGHT? AM I RIGHT?

Jack just stares at him.

INT./EXT. PORSCHE -- DAY

Jack and Peter drive to school. It's quiet in the car.

PETER

So uh... do you know much about Van Halen?

Jack doesn't react.

PETER (CONT'D)

They were my dad's favorite band. When he still lived with us, he played them in the car... all the time. So they were my favorites too. And then he left. And it was ironic, because he left right around when David Lee Roth, the original lead singer for Van Halen, left the band.

A beat. Peter remembers.

PETER (CONT'D)

For a while, I couldn't listen to them. Then a funny thing happened. They got Sammy Hagar in there as lead singer. So I started listening to them again. And then eventually I went back to the David Lee Roth songs as well.

Jack is looking at him, interested in this self-disclosure.

PETER (CONT'D)

You have a great dad. And a great mom. But that doesn't mean life isn't hard sometimes or doesn't kick you in the teeth. It does. I understand that.

(beat)

Look, I am not one to lecture other people. I don't have my shit all figured out. I was gonna be the great American novelist and maybe find a person to spend my life with and now I'm just a lonely guy with outstanding hair who tells people how to fix their lives even though he's not totally sure his life doesn't suck, you know?

(deep breath)

I guess what I'm trying to say is... sometimes bad stuff happens. To everyone. But you can transcend it. You, Jack, can transcend this. And I have an idea--

JACK

Please, no more branding.

PETER

No, we're past that superficial stuff. We need to take action. I think what you need to do is start playing hockey with the team. The one Wade and Evan are on. Which you should've been doing to begin with, if you ask me.

JACK

(stunned)

What?

PETER

If that's what you want, I support you. Not because you need to be friends with those asshole kids -- again, they're great -- but because it's your dream.

JACK

You're gonna let me practice? And go out for the team?

(Peter nods)

Are you gonna tell Mom?

PETER

I was thinking... we tell her when she gets back?

EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY

Peter and Jack get out of the car, walk towards the school. Jack is now very happy, we've not seen him this way.

He walks away from Peter. A beat, then he runs back. Gives Peter a stiff, one-armed teen hug. But a hug nonetheless.

PETER

See you later, Jack-o-lantern!

JACK

No!

But he's laughing. Peter stands there a moment, so pleased by this turn. Just then Alicia walks over.

ALICIA

You okay? You look exhausted.

PETER
I screwed something up with the kid
yesterday. Barely slept last night.

She looks at him, amused.

PETER (CONT'D)
This taking care of kids thing...
it's harder than I thought.

ALICIA
Huh. Imagine that.

And from the next scene we hear the burble of someone talking
about actuarial risk...

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Meanwhile, we find Debbie in class, taking notes.

Suddenly a PIERCING RING shatters the quiet. Debbie realizes.
Oh crap it's HER. Her computer is RINGING.

Everyone stares. She tries to figure out how to pick up the
call. Finally, she flees the room, clutching the laptop.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Debbie finally figures out how to click on the call,
awkwardly clutching her laptop and talking to the screen.

DEBBIE
Hello?

ASSISTANT
Is this Debbie Menk?

DEBBIE
Yes, I... uh huh.

ASSISTANT (O.S.)
I'm calling from Theo Martin's
office. Are you available to meet
with him this afternoon?

On Debbie, surprised.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Debbie and Minka walk uptown together.

DEBBIE

Thanks for coming with me. I have no idea what to say to him.

MINKA

Who can say things when he's smiling at you with that smile?

DEBBIE

Exactly. THE SMILE.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Minka and Debbie stand in front of a heavy wooden door that says: DUNCAN PUBLISHING. A beat.

DEBBIE

I think I'm wearing the wrong outfit again.

MINKA

Won't fight you on that.

Debbie takes a breath and knocks on the door. Almost instantly the door sweeps open and they see...

INT. DUNCAN PRESS -- DAY

The office is Debbie's idea of heaven.

Not fancy. Been around forever. Filled with books. First editions everywhere. Comfortable couches. Clever art.

Just then Theo, standing in some very flattering light, spots them and walks over.

THEO

There you are! Hello, Minka.

MINKA

Theo.

THEO

Sorry to make you rush uptown on short notice but... your book. I love it. We all love it.

MINKA

You read the whole thing already? It's a shit-ton of pages.

THEO

My assistant read it, raved, then I read it, raved, then we all ready it, and we are now all raving.

(as she stares)

One of the best first manuscripts I've read. Great story, moving, beautifully constructed--

DEBBIE

Oh, wow. Yes. I agree.

THEO

I understand why it made you cry. Teared up myself. We want to publish it. ASAP. When can we talk to the author?

A beat. Debbie nods, panicking.

DEBBIE

Would you...? Can I...? I walked up here after drinking a huge coffee... have to pee...

She pulls Minka away.

INT. DUNCAN PRESS -- BATHROOM -- DAY

Debbie huddles with Minka.

DEBBIE

Peter doesn't even know I read the book. Let alone that I GAVE it to people. I have to call him right now before I do anything--

MINKA

No.

DEBBIE

No?

MINKA

Debbie, listen, you came to New York to get your groove back--

DEBBIE

I mean, I really didn't. No one studying actuarial sciences has any groove, I promise you--

MINKA

You took a chance. You gotta see it through. You said you were gonna fix Peter's life. You giving up so easily?

Debbie thinks about this.

INT. DUNCAN PRESS -- DAY

A beat. Debbie gathers herself and strides over to Theo.

DEBBIE

Hey, before we firm anything up, can we get dinner right now?

THEO

It's 4PM.

DEBBIE

Right. Okay. Meet me for dinner in a couple hours? Then we can talk about the book? And the author?

THEO

(smiling)
Perfect.

DEBBIE

(lost in his eyes again)
Perfect.

Minka beams. These two. Meanwhile--

INT. HOCKEY RINK -- DAY

Peter walks in with Jack. Jack looks around like he's walking into heaven, instead of a cold rink.

Peter spots the COACH, milling around with the kids (including Wade and Evan), who are putting on their skates.

Peter walks over to the coach. From a distance, with Jack, we watch as Peter pours on his usual charm. In a second, the coach looks back at Jack and gestures. Come on.

Jack leaps to his feet.

INT. HOCKEY RINK -- DAY

In the stands, Peter watches and waits until he sees... Jack skating out onto the ice. He's tiny but quick and agile.

A beat. And a big grin spreads over Peter's face. Jack skates by and smiles at him, ecstatic. Meanwhile--

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

--more movement as Debbie opens the door. Minka rushes in, carrying clothing over her arm and some bags.

MINKA

I grabbed what I could from my closet. All my stuff is black which is not your vibe but I did have some vintage YSL print things--

DEBBIE

Minka, I don't need a new outfit.

MINKA

How is "need" relevant here?

DEBBIE

I'm feeling terrible. I'm about to tell one of the most famous literary editors in America that I gave him a book he wants to publish and possibly cannot.

She dials her phone.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I've been trying to call Peter about it. Been calling him and Jack the last hour and no one's picking up. No idea where they even are.

INT. HOCKEY RINK -- DAY

Jack races across the rink, controlling the puck and making a shot. Peter freaks out, cheering. POP BACK TO:

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Minka shrugs.

MINKA

If you don't reach Peter before
your date, you can reach him after--

DEBBIE

It's not a date.

MINKA

Let me have this. All right, try
this on. YSL 1988.

She holds up a garment with a lot of sleeves and legs.

MINKA (CONT'D)

It's a romper. Or a jumper? It's a
romper jumper or a jumper romper.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie steps out in the romper. Looks great in the front.

MINKA

Obsessed with that. 10 out of 10.

Debbie turns. It's fully up her butt.

DEBBIE

This is good, right? This is how we
want this?

They dissolve laughing. Minka throws a dress at her.

MINKA

Next!

EXT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- YARD -- NIGHT

Peter and Jack walk across the garden. Jack is exhilarated,
happy. Peter's on a high as well. Zen greets them, cheery.

ZEN

Sup, fellas!

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Peter and Jack over some (non-dairy, of course) ice cream.

JACK

So, you ever gonna have kids?

PETER
Uh, I don't know, I...

JACK
You're not terrible at it. A little weird, but you don't suck.

Peter stares at him.

JACK (CONT'D)
Well, I should hit the homework.

A beat. He exits. Peter stands there a moment, feeling proud. Just then he spots something out the window. Zen. He thinks.

EXT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter appears with drinks: beer for Zen, iced tea for Peter.

ZEN
For me?

PETER
Sure. Take a break.

ZEN
I don't need to take a break. I don't work here.

PETER
Yeah. I know. What you do is way, way weirder than working here.

He sits on a garden bench. Zen puts down his shears, sits beside him. A clink of bottles. They sip.

ZEN
I thought you didn't like me.

PETER
Because I've been a jerk to you?

ZEN
Yeah, that.

PETER
Sorry. I think I was stressed out about being responsible for a human. I've never even had, like, an herb plant. But I actually think I might be, like, doing okay at it.

ZEN

That is dope, bruh.

PETER

Yeah, so, sorry if I was kinda rude. Debbie's lucky to have you around looking out for them.

ZEN

Oh, I'm the lucky one. She's amazing.

Oh. Huh. Something about the way he just said that.

PETER

Yeah, she really is.

ZEN

We've been friends a long time.

PETER

Right, sure... not as long as she and I have been, though--

ZEN

Of course. I wasn't saying... you and Debbie have your thing, which is different from our thing.

PETER

Your... thing?

ZEN

Well, yes, you're her friend. And me, I'm her neighbor--
(Peter nods)
And her part time lover.

PETER

(beat)

Wut?

ZEN

You probably have never noticed since you guys are just friends, but, Brosephus, she's pretty hot. And I'm honored to say, we hook up now and again.

On his words and Peter's stunned expression we cut to...

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Debbie walks down the street, wearing a dress. Looking pretty hot, like Zen said. Suddenly her eye is drawn across the street to Theo, leaning against a post. He's bewitching.

A beat. She notices another woman staring at Theo.

DEBBIE

It's, like, NOT OKAY how good-looking he is, right?

WOMAN

Oh yeah no, it's actually making me feel ill. And bad about myself.

DEBBIE

Well put.

The light changes. Debbie takes a breath, heads over to Theo.

EXT. CAFE -- NIGHT

Theo watches her approach. She's suddenly aware of every step she's taking and the fact that she feels like she's floating.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Debbie and Theo with wine in front of them, talking.

THEO

...one of the things I loved was how the book started. Most would start on that third chapter...

DEBBIE

It did start on Chapter 3. I, uh, suggested we move a few things.

THEO

Oh, wow. I also really loved how the last four chapters alternated the points of view between--

(realizes)

You did that, too?

DEBBIE

It was all in there. I just tweaked.

THEO

Well, I'm even more impressed. With
the book AND with you--

Debbie smiles. He smiles back. Whoa, boy.

EXT. STREET -- NEW YORK CITY -- NIGHT

Debbie and Theo walk through Tribeca on the way back to Peter's apartment. Weather is warm, people outside. Debbie and Theo fit right in, a perfect couple.

DEBBIE

...by far the book I've read the
most is House of Mirth...

THEO

...oh Edith Wharton, the best...

DEBBIE

So sad. I cry my eyes out every
time Lily Bart dies.

THEO

And then poor Lawrence shows up the
next morning to propose--

DEBBIE

Little late, buddy, I took a TON of
sleeping potion stuff last night,
I'm *super* dead...

He laughs. Finally they reach the door of Peter's building.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

So, I will see the author in a few
days when he is back from hiking
and... biking and will bring him up
to speed.

THEO

Great. Terrific. Perfect.

DEBBIE

You wanna--

THEO

--come up? Yeah sure.

INT. LOBBY -- NIGHT

Debbie and Theo pass Stevie who catches Debbie's eye, throws her an approving look. Not bad.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Theo looks around, impressed.

THEO
This is an Airbnb?

DEBBIE
Uh... Yup. No food in here, but I do have... champagne?

THEO
I wouldn't say no to a champagne.

DEBBIE
Okay, then.

She grabs a bottle, closing the refrigerator door as...

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

...a refrigerator door opens in Debbie's house. Peter grabs a water. Haunted by what he just learned about Zen. Staring at Zen out the window, freaked out.

PETER
Part-time lover. Oh my GOD.

Jack sits at the kitchen table doing homework.

JACK
You okay?

PETER
Eeyep.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie and Theo are now sitting on the world's most uncomfortable couch, glasses of champagne in front of them.

THEO
This view...

DEBBIE
I know, it sucks, right...

THEO

Awful.

Just then the home phone rings. Debbie looks around, confused. She finds the portable phone.

DEBBIE

Oh, huh, this hasn't rung before--

She looks at the caller ID. It says Christopher. A beat.

Debbie's about to not pick up but then... she looks at Theo, holds a finger up. One second.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Hi... yeah, hello, Christopher. No he's not back yet, but he did tell me to give you a message. Said he's taking a sabbatical to...

(beat)

...um, work on a side project. I don't have the deets but he said he would call you! Thanks!

She hangs up. Sits. Theo looks at her.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Long story.

And now tension starts to build.

THEO

Sorry, what were we talking about?

DEBBIE

I can't remember--

And then, who knows how these things happen, they're kissing. Things progress quickly.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Window.

THEO

Curtains.

DEBBIE

No idea how to close them.

Theo spots the iPad.

THEO

I bet it's on here.

DEBBIE

That thing is a little tricky--

He presses a button. Instead of curtains moving, Van Halen comes on. A squealer called "Everybody Wants Some!!"

VAN HALEN

*EVERYBODY WANTS SOME/ I WANT SOME
TOO/ EVERYBODY WANTS SOME
BABY, HOW 'BOUT YOU/ OH OH YEAH...*

Debbie grabs the iPad, tries to turn the song off.

DEBBIE

(stabbing at keypad)

Stop! Stop it, Van Halen iPad!

Finally, Theo takes it from her. And with a few strokes, he manages to turn the music off.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Oh, thank God. You're amazing.

THEO

It's true. I am. Extremely amazing.

Debbie takes the iPad, puts it back in its spot.

As she does, without noticing... she accidentally presses a button, an icon of a camera.

She walks back to Theo. They start kissing. It gets more heated quickly. Meanwhile--

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter stares out at Zen a couple more moments. Intrusive thoughts in his head...

...Debbie and Zen, kissing in the garden. To clear the thought from his head, he looks away.

Suddenly, he hears an unusual PING from his phone.

He looks down. The phone says: HOME CAMERA ACTIVATED.

Huh. He presses a button. An app opens. An image fills the screen... a perfectly framed image of Theo and Debbie.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Peter watches, aghast, as Theo effortlessly scoops up Debbie, carries her to the bed.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter can't rip his eyes away, horrified. A few beats, then he chucks his phone across the room.

It flies across the room, skips like a pebble across a shelf, smashing some breakable stuff. Hearing this, Jack walks in.

JACK

Seriously what the what with you?

PETER

Nothing, I'm fine. You know what, though? I remembered, I have a... thing... I'm gonna call Alicia, see if she can watch you for a bit right now. That okay?

JACK

Sure. Whatevs.

PETER

Coooooolio. Awesome sauce.

Jack exits. Peter picks up his phone. He thinks, starts scrolling through his contacts.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Peter opens the door to Alicia.

PETER

I owe you.

ALICIA

No problem.
(as he passes)
Is that... cologne?

EXT. HOTEL -- NIGHT

Peter, in the Porsche, zips up in front of a trendy hotel.

INT. HOTEL BAR -- NIGHT

Peter enters. The place is sterile and chic. He takes a breath, so comfortable here. He settles in at the bar.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

PETER
Well, I would LOVE a Macallan. A double... but I don't drink anymore, so... Pellegrino me.

The bartender pours a Pellegrino, puts it in front of Peter, and when he clears a WOMAN enter the bar.

Sleek black dress and heels...

PETER (CONT'D)
(smiles)
Vanessa Morton.

The woman he brought to Debbie's wedding long ago. They grin at each other. A hug, a kiss.

VANESSA
Peter Coleman. I couldn't believe it when my phone rang--

PETER
Who'da think you'd have the same cell phone number?

VANESSA
Didn't change it for this reason.

PETER
(chuckles)
Oh, I'm sure.

VANESSA
What're you doing in town?

PETER
You remember Debbie?

VANESSA
Of course. Spunky, loves books?

PETER
Exactly. I'm, uh, taking care of her kid for a bit.

VANESSA

Wow, you?

PETER

Yes. Me. The rolling stone.

VANESSA

Good term for you.

PETER

That's what I'm told. You? Kids?

VANESSA

Nope. No kids or husband. Footloose and fancy free.

PETER

Oh... that's good.

They smile at each other. A light sense of anticipation.

VANESSA

You know, it's a little loud here.
(it's not)
If you want, I live right up the hill...

Peter looks at her. Thinking. The moment is perfect. We move past them to the night outside...

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

...and move back in from the night sky to see Debbie and Theo in each other's arms, in Peter's bed...

Debbie carefully rolls over to the side. Picks up her phone. Texts Peter:

Debbie: **BEEN TRYING TO GET IN TOUCH ALL NIGHT. WHAT'S UP?**

INT. HOTEL BAR -- NIGHT

Peter sees his phone light up. Another text from Debbie. He flips over the phone.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie frowns. Texts again. This time Jack.

Debbie: **WHAT WERE YOU GUYS UP TO TONIGHT? NO ONE TEXTING ME BACK!**

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- DAY

Jack looks over at his pile of hockey gear.

We INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN as Jack texts back.

Jack: **NOT MUCH. I'M JUST DOING HOMEWORK. EVERYTHING GOOD, ALL NORMAL.**

Debbie looks relieved.

Jack: **PETER IS AWESOME, MOM. REALLY GLAD HE'S HERE.**

And now Debbie smiles, relaxes. Meanwhile--

EXT. HOTEL BAR -- NIGHT

Vanessa and Peter outside the bar. A fraught moment, then...

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Alicia sits at the counter, having tea.

Just then she spots Peter crossing the garden, coming home, looking pensive. He walks back in.

ALICIA
Back already?

PETER
Yeah. Was going to stay out later,
but somehow didn't feel like it...

He sits at the counter beside her.

ALICIA
So... Jack tells me he's trying out
for the hockey team?

PETER
Yeah. Yep.

ALICIA
Did you tell Debbie?

PETER
I will. When she gets back.

ALICIA

Brave man.

PETER

Ah, it'll be okay. Something tells me she's gonna be more laid-back when she gets home.

ALICIA

Hmm?

PETER

I just have a suspicion, not based on anything specific, that being in New York may have caused her to become... more adventurous. Just a guess. Not based on anything I saw.
 (off Alicia's confusion)
 Yeah, turns out Debbie is way more--
 (pushes away the image)
 --uh, flexible than I thought.

ALICIA

Okay...

A beat.

PETER

Can I tell you something that I've never told anyone?

ALICIA

Never said no to that question.

PETER

You know the first night I spent with Debbie? 15 years ago?
 (off her nod)
 After that, I told her to stay away from me, you know, but then... I thought about her a lot. Was gonna call. See if we... you know.

Alicia looks at him. Whoa.

PETER (CONT'D)

But then, a couple days later, I ran into her and Tai at the BevCon movie theater-

ALICIA

--oh god, the BevCon, I saw every movie at that place--

PETER

--oh yeah I saw Hunt For Red
October there 8 times. Anyway, I
saw them and I could tell... so I
let it go. And then--

He takes a deep breath. He's TRULY never told anyone this:

PETER (CONT'D)

The second time she picked me up
from rehab? I'd done a lot of
therapy in there. So when Debbie
came to get me, I was on an honesty
kick. Was gonna tell her how I felt
about her. She and Tai were married
but didn't have kids yet and he was
away so much, I don't know. I
figured I had this one last chance -
- but um... soon as I got in the
car she told me they were pregnant.
So that was it.

ALICIA

(thinks)

Wait. Is that why you left LA?

PETER

Nope. It was... the, uh... quakes.

A lie, obviously.

ALICIA

This is it. This is why you guys
crossed the country to live each
other's lives. So you could realize
this. Peter. You have to tell her.

PETER

Nah. Too late.

ALICIA

No, it's not. Listen, I was at that
first poker game, remember? Debbie
played conservative. You? You took
every chance. Where is that guy?

PETER

Oh that guy? That guy got into
trouble. Drank too much. Escaped
into his work. Has only one close
friend and she lives across the
country. And most importantly, has
dated a million incredible women
and can't get past six months.

ALICIA
 Yes. And that's because... he's
with the wrong person.

A beat. He looks at her.

PETER
 God, mom friends are intense.

ALICIA
 Oh yeah, we're everything. Now tell
 me, what are you going to do?

On Peter, thinking.

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Match cut to Peter, thinking some more.

We see what he's looking at... Jack, asleep, sprawled over
 the bed, teenager style.

Peter watches him, looking parental. Then he walks out,
 closing the door.

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- THE NEXT DAY

The morning routine. Jack and Peter have a synchronized
 breakfast-pack-for-school ballet. We go from the LA sunshine--

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

--to Debbie waking up, in bed with Theo. She startles.

DEBBIE
 Shit. What time is it?
 (checks)
 My final.

THEO
 Your...?

DEBBIE
 Final... draft of a new book coming
 in, gotta run. Let yourself out?

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Debbie, backpack on, races to class.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Debbie rushes in, trotting past the other students. She grabs a test and sits down. Yawns like crazy. And gets to work.

INT. CLASSROOM -- LATER

Debbie turns in her final and then trots out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY -- LATER

Debbie flees into Sheila's class.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Debbie listens to Sheila, lecturing...

SHEILA

In "The Portrait of a Lady," Henry James spoke to the changing role of women in late Victorian society...

Debbie smiles, savoring this last lecture.

EXT. STREET -- EVENING

Debbie walks home, hugging her books. The sun is setting, the city is perfect. She dials the phone. Peter.

DEBBIE

Hey, sorry we didn't talk last night but I texted with Jack. He gave you a very good review by the way and listen... I wanted to say thank you. Again. I know you hate thanking, but that's your issue, not mine. Thanks to you, I got everything I wanted from this week. And then some. I'll never be able to pay you back, but I am gonna try until my last breath. You know that, right? All right, call me later or... I'll see you very soon.

She hangs up and right then, just at that moment, she sees something, in the window of a small grocery store...

...herb plants, potted in little rows. She grins, walks over.

EXT. STREET -- EVENING

Debbie carries plastic bags full of herb plants. She walks past a thrift store, walks out of frame.

Then walks back. And from the next scene we hear a Van Halen classic, "Why Can't This Be Love?"

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

In great spirits, Debbie pots the herb plants and puts them on the window sill. She bops around a little to the music.

VAN HALEN
*AND I CAN'T RECALL/ ANY LOVE AT
 ALL/ BABY, THIS BLOWS 'EM ALL AWAY*

We pull back to see that Debbie has added homey touches everywhere. Stacked books on tables, added pillows and blankets, put up framed things.

VAN HALEN (CONT'D)
*IT'S GOT WHAT IT TAKES/ SO TELL ME
 WHY CAN'T THIS BE LOVE?/ STRAIGHT
 FROM MY HEART/ OH, TELL ME WHY
 CAN'T THIS BE LOVE?*

She's made Peter's house a home. She settles into the couch. For the first time, looking truly at home there. She dials Peter. It goes to voicemail.

DEBBIE
 Hi, wondering what's going on?
 Talked to Jack but haven't heard
 anything from you. Everything okay?

Just then her phone rings. She smiles, thinking it's Peter and then she looks... it's Theo.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, hi.

INT. DUNCAN PRESS -- DAY

Theo is in his office. We intercut.

THEO
 Hey, I got you!

DEBBIE
 You got me.

THEO

Listen, it's your last night and I don't want to monopolize you, but I have something important to talk to you about before you go home. A proposal, of sorts. If you're free tonight, that is.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- LATER

Minka sits on the couch. Debbie is packing.

MINKA

"Proposal." Wow. WOW.

But Debbie looks distracted.

MINKA (CONT'D)

What... is it? What's wrong?

DEBBIE

I... nothing. I'm fine. Just haven't heard from Peter in a bit. Jack is fine, but...

MINKA

Okay, I don't get this mood. Look at what you've done. In a measly few days, you got a boring-as-hell-but-useful-I-guess degree, audited Sheila's amazing class, got Peter's book published and befriended an adorable millennial/borderline Xennial like myself. And then Theo, the gorgeous cherry on top!

DEBBIE

You're right. Just think something weird is going on with Peter...

MINKA

Forget Peter. Theo Theo Theo. That's who you're seeing tonight.
(studies her)

I guess we don't have time to buy you a new dress.

DEBBIE

No, I'm going as Debbie tonight. Regular Debbie.

MINKA

Okay finnnne.

DEBBIE

Where did I put my jean jacket? You seen it?

MINKA

Hard to say. Can't pick it out from all the other denim and chambray items strewn about.

Debbie looks around, looks under the bed. And suddenly she sees something. She stops, curious.

DEBBIE

Huh.

MINKA

What?

DEBBIE

There's something under the bed.

MINKA

What is it? Porn? Drugs? What?

Debbie reaches in and pulls something out. It's another envelope, looks like the book envelope.

MINKA (CONT'D)

He wrote ANOTHER book? A real scribbler, that guy.

DEBBIE

(shakes it)

No, not a book.

They stand there a moment.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

We should not open this.

MINKA

No, yeah, for sure not.

QUICK CUT TO

Minka hovering, Debbie spills the envelope on the table. A beat. They both look at each other. What? Meanwhile--

EXT. PARKING LOT -- DAY

Jack and Peter pull into the lot outside the rink. Jack sees Wade and Evan, walking in with their gear for practice.

Peter waits for Jack to dash out of the car. But Jack is just looking at him.

PETER

Don't you wanna... tryouts start in
15 minutes...

JACK

I need to ask you something first.
Something I've been thinking about.

PETER

Okay...

JACK

What happens next?

PETER

Huh?

JACK

What happens next?

On Peter as we see the flashes of the other people who have said this to him... the clients, Becca.

JACK (CONT'D)

With you. And me. And Mom. After
Mom comes back.

PETER

Well, I go back to New York and--

JACK

Yeah, so I was thinking... what if
that doesn't happen?

(over Peter)

Look, I know that you and Mom have
been just friends, for, like a long
time. But--

He tries to find a way to put this teen words.

JACK (CONT'D)

It feels like we could be together.
All of us. Like we should be.

PETER

Look that is... the nicest thing
anyone's ever said to me but...

JACK

You don't do families? Not your
brand? Rolling stones and things?

PETER
No, no, it's... your mother, she
doesn't... we aren't...

JACK
Are you sure? When was the last
time you asked?

PETER
Well, I--

JACK
Then how do you know?

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie and Minka look down at the table (we don't see what they see yet). Debbie is very shocked.

MINKA
Did you know?

DEBBIE
Of course not.

MINKA
Well I, for one, am relieved.
(off Debbie's look)
It explains a lot.

And we finally see what they are looking at. What's strewn
across the table. What was in Peter's envelope:

...mementos. Photos. All the things Peter doesn't have in the
apartment. And they're all...

...of Debbie. Debbie and Peter. Debbie and Jack and Peter.
Over 15 years.

Including the Book Soup flyer, old photos and... finally, at
the bottom of the envelope...

...a single poker chip that matches the one Debbie has.

MINKA (CONT'D)
My god, this makes so much sense.
Why he couldn't fall in love with
me or anyone else. You.

Debbie just stares at her, unable to make sense of this.

MINKA (CONT'D)

Do you love him too?
 (as Debbie hesitates)
 Seriously. This is the moment.
 Right now. Do you?

Debbie is still just frozen.

DEBBIE

I... I... he... well...

MINKA

That first night you spent with
 him, did you think, "this is a
 fling or this is my soulmate?"

DEBBIE

It doesn't matter what I thought,
 he was clearly unsuitable and then
 he was drunk and then I was married
 and then he was dating all these
 girls like you who know they are
 supposed to carry those tiny purses
 -- what DO you put in there anyway--

MINKA

Fling or soulmate.

Debbie gets quiet.

DEBBIE

Well maybe I thought... maybe that
 first night I thought...

MINKA

AHA! SEE? I knew it! That's why
 this happened. This whole crazy
 body swap week. Where you lived his
 life and he lived your life. So you
 could STOP being friends. It's all
 in front of you. All you have to do
 is take a little leap--

DEBBIE

You don't understand. I can't. I
 can't risk my friendship with him
 on the off chance that...

MINKA

But--

DEBBIE

I don't risk things. I don't. I
 take what I get.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

I'm grateful for what I have. I don't try to make something good into something great. It's how I live my life. How I play poker too. I don't ever draw into a straight. I stand pat with two pair. Always.

(Minka is confused)

I'll explain poker to you later. Minka, this is who I am, who the world made me. Someone who calculates the odds, chooses the wiser path. It's worked for me. Kept me safe. Kept my son safe.

And as she says this, we hear the sound of a CROWD.

INT. HOCKEY RINK -- DAY

...parents and coaches stand around the edge of the rink, watching as the kids get ready to scrimmage.

Jack passes Peter. Their eyes meet. Jack smiles, continues.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie pulls on her jean jacket.

DEBBIE

I have to go. Have dinner with Theo. I said I would. I'm gonna do that, then go home, get a good job calculating financial risks for other people, and take care of my kid. Because that's who I am. It's too late for me to be doing things that aren't practical. I won't.

Debbie puts her arms around Minka. They hug. And Debbie runs out the door. Minka sits and looks at the old photos.

MINKA

Why so many shirts on top of one another?

INT. HOCKEY RINK -- DAY

Meanwhile, a puck DROPS. A scrimmage starts on the ice. Peter watches, riveted by Jack. Suddenly Jack gets the puck...

Peter steps forward to watch as Jack skates through a throng of opponents, expertly dodging the defense, as--

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Debbie makes her way uptown. Dodging pedestrians.

We INTERCUT between her and her son, the SOUNDS of his scrimmage washing over her as she runs.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Debbie runs in, breathless. She sees Theo, walks over and sits at the table with him.

THEO

Here you are.

DEBBIE

Sorry I'm late.

THEO

That's okay. I'm really excited to see you. I should wait until appetizers, but... can I go?

DEBBIE

Yes, please, go--

And as Debbie smiles at him, we move to--

INT. HOCKEY RINK -- DAY

--Jack, in control of the puck, heads for the goal.

PETER

Go, Jack, Go!

Everyone holds their breath. Jack raises his stick, takes aim... a clean line from his stick to the goal. Suddenly...

...a kid near Jack loses control of his skates, crashing right into Jack, sending him flying...

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

THEO

Okay, here's my proposal. The first part is -- you shouldn't be a freelance editor, you should work at a proper house. So I got you an interview at McMillan.

(off her look. What?)

(MORE)

THEO (CONT'D)

And the second part is: I didn't get you an interview at Duncan Press because... because I want us to be able to see where this goes -- if this leads somewhere, me and you -- without us working together.

(beat)

So that's what I have. To propose to you. Books and, I guess, me.

DEBBIE

Wow. I... don't know what to say.

THEO

I know it's a leap. A risk.

And she looks into his eyes. Holding her breath while--

INT. RINK -- DAY

...the play continues. Jack skids across the ice...

It's happening so slowly and so quickly at the same time and suddenly we see... and feel...

...the reaction of the parents as Jack collides with a wall.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Debbie looks at Theo. Smiles.

DEBBIE

Listen, Theo, you're wonderful. Being with you was... but the thing is, earlier, while I was looking for my jean jacket, I found an envelope. You know?

She pauses. He looks confused.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Look, this is a very... it's the weirdest thing to say, you can't imagine how weird, but the problem is... I'm in love with someone else. Like, seriously in love with someone else. Which is confusing. To me as much as you and--

And right then her phone rings. Peter.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 And I have to take this. I will...
 I'll be right back. Very sorry.

She walks to the front of the restaurant. Takes a deep breath. Okay, this is it. She picks up.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 Hi! I was about to call you. I know
 we are going to see each other
 tomorrow but--

She listens and then says, quietly--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
 ...wait, what...?

INT. HOSPITAL -- LATER

Peter and Alicia. We INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN with Debbie.

PETER
 ...the ambulance got there quickly
 and he's with the doctor.

DEBBIE
Hockey tryouts?

And suddenly a DOCTOR appears.

PETER
 Oh good, the doctor is here.

Debbie is standing still as the fancy people enter the restaurant, sweeping past her. She's clutching the phone.

Peter races over to the doctor. We stay in the hospital now.

PETER (CONT'D)
 (to Debbie)
 I'll put you on speaker.

He presses the button. Speaker lights up.

DOCTOR
 Good news. He's doing great.

PETER
 Great news!

DOCTOR
 Just gonna need a new front tooth.
 (Peter and Alicia wince)
 (MORE)

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Yeah, we popped in a temporary and he's feeling okay. He just needs to stay overnight and make sure he didn't sustain a brain injury.

Oof. Peter and Alicia wince again. In the restaurant, people swirl around a stunned Debbie. A beat.

DEBBIE

Can I talk to him?

PETER

He's--

DEBBIE

Can I talk to him, please? Might be nice to chat with him before the POSSIBLE BRAIN INJURY sets in.

PETER

Okay, yup, you're upset, I get it, that's fair.

INT. JACK'S HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Peter walks in with a phone. Hands it to Jack, then exits.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Debbie huddles near the door. We INTERCUT/SPLITSCREEN.

DEBBIE

You okay?

JACK

I'm fantastic. Seriously.

On the "s" sounds, his tooth emits a sound.

JACK (CONT'D)

Temporary tooth will make my s's whistle until we fix it, they said.

DEBBIE

Jack, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry I wasn't there when--

JACK

Mom, no, stop, this has been the best week of my life. Me and Peter.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

We watched Alien and drove in a convertible and sat in a box at a hockey game, even though that was kind of terrible, and we listened to Van Halen, David Lee AND Sammy, and we had pancakes AND coffee--

DEBBIE

Wait, hold on--

JACK

This week, I got to be a different kind of me. I liked it. Don't be mad at Peter, okay? Please?

DEBBIE

I--

JACK

And I made the team.

DEBBIE

We'll talk about that later.

JACK

No. I wanna talk about it now. I want to do it, Mom. I want you to let me. Look, I know you are afraid of stuff. Sometimes I have been afraid too. But I don't want that for us anymore. Okay?

He looks over. Something catching his eye.

JACK (CONT'D)

Now I gotta go. My friends're here.

He looks up to see Wade and Evan walking in the door.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hey Wade, hey Edward--

EVAN

Evan.

JACK

Sorry, yeah.

WADE

Dude, you lost a tooth. Sweet.

They all laugh. Through the window, we see Peter, relieved.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Debbie strides back to Theo.

DEBBIE
I'm sorry. Thank you but I... I
have to go home.

THEO
Everything all right?

DEBBIE
It will be. I'll call you, okay, I--

And her phone rings. She looks down. Peter. IGNORE.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
I have to go.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

She hails a taxi. Her phone rings. Peter. IGNORE.

INT. PETER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Debbie grabs her bag. Her phone rings. Peter. IGNORE.

INT. LOBBY -- NIGHT

Debbie runs through, carrying her stuff. She passes Stevie. A
beat, she runs back in and hugs him. She runs back out. As
she goes, her phone rings. Peter. IGNORE.

INT. AIRPORT COUNTER -- NIGHT

Debbie changes her ticket. Her phone rings. Peter. IGNORE.

INT. AIRPLANE -- DAY

Debbie starts to put her suitcase in the overhead and
instantly... a MAN comes over and tries to help.

DEBBIE
Really. Something different about
me now? Interesting.
(takes the bag back)
Never mind. I got this.

And she puts up her own damned bag.

INT. AIRPLANE -- NIGHT

Debbie sits smushed between seats in coach. The people on either side of her read books. She stares into space.

INT. AIRPORT -- DAY

Debbie strides through. Her phone rings. Peter. Finally she picks up.

DEBBIE

I'm going straight to the hospital.

We don't see Peter yet.

PETER (O.S.)

Oh Jesus, there you are. I called you a million times.

DEBBIE

You're not at my house, right?

PETER (O.S.)

Debbie, come on, please, I'm sorry--

INT. AIRPORT -- DAY

Debbie now moves from the main terminal to the one we saw earlier, the one with two opposite people movers.

PETER (O.S.)

I feel like complete shit. I should NOT have let him try out for the team without asking you. But I don't regret it. I don't.

DEBBIE

I'm sorry. What?

INT. AIRPORT -- DAY

And now we find Peter. He's walking into the concourse the other way, from the LA side.

PETER

He needed freedom.

He steps onto the people mover. As he does we INTERCUT /SPLITSCREEN to Debbie, who also steps on the people mover but coming from the other direction.

PETER (CONT'D)

Even be free to knock his teeth out. So yeah, maybe I overstepped but Jesus, Debbie, you did too.

DEBBIE

Me?

PETER

I talked to Minka, called her after the millionth time you didn't pick up. She told me about the book.

DEBBIE

The book you never told me about--

PETER

Uh, exactly--

DEBBIE

Don't you want to be a writer?

PETER

Who knows!? Maybe I'm dying to, but it's up to me! Oh and I finally picked up the phone when Christopher called. You took a sabbatical from my job for me?

DEBBIE

I was gonna quit completely but chickened out. You don't belong in there! And I was going to tell you!

PETER

I learned some other fun stuff. About Zen. And some guy named "Theo"? As in "oh, Theo"?

DEBBIE

Wait. How do you know about--

PETER

There's a camera in my apartment--

DEBBIE

YOU WATCHED ME AND THEO--

PETER

Only long enough to want to poke my eyes out. I thought you were "done with romance." Clearly NOT.

DEBBIE

Hey, I'm a person, not a rock.

PETER

That's literally what you always said! That you were a cold hard pebble! But anyway, none of that matters, Debbie. I understand. Whatever you did, I screwed up way worse, I know that--

DEBBIE

I just thought... we were so close.

PETER

We are. We tell each other everything.

DEBBIE

No, we don't. Look at all the things we didn't say. So many things. Over so many years.

And finally they spot each other. Going opposite ways. Heading inexorably for each other.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

There's so much about you, about who you are and how you have felt, that I didn't know until this week.

PETER

So what do we do now?

They move past each other. Peter turns. She turns. And they watch each other move away from each other.

DEBBIE

I don't know.

EXT. AIRPORT -- DAY

Debbie walks out, toting her bag, looking stunned. People swirl around her. She waits at a light, looks over. Someone is standing next to her. A SKATER with a skateboard.

DEBBIE

I think I just let the love of my life go back to New York.

(off his look)

And the thing is...

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
if we end up on the other side of
the country from each other again,
this time we might never make it
back, you know?

SKATER
I don't. But also, I do. You know?

DEBBIE
Will you watch my bag?

SKATER
Um... I'm waiting for an uber?

DEBBIE
I'll leave it, I can risk it.

With that Debbie turns, preparing to run back into the
airport. And the second she turns she sees someone...

...standing at the entrance. Peter. Looking at her with so
much love in his eyes.

And without hesitation, without checking the light, Debbie
runs across the busy street. Peter watches her, astonished.
He turns to a nearby stranger, a TOURIST.

PETER
She's jay-walking.
(off the tourist's look)
She's jay-walking.

Debbie is fully dodging cars, terrified, but headed straight
for Peter. The skater looks on. Coolio.

And suddenly she's in front of him. They look at each other.
She pulls something out of her jacket. The poker chip.

DEBBIE
I found this. At your place.

Peter looks at her. Realizes she knows.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)
Why didn't you ever tell me?

PETER
I'm bad at taking risks, I guess.

DEBBIE
No, you're not. And neither am I.
Not anymore.

And with that he scoops her into his arms and kisses her. A kiss that instantly feels right. And epic.

They're so caught up in kissing, neither cares they are blocking the travelers. And yet somehow the crowd adjusts around them, enveloping them in a kind of embrace.

The farther we move back, the more people block the camera, until Debbie and Peter just blend in and then they disappear, vanishing into their future together...

...and that's where we go. The future. And from the future we hear the unmistakable opening chords of "Jump"...

INT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- DAY

The ballet of the morning routine except now it's Debbie, Peter and Jack. All in the same frame, at long last. As they get ready, they sing along here and there:

VAN HALEN
I GET UP/ AND NOTHIN' GETS ME DOWN/
YOU GOT IT TOUGH/ I'VE SEEN THE
TOUGHEST AROUND...

Alongside the eaten breakfast and the stuff for Jack we see books near the window -- Peter's novel, casually stacked.

We also see another stack of manuscripts which Debbie shoves in a briefcase, ready for her new job... in publishing.

They gather up the last few things for their day as we hear:

VAN HALEN (CONT'D)
AND I KNOW/ BABY, JUST HOW YOU
FEEL/ YOU GOT TO ROLL WITH THE
PUNCHES/ TO GET TO WHAT'S REAL...

Well said, Van Halen. Finally they leave, as a family.

Debbie turns off the music, looks around, smiles. And then she closes the door to what is now, yep... their place.

AND WE FADE OUT