SECOND ACT

Written by
Justin Zackham & Elaine Goldsmith Thomas

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OPEN ON:

1

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

A small potted plant, a Ginkgo tree, sits in a Japanese urn.

MAYA (V.O.)
I know that many people believe in fate, and trust me, there are times I wish I was one of them.

Pan off to the open door of a bathroom where MAYA DAVILLA, 42, pretty, fit, stands under a running shower.

MAYA (V.O.)
I tend to think our lives are shaped by a series of choices; one decision leading to another and another.

2

INT. BATHROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Maya combs out her hair in the mirror.

MAYA
As far as I can tell, it’s the journey through all these decisions that paints the clearest portrait of who we really are.

Her boyfriend, TREY EVERS, 38, enters with avocado toast with a candle on it.

TREY
Birthday breakfast.

MAYA
Love breakfast. Hate birthdays.
(kissing him)
Love you, though.

TREY
How bout a little more.

She takes a bite of toast.

TREY (CONT’D)
I wasn’t talking about the food.

She smiles, drops her towel, and kisses him.
INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Maya sits at the vanity, hair extensions in, blowing on her nail polish.

TREY
You look hot.

MAYA
I need to look professional.

TREY
You do... Relax, okay. Everybody there loves you.

MAYA
You need a bachelors degree to be a manager.

TREY
I’d argue fifteen years experience is worth ten degrees, not to mention the Bernie Millman seal of approval.

MAYA
Thank you...
(smiles; he always knows what to say)
We need to move your car.

She heads out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Maya gets her bags then stops to rub her fingers on a leaf of the Gingko tree. Speaks under her breath--

MAYA
I need you today, abuela.

Trey enters, dressed...

TREY
It’s they who need you more than you need them.

MAYA
Yeah, well, I’m taking it one game at a time.

(CONTINUED)
TREY
Did you just sports metaphor me?
(he loves it)
Just keep your eye on the ball.

MAYA
What if Weiskopf doesn’t like me?

TREY
It’s a game of inches. Give it a hundred and ten percent.

MAYA
I’m ignoring you... Do you like, it’s an honor to meet you Mr. Weiskopf, or does that sound too--

TREY
Ass kissy.

MAYA
I have to get this, Trey.

TREY
C’mere.
(wrapping her in a hug)
You’re Maya Davilla. The only thing with a prayer of stopping you, is you.

MAYA
(then)
I’m going to be late.

TREY
Knock ‘em dead.

He grabs his keys and leaves.

MAYA
Your ass looks great in those jeans by the way.

TREY
(playfully offended)
Sweetie, no. I am not a piece of meat. What? Again? I’m not in the--
(approaches her)
Okay. But we’ll have to make it quick.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

MAYA
(giggles)
Go!

She takes a minute collecting her things, herself.

EXT. MAYA AND TREY’S APARTMENT - DAY

Maya walks out to her ’95 Ford Fiesta, rehearsing as she goes.

INT. MAYA’S CAR - DAY

Maya practices her pitch as she drives through the Queens neighborhood streets.

MAYA
To stand out in the big box community, we knew we had to do things differently.

Maya stops at a light and looks over as a Mercedes SL pulls up next to her. She admires the car, even as the business woman in the front seat snaps orders into a phone, then peels away as the light changes.

INT. BODACIOUS BODEGA - DAY

Maya enters, still rehearsing under her breath. She grabs a wrapped ham and egg from a spot beneath a small, plastic palm tree bearing a faded sign that reads: MAYA’S H&M.

MAYA
Thanks, Justin.

JUSTIN
(behind the counter)
You got it, babe.

EXT. BODACIOUS BODEGA - DAY

Maya crosses the street and sits on a wooden city bench beneath a tree. Her world seems to slow as she eats meditatively.

When she’s done, she ritualistically rubs her hand back and forth across the pommel of the left arm rest before folding the sandwich paper and, with a deep breath--

MAYA
Let’s do this.
EXT. VALUE CLUB - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Maya pulls into the huge parking lot.

She climbs out and joins the dozens of others walking towards work at the giant warehouse market that is VALUE CLUB.

COSTCO by another name.

MAYA (O.S.)
It’s an honor, Mr. Weiskopf...

INT. VALUE CLUB - LATER

SAMUEL WEISKOPF, 72, CEO of VALUE CLUB, stands with, a young man in a bow tie, ARTHUR COYLE, 27 fastidious, southern preppie, and store manager, BERNARD MILLMAN, 70’s.

MAYA
...to show you what we’ve been doing at VALUE CLUB, 151.

WEISKOPF
The honor is ours.
(introducing)
My associate Arthur Coyle. Take note, Arthur, Forest Hills Value Club outsells it’s nearest competition twice over.

MAYA
Two and a half times, but who’s counting.

BERNARD
We are. Let’s show him why, Maya...

Maya walks with Bernie, Weiskopf, and Arthur through the enormous warehouse of food, electronics, household supplies.

MAYA
It’s no secret the challenge for brick and mortars are the online outlets, the Amazons, eBay’s...

BERNARD
So we started to think, how do we fight them...

WEISKOPF
And?
INT. BACK ROOM/FULFILLMENT CENTER - SAME

MAYA
Welcome to our online store.

Three staffers sit at desks with iPads and head sets fulfilling phone orders.

ON THE COMPUTER: We see Value Club’s well stocked aisles.

MAYA (CONT’D)
It’s what sets us apart. Wasn’t it you sir who said, "We live in a multiple universe"?

WEISKOPF
Did I?

MAYA
In your last newsletter. So, my best friend, Joan Viccidommini, fellow employee, sends her son, Dilly, into the store with his cellphone so he can hold up every single cut of sirloin for her Beef Braciole, and that’s when it hits me.

ARTHUR
(browsing the site)
It’s a live feed. Interesting.

MAYA
From home, our subscribers can pick an exact filet of salmon, the third lemon from the back, anything they need. They shop before noon, we deliver by six. Twenty mile radius. Expands our community. Expands our volume.

BERNARD
And expands our profits nicely.

WEISKOPF
Wow.

MAYA
Anyone thirsty?
Located at the back of the store. A few early shoppers stand at the coffee bar beneath the sign that reads: TRIPLE M CAFE.

**ARTHUR**
Triple M?

**WOMAN’S VOICE**

Everyone turns to see **JOAN VICCIDOMINI**, 30’s, Maya’s best friend. She’s colorful both in language and dress.

**MAYA**
Meet the aforementioned Joan...

**JOAN**
(to Maya)
Now?

(Maya nods)
Okay, so I have three kids and a husband on disability, and I was, you know, "sharing my woes" with a few other mothers, and Maya thought we should start a weekly bitch fest--

**MAYA**
--a social club. Catering to the Monday Morning Moms or Dads. It started small, the hour after AM school drop off--

**JOAN**
We vent. We shop. We vent.

**MAYA**
And it just grew.

**ARTHUR**
Are we talking staff or customers?

**WOMAN’S VOICE**
BOTH!

Maya looks shocked as a short, squat, woman, **SUZI TEPLITSKY** late 30’s walks over. Tight pants, lots of jewelry, make up.

**MAYA**
Suzi’s here?

**JOAN**
For seasoning.

(CONTINUED)
SUZI
I call it Value Club Therapy -
we’re like shopping friends. We
swap stories, recipes...

Another triple M member, Antonella Denunzio ("Big Ant"), 40s,
big voice, big boobs, overweight, tight clothes.

BIG ANT
Husbands...

JOAN
You wish.

BIG ANT
This moisturizer sucks, that one’s
overpriced, the rotisserie
chicken’s as dry as my--

SUZI
--and that’s why they got rid of
it.

BIG ANT
Along with all the crappy skin care
stuff. The point is, these ladies
listen to us.

SUZI
Like it’s our store too.

MAYA
And that about sums it up.

WEISKOPF
I don’t know what to say. Other
than, Arthur’s going to be
extremely fortunate to have you as
a first Lieutenant.

The news hits Maya hard. Now she knows why Arthur’s there.

WEISKOPF (CONT’D)
(walking off)
I’ll leave you guys to get to know
each other.

MAYA
(calls out)
Mr. Weiskopf.
(he turns)
Could I have a moment?

(CONTINUED)
Bernard looks worried.

WEISKOPF
You can have two.

MAYA
Thank you, ummm I prepared for this meeting for many weeks. I didn’t sleep last night or all week, actually.

BERNARD
You did great, Maya.

MAYA
I’ve put fifteen years of my life into this store, and, since becoming assistant manager 6 years ago, sales have increased at a record pace.

(she looks at Arthur)
I mean, no disrespect, but what do you know about this store or the customers who shop here?

ARTHUR
(smarmy)
I specialize at team building.

WEISKOPF
Arthur’s MBA is from Duke. I think you’ll find that he’s the best man for the job.

MAYA
No sir. I am.

WEISKOPF
Where did you go to college, dear?

MAYA
I have my G.E.D.

WEISKOPF
Well, I respect that. I do. But we have minimum job requirements in place for a reason.

MAYA
And what is that reason?

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (3)

WEISKOPF
(shutting this down)
I want you to know how much we value you, your ideas, and your loyalty.

Off Maya as Weiskopf walks away.

INT. BREAK ROOM - LATER

Maya has her head down. Joan comes in.

JOAN
It’s just a title.

MAYA
It’s everything.

JOAN
It’s one thing. Perspective. You’ve got Trey, hello amazing boyfriend. You know he’s ring shopping, right? (off Maya)
Oops.

MAYA
Why would you tell me that?

JOAN
I said, “oops.” And helllooo, after five years together, this can’t be a shocker.

MAYA
It’s not about-- He wants kids.

JOAN
And that’s bad because...

MAYA
We’re not talking about this right now.

JOAN
News flash. You’re forty-two. Correction, forty-three today. (off Maya)
But we can call you forty-two. Who even knows if you can still get pregnant?

(continues)
MAYA
Wow, and I thought I felt bad ten minutes ago.
(then)
I wanted that job, Joanie.

JOAN
How do I say this nicely? I don’t... Get sloshed, and get knocked up after the party tonight. You can use the guest bedroom, and--

MAYA
Wait, what party?

JOAN
Oops?

MAYA
WHAT PARTY?

JOAN
It’s supposed to be a surprise. Trey talked us into it. You can’t say no.

MAYA
Watch me.

JOAN
Plus Dilly’s leaving for California soon. If you don’t want to celebrate you, celebrate him. Just do me one favor. Act surprised.

PRE-LAP CHEERING:

PEOPLE (O.S.)
SURPRISE!!

INT. JOAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Blue collar, lived in, split level. Decorated for a birthday.

MAYA
Joan told me this morning.

Everyone glares at Joan.

JOAN
Bitch.
INT. JOAN’S HOUSE – LATER

The party is in full swing until Trey steps to the center of the living room and quiets everyone...

TREY
If we could pipe down for a second...Thank you...I’d like to tell you all a couple’a things about the birthday girl.

Joan takes Maya’s arm...

TREY (CONT’D)
Back when I coached Babe Ruth League--

MAYA
Oh, here we go.

TREY
There was this Friday night game at Pezzicola Field. This one kid--
(points at DILLY)
--goes down on a called third strike and suddenly there’s this shrieking from the stands. Some crazy lady’s all over the ump.
(waving her off)
In fairness, she wasn’t wrong; the guy was dropping more calls than AT&T. But she wasn’t letting up. So I turn to get a look at this wacko, and bam, that was it for me. She was beautiful and brazen and completely on fire, and anyone who doesn’t appreciate how amazing she is... Well, babe, just remember, it ain’t over ‘til it’s over. Happy birthday.

Everyone oooh, and ahhs, as Maya embraces, Trey.

TREY (CONT’D)
(indicating the music)
Dilly.

DILLY, Joan’s son, 18, eccentric, skateboarder tech-genius, puts on Luther Vandross’ SUPERSTAR.

Trey and Maya dance slowly and others join in. A real party.
Maya and Joan sit outside sharing what’s left of a bottle of champagne.

MAYA
I don’t know why I’m so upset.

JOAN
Me either.

MAYA
It’s just... I guess I let myself believe they’d give me a shot.

JOAN
Who would?

MAYA
Them. The “educated” people in their big houses and fancy cars who, I don’t know, climb Kilimanjaro and only drink Rose.

JOAN
Oh. Them.

MAYA
System’s rigged... Doesn’t it bother you that just because you couldn’t go to college when you were eighteen, you can’t qualify for a job when you’re forty?

JOAN
Given where you were at eighteen, I’d say you’ve come a very long way.

MAYA
Days like this, it doesn’t feel like it.

JOAN
It’s different now. The opportunities, I mean, a child from my loins is going to Stanford, on a Google scholarship. My son.
MAYA
Well, we’re sending him with a truckload of condoms, last thing we need is for his life to go off the rails like mine did.

JOAN
You mean Sarah?

MAYA
(nods)
I just wonder how different things would have been if she was still with me. Neither one of us really had a chance.

DILLY (O.S.)
There’s tons of other jobs out there, Auntie M.

He’s been listening from the door.

JOAN
Quit eavesdropping. She’s not going anywhere. And there will be no truckload of condoms.

He hands Maya a piece of cake.

DILLY
One wish for your birthday.

Close on Maya.

MAYA
I wish...

Shakes her head, fights off tears...

JOAN
You did the best you could.

MAYA
I gave it a hundred and ten percent.

INT. VALUE CLUB - STAFF ROOM - MORNING

Maya, sits with a few other assistant managers.
ARThUR
I’ve always liked the idea of round tables. As a boy, my favorite stories were--

Maya rolls her eyes, Arthur clocks it.

ARThUR (CONT’D)
Ms. Davilla, a minute.
(steering her away)
I’m aware you wanted this position, and what’s more I sincerely believe you deserved it. For me this is just a springboard into corporate. But I promise you this, when I get there, I’m going to take a long hard look at any policies that keep-out someone with your...
(searching for the word)
...temerity.

MAYA
Temerity?

ARThUR
It means spunk.

MAYA
I know.

ARThUR
Yes. Your ideas, while rough, still have merit.

MAYA
What’s rough about them?

ARThUR
But when you roll your eyes at me, you are trivializing a team building exercise that I’m trying to implement. And that divides us.
(then)
I don’t want to be the despot ruler forced to replace old regimes. You’re my right hand, and we’re all at the same table.

He beckons her back to the group.

ARThUR (CONT’D)
As I was saying, I’d like us to think of ourselves as knights...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ARTHUR (CONT’D)

Each with our own wisdom and fiefdoms. So, Sir Vondell Girard, you are our knight of legumes, and Sir Alex Gibian, knight of fowl.

Joan appears at the door. Gesturing.

ARTHUR (CONT’D)

And Shaniqua Hughes—You are the Knight of Hummus.

SHANIQUA

(confused)

Um, I run the dairy.

EXT. STAFF ROOM - SAME

They stand by the opened door.

MAYA

I can’t take this much longer.

JOAN

Good timing...

(handing her a note)

Some lady from Franklin and Clarke called for you.

MAYA

F&C?

(off Joan’s blank stare)

They make half the crap on aisle 7, 8, and 11.

JOAN

Ah. Don’t worry. I intercepted, no one knows.

MAYA

No one knows what? I didn’t apply for a job.

JOAN

Actually, I think Dilly did. Last week when you were all, “I wish this, and I wish that.”

MAYA

WHAT?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Relax. He used your legal... Maria de la Rosalinda de la whatever name, and put you up for some jobs.

MAYA
I didn’t ask him to.

JOAN
So blow it off. Become the knight of laxatives.

Off Maya.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - MORNING

Maya with hoops, hair, Queens flavor, but not too over the top, approaches the imposing Chrysler Building.

INT. HUMAN RESOURCES - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Packed. Maya sees other candidates half her age dressed more conservatively, waiting. She eyes them, they her, as she walks to the receptionist.

MAYA
Maya Davilla.

The receptionist checks her computer.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Sorry, it’s under Maria Vargas. I got a call from a Miss Lipton...

RECEPTIONIST
Your interview’s on the 59th Floor.

Off Maya.

INT. RECEPTION 59TH FLOOR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A Zen-like lobby with Feng-Shui rock fountain and muted colors. Even the phones whisper. Maya’s heels echo as she walks to the receptionist.

MAYA
Hi. I’m--

RECEPTIONIST
Miss. Vargas. Yes, they’re expecting you.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAYA
They are?

INT. ANDERSON CLARKE’S OFFICE - 59TH FLOOR - SAME

Views for days, Maya is led in by the receptionist.

ANDERSON
Nice to meet you Maria.

Reveal, ANDERSON CLARKE, late 50’s, affability born of supreme confidence; he’s been wearing a suit his entire life.

MAYA
Please call me Maya.

ANDERSON
Anderson Clarke.

MAYA
As in Franklin and Clarke?

ANDERSON
I wanted it to be Clarke and Franklin, but I lost a coin toss. Still pisses me off. This is Zoe, one of our senior executives.

ZOE (mid-20’s), coolly professional as she shakes Maya’s hand.

MAYA
Pleasure.

ANDERSON
I recognize that this is a bit unorthodox, but I’ve long thought that sales should have a greater voice in product development.

MAYA
Wow. Okay.

ZOE
You’re familiar with our products?

MAYA
Company wide?

ANDERSON
Dazzle us.
CONTINUED:

MAYA
Okay, let’s see... In personal care, the Mountain Rain Shampoo’s excellent, though we only stock the regular version. Men’s shaving gel, Fresh and Bright Toothpaste are big sellers, although the entire skin-care line is...

ZOE
Yes?

MAYA
(trying/failing to soft-pedal)
Careless. You’re far behind the competition.

Zoe’s eyebrows go up, but Anderson, slightly bemused, motions for her to stand down.

ZOE
Go on.

MAYA
(pivoting)
Um... Your detergents fly off the shelves, oh, and the new Paraffin Dusting Spray is--

ANDERSON
(heard enough)
Your credentials are certainly impressive.
   (reads a file)
Harvard undergrad? Wharton B-school...

MAYA
Um--?

ANDERSON
And your philanthropy, all the work with the homeless, two years in the Peace Corps. And then there’s--

MAYA
(confused)
I’m sorry but...

ANDERSON
Surely you have summit pictures?

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
Summit pictures?

ZOE
Mr. Clarke has been training to climb Kilimanjaro.

MAYA
Is that right? Actually, I don’t have any--

ZOE
Except on Facebook.

MAYA
Except on...Facebook.

ANDERSON
The breadth of your experience is what’s impressed us most.

ZOE
You’re currently consulting for Value Club?

MAYA
M-hmm.

ANDERSON
Sam Weiskopf is an old friend of mine. Know him?

MAYA
Not really. I’m mostly focused on products; what works, what doesn’t.

ANDERSON
What F&C product doesn’t work? Other than skin-care?

ZOE
I don’t think we need Ms. Vargas to tell us--

MAYA
--Cherry-scented floor-polish.

ZOE
One of our best sellers.

ANDERSON
Not anymore.

(Continued)
MAYA
And not in the tri-state area.

ANDERSON
Why do you think that is, Maya?

ZOE
It’s more of a seasonal--

MAYA
People only buy what they need.

ZOE
People don’t know what they need until they see it.

MAYA
If people needed their floors to smell like cherries, I wouldn’t have had to RMA thirty-six unsold cases back to your distributor.

Point. Counter point. Zoe, unreadable considers.

ZOE
(dismissive)
Thanks for coming in, Maya.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - LATER

Maya stands on the sidewalk googling Maria De la..... Now she sees article after article on herself.

MAYA
SHIT!

Heads for the subway.

EXT. JOAN’S BACKYARD - DAY

Cole leans out the back door shouting at Joan who is on the trampoline with OTTO, her 5 year-old son.

COLE
Honey bunch, would you mind whipping up some steaks for the boys and me?

JOAN
Sure, baby breath. I’ll get ‘em out the freezer and you can whip ‘em right up your ass.

(CONTINUED)
Maya appears.

   JOAN (CONT’D)
   You don’t look happy.

   OTTO
   She doesn’t look happy.

   MAYA
   I’m not happy.

   JOAN
   Did they like you?

   MAYA
   Well, they think I’m very accomplished; given my MBA, and stint in the peace corps, who can blame them?

   JOAN
   Peace Corps????

   MAYA
   It’s all there on my Facebook Page!

   JOAN
   You don’t have a...
   (screaming)
   DILLLLLLYYYYY

INT. JOAN’S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Joan and Maya come in.

   JOAN

Dilly FREEZES while drinking milk from the carton.

   JOAN (CONT’D)
   Did you make a Facebook page for Maya, and don’t lie.

   DILLY
   Yes.

   JOAN
   That was easy.

He pulls it up on his tablet.

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
It’s not just Facebook.

DILLY
Gimme some credit.

Close on the tablet as we see article after article on MAYA DE LA ROSALINDA DAVILLA VARGAS.

DILLY (CONT’D)
THIS... is a work of art. I gave you a completely new identity over almost a hundred websites - social, corporate, you’ve even got a library card.

JOAN
Huh?

MAYA
Why, Dill?

DILLY
Your birthday wish.
(to Maya)
You wanted to be fancy, so I Frankensteined your ass.

Joan slaps the back of his head.

DILLY (CONT’D)
Well I did. I was gonna use your porn name, then I remembered you don’t use your legal name anymore so--

MAYA
My porn name?

DILLY
First pet, first street. First pet, first street.

JOAN (CONT’D)
Mine’s Stubby Winkle.

DILLY
(to Maya)
It’s under your legal name, Auntie M, so you have a whole new you, but it’s still you.
(scrolling)
We got your transcripts, employment histories. The FBI couldn’t debunk it. It’s basically real.
MAYA
But it's not.

We see pictures of Maya smiling with giraffes, etc.

JOAN
Did you retouch her ass?

MAYA
Not funny.

JOAN
A little funny. And a lot of ass.

MAYA
Doesn't matter. I'm not getting this job.

JOAN
What happened?

MAYA
You know when someone has a baby that looks like a potato, but instead you say, "Look at those cheeks?"

JOAN
You insulted their potato.
(Maya nods)
Which?

MAYA
Cherry scented floor polish.

Otto walks by with a juice box.

JOAN
I love that shit.

OTTO
I love that shit.

JOAN
Out!

MAYA
Thank you, Dilly. But you gotta take it down.

DILLY
No problem.
MAYA
Next time I start dreaming hit me with something.

DILLY
Bulbous Cockburn.
(self satisfied)
My porn name.

INT. VALUE CLUB – MORNING

Monday Morning Moms are sitting in a circle. Arthur is trying to conduct the meeting.

ARTHUR
Okay, so all in favor of renaming to Monday Morning Masticators, raise your hands.

He raises both. He’s the only one.

SUZI
It just sounds so much like--

ARTHUR
It means eating. Calling it “Moms” is sexist against men.

BIG ANT
You’re a little stupid, aren’t you?

Joan laughs with the girls. Maya joins in. Arthur clocks it.

ARTHUR
(under his breath)
Remember, you’re my right hand...

Arthur walks away past Big Ant and Joan who hear this.

JOAN
(aside to Maya)
You better hope he masticates with his left.

Maya’s phone rings. She walks to the corner, Joan trails.

MAYA
(into the phone)
(flummoxed)
That was F&C. They want to hire me.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
I thought you shit the potato?

MAYA
I did.

JOAN
Maybe it was some kind of test, you know? They wanted to see if you’re a straight shooter.

MAYA
I am. Except for the whole lying about every last part of my life thing.

JOAN
The lie opened the door, but it was you who got that job. You know you can do this, and we both know you may never get another chance.

Arthur snaps at her.

ARTHUR
Maya, I need you.

Maya shares a look with Joan, takes a deep breath and walks over to Arthur.

MAYA
Excuse me, Arthur. I’ve been thinking about everything you’ve said over the past month.

ARTHUR
Good.

MAYA
And I’m just not ready to be your right hand.

ARTHUR
You’re quitting? Are you’re quitting?

MAYA
Best of luck to you.

She turns and starts to walk away.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ARTHUR
Pretty tough for a woman your age
to get another job like this.
(then)
Especially with your lack of
education.

You could hear a dime drop. Maya walks right up to him. He
backs away slightly. After an uncomfortable beat--

MAYA
Watch me.

Joan quietly fist pumps and mouths 'yes!'

BIG ANT
(aside to Joan)
masticating leftie now.

INT. VALUE CLUB - MINUTES LATER - MUSIC UP AS:

Maya strides down the cashier lane taking off her "Value
Club" vest. She tosses it as two cashiers applaud.

She smiles at them, then runs right into the chain and "aisle
closed" sign, which knocks her down. Then she's up, a bit
wobbly, and makes a hasty, but triumphant exit.

EXT. BAINTON FIELD - NIGHT

Home of the Rutgers University baseball team, of which Trey
is the assistant head coach. He sits atop the dugout,
spitting seeds as the team goes through batting practice.

TREY
(shouting)
Light 'em up, Blucas.

The batter takes a pitch off the outside corner. Ball four.

TREY (CONT'D)
Good eye!

MAYA (O.S.)
Good ass.

TREY
(turning)
Who you talking about?

MAYA
Who you think I'm talking about?

(CONTINUED)
He smiles. She kisses him.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Team’s looking great, babe. You guys are going all the way.

TREY
Easy. We’ll be happy to make the tournament. Lotta good teams to beat.

MAYA
They don’t have the best assistant coach in the country.

TREY
I like your confidence.

MAYA
I like your...

MAYA
I was going to say smile. Hey, I got some really good news I want to talk about.

TREY
Yeah? Well, that makes two of us.

MAYA
Fidel’s?

TREY
Perfect. Let me finish up--
(checks his watch)
Meet you at eight?

MAYA
(kisses him)
Perfect.

EXT. FIDEL’S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

We see Maya and Trey through the window, mid-conversation.

INT. FIDEL’S - SAME

TREY
(agitated)
--I can’t believe you said yes.
MAYA
I know, I know. My head is still spinning.

TREY
You’re gonna come clean, right?

MAYA
I admit that the way I got in was less than honest, but what I did in that room... I can do this.

TREY
How about you take this offer and leverage Value Club for the promotion they didn’t give you. This could be a really good--

MAYA
--I quit this morning.

TREY
You what?
(off her nod)
Busy day. I would have thought you’d want to run at least one of these huge, life-altering decisions by me first.

They look at each other for a beat.

TREY (CONT’D)
--at least that’s what I would have done. I mean, that’s what I was gonna do tonight... Ask you about a huge life decision. But I don’t know. I don’t think it’s--

MAYA
What?

He looks down. Off his silence, she puts her hand on his.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Tell me. Please.

Trey hesitates, then reaches into his pocket and pulls out a ring box. He places it on the table.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Oh baby.
Her hand still on his. She doesn’t reach for the ring box. The awkwardness is palpable.

TREY
Our timing never seems right, does it?

Maya’s eyes fill with tears. She doesn’t know what to say.

TREY (CONT’D)
I want a family. Kids.

MAYA
(she doesn’t, not yet)
You know how much I love you.

She puts her hand over his, but he pulls away, taking the ring box off the table.

TREY
I don’t think we can do this anymore.

INT. JOAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT
Joan opens the door to reveal Maya, tears in her eyes, holding suitcases. Joan hugs her as Maya begins to sob – an unspoken moment of understanding between two friends.

INT. JOAN’S KITCHEN - MORNING
It’s morning mayhem as Joan makes lunches and breakfast as Otto eats at the table and Cole grabs his stuff to leave.

COLE
Going to Pete’s, bye.

JOAN
You’re picking up Otto from baseball at 4.

COLE
Got it.

JOAN
(shouts)
Maya. You gotta eat something.

MAYA (O.S.)
(freaking out)
I don’t know what to wear.

(continues)
She enters the kitchen wearing a very conservative dress with a large white collar and flat shoes.

MAYA (CONT’D)
How’s this?

JOAN
You look Amish.

MAYA
I’m trying to look respectable. Not too uptight, not too slutty.

JOAN
Don’t worry. That dress is like dick repellent.

OTTO
What’s dick repellent?

JOAN
Otto!

OTTO
What? You say bad shit all the time.

JOAN
(stares at him a beat)
Just go get your frickin’ jacket.

OTTO
(as he leaves)
That’s not even a word.

Maya returns, having changed into a white pant suit.

MAYA
This better?

JOAN
Yeah, if you’re selling milk or joining a cult.

(approaches her)
Get back in that room. Let’s see what else you got.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET – DAY

Maya walks down Madison Avenue, chic, together, and understated. She pauses in front of the Chrysler Building, and looks up. Here goes nothing.
INT. CHRYSLER BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Maya waits on an bench next to the security desk. She picks a mote of lint off of her skirt while arguing with herself.

Finally, she stands to walk out when--

HILDY (O.S.)
Maria Vargas?

Maya turns to see HILDY OSTRANDER (43), wears Lily Pulitzer on weekends, and ARIANA NG (23), an overweight Asian girl who is on her third day and failing miserably thus far.

MAYA
Hello.

HILDY
I’m Hildegard Ostrander, your D.E.
Call me Hildy.

MAYA
(shaking hands)
Nice to meet you, Hildy. D.E.?

HILDY
Development Executive. This is Miss Ng, your probationary assistant.

ARIANA
An honor to meet you, m’am.

MAYA
Please call me Maya.

ARIANA
Yes, Mayam. My. M’am. Yes. It’s truly an honor to--

HILDY
Say less.

Ariana silently beckons Maya down the hall.

HILDY (CONT’D)
This way please.

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - DAY

Maya enters the spacious and tastefully adorned corner room with a vertigo-inducing view of the city.

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
Wow, this is...

HILDY
We'll get the decorators up, so you can customize.

MAYA
This is pretty great.

HILDY
(disagrees)
Cancel the decorator.

Hildy hands Maya an envelope.

HILDY (CONT'D)
These are the keys to our company apartment in the city. It's a bit small, but comfortable.

Off Maya “apartment?”

HILDY (CONT'D)
(looks over her shoulder)
Miss Ng?

ARIANA (O.S.)
(unseen; in the hallway)
Yes?

HILDY
I can't-- Please come in here.

ARIANA (O.S.)
...No thank you.

HILDY
She's afraid of heights.
(Maya stifles a giggle)
We were hoping to dazzle you...
Alas.

MAYA
How long have you worked here?

HILDY
Thirteen years.

ARIANA (O.S.)
Three days.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

MAYA
Great, because I’m here to work my butt off, so, you know, any wisdom you can impart...

HILDY
We can start with the morning meeting.

INT. F&C HALLWAY – DAY

Hildy leads Maya down a marble staircase to the Zen-like foyer. Ariana follows, taking notes on everything.

HILDY
Development kicks off the new quarterly cycle today, so your timing’s perfect.

MAYA
What cycle?

HILDY
It was men’s grooming, but they switched it to skin care at the last second.

MAYA
(“because of me?”)
You’re kidding?

They stop outside a large door marked EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM.

HILDY
I don’t want this to sound like anything but constructive advice--

MAYA
Shoot.

HILDY
We’ve never had a consultant in development before. They’ll be looking for any excuse to tear you apart.

MAYA
That’s comforting.
INT. EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM - DAY

Executives and lab coated scientists scatter throughout the seats. Hildy and Maya enter. Hildy closes the door behind them. A thump is heard as Ariana walks into it on the other side.

HILDY
(to Maya)
You’re reasonably attractive, which will help with the men, she’s another story.

MAYA
She who?

RON EBSEN, 34, officious, ambitious, comes in.

HILDY
That’s Ron Ebsen, the other D.E.

MAYA
He’s cute.

HILDY
He knows. He’ll come over as soon as he...yep here he comes. Brace for impact.

RON
(walking over)
You must be Maya. You know, I’ve been lobbying for a consultant for awhile, but bringing in someone from sales is either brilliant or insane.

MAYA
Probably both.

RON
Probably. You went to Wharton, right?

MAYA
Yes, I did. Wharton.

RON
Did you have Professor Gumpart?

MAYA
Of course. Love him.

(CONTINUED)
RON (smiling, suspicious)
Her...

MAYA (quick pivot)
Yeah, not anymore.

RON
Oh. Wow.
(stumbling)
Cool.

ZOE (O.S.)
Good morning everyone.

Everyone takes their seats as Zoe enters.

HILDY (to Maya)
That’s “she who”.

MAYA
Zoe, right?

HILDY
President of Global Skin & Personal Care.

MAYA
(“I’m fucked”)
Oh, wow.

Zoe hits a button on an iPad, and dozens of skin care products appear on the four interactive screens behind her.

ZOE
Some of you have already heard, our new mandate from on high...
(audience mutters)
To replace our existing moisture line with an organic alternative.

The mutters turn to complaints as Zoe meets Maya’s eyes with a hard stare - clearly the change wasn’t Zoe’s idea.

MAYA
(“I’m really fucked”)
Oh, wow.

CHEMIST #1
It’s already all natural.

(CONTINUED)
ZOE
It needs to be more so.

CHEMIST #2
By the end of this quarter? Not possible.

RON
We’re not talking one hundred percent green. Just green...er.

More groans... Until Anderson enters...

ANDERSON
From the shrieks of wild enthusiasm, I take it Zoe’s just broken the news.

He takes Zoe’s hand and pecks her cheek.

MAYA
Are you kidding me? He’s old enough to be her--

HILDY
Father. Because he is.

MAYA
("really really fucked")
Oh, wow.

ZOE
(to Anderson)
You want to run this?

ANDERSON
No, no, I just wanted to pop in and formally introduce our newest hire. (he looks to Maya)
Maya Vargas is an extremely accomplished consultant, and the new skincare direction was partially based on her feedback. Maya?

Maya stands briefly to small, cold applause. Then--

RON
Sir, I think it’s an inspired idea. End of the quarter is aggressive but we’re up to the challenge, aren’t we folks?
He turns to the people in the audience, eyebrows raising sharply to compel their response, which comes...

**ANDERSON**
Excellent.

**RON**
We’ll get to brainstorming, though it would be helpful to hear Maya’s game plan.

**MAYA**
Sorry?

**ZOE**
Yes, Maya. Tell us where you think the existing skin-care line falls short.

**MAYA**
Oh, it’s not fully... I don’t want to offend.

**ZOE**
(challenging)
How about you consult.

**MAYA**
Okay.

(then)
I think it’s a rip-off.

People stir. Hildy shifts slightly away from Maya.

**ZOE**
Is that right?

**MAYA**
I mean, respectfully, the company was skewered when you tried to convince people that Novalis was some new hair growth product and it came out that it was repackaged shampoo.

Zoe stiffens. Ron is offended. Anderson is intrigued.

**MAYA (CONT’D)**
They felt scammed. So to repeat the pattern...

**RON**
--It’s not the same.
MAYA
It’s close enough. You don’t want your consumers to lose faith in you.

(before he can speak)
I’m just saying aim higher. You can’t say “all-natural” on the front of the bottle, then have a list of parabens, and... other chemicals on the back--

FELIX HERRMAN, 48, bald, bespeckled and confident in his 25+ years as a white-coated chemist.

FELIX
All comfortably within FDA guidelines.

MAYA
People don’t want to “probably not” get cancer from skin cream.

RON
Launching an entirely new product line is almost triple the cost of evolving an existing one.

MAYA
Ok. I come from a different world.

ANDERSON
Which is why we asked you to join this one...

(paces for several beats)
Why don’t we see who’s right.

ZOE
I beg your pardon?

ANDERSON
Zoe and Ron’s group will thread the needle on profitably organic-ifying the current line. And Maya and Hildy will cook up something new.

HILDY
Oh Christ.

ANDERSON
All green. Within our profit margins. Three months. May the best woman win.

(CONTINUED)
Zoe glares at Maya for a moment before she follows Anderson out, protesting as she exits.

Maya sits back in her seat as Hildy and Ron exchange exasperated looks.

RON
(to Maya)
Welcome aboard.

He chuckles to himself and walks off...

HILDY (V.O.)
The first, and most imperative step-

INT. F&C HALLWAY - LATER

Hildy and Maya walk briskly back to Maya’s office.

HILDY
--is landing Felix.

MAYA
What’s Felix?

HILDY
He’s F&C’s chief chemist. Inventor of Eye Soar and--

MAYA
I love Eye Soar.

HILDY
--every other brilliant personal care product this company has produced over the last twenty-five years.

MAYA
Can we get him?

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - LATER

On Felix, staring across the desk at the hopeful Maya and Hildy who have just made their pitch.

FELIX
No.

He gets up, buttons his jacket and walks out. Maya is incredulous. Hildy slumps.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HILDY
Walt Benjamin is Felix’s number two and an incredibly talented--

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - LATER
As WALT BENJAMIN, 48, bearded, sits uneasily.

WALT BENJAMIN
I’m not going against Felix.

HILDY (V.O.)
Rishad Olpadwala is our latest hire out of Cornell--

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - LATER
As RISHAD, 29, in a Sikh turban, stares at them cockily.

RISHAD OLPADWALA
Are you guys smoking crack?

Off their looks--

INT. BASEMENT LABORATORY - NIGHT
Freight elevator doors open into a gloomy corridor. Maya and Ariana emerge, checking darkened room numbers against a post-it note. A cat pads quickly past.

MAYA
What the hell? Was this guy on Hildy’s list?

ARIANA
We’ve gone through her list. This is my idea.

They share a look and stop at a door with light coming from beneath the crack. Another shared look before Maya opens it.

INT. CHASE’S LAB - NIGHT
The sound of mewing hits us first. Cats in cages. Cats on play structures.

CHASE
Wait, no!

(CONTINUED)
CHASE ISKOWITZ, 28, disheveled, adds slices of chicken to a blender filled with other mystery meats and powders. He runs after a pair of cats that escape through the door.

CHASE (CONT’D)
Daenerys and Cersei, get your little butts back here—Dammit!

Maya slowly turns to Ariana, who smiles sheepishly.

INT. CAFETERIA – NIGHT

Chase sits across the table from Maya and Ariana. He picks at a plate filled with mashed potatoes.

MAYA
So, you went from M.I.T. to developing cat food.

CHASE
Maybe I like cats.

ARIANA
(to Maya)
Or maybe Felix exiled him.

CHASE
Maybe Felix is an ass-panda.

Ariana catches his eye, pointing to her face. He’s got a glob of potato above his lip. He wipes the wrong spot.

MAYA
Well, he joined up with Zoe.

Ariana shakes her head, points again. Chase wipes, smearing the potato across his lip like a pencil-thin mustache.

CHASE
Everyone joined up with Zoe.

MAYA
Except you. Is that because of Felix?

Chase just shrugs.

ARIANA
So here’s your chance to beat his punk ass.

She reaches across and wipes the potato from his face. Both he and Maya are startled.
CHASE
Thank you.

ARIANA
(looking for a place to
wipe her hand off)
Gross.

EXT. FLATIRON DISTRICT - NIGHT

Joan and Maya get out of a cab with Maya’s suitcases. Maya checks the address and looks up at the renovated building.

JOAN
Wow.

MAYA
Yup.

INT. MAYA’S NEW APARTMENT - FOYER - NIGHT

The elevator opens to the 15th floor, and her apartment. The elevator man helps her with her bags.

ELEVATOR MAN
Welcome home.

With sight-lines for both rivers. The furnishings are exquisite. Maya and Joan start walking around, in awe.

JOAN
Screw the kids, I’m moving in with you.
(off Maya’s look)
They can learn to hunt or something.

MAYA
What am I doing here? The CEO’s taking a risk on me, and yet he’s got me competing against his daughter, who already hates me. And all of them think I’m someone else.

Joan has wandered into the kitchen. She opens the fridge.

JOAN
Holy frick, you cannot back out now. They stocked the fridge with beer.
MAYA
Holy frick?

JOAN
Otto got sent home yesterday for calling his teacher a dunt.

MAYA
A what?

JOAN
A dumb--

MAYA
Oh wow.

JOAN
Yeah, I’m endeavoring to set a better example.

She hands Maya a beer. They sip together, taking in the view across the Hudson River...

MAYA
Have you seen him?

JOAN
Him?
(off Maya’s look)
Oh, Trey. Have I. Uh, maybe, I don’t really--

MAYA
What are you not telling me?

JOAN
Nothing. You know how it is. Word gets out you guys broke up. He’s a wounded fish, and the sharks start circling.

MAYA
Already?

JOAN
What does it matter, you ended it?

MAYA
He ended it.

JOAN
He wants a family, and you never told him the truth.
CONTINUED: (2)

MAYA
So telling him I’m screwed up because I gave my baby up for adoption when I was seventeen is gonna fix everything?

JOAN
Oh, right - it’s way better to lug your past around like a cross and bury your self-esteem in your career than ever forgive yourself for things that happened when you were practically a child.

Maya drops into the couch, conflicted.

JOAN (CONT’D)
Uh, oh. Look what I’ve done. I’ve put you in a funk and I haven’t even made you mad at me for jumping on your princess bed.

Joan giggles and runs off to find the bedroom. Maya doesn’t want to take the bait, but can’t help herself. Chases her.

MAYA
Don’t you dare!

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - DAY

She’s drawing on her iPad which is hooked up to a large screen on the wall as Hildy and Chase look on.

MAYA
Okay, let’s start with our goal:
(writes)
“Face cream. Moisturizer. Sun block.” It’s gotta be one hundred percent organic.

CHASE
(rolling his eyes)
Here we go.

HILDY
(hits him)
It has to be profitable.

Maya writes “profitable”.

HILDY (CONT’D)
And it needs to fill a hole in the market.

(CONTINUED)
Maya writes “fill hole in market.”

ARIANA (O.S.)
(in the hall)
It needs a ‘wow’ factor.

CHASE
Why are you in the hall?

ARIANA
(eyes down)
I’m not.

HILDY
It’s not important.

CHASE
The ‘wow’ factor or the reason she’s in the hall?

MAYA
We need to approach this holistically. What do people really want?

HILDY
To be young?

ARIANA
To be thin.

CHASE
To be loved.

Surprised by this, Ariana looks up at the back of his head.

MAYA
Great, let’s invent a product that makes people, young, thin, and lovable....

ARIANA
Oh, and rich. They want to be rich.

MAYA
Ok, where do we start?

INT. SKIN CARE ROOM - DAY

Floor to ceiling skin-care products; anything and everything with myriad variations. Hildy leads down the rows...
HILDY
These are all the moisturizers... face creams... sun blocks... on the market.

CHASE
Lotta dry skin out there.

HILDY
I’ll have research put together a data package to show us the top sellers in each sector.

MAYA
Why?

HILDY
It’s standard procedure in launching any new line.

MAYA
I think we need to be IN the stores, talking to the managers, looking at sell throughs, rates of returns if we’re going to find a hole in the market.

HILDY
That’s going to eat up a lot of time and we only have twelve weeks.

From behind them we hear--

ANDERSON (O.S.)
Maya? Are you in here?

HILDY
Mr. Clarke!

Anderson appears around an aisle.

ANDERSON
There you are. Brushing up on the competition?

MAYA
What? Yes. We’re brainstorming to— Anyway, what can we do for you?

ANDERSON
We like to have a little fun on the weekends and thought you might like to join us at the river.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

MAYA
The river?

ANDERSON
That’s where our rowing club is.
Since you coxed at Harvard, I
thought you might show us a thing
or two.

Off Maya, huh?

EXT. HARLEM RIVER - MORNING

Zoe sits at the end of her 8 man boat. Ron is in the stroke
position facing her. Felix behind him.

RON
This should be interesting.

FELIX
I loathe this.

On the shore, Ariana and Hildy watch.

ARIANA
This is so exciting.
(off Hildy’s stare)
Say less?

ZOE
(calls out to her crew)
On the feather!

Maya, terrified as the coxswain, tries to mimic her.

MAYA
On the feather!

Anderson sits facing her in the stroke position, Chase right
behind him. Anderson smiles.

ANDERSON
Now this is what I call team
building. A little friendly
competition to get the creative
juices flowing.

CHASE
My juices certainly are...
(off Anderson’s look)
Flowing... Sir.

(CONTINUED)
ANDERSON
Who are you?

CHASE
Chase, sir. I'm on Maya's project team... I was in cat food.

ANDERSON
Oh. Right.
(then to Maya)
Zoe rowed lightweight for Princeton. Never could beat you Crimson when she was there. Said you guys always had their number.

MAYA
Well, we'll see if we still have the old Crimson magic.

Zoe settles her team just before the gun.

ZOE
Sit ready!

MAYA
(straining to hear)
Shit's ready!

ANDERSON
(bit between his teeth)
Damn right it is! Shall we Power twenty from the start?

MAYA
(nods, trepidatious)
Of course.

ZOE
Ready all...

Maya pauses. The gun goes off.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Row!

MAYA
Row! Power twenty!

The crew accelerates 20 strokes at maximum effort. A bold move that sends Maya's team into the lead, to her surprise.

Zoe and Ron look over at Maya guiding her team into the lead.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

FELIX
They’re pulling ahead.

RON
Damnit, Zoe!

ZOE
(pissed)
I’ve got this.

Maya gets caught up in the exhilaration.

MAYA
(smiles, sotto)
I’ve got this.

Boats go out of frame as we CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. BOATHOUSE CLUB - LATER

Where a paramedic truck is parked with its cherries flashing. A couple of rowers have ice packs on their knees, heads, etc. Everyone is wet, in towels. Ariana and Hildy approach.

MAYA
I so did not have that.

CHASE
(lying)
It’s okay. We’ve had worse.

In the background, several of Zoe’s team carry the broken HALF of their skull past camera.

ARIANA
That was cray-cray.

Anderson, Zoe, Ron and Felix approach, each drying off with a towel.

ANDERSON
Where to begin?

RON
I can think of a couple of places.

EXT. HARLEM RIVER - FLASHBACK

Maya’s boat grazes a metal buoy, shearing off all the oars.

BACK TO:
EXT. BOATHOUSE CLUB – DAY

ANDERSON
It’s funny, I thought I heard you call ‘pull port’ as something different.

MAYA
Really?

EXT. HARLEM RIVER – FLASHBACK

Zoe yells through her megaphone.

ZOE
Pull port!

MAYA
Pulled pork.

ANDERSON
What?

CHASE
You want us to pull port?

MAYA
Right.

ANDERSON
To the right?

MAYA
Yes.

The boat shifts to the right.

MAYA (CONT’D)
The other right!

Zoe and Ron look right just in time to see the impact of Maya’s boat slicing theirs in two.

Bodies, oars and up-ended rowers splash into the river.

BACK TO:

EXT. BOATHOUSE CLUB – DAY

MAYA
It was hard to hear.

(CONTINUED)
HILDY
Yes, over all the screaming.

MAYA
I just want to apolog--

Anderson politely holds up his hand.

ANDERSON
--I just have one thing to say.

Zoe, Ron and Felix can’t wait for this.

ANDERSON (CONT’D)
That. Was. Hilarious!

Anderson chuckles and pops the tops off of two bottles of beer on the edge of a picnic table and offers them to Maya and Chase.

RON
(bugged)
But Mr. Clarke, that skull was--

ANDERSON
--a piece of crap. Now we have an excuse to upgrade.
    (then, as he walks)
See you tomorrow, guys. God I hope someone video’d that. That was some crazy shit.

Chase gets up as well and leaves with Ariana and Hildy.

CHASE/ARIANA
See ya, Maya./Bye.

MAYA
Okay.

Ron sizes up Maya as he and Felix walk off. Then, quietly--

FELIX
Coxswain my ass.

RON
Exactly. First we gotta work for his daughter, now we get this one... Something’s bullshit about her.

Back at the tables, Maya looks at Zoe.

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
Your dad is... unique.

ZOE
He is that... He’s brilliant and competitive to the point of occasional insanity, but it’s made him who he is.

She trails off, Maya reading her concern...

MAYA
You worry about him?

ZOE
I worry about some of his decisions.

Maya smiles at the reference...

ZOE (CONT’D)
Especially since my mother passed away.

MAYA
I’m so sorry.

ZOE
Six years he hasn’t been on a date or a single vacation, although I finally talked him into selling the apartment. But still, he’s always on me about having more of a life outside of work, and yet he can’t see the same about himself.

MAYA
I lost my parents young... My grandmother raised me until she died... After that I ended up bouncing around foster care, which was... tough.

ZOE
Is that why you never married or had kids?

MAYA
When you come out of that, there’s a lack of confidence that’s implanted in you, and you’d never risk making someone else feel as unwanted as you did.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

ZOE
Which makes all of your accomplishments that much more impressive.

Maya accepts the kindness, but cringes inside at the lie.

ZOE (CONT’D)
Well, now that we’ve Oprah’d each other, I’ve got a big day tomorrow – first shot at initial prototypes. How are you guys coming?

MAYA
(lying)
We’re close. Very close.

INT. CHASE’S LAB - DAY

CLOSE ON: MAYA’S EYES suddenly snapping open. Her face covered with a GREEN CREAM MASK.

MAYA
Holy shit! What is that smell?

CHASE
Oh, that’s you.

MAYA
What the hell!? Oh my God, it’s burning!

Maya runs to the sink and starts splashing water on her face.

CHASE
Yeah, that’s because it’s a hundred percent organic, as ordered.

MAYA
Ugh. It smells like Chewbacca took a dump on my face.

CHASE
Be honest, now. Don’t hold back.

EXT. VALUE CLUB - ANOTHER DAY

Ariana stands at the entrance as people pass...
CONTINUED:

ARIANA
Excuse me, can I ask some questions about your daily skin care routine...?

Everyone ignores her.

INT. WALMART - ANOTHER DAY
Maya chats with a friendly customer...

MAYA
I see, so then what do you look for in a sunblock?

EXT. VALUE CLUB - DAY
More people blow past Ariana.

ARIANA
Excuse me, can I just ask you--
Okay. Have nice day.

EXT. CVS - ANOTHER DAY
Hildy talks to a customer who is overly made up.

HILDY
Were you going for gaudy when you chose your make up today?

The customer, offended, walks away.

INT. CHASE’S LAB - DAY
Maya is wiping her face with a towel.

CHASE
The paraben chemicals are what make it smell better.

MAYA
Can’t do that. And what’ll make it a nicer color than vomit green?

CHASE
Ethoxycinnimate--
CONTINUED:

MAYA
Okay. Dumb it down for me? How do we get rid of the chemicals and still make it look and smell nice?

CHASE
Find a biopolymer--

MAYA
Dumber. More dumb.

CHASE
If you don’t want it to burn and smell like ass covered in bitch sauce, then we have to find the ingredients in nature.

MAYA
Good. Start searching.
(re: the green cream)
Because we can’t market this.

EXT. VALUE CLUB - DAY

Ariana approaches a dapper gentleman.

ARIANA
Excuse me, sir. Can I just--

The man literally shoves past her. She turns angrily and trips the first woman to walk past.

ARIANA (CONT’D)
Oh my god, are you okay?
(helping the woman up)
That dickhead just kept going.

WOMAN CUSTOMER
Oh thank you dear.

ARIANA
Wow, your hands are so soft. What moisturizer do you use?

INT. RON’S OFFICE - DAY

Ron is looking at Maya’s resume on his desktop. He looks at her Harvard accomplishments, and dials the number listed.

VOICE ON PHONE (O.S.)
Office of the registrar.

(CONTINUED)
RON
Yes, how do I verify if someone who says they went to Harvard actually graduated from there?

VOICE ON PHONE (O.S.)
Do you have the name of the person and the year of graduation?

RON
Yes, Maria Vargas. Class of '96.

VOICE ON PHONE (O.S.)
Vargas, Maria. Yes she did, with honors. Magna Cum Laude.

ANOTHER VOICE (O.S.)
Suck on that!

RON
Excuse me?

INT. DILLY’S DORM ROOM - STANFORD - SAME - INTERCUT:
Dilly is multi-tasking playing ‘Call Of Duty’ with his roommate - who shot him in the game. Dilly “shooshes” him.

DILLY
Sorry, admissions gets excited when they ding a scholarship candidate.

RON
(unsure)
Uh, okay. Thank you.

Ron hangs up, then looks at another name on Maya’s CV:

Dilly screams at the video game, bouncing angrily on the couch. His phone lights up as it FALLS, UNSEEN, TO THE GROUND.

We see Ron’s name appear on the screen, calling a new number with a prompt asking if Dilly wants to intercept the call. After a five-second countdown, the call goes through.

FEMALE VOICE ON PHONE (O.S)
Edward Taylor’s office.

RON
Yes, is Mr. Taylor in? I have a quick question about a reference on a former employee.
FEMALE VOICE ON PHONE (O.S.)
Mr. Taylor is on vacation for the next few weeks. I can have him return.

RON
I’d appreciate that.

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - DAY

Maya sits at her desk, watching a YouTube video of the Rutgers baseball team winning the Big Ten Conference championship.

Maya smiles as she sees Trey amidst a group of howling, champagne spraying players. She becomes wistful and starts to type an e-mail to him when suddenly--

Hildy drops a stack of research on Maya’s desk.

MAYA
What’s this?

HILDY
Research.

MAYA
You did all of this? In the field?

HILDY
Sweet Jesus, no. We’ve wasted six weeks talking to nutjobs store to store. I ordered this from research.

MAYA
That’s not how we’re doing this.

HILDY
But it’s how it’s done.

Ariana pulls one of the binders over and begins to peruse.

ARIANA
Wow, a hundred and twenty thousand responses, no real consensus on anything.

HILDY
Which is exactly the point - people don’t know what they want. They want us to do the work for them so they can pick the prettiest bottle and get on with their lives.
ZOE (O.S.)
Maya?
(Maya looks up)
Do you have a second?

MAYA
Uh. Sure.

Maya walks over to Zoe who leads her out into the hallway.

ZOE
The head of our manufacturing company that we may merge with in China wants to meet me and Ron for dinner Thursday, and his English is sketchy. I was wondering if you might help me out.

MAYA
(slightly confused)
Okay. How?

ZOE
Well, Dad doesn’t trust freelance translators and our in-house guy is on his honeymoon. The only employee we have who speaks Mandarin is--

Zoe stops, turns to Maya.

MAYA
(knows what’s coming)
Me?

ZOE
I’m kinda desperate.

INT. MAYA’S NEW APARTMENT - DAY

Joan is HOWLING with laughter. Then, barely able to speak--

JOAN
You are so butt-fricked.

MAYA
This is not funny, Joan. I almost killed people in a boat race, and now I’m gonna murder Mandarin. I do not speak Chinese!
JOAN
(still laughing)
Fine. Then just tell the bitch she can blow you, respectfully.

MAYA
I’m serious.

Joan pulls out her phone and starts searching for a number.

JOAN
Okay. I’ve got an idea. Remember Dilly’s carpool friend, Kevin Chow, from computer camp?

MAYA
No.

JOAN
His father’s a vet. Caters to Chinese clientele. Fluent in Mandarin.

MAYA
And how does that help me?

JOAN
(dials)
If this works, you will owe me big time.

MAYA (PRE-LAP)
(perfect Mandarin)
I haven’t spoken in years. My pronunciation is spotty.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Maya, Zoe, and Ron sit with Philip Jiang, of F&C China. All italics indicate – IN MANDARIN – SUBTITLED.

JIANG
So you understand our concerns?

MAYA
We do, and I must say our team is very eager to help you understand our process in any way we can, sir.

JIANG
Call me Philip.
INT. VETERINARY OFFICE - EVENING

Where DR. DAVID CHOW and his CHINESE ASSISTANT are giving a check up to a male Wienermaner, while listening to Maya’s conversation and feeding her lines in Mandarin.

Dogs howl in the background. It’s mayhem for poor Dr. Chow.

    DR. CHOW (IN ENGLISH)
    Okay, he’s asking if you have travelled extensively in China.

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

Close on Maya’s ear as she hears the translation.

    MAYA
    (Mandarin)
    No. No I haven’t been so fortunate as of yet.

    JIANG
    You must come visit.

INT. VETERINARY OFFICE - SAME

Dr. Chow holds the dog’s head and motions to his assistant as he multi-tasks the phone conversation.

    CHOW
    You say...
    (in Mandarin)
    I’d love to.
    (then, to his assistant, still in Mandarin)
    Check its scrotum.

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

    MAYA
    (in Mandarin)
    I’d love to. Check its scrotum.

Off Jiang’s confused look.

    CHOW (O.S.)
    (still to his assistant)
    Really, feel for any swelling.

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
Really, feel for any swelling.
(then in English)
But I feel badly we’re leaving everyone out of the conversation.
I’m sure your English is better than my Mandarin.

JIANG
I suspect it might be.

ZOE
We would love to schedule a tour for you and your colleagues to visit our facilities first hand.

RON
But of course we have to wait until the deal is closed due to the proprietary nature of R&D.

ZOE
As long as there is a signed a non-disclosure agreement, I’m perfectly comfortable allowing Mr. Jiang to tour.

RON
You may not be aware, Zoe, but that directly contradicts company policy. I’m sure Mr. Jiang can understand that.

A tense beat at the table. Jiang looks at Maya.

JIANG
(In Mandarin)
Tell me. I’m having a tough time dealing with Ron. I like everyone at F&C, but I find him arrogant. What’s his problem?

INT. VETERINARY OFFICE - SAME
Dr. Chow looks at the dog’s rear end and tells his assistant--

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME
MAYA
(listening to Dr. Chow)
His anal glands need milking.
Jiang stares at Maya for a beat, then laughs hysterically.

JIANG
(pointing to Maya)
I like her.
(looks to Zoe)
And thank you, Zoe. I will gladly sign an NDA to tour the facilities.

Ron looks humbled. Zoe looks at Maya, smiles appreciatively.

JIANG (CONT’D)
Shall we order?

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT

ZOE and Maya walk alone.

ZOE
Thank you. That actually worked out great.

MAYA
Ron didn’t seem happy.

ZOE
Ron’s only happy when someone else isn’t.
(then)
So, how’s your project coming?

MAYA
Honestly? Slow. Wish I didn’t open my big mouth.

ZOE
Yeah, a hundred percent organic is tough. I took a run at it a few years ago. I still have a lot of data at my dad’s place. I moved out a few months ago, but if you don’t mind helping me dig for it, the research might save you a few headaches.

MAYA
(taken aback)
That actually would be... very helpful.

ZOE
It’s the least I can do for you making Ron look like a dick.

(CONTINUED)
Continued:
Off Maya's smile.

INT. ANDERSON CLARKE'S OFFICE - DAY
Anderson works at his desk. Zoe pokes her head in.

ZOE
Hey Pop. Heading out a little early. I'm meeting Maya over at the apartment.

ANDERSON
(closing the door)
Actually, that's why I wanted to see you.

ZOE
(jokingly)
Uh, oh. This sounds serious.

ANDERSON
There's something I need to tell you.

EXT. ANDERSON'S OFFICE - SAME
Through the window from the hallway, we see Anderson start to tell Zoe something. She listens for a beat, then turns white. She steadies herself as he hands her a folder.

She reads for a moment, then walks out on him. He doesn't follow...

EXT./INT. DAKOTA - ANDERSON'S APARTMENT - LATER
Zoe opens the door, she appears shaken and looks at Maya as if at a stranger.

ZOE
Hey.

MAYA
Hey.

She enters to find the beautiful apartment filled with moving boxes. Looks around.

MAYA (CONT'D)
When's he moving?

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

ZOE
(watching Maya)
In a few weeks. My apartment in the
Village is so tiny he let me keep a
lot of my junk here.

MAYA
This place is... You grew up here?

ZOE
Most of my life.

As they walk down the hall there’s a picture of a young Zoe
and a blonde woman.

MAYA
Was that your mother?
(Zoe nods)
Beautiful. She was blonde?

ZOE
Yeah. I was adopted.

Maya nods. Zoe clocks it.

INT. ZOE’S BEDROOM - SAME

The room is a shrine to her childhood. Boxes are filled with
piles of dolls, stacks of books, and homework assignments.

ZOE
Sorry about the mess. Dad saved
everything.

She pulls out SpongeBob PJs that are half her size.

ZOE (CONT’D)
And I mean, ‘everything.’

Maya smiles, pulls out a photo of Zoe dressed as Wonder Woman
for Halloween with her two front teeth missing.

MAYA
Oh my God. Could you be any cuter?

ZOE
(smiles)
This is the early stuff.
(pulling out ziplocks)
First haircut, first tooth,
(beat)
...first blanket. It’s from my
birth mother.

(CONTINUED)
She hands a FADED BLANKET to Maya who takes it, her expression suddenly changing.

   ZOE (CONT’D)
   (quietly)
   It came with this.

Zoe pulls out a FADED ENVELOPE. Maya’s face goes white, recognizing it. She looks up at Zoe in disbelief.

   ZOE (CONT’D)
   It says...

   MAYA
   (without reading)
   “I will always watch over you.”

She looks up at Zoe with tears in her eyes. Zoe swallows hard. Tears fill her eyes as well.

   MAYA (CONT’D)
   Oh my god.

   ZOE
   You’re my mother, aren’t you?

Maya backs away, overwhelmed by more than twenty years of fear and guilt surging through her.

   ZOE (CONT’D)
   I just found out myself...

It’s several moments before Maya can begin to compose herself and almost involuntarily, she steps to Zoe and hugs her hard, feeling Zoe’s shoulders and head with her hands.

   MAYA
   Oh my god.

Tears stream down Zoe’s face at Maya’s primal reaction. They part, then--

   MAYA (CONT’D)
   How?

   ZOE
   My dad. I’m completely pissed at him... For years, after my mom died, I tried to find you. It was just a series of dead ends. I sorta gave up. But apparently he didn’t.

   (CONTINUED)
(CONTINUED: (2))

MAYA
(laughing through tears)
That was a good decision.
Zoe smiles.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK – STRAWBERRY FIELDS – DAY
They walk, arm in arm.

MAYA
Ask me anything.

ZOE
Did you ever search for me?

MAYA
The adoption agency advised me not to. You know, ‘don’t disrupt her new environment.’ But every time I’d see a little girl, I’d think is that what Sarah looks like now?

ZOE
You called me Sarah?
(Maya nods)
So, I’d have been Sarah Rosalina de la Santa Cruz DaVilla Vargas?

MAYA
You see why I shortened it.

EXT. PROMENADE – CENTRAL PARK – EARLY EVENING
They walk.

ZOE
Can I ask... What about my father?

MAYA
I met him at party.

ZOE
Does he know about me?

MAYA
Oh baby, I never even knew his last name.
(off Zoe)
But he was the most beautiful boy I’d ever seen.

(Continued)
ZOE
He was?

MAYA
And so sweet.
(Zoe smiles)
I was sixteen and basically on my own. But I knew you had to be born.
Wasn’t even a question. I left school, got two jobs, but I had no one to watch you. They were going to take you away. Put you back in the system. I couldn’t let that happen.

INT. ANDERSON’S HALLWAY – DUSK

PAN ACROSS dozens of framed pictures of the Clarkes.

We see photos of Zoe as a toddler being carried by her adoptive mother; Zoe in braces; playing softball; with both of her parents before the prom; standing with only father after graduating from Princeton. There’s love in every image.

Reveal Maya, standing alone, crying as she looks up at the photos – it’s everything she missed in Zoe’s life.

ZOE (O.S.)
I found my old research!

Maya composes herself as Zoe walks through frame at the end of the hall carrying a box.

ZOE (CONT’D)
But I took out the really good stuff cause I’m still gonna kick your ass.

She smiles playfully and approaches Maya.

ZOE (CONT’D)
You okay?

Maya nods, a lump in her throat.

ZOE (CONT’D)
Good. Let’s go, I’m starving.

Maya takes one last look at the wall, then takes Zoe’s hand with a smile.

MAYA
Me too.

(CONTINUED)
EXT. ZABARS - DAY - MONTAGE:
From outside, we see Zoe and Maya sharing a sandwich and talking animatedly.

INT. ROSE PLANETARIUM - ANOTHER DAY
Maya and Zoe continue to talk as they walk along the display of planets.

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - ANOTHER DAY
As Zoe and Maya jog, Zoe steps on the gas, but Maya keeps up. Zoe smiles, impressed.

EXT. CHRISTMAS TREE LOT - NIGHT
Zoe has picked a tree way too big. She and Maya struggle to carry it fireman style, laughing as they stumble.

EXT./INT. JOAN’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Joan walks in from the kitchen with a bottle of wine, tops off Maya’s glass and sits with her on the couch.

JOAN
So that’s where you’ve been. I can’t believe it. I mean, it’s like out of a movie.

MAYA
Joan.

JOAN
You’re right. No super heroes. No one will give a sheet.

MAYA
And please start cursing.
   (then)
The last few days have been - amazing. She wants to get to know me.

JOAN
Oops.

MAYA
No kidding. She wants to make up for lost time.

JOAN
Good.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAYA
She wants to meet my friends.

JOAN
Great. Love to.

MAYA

INT. TAVERN ON THE GREEN - DAY
Anderson sits at lunch across from Maya and Zoe.

ANDERSON
I’d like to explain myself, to both of you.

MAYA
You don’t have to.

ZOE
Oh yes, he does.

ANDERSON
We used to say Zoe got her spirited streak from her mother, now we know that was only half true. (Maya laughs)
When Zoe started looking for you, I didn’t know if it was healthy or not, but she wasn’t exactly asking my permission... After a while, she gave up, and...
(to Zoe; quelling his emotions)
...something went out in you. I know what your mother would have said, “Fix it, Andy,” so I kept the feelers out. (to Maya)
And suddenly, almost magically, there you were online, formidably so. I had no idea if you’d want to have contact with Zoe, and I couldn’t risk her being rejected, so, after reading your resume, I...

ZOE
Manipulated us.

(continued)
ANDERSON
(he gestures, mea culpa)
One day, god willing, you’ll understand the lengths a parent will go to for their child’s happiness. Besides, for all I knew Maya could have been a serial killer.

MAYA
Well, you still haven’t seen what’s in my basement.

ANDERSON
(chuckles; then...)
I did lie, though. To both of you. And for that I am sorry.

Anderson takes Zoe’s hand as they smile at each other. Maya is affected by the deep love between them.

MAYA
Listen guys, there’s something--

From behind them, we hear familiar voices.

BIG ANT (O.S.)
Maya? Is that Maria Maya Vargas?

Reveal, Big Ant, Suzi, and Joan trying their best to look “up town.” Pants suits, hair done up, less make-up.

BIG ANT (CONT’D)
What are the odds?

JOAN
We were just on our way to the alumni social for Norton.

MAYA
Wharton.
(to Zoe & Anderson)
Zoe, Anderson... these are my old friends from--

SUZI
Harvard.
(extends her hand)

JOAN
(extends her hand)
Joan. London. No relation.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JOAN (CONT'D)
(re: Maya who looks apoplectic)
We did some time in the Peace Corps.

BIG ANT
Big. Ant. No relation.
(off their looks)
...We saved whales.

JOAN
(staring at Zoe)
So, you’re Maya’s little girl.

SUZI
She’s totally got your eyes.

MAYA
So, guys. Where’s the mixer?

JOAN
Upper West Side somewhere. Our driver has the 4-1-1.

BIG ANT
We just stopped in for a couple drinks and a tinkle.

JOAN
So we must go. Philanthropy never waits.

SUZI
Always saving something.

ANDERSON
I thought you said it was an alumni social.

JOAN
Three hours with drunk alums pawing at our checkbooks, we’ll be the ones who need saving.

Anderson and Zoe laugh. Maya goes along with it painfully.

ANDERSON
Isn’t that always the truth. Well, nice to meet you ladies.

ZOE
Yes, it’s lovely to finally meet some of Maya’s friends.
INT. MAYA’S OFFICE - DAY

Maya enters to find Chase and Hildy.

MAYA
Hi guys--
(off their excited looks)
What?

Hildy sets a stack of research on Maya’s desk.

HILDY
I found the hole!

MAYA
I’m sorry?

CHASE
In the market. Here...

He pushes a top sheet of data towards Maya.

MAYA
(reading)
Fruit?

HILDY
Not just any fruit.

MAYA
Tangerine... Huh.

HILDY
Our data shows that there’s a thirty-seven percent increase in sales of any moisturizer, face cream or block with a citrus smell. And they’ve all been done, except for...

CHASE
Do you know what this means?

HILDY
We did it! Yes!

But Maya still looks unsure.

CHASE
Maya?

(CONTINUED)
HILDY
(warning)
We’re at deadline.

MAYA
I know. It’s just... none of our
surveys gave us any indication that
this really matters.

HILDY
We have to green light? Please?

MAYA
(a beat, then)
Okay.

Hildy and Chase start celebrating. Maya seems unsure.

EXT. HIGHLINE - LATER
Maya and Joan walk silently.

JOAN
So you’re still mad at me for
lunch?
(Maya shrugs)
She seems nice.

MAYA
Yeah.

JOAN
So pretty too.

MAYA
Uh huh.

JOAN
Unlike the bug up your ass.

MAYA
Oh come on, Joan, “Save the
whales?” really?

JOAN
She nailed it in rehearsal.

MAYA
Why’d you spring that on me without
checking?

JOAN
We were helping you.
MAYA
I wish you’d asked.

JOAN
You said she wanted to meet your friends.

(off Maya)
So what, suddenly we don’t exist anymore? Be careful Maya, don’t confuse your new Facebook thing with who you really are.

MAYA
My daughter thinks I’m this amazing person, what do you want me to do?

JOAN
Try telling her the truth.

MAYA
And ruin everything, are you crazy? Maybe once we’ve gotten to know each other more.

JOAN
You once said the exact same thing about Trey.

MAYA
(Joan’s right, but--)
That’s a shitty thing to say.

JOAN
If the shite fits.

MAYA
You have no idea what it’s been like. You have NO idea how many times a day I still thought about her! Is she okay? Is she happy? Is she even alive?... And now, you’re right, I’ve found her and it’s all messed up, I’m a mess, and I hate the lie but I have to be the person she thinks I am or I will definitely lose her and I cannot survive that again.

JOAN
You act like you don’t have a choice.
CONTINUED: (2)

MAYA
I don’t.

JOAN
Then I guess it’s too bad she’ll never meet the old Maya; she was an amazing person.

Joan walks off.

INT. MAYA’S APARTMENT – NIGHT
Maya sits alone in her apartment, several iterations of the ‘green line’ and stacks of data lie on the coffee table.
Unable to concentrate, she leans back and sighs, looking around the apartment that, somehow, doesn’t seem so grand anymore.

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE – DAY
ARIANA (O.S.)
HOLD EVERYTHING!
Ariana bursts in holding a flash drive. Maya, Hildy and Chase look up from their work.

HILDY
Please don’t shout.

ARIANA
(to Maya; dizzy from the view)
Before we ran down Hildy’s tangerine road I wanted to make sure we’re good.

MAYA
And?

ARIANA
We’re not.
She closes her eyes and “bravely” inches her way over to Maya’s desk, holding out the flash drive.

HILDY
Oh, for the love of god.
She grabs the flash drive and hands it to Maya who puts it into her computer. Up comes graphics for--
ARIANA
(eyes still closed)
Ponds just announced they’re putting out a whole Tangerine skin care line. And it’s green.

HILDY
What?

CHASE
They beat us to the punch?

MAYA
Who cares. For every Pepsi there’s a Coke. I say we stay the course.

Ariana starts backing away...

HILDY
The board will never go for it. Especially if they’re out first. We’ve been burned in marketing wars before. They want originality.

MAYA
Originality. So... you’re saying--

HILDY
We’re done. We’re out of time.

Hildy slumps on the couch. Maya feels terrible.

MAYA
I’m sorry guys.

She grabs her coat and walks out.

INT. VALUE CLUB – TRIPLE M’S – DAY

The back room overflows with MMM’s. Maya walks in, unsettled.

BIG ANT
Oh, look who came to the mountain.

JOAN
You mean down off the mountain.

SUZI
What’s wrong?

JOAN
(thinking she came clean)
They fired you?

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
Might as well have. Nine weeks of work, and we just got beat by another company doing the same damn thing.

SUZI
Well, everything happens for a reason, right?
(off Maya’s look)
You’re with your daughter again.

BIG ANT
Who’s gorgeous, by the way.

MAYA
Thank you guys for the other day. It was a little pathetic, but very sweet...
(teasing)
Mostly pathetic.

BIG ANT
I know, I went with whales, should’a said frogs. Gotta listen to my gut more.

MAYA
Me too. I let myself get talked into data and spreadsheets when I should have stuck with what got me there. There’s just so many products, so much competition. Too much noise.

SUZI
When there’s too much noise in the car from the kids screaming, I lay on the horn. BEEEEEEEEHH! Shuts ‘em right up every time.

MAYA
If only there was a skin-care equivalent.

JOAN
Of what?

MAYA
One thing to cut through the noise... One thing to... Omigod, that’s it.
CONTINUED: (2)

SUZI

What?

MAYA

You guys are amazing, I love you, I gotta go.

She runs out. Joan shakes her head, disappointed in Maya.

BIG ANT
(to Suzi)

What you don’t realize about the horn thing, is your kids duck down in the back seat, and you look like a crazy lady driving alone with your horn blowing.

Off Suzi...

CHASE (PRE-LAP)

One product?

INT. CAR – LATER

Maya is on the phone. Screaming.

MAYA

Yes! That does the job of all three.

INT. LAB – SAME

Chase on his cell phone.

CHASE

We should run it by Hildy to check the numbers.

MAYA

Forget the numbers. That’s what got us in this mess in the first place. I got a good feeling about this. We’re making one product that does everything. Rejuvenates, blocks the sun, moisturizes the whole body. I mean think about it, how ridiculous is it that we have a different cream for every body part. It’s stupid.

CHASE

So I can use it for my jock itch?

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
(a beat)
Okay, so there’ll still be two creams.

EXT. NYC STREET – DAY

Maya and Chase walk as he eats a hot dog from the cart.

CHASE
Maya, SPF formulas that block the sun and stay on your skin are synthetic and can actually be poisonous. You don’t want people sleeping in it. Plus we only have three weeks left.

MAYA
But, isn’t there a natural compound that gives sun protection and isn’t poisonous?

CHASE
You’re talking a biopolymer with a sun resistant, organic component?

MAYA
Yes!

CHASE
No!

MAYA
Why?

CHASE
It doesn’t exist.

MAYA
Yet. If we can put everything into one product instead of three, and keep it green? That’s a game changer. No one is doing that.

Chase shakes his head ‘not possible.’

MAYA (CONT’D)
Chase, I believe in you.
(checks her watch)
Shit, we’ll make a quick stop at the Christmas party, and then we’ll hit the lab.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She tries hailing a cab, but Chase hesitates.

CHASE
I can’t go.

MAYA
Why not?

CHASE
It’s for executives only.

Maya approaches him. Knows what it feels like not to belong.

MAYA
Gimme a break. You’re my date. And Ariana too. It’s on the top floor, she’ll be thrilled.

INT. EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Decorated for Christmas, the F&C executive holiday party is in full swing with an 8 piece band.

Maya, in a black dress, hair up, comes in with Chase who’s stuffed into an ill-fitting suit. Maya can tell he’s nervous.

MAYA
You okay?

CHASE
There’s a reason I was banished to cat food. Not good at these things.

Chase grabs a glass of wine off a waiter’s tray and downs it.

MAYA
Why did Felix banish you?

CHASE
(a beat, then)
The whole Novalis scandal was Felix’ idea. He wanted me to cheat the readings to hide the fact we were repackaging shampoo as a hair growth product. But I wouldn’t do it.

MAYA
So he let you keep your job if you kept quiet, but sent you to Siberia.

(off Chase’s painful nod)
So why didn’t you quit?
CHASE
Because that’s what he wants.

Maya sees Felix at the bar with Ron, who raises his drink.
Maya smirks back.

ZOE (O.S.)
Well if it isn’t Team Green.

Maya turns to see Zoe, looking fantastic. She smiles.

MAYA
Zoe, wow. You look amazing.

ZOE
Thanks. Pretty damn fine yourself.

They’re unsure how to greet each other, settle for a hug and
semi-cheek-kiss. They laugh.

ZOE (CONT’D)
Did any of that research help?

MAYA
(cryptically)
Who’s asking, my rival or my--

ZOE
Your daughter.

Maya smiles at the warmth, once again feeling pangs of guilt.
Anderson approaches.

ANDERSON
Well, I seem to have found the cool
crowd.
(quietly)
And two of the most beautiful
people here.

CHASE
Thank you.
(then realizing)
Right.

ANDERSON
(offers his hand to Maya)
Shall we?

They start to dance just as Felix sidles up to Chase.

(Continued)
FELIX
I believe the party for the lower-level employees is down at Chili’s.

CHASE
I came with Maya.

FELIX
Ah, well, enjoy this while you can. Word is you’ll be back to cat food soon enough.

Chase spots Ariana standing nervously at the entrance. Ignoring Felix, he walks over to her.

CHASE
You look pretty good.

ARIANA
Oh, thanks.

CHASE
I’m actually surprised you made it off the elevator.

ARIANA
I just barfed into my purse.

She hands the small, closed clutch to Chase.

CHASE
I see. Do you trust me?

ARIANA
Of course.

He starts to undo his tie, leading her away from the dance floor. As they pass Felix, Chase hands him the purse.

CHASE
Hold this for a sec.

Confused, Felix reaches for the purse’s zipper.

INT. EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM, DANCE FLOOR – NIGHT

Anderson and Maya dance. He can tell she’s conflicted.

ANDERSON
You okay?

Maya nods. They watch Zoe dancing “The Shopping Cart” with a group of co-workers.

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
Is she happy?

ANDERSON
Happier...
(off Maya)
F&C was never her ambition, but she came to work right out of college. I shouldn’t have let her but I was selfish and we were both hurting and... But now she needs to go and live a life, and fall in love, forget about the old man for awhile.

MAYA
Is it awkward to say thank you? In my dreams I couldn’t have asked for... You and Cynthia both did an incredible job with her.

ANDERSON
(touched)
She’s the love of our lives.

They admire Zoe, dancing and laughing and young.

RON (O.S.)
Hail to the Chief.

Ron dances with Hildy.

RON (CONT'D)
(to Anderson)
Everything good with China?

ANDERSON
Apparently your dinner went well. Jiang was so impressed with our facilities that he wants to make a deal.

RON
Fantastic. I knew once he saw them, he’d be in.
(cuts off Maya before she can contest the lie)
Maya really helped me to convey that to Mr. Jiang.

Anderson is pleased. Ron gives Maya a “you owe me one” look, which is echoed by Hildy. Zoe, who’s dancing nearby, witnesses this.
SAMUEL WEISKOPF
(steely)
Happy to help.

ANDERSON
Look who finally showed up.

Samuel Weiskopf, from Value Club comes over. Anderson stops
dancing to greet him as Maya blanches.

SAMUEL WEISKOPF
Anderson.

ANDERSON
(they shake hands)
Hello, Sam. Of course you know Maya
from her time consulting for you at
Value Club.

SAMUEL WEISKOPF
(perplexed)
When was that?

Maya realizes he doesn’t recognize her. Ron clocks this.

RON
Wasn’t it fairly recently, Maya?

MAYA
(pivoting)
You’ve built a great business, Mr.
Weiskopf, you should be proud.

SAMUEL WEISKOPF
Tell me your name again.

RON
Funny you two not knowing each
other.

The music changes to an upbeat tempo. Zoe knows Maya is being
cornered by her asshole partner and moves in to rescue her.

ZOE
(playfully)
It’s party time, guys. Time to
just shut up and dance.

WEISKOPF
(looks at Maya)
I’m down.
MAYA
('fuck it')
You sure about that?

They spin away, it’s immediately clear that Weiskopf is out of his league.

WEISKOPF
I’m sure we haven’t met. I always remember the attractive executives.

MAYA
Me too. That’s why I’m sure we haven’t met.

Maya spins, snaps and twirls into him, knocking him backwards.

WEISKOPF
(laughs)
Okay, I’m fairly sure I deserved that. Whoa!

People make room as he tries to keep his feet in the barrage of Maya’s aggressive dance moves.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

Using his tie as a blindfold over her eyes, Chase leads Ariana outside.

ARIANA
Are we outside?! Ohmigod!

CHASE
It’s fine. Here, I’ve got you.

He wraps his arms around her. She clings to his shirt.

CHASE (CONT’D)
I’m going to take the blindfold off.

ARIANA
No.

CHASE
When I do, look only at me.

ARIANA
Okay, but, can I say something first?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHASE
Of course.

ARIANA
You don’t need to pull some Titanic bullshit to get close to me.

CHASE
Oh. I was going to show you the city and tell you you’re the queen of the world.

ARIANA
Can you tell me inside?

CHASE
Oh. Sure.

INT. DANCE FLOOR – NIGHT

Weiskopf and Maya continue dancing. He’s trying to keep up.

WEISKOPF
(getting winded)
So what are you working on?

MAYA
Skin care. We’ve got some great ideas, but so far our R&D has been bombing big time.

WEISKOPF
Well, stay at it. Through the greatest disasters, there is always a morsel of hope.

She dips him, holding him horizontally until a huge realization hits her...

MAYA
That’s it.

...and she drops him.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Oh, sorry.

INT. EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Chase and Ariana coming in from the observation deck. Before he can talk, she grabs him around the waist and smiles.

(CONTINUED)
ARIANA
Just so we’re clear, I’m a little kinky.

CHASE
Um, okay.

They kiss. She bites his lower lip. He yelps. She smiles. He’s a little nervous and a little turned on.

MAYA
Chase, we gotta go. Now.

EXT. QUEENSBOROUGH BRIDGE - NIGHT
Maya’s car is speeding down the road.

INT. CAR - NIGHT
Chase is shotgun.

CHASE
Where are we going?

MAYA
I cannot believe Weiskopf didn’t recognize me.

CHASE
What are you talking about?

MAYA
It’s like in a different uniform they look right through you.

Maya calls someone.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Come on, answer. Shit, his voicemail’s full.
(hangs up the phone)
Looks like we’ll have to bust in.
I’m sorry. I’m rambling.

CHASE
If you could give some context...

MAYA
Weiskopf said something. Out of the biggest disasters, there can still be hope.

(CONTINUED)
CHASE
Which disaster are we talking about?

MAYA
Hiroshima.

CHASE
How much did you have to drink tonight?

MAYA
When I was a little girl, my grandma gave me this potted plant and told me this story. After we dropped the bomb, the military sent a team to Japan to make sure the radiation had depleted. The only thing they found that hadn't been destroyed was one single living tree.

CHASE
Still wondering about your alcohol intake. Should you be driving?

MAYA
The leaves were already growing back. A month later it flowered. The citizens built a temple around it, and the soldiers took clippings from it. One of those soldiers was my grandpa.

She pulls onto a familiar street and parks the car.

CHASE
Okay. What kind of tree was it?

MAYA
The Japanese call it gin kyo which means silver apricot.

EXT. TREY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They climb out of the car, and cross the street.

MAYA
After returning home, my grandpa planted his clipping and named it after my Grandmother, Silver Guadalupe.

She rings the front door bell, and knocks on the door.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHASE
(realization)
And it’s resistant to radiation.

She tries the two front windows. They’re locked.

MAYA
AKA the sun.

She leads him through a side gate to the back yard. Where a
lattice hugs a clematis vine to the side of the building.

CHASE
We’re breaking in? You know they
have Ginkgo trees in Central Park?

She stops at the second story and shimmies across to a
darkened balcony.

MAYA
Not the same kind. That’s my plant
in there.
(off Chase)
I used to lose my keys all the
time.

She jumps over the railing and lands on the balcony, reaches
around and unlocks the door.

INT. TREY’S HOUSE - SAME

She walks in. Takes in the space. It’s different.

She notes the empty end table. The pictures they used to have
of the two of them together are no longer there.

After a moment she picks up the potted plant.

MAYA
(quietly)
Thank you, abuela.

EXT. TREY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

She puts the tree in the car. She gets in, then--

MAYA
Gimme a minute.

She gets out of the car and begins scribbling a note, takes a
leaf off the tree and is about to go to the front door when:

(CONTINUED)
TREY pulls into the driveway. Maya smiles when she sees him until A BLONDE WOMAN gets out from the passenger side. They’re laughing, he puts his arm around her, and they walk to the front door.

Off Maya.

EXT. CHASE’S NYC APARTMENT BUILDING – NIGHT

Maya’s car come to a stop. Chase gets out and waves as Maya pulls away.

INT. MAYA’S CAR – NIGHT

Maya drives, lost in thought. Second guessing every move she’s made in the last several weeks. Second guessing what she left behind - her friends... her life... Trey.

She looks in the passenger seat at the little potted plant - then back to the road as she makes her way to her apartment in the city.

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE – NEXT MORNING

Where Hildy is standing in front of Maya, Chase, and Ariana,

HILDY
And this will undoubtedly set you back a bit, but as the ancient proverb says, “Man makes plans, and then the Big Man takes a poop on them.” N’est pas?

ARIANA
I don’t think that’s how it goes.

MAYA
So you’re leaving us for Ron?

HILDY
It’s not because everyone thinks you’re delusional to try and invent a whole new product with three weeks to go. It’s just... Ron values me. Plus, when his assistant D.E. got colitis, it just seemed too good to be true.

As Hildy goes to the door, she turns for one final comment when Ariana interrupts.
ARIANA
No. No. Say less.

Ariana SLAMS the door in Hildy’s face.

ARIANA (CONT’D)
(smiles)
God that felt good.

INT. LAB – DAY

A Chemist carefully grinds leaves before feathering them into a mixer filled with a churning green emulsion.

CHASE
First we emulsify the leaves and mix them with different base compounds.
(re: a thermometer)
Then we give it a few hours to see if it’ll homogenize. And then we begin the ultra-violet light tests to see if it works.

MAYA
What if it doesn’t?

TECHNICIAN
You’re screwed.

ARIANA
It ain’t over ’til it’s over.

MAYA
(smiles; reminded of Trey)
That’s right. How long could this take?

TECHNICIAN
To be honest, could take a lifetime.

ARIANA
To be honest, you’re kind of annoying.
(then, to Maya)
We’re not going to let you down.

She holds her fist out, Chase puts his in, Maya puts hers in.
A couple of the cats mill about in the background, as the technician levels and pours a scoop of leaves into a mixer. The solution turns to a runny oil. He shakes his head. Ariana gives him a blistering look. Frightened, the technician goes to make another batch.

INT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Maya picks up several coffees for her team, balancing a bag of scones under her chin.

INT. LAB - DAY

Chase writes equations on a dry erase board as Ariana, from a distance, checks out his ass. She’s caught by Maya who returns with the coffees. Ariana smiles sheepishly.

A new batch comes out of a mixer bubbling and steaming. Everyone reacts, ‘Not good.’

The technician scoops a new brownish sample onto the table. Everyone winces as they sniff--

MAYA

Damn.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Maya, Chase and Ariana sleep on the lab tables. A couple of the cats are licking Chase’s face. He giggles, dreaming.

INT. LAB - DAY

Exhausted, Chase, walks up to find another small sample of the brown batch in a lump on his papers. He looks at the technician, “WTF?” The technician shrugs. Then, Chase draws his look to one of the cats which just stares at him.

INT. LAB - LATER

Chase walks by vat after vat of failed versions of mixture, then approaches one final one. He scoops up a ‘white-ish’ sample and smiles at Maya.

CHASE

Behold.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAYA
What’s that?

CHASE
Hope.

INT. SOLAR LAB – DAY

Chase spreads some of the white cream across a gray plate. The technician sets other plates with different versions of cream on them beneath an array of “sun simulators.” He looks for his glasses, then sees Ariana wearing them, lying with her face under a sun simulator trying to tan. He taps her shoulder. She startles awake. With everyone wearing glasses now, Chase flips a switch and all of the simulators bloom with UV light.

ARIANA
They’re glowing!

MAYA
What does it mean?

Chase takes his glasses off. Then smiling big--

CHASE
It’s party time!

They all hug. Scream. THEY HAVE SOMETHING!

INT. MAYA’S OFFICE – DAY

Maya is preparing her presentation. Ron knocks at the door.

RON
Got a minute?

MAYA
Sure.

RON
No hard feelings with Hildy jumping ship?

MAYA
You didn’t get my thank you note?
RON (smiling)
Interested to see what you got.

MAYA
I think you’ll be impressed.

RON
Haven’t been so far.
(then)
I’m not fond of liars, Maya.

Maya stares him down, what does he know?

RON (CONT’D)
Everything checks out, but it doesn’t add up.
(then)
I really don’t care how you got here, Maria Vargas. Because the one thing you and I both know is that you don’t belong.

He walks away. Off Maya we--

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

Filled with technicians, executives, assistants. Members of the BOARD sit in the front row.

ANDERSON
I’ve tasked two teams with two different challenges. Zoe’s team set out to create an slightly more organic alternate to an existing product line, while Maya’s task was to create a completely new one. A totally green line. Zoe?

Zoe steps forward. Hildy passes out test results.

ZOE
Thank you. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then these test results should be priceless... You asked us to re-purpose one organic line, we made you two. Skin care.

She pulls a sheet off a line of products, then nods to Ron.

RON
And make-up.

(CONTINUED)
Ron pulls a sheet off a second line of products.
Anderson, like everyone, is impressed.

HILDY
What can I say, we’re over achievers.

Ariana and Maya exchange a look as people pore over stats.

ANDERSON
Are these numbers right?

RON
Yes. With a minimal cost, we made our products six percent more organic than our previous line.

ZOE
We estimate we can raise our price per unit by four percent, and increase our annual skin care revenue by twenty-three million.

The room applauds. Hildy takes this in, satisfied.

ANDERSON
Very impressive, Zoe, Ron and....

Hildy jumps up.

HILDY
Hildy. Ostrander. Thrilled to be part of all this.

ANDERSON
Okay then.
(turns to Maya)
Maya? Your ball.

Maya steps up.

MAYA
Well, my partners, Chase Iskowitz, Ariana Ng--
(Hildy rolls her eyes)
--and I have challenged ourselves to think outside the box. And in keeping with that theme, we’d like to move our presentation outside.

Zoe, Ron and the rest of the board look confused.
A display table covered with a table cloth has been set up underneath a FLOWERING TREE with a big desk top computer screen. The board members as well as Zoe’s team watch, intrigued, as they stand adjacent to the road.

Before Maya begins, Ariana leans in to Maya and whispers--

ARIANA
Everything’s ready.

MAYA
(quietly concerned)
Okay. But I still don’t think we need--

ARIANA
--please. Every great presentation needs a ‘wow’ factor. Trust me.

Maya looks at Ariana, then Chase. She smiles with her reassurance and nods. Maya then turns to the group--

MAYA
We’re standing here beneath this tree for a very special reason. Sometimes the simplest answers to complicated questions are right in front of us. Consumers are always looking for something natural and real, but they are confused by the amount of choices out there.

She nods to Ariana who cues the graphics on the screen.

MAYA (CONT’D)
Words like, “Paralyzed”, “Confused”, “Lost”, kept popping up in our research. I’m sure you’ll all agree that we don’t want to be caught holding the bag with thirty-four percent of the inventory when the crash comes.

RON
What crash?

MAYA
The one that’s already happening. People feel ripped off. We use one bar of soap for our whole body, why is our face sub-divided?
CONTINUED:

Zoe looks intrigued.

RON
Uh, because we can make more money?

A few board members laugh. Zoe bristles at Ron’s sarcasm.

MAYA
I think F&C has an opportunity to double our market share by giving people what they want and what they need; one organic product that does it all. And that product comes from this very Ginkgo tree.

She uncovers a small jar on the table with a simple Ginkgo leaf logo.

MAYA (CONT’D)
All-In-One Ginkgo Cream.

Anderson looks very impressed. Maya cues Ariana as--

MAYA (CONT’D)
It’s a revolutionary idea that we think--

Chase pulls back the table cloth so that Ariana can reach into a cage filled with doves.

MAYA (CONT’D)
--is really going to take off...

Ariana and Chase grab several of the cute birds.

MAYA (CONT’D)
--and signify a new era in skin care.

Ariana and Chase release the doves that start to fly out into the park, then circle the tree...

MAYA (CONT’D)
--filled with the hopes and dreams of every woman to look rejuvenated, while being protected by a product that will naturally and delicately care for their beauty.

The doves swoop back over the group and out to the road where a TRUCK drives by and SMACKS into them in an explosion of white feathers.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Off the horrified looks from the board—

ARIANA
Oh.

MAYA
(brightly to the group)
Any questions?

EXT. MCGINLEY’S BAR – NIGHT

Downtown Elmhurst. Been around for decades.

INT. MCGINLEY’S BAR – NIGHT

Full swing. Cole’s birthday. People are drinking, shouting, dancing. Maya walks in.

JOAN
Whoa, she’s here.
(to Cole)
You owe me five bucks.
(to Maya)
So, did the presentation go good?

MAYA
Define good?

JOAN
Did they like it.

MAYA
Until PETA came.

JOAN
Who’s he?

DILLY (O.S.)
Auntie M!

Maya turns, surprised to see Dilly home from college.

MAYA
(hugs him)
You’re home!? How’s Stanford?

JOAN
Yeah, tell her. I can’t.

DILLY
I’ve spent the past decade writing code, building my own apps.
(MORE)
Why waste four years on a piece of paper that says I know how to do what I already know how to do?

Joan, disgusted walks away...

She’s really pissed at me.

She doesn’t want you to wind up like me.

What are you talking about? You’re slaying it.

We’re only allowed so many bad decisions, Dill. Dropping out now only kneecaps your ability to make good ones.

Off Dilly, feeling a little guilty.

Look who’s back.

Dilly peels off as Maya turns to see Trey.

Hey! I was hoping to see you.

You look--

(--different.

Is that bad?

It’s never bad.

Listen, I--

Thank you all for coming--

ON JOAN NEAR THE BAR
CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN (CONT'D)
--to celebrate my Christmas baby,
my better half, the man that keeps
me sane.

BIG ANT
(shouting)
He's slacking on the last part.

Everyone laughs and toasts, "TO COLE".

MAYA
(to Trey)
Can we talk?

She motions to go outside. Trey nods and follows.

EXT. MCGINLEY'S - NIGHT

MAYA
Look, there's something I never
told you.

TREY
About your daughter?
(Off Maya’s surprise)
Joan told me... All those
conversations we had about family.

MAYA
I know. I was ashamed. I thought...
I should have told you.

TREY
I guess we both dodged a bullet
then.

MAYA
(disagrees)
I know I ruined it, but what we had
was wonderful.

TREY
You're kidding yourself. I fell in
love with a version of you, never
the real you. No relationship built
on a lie can ever survive.

This settles on Maya. Then, from behind.

WOMAN’S VOICE
Hi honey.

(CONTINUED)
REVEAL CLAIRE: the blonde that we saw with Trey earlier. She comes out from the bar and hands him his beer.

CLAIRE
They didn’t have stout, so...
(to Maya)
Hello.

TREY
Thanks.
(then)
Maya, Claire.

CLAIRE
Nice to meet you.
(then)
Trey talks about you, a lot. Congratulations on all your success.

MAYA
Thanks.
(then)
Well I’d better...

Maya’s phone rings. She pauses, not wanting to take it.

TREY
We’ll see ya around.

Trey walks Claire back into the bar. Maya watches him disappear, his words still stinging. Then, she answers--

MAYA
Hello? What? Now?

INT. ANDERSON’S OFFICE – EVENING

Maya rushes in.

MAYA
I can’t believe you’re still here. Everything okay?

Anderson grabbing his things.

ANDERSON
It could have waited until Monday. But then I wouldn’t be able to say this in person. And you wouldn’t have the weekend to prepare your speech.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAYA
Speech?
Anderson extends his hand. He smiles--

ANDERSON
The board unanimously voted to endorse your product.

MAYA
Oh my God! Even with the whole bird thing?

ANDERSON
Yes, that was unfortunate.

Zoe enters with a cup of coffee. Maya feels awkward in her victory against her daughter.

ZOE
Congratulations.

She smiles, and gives Maya a hug. Then--

ZOE (CONT'D)
Except for the donation we’ll have to make to the National Dove Society, you’re going to help make this company a lot of money. And that’s good for all of us.

ANDERSON
We want you to present it to our distributors at the conference on Monday.

ZOE
It’s kind of a big deal. It’s streamed online. Business Weekly, Forbes, Fortune, they all report on it.

MAYA
Wow.

ZOE
And there’s one more thing.

She motions to her father with a smile.
ANDERSON
We don’t want you to consult anymore. We want you to work with us permanently.

He gets his things.

ANDERSON (CONT’D)
It’s late. We can discuss it all on Monday.
(as he heads out)
But excellent work today, Maya.
Welcome to the family.

He leaves. Zoe turns to Maya--

ZOE
Wanna celebrate?

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

They walk in silence.

ZOE
What’s the matter? I thought you’d be happier.

MAYA
It’s just. A lot.

ZOE
Which part?

MAYA
All of it.
(then)
I don’t make products, Zoe. That’s not really what I do.

ZOE
It is now.

MAYA
I think I just wanted to try it to prove to myself that I could.
(then)
And, to be fair, your dad reached out to me, not because he thought it was a good idea, but because he wanted us to get to know each other.
CONTINUED:

ZOE
What’s the difference? It turned out to be a good idea, and we got to know each other.

She stops, faces Maya.

ZOE (CONT’D)
I’ve lived my whole life without you. And now we can build our lives together, like it was meant to be. I can’t remember the last time I was this happy.

She hugs Maya. Maya hugs her back filled with guilt.

MUSIC UP AS:

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT
Maya walks lost in her own world. We see flashbacks:

INT. VALUE CLUB - FLASHBACK
The Triple M’s applauding her exit from V.C.

EXT. HARLEM RIVER - FLASHBACK
Maya dripping wet as the broken boat is carted away. We see what Maya didn’t see before – Zoe looking at her, smiling.

INT. MAYA’S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK
Joan and Maya jumping on her bed, laughing.

INT. ZOE’S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK
Zoe giving Maya the blanket, and the letter.

INT. MAYA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Back to Maya, looking out at the city from her balcony.

INT. F&C HALLWAY - DAY
Ron is walking when his cell rings. He answers:

(CONTINUED)
RON
Yes? Okay, put him through.
(then)
Hello, Mr. Taylor?

INT. EDWARD TAYLOR’S OFFICE - SAME - INTERCUT:

Taylor, mid-fifties, sits behind a sprawling desk in a fancy office. We see a logo on the wall behind him: Maybelline.

EDWARD TAYLOR
Yes, Mr. Ebsen. So sorry for the delayed response. I’ve been doing a lot of traveling the past few weeks.

RON
That’s quite alright.

EDWARD TAYLOR
I got your message, and I have to say, I’m a bit confused. We never had a Maria Vargas work here.

Ron’s eyes light up. The break he was looking for.

RON
Really?

EDWARD TAYLOR
Absolutely. As far as Maybelline goes, that person never existed.

Off Ron’s look we--

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Rigged with television cameras to stream online, the auditorium is filled with several hundred people.

ANGLE ON THE STAGE:

Set up like an Apple Keynote. Zoe stands alone at the podium, facing an audience of several hundred – the F&C logo on the screen behind her.

ZOE
My father would normally be making this introduction, but because of special circumstances, he is, for once, allowing someone else to get a word in.
Laughter as Zoe looks off stage to Maya and smiles at her.

ZOE (CONT’D)
In a world of increasing
competition, and decreasing
profits, sometimes you need a fresh
perspective to build a better
mousetrap. Isn’t that what you
always say, Dad?

From the front row.

ANDERSON
When I can get a word in.

Laughter.

ZOE
So, we hired a woman who has
achieved her success not by going
by the book, but by using her gut.
(she looks to Maya)
Someone not afraid to tell the
truth, even if that truth hurts.
Ladies and Gentleman, Maya Vargas.

ON THE SCREEN: The beautifully designed jar with a gingko-
leaf logo.

Maya walks on stage to applause.

Ron enters the auditorium. He spots Anderson in the crowd and
makes his way towards him to tell him the news.

MAYA
Thank you, Zoe. Anderson. Thank you
for giving me a chance. Not
everyone in corporate America does
that. There are people out there
who were never given an opportunity
because they couldn’t afford the
right college, and never got that
degree that would open the door.
And you’re right, Zoe, maybe I did
get where I am today because I
wasn’t afraid to tell the truth.
Even if it hurts.
(deep breath)
And the truth is... the truth is...
(fumbling)
The truth is...

Ron is almost to Anderson...
INT. VALUE CLUB - SAME

Joan and The Triple M’s watch in the TV and electronics section.

JOAN/SUZI/BIG ANT
Oh shit./Here we go./She Looks good.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

MAYA
--For the past fifteen years I was a checker then assistant manager at the local Value Club, in Forest Hills.

INT. VALUE CLUB - SAME

Joan and The Triple M’s CHEER...

JOAN
Fuck yeah!

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

Ron stops in his tracks and looks at Maya, beaten to the punch - but still a bitter sweet victory.


MAYA
I invented my resume. My degrees. And my accomplishments.

ZOE
What?

ANGLE ON CHASE

CHASE
Holy cow.

ANGLE ON ARIANA

ARIANA
Cool.

ANGLE ON RON

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RON

Yes!

MAYA

It’s what I thought I needed to do to get in the door. To be good enough. I thought none of you would have looked at me if you knew the truth.

ANGLE ON: Weiskopf in the crowd, dawning on him who she is.

MAYA (CONT’D)

So I gave you a version of me. But no relationship built on a lie can ever survive.

INT. TREY’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Trey watches on his iPhone. He smiles, proud of Maya.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

MAYA

So, for better or worse, I have to be who I really am. And... I’m Maya from Queens. That’s the real me.

HILDY

(to Felix)

This is so embarrassing. How fun.

As a commotion builds in the audience, Maya looks at Anderson-

MAYA

What I did was wrong. I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have lied.

(to Zoe)

To any of you.

(back the crowd)

Chase? Ariana?

Chase and Ariana, stunned, shuffle down their row to the aisle, pushing past the equally stunned Hildy and Felix, and take the stage.

MAYA (CONT’D)

It’s all yours.

She walks off the stage leaving Chase and Ariana to face the crowd. Behind the podium they hold hands.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Maya walks off the stage, and approaches Zoe. Zoe looks at her, then turns and walks away.

MAYA (V.O.)
I know that many people believe in fate; and trust me, there are times I wish I was one of them.

MUSIC FULL AS WE SEE:

INT. MAYA’S APARTMENT – DAY

Maya looks around her Manhattan apartment for the last time. She takes her suitcase and walks out the door.

MAYA (V.O.)
I tend to think our lives are shaped by a series of choices; one decision leading to another and another.

INT. NYC SUBWAY – DAY

Maya rides the train back to Queens.

MAYA (V.O.)
As far as I can tell, it’s the journey through all these decisions that paints the clearest portrait of who we really are.

EXT. NYC STREET – DAY

Joan helps her find a new apartment. Maya, sadly turns to her best friend and hugs her.

MAYA (V.O.)
I’ve made some spectacularly awful choices in my life.

EXT. DAKOTA – ANDERSON’S APARTMENT – STREET – DAY

It’s moving day. Zoe sits on the lift gate of a moving truck on the street as workers are loading, and reads a letter written to her by Maya.

MAYA (V.O.)
Next to giving birth to you, the best decision I ever made was to give you up.
**INT. ANDERSON’S APARTMENT – SAME**

Anderson is carrying the last box out of Zoe’s room. He looks around sadly, then walks out into the hall.

**MAYA (V.O.)**
...because you never would have become you if it weren’t for your parents.

**INT. WAREHOUSE – DAY**

Maya, Joan and the Triple M’s are being lead through an empty warehouse with a realtor.

**MAYA (V.O.)**
And because you’re exactly the person I’d like to be when I grow up...

**INT. COFFEE SHOP – DAY**

Zoe watches the snow fall outside as she sips her coffee.

**MAYA (V.O.)**
...You will always be the best thing that ever happened to me. I’m sorry I screwed it up. Again.

**SUPER: ONE YEAR LATER**

**EXT. TRIPLE M – WAREHOUSE – DAY**

A sign says, MMM.COM

**JOAN (PRE-LAP)**
Monday Morning Mom’s, hold on please.

**INT. TRIPLE M – WAREHOUSE – DAY**

Joan supervises several of the TRIPLE M’s fulfilling orders from their online site.

Maya is being interviewed by a reporter from Business Week.

**MAYA**
We aggregate consumers favorite products, opinions, recipes, anecdotes, pictures and share them with our members.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAYA (CONT'D)
And all it takes to join is an email address and an opinion.

BIG ANT (O.S.)
And twenty bucks.

REPORTER
You created an online store specifically designed for each member?

MAYA
Yes. And we make suggestions based on past purchases so your virtual shelves are stocked with items you’d find interesting. It was my Godson’s idea. He created the app between finals.

(waves at Dilly)
Works here in the summers when he’s not at Stanford. He’s a genius.

REPORTER
He’s not alone. You basically said to Value Club, we’re gonna build a better mousetrap.

From behind them, reveal Sam Weiskopf.

WEISKOPF
And we said, we’d like to help.

BIG ANT
He’s our ‘lil angel.

REPORTER
(to Maya)
This is quite an accomplishment. It must be incredibly satisfying.

Maya is about to answer “yes” but it dies on her lips...

MAYA
I thought it would be, but...

REPORTER
But what?

INT. JOAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Joan, Cole, Maya, Dilly all have dinner laughing.
MAYA (V.O.)
We spend half our lives looking
back wishing, if only we’d done it
differently...

Trey comes in, carrying the Gingko tree. He says an awkward,
hello. Nods for Maya to come talk to him.

MAYA (V.O.)
...chose smarter. Not made so many
mistakes.

INT. JOAN’S KITCHEN – NIGHT

Trey points to a note tied to the tree.

TREY
You really mean this?

MAYA
Ask me anything.

TREY
Okay, are you--

MAYA
Yes.

TREY
You don’t know what I was going to
ask.

MAYA
Whatever it is, the answer’s yes.

TREY
Did you really lose your daughter?

MAYA
(hurts but owning it)
Yes.

TREY
Will you ever lie to me again?

MAYA
(after a beat)
Yes.

(off his look)
But that’s the last time.

TREY
Are you ready to have a family?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAYA
(takes his hand)
You’re my family, so yes.

They’re about to kiss when they hear a floor board squeak. They look to see Joan, Cole and Dilly staring at them from the dining room doorway.

JOAN (O.S.)
Sorry.

They disappear as--

MAYA (V.O.)
But the truth is, our mistakes don’t limit us. Only our fears do.

EXT. HUDSON RIVER FRONT - DUSK

Zoe jogs alone.

MAYA (V.O.)
And as unpredictable as this journey has been, I’m glad it finally lead me back to you.

Zoe stops. We see her POV: Maya, in her running attire, waiting for her.

MAYA
Hey. Your dad told me I’d find you here.

ZOE
Dad, huh? Why does that not surprise me?

Maya approaches her.

MAYA
I thought, maybe we could go for a jog. Or a run if you’re up for it.

ZOE
(Zoe’s heart races)
I think I’d like that. A lot.

Maya smiles, extends her hand...

MAYA
I’m Maya Vargas.
ZOE
I’m Zoe Clarke.
(they shake hands)
Nice to meet you.

ANGLE ON a nearby parked car where Joan, Otto, Suzi, Big Ant and Trey crouch down trying not to be seen.

SUZI
I’m gonna cry.

Big Ant blows her nose loudly.

OTTO
You guys are frickin’ pussies.

JOAN
(off Suzi, Big Ant)
What? It’s progress.

Trey and Otto fist-bump.

Zoe starts to jog, Maya joins her.

ZOE
This time I won’t be so easy on you.

MAYA
Bring it.

They begin to run, hard. Mother and daughter, together again.

MAYA (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Every day you wake up and have a second chance to do whatever you want, to be whoever you want. The only thing stopping you, is you.

FADE TO BLACK.