

SPIN

Written by Gio Schwab

Featuring and inspired by the music of Fleetwood Mac

Gioschwab@gmail.com
917-940-7761

EXT. DTLA CITY STREET, DAY.

MUSIC UP: "Don't Stop" by Fleetwood Mac

We open on a pile of dog shit.

A pair of green-laced, ratty white sneakers pounds right into it. We follow the shoes as they continue running - from the sidewalk to the corner and into the street - and as their wearer mutters obscenities under her breath. An old roller suitcase follows closely behind. Pre-title credits appear and vanish.

CHELLE (O.S.)
(under her breath)
Two-three-oh-six... two-three-oh-six

We stay with her legs as they stop at the foot of a car

CHELLE (O.S.)
Oh-six -- Uber pool? Oh, perfect -
could you pop the trunk? Thanks!
Oh, no - I've got it. Thank you!

She jams her luggage into the car with a heave. She tries to wipe her sole on the curb, gives up after only a second, then her legs disappear into the car.

Title overlay on wheel
SPIN

The wheel rotates and the letters vanish. The car drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR

CHELLE's face (43, dressed for comfort, hair pulled back). Her eyes are tired, but she has well-earned laugh lines. She looks out as the skyscrapers are reflected back at her onto the window.

The car pulls to a stop.

EXT. CAR - REVERSE SIDE

We are again low to the ground. This time, we follow the car's other wheel as it pulls in to reveal a pair of legs and a sleek black rolling suitcase. The legs do not move until the car has settled to a halt in front of him. The driver's legs appear in frame briefly as he passes - moving to put his client's suitcase in the trunk.

DONNY

Thanks.

INT. CAR

DONNY (43, business suit, no tie; greying hair neatly combed, face clean shaven) enters the passenger side opposite Chelle and settles into his seat.

He immediately recognizes the woman to his right, who still has not turned her attention from the window. He says nothing - but looks shaken.

The car starts, and behind them - through the rear windshield, we see the streets move past. Offscreen, the radio channels cycle until finally landing upon Fleetwood Mac's "Don't Stop".

There is a visible - silent - but visible reaction on Donny's face: discomfort. He contemplates saying something until finally he lets out - barely a whisper -

DONNY

...Could you turn down the music?

Seeing no result, he goes just a bit louder, trying his best to stay unnoticed by Chelle.

DONNY

Could you turn down the music? I have a bit of a headache!

The music shuts off. Chelle suddenly seems alert. She twists slowly to face Donny. His back is turned - he's trying very hard to be anywhere but here. Chelle takes a deep, quiet breath. Don checks over his shoulder and is startled to find her looking at him. He pretends not to notice her, turning back to the window.

CHELLE

I don't believe it. Donny Moretti.
As. I. Live. And. Breathe.

He turns to meet her but still tries his best to avoid eye contact.

DONNY

I'm sorry, do... I...

CHELLE

-Chelle. Michelle Bergmann. High school!

The jig is up. Donny feigns surprise.

DONNY
Chelle! Well, how the hell are you?

CHELLE
Oh... great! And you - you're looking sharp.

DONNY
Oh, yeah... business trip. Tokyo.

CHELLE
You don't say. New York!

DONNY
Oh, wow...

CHELLE
Home for Thanksgiving - Family holidays - gotta love em!

DONNY
That's lovely. How are they doing - your folks?

CHELLE
My dad passed in May.

DONNY
I'm sorry to hear that. How's your mom holding up?

CHELLE
She's... hanging in there. Just...

DONNY
Aren't we all?

Chelle laughs politely, sighs, and drifts into silence. Beat.

DONNY
And you?

CHELLE
Hmm?

DONNY
How are you holding up?

Chelle smiles and nods and makes a motion somewhere between a shrug and a fist-pump.

CHELLE
Enough about me! How are you? Japan! That's so exciting.

DONNY
Ha, yeah... it's...

CHELLE
Whatcha been up to?

DONNY
Oh, well... I... got my bachelor's.
Pomona. Moved out here - stayed
out here. I'm a cultural
anthropologist.

CHELLE
Oh. Like Indiana Jones?

DON
Sure! Kinda. Well, I used to be,
but now I do more administrative
stuff, coordinating with museums
and keeping records and such...
stuff like that... Yeah. It's great.
Traveling - seeing the world. I
love it.

CHELLE
Good for you, Donny, I-

DONNY
It's just Don now.

They are both quiet for a little while.

DONNY (CONT'D)
What's it been... 24-

CHELLE
25-

DONNY
25 years. Have you been back... to
school, I mean?

CHELLE
High School Reunion? Oh... no. They
tried to work something out a
while back - a small get-together
type thing - but it didn't... you
know, pan out. How about you - you
keep in touch with anyone?

DONNY
Every now and then, I suppose.

Silence again.

CHELLE

So... Japan on Thanksgiving. Your wife must love that! Exotic...

Donny smiles and laughs politely. He holds up his ring-less hand and waves his finger awkwardly. Then, looking at her hand-

DONNY

But I see that there's a Mister Bergmann!

CHELLE

Was.

Chelle seems to have just noticed the ring on her finger. She plays with it idly.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

I've got a beautiful little girl though! Gosh, I guess she's not so little anymore. Time flies!

DONNY

Yeah. Yeah, it really does.

They are quiet again. This time, it is longer than before. She stares out the window.

DONNY (CONT'D)

I had no idea you moved out to the West Coast. I woulda... Are you on Socials?

CHELLE

Oh, no. I'm, I'm off the grid, hahaha...

DONNY

Hahaha. Do you... like it out here?

CHELLE

Uh... well - the weather is... it's something!

DONNY

I hate it. It's too hot.

CHELLE

Yeah! Yeah, it is. I mean, it's not subway-levels muggy, but-

DONNY

God, do you remember that one year? That heatwave back in, what, '18?

CHELLE

Oh... yeah... yeah I think I do.
Maybe.

She does. Chelle looks out the window.

INT. NEW YORK CITY SUBWAY, SEPTEMBER 2018

MUSIC UP: "Don't Stop" by Fleetwood Mac, we continue where we left off.

Once again, we follow a pair of legs - now in high heels. They clumsily traipse through a crowded subway station.

CHELLE (O.S.)

Oh no nonono excuse me, pardon me,
nonono wait!

The heels stumble through a crowd of people, just barely making it into the train before the doors shut behind her. The train lurches forward and her legs buckle. She shoots out her arm to grab a pole; her hand slides down onto that of a young man's. He catches her. We open up to reveal a young Chelle (17, meticulously dressed, a shock of curly hair) and Donny (17, oversized Superman t-shirt, dollar-store rings). They both look very different. He looks down at her - their eyes meet. She pulls out one AirPods and says-

CHELLE

...looks like I've fallen for you!

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE

I did not say that.

DONNY

You totally did! I remember!

CHELLE

How would you know? You probably had your head in the clouds anyway!

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN, 2018

Donny pulls out one tangled earbud.

DONNY

What's that?

Chelle collects herself and decides not to try her joke again.

CHELLE
Nothing. Uh, thank you.

DONNY
Hey... you're... do I know you?

CHELLE
Uh... well you do now!

DONNY
No, from school! Yeah - you're...

CHELLE
Yeah, I... I think maybe I have seen you around.

She has.

DONNY
Donny. Donny Moretti. Fancy bumping into you here.

Michelle snorts as she laughs. She turns very red, but Donny finds it endearing.

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE
Ugh - I was such an awkward kid!

DONNY
You? Please... don't get me started! I was always... with the T-shirts! The belts, Chelle! I thought I was so cool then!

CHELLE
Well, to be fair, I thought so too.

INT. SUBWAY, 2018

CHELLE
You have a first-period class?

DONNY
Yeah, French. You? [{"French me? yes please"}]

CHELLE
Oh, no - but I have a weekly
meeting with the college
counselor.

DONNY
Weekly? Right.

CHELLE
What were you listening to?

DONNY
Oh, before you so rudely
interrupted me? Nothing!

CHELLE
Yes, before I graced your life
with my presence.

DONNY
(lying)
Lil Uzi...

She squints her eyes.

DONNY (CONT'D)
...Taylor Swift.

CHELLE
Pre or post-Kanye VMA Taylor
Swift?

DONNY
...post?

Celle bursts out laughing.

CHELLE
You're a terrible liar!

DONNY
See, I knew you'd laugh.

CHELLE
I'm not laughing! Hey, I hope I
didn't cause any Bad Blood!

DONNY
I knew you were trouble when you
walked in.

The train stops, two seats become available. They move to them.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Come on, what were you listening to?

CHELLE

Nah-ah.

DONNY

Whaddya mean 'nah-ah,' I showed you mine, you show me yours. I promise I won't laugh.

CHELLE

I know you won't laugh cause my music isn't lame-

Donny puts his hand to his chest and lets his jaw drop dramatically.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Oh Shake it Off... Fine. I was listening to Dreams by Fleetwood Mac?

Donny makes a blank face.

CHELLE

(incredulous)

You're joking, righ- do you not know who Fleetwood Mac is?!

(then)

They're the greatest rock band of all time!

An old woman reading a book behind Chelle shakes her head at Donny. He smiles subtly and returns his focus to Chelle. She entertains him.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Rhiannon? Go Your Own Way? Little Lies - nothing? The Chain - tell me you've heard The Chain. Everyone's heard The Chain!

DONNY

Sorry to disappoint you.

CHELLE

Disappoint me? No, on the contrary! This is perfect! I wish I could hear them for the first time again! Open wide, I'm going in.

Chelle takes Donny's phone out of his hands and searches for a specific song, downloading albums onto his phone as she goes. She finds what she's looking for; Donny deliberately puts the outermost bud in his ear and the other in hers, so that the wire's length forces their heads to be closer to one another.

Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams" begins to play as present-day VO enters.

CHELLE (V.O.)
I stand by my choice. Dreams.
Their best work.

DONNY (V.O.)
It was a bop.

CHELLE (V.O.)
A bop? Please, it was a banger at
least. A full-on jam, if you will.

DONNY (V.O.)
I won't.

Their rapport softens as they delve deeper into their old memories.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN, 2018

The ambient audio of the train fades as they listen to the song.

DONNY
I like it. Whatshisname, Fleetwood
Mac. She's good.

CHELLE
Yes, they are. Mick Fleetwood and
John "Mac" McVie, and then his
wife Christine McVie.

DONNY
Mick and Mac.

CHELLE
Right, Mick and Mac, and Mac's
wife, and Lindsey Buckingham and
Stevie Nicks, of course. And,
Peter Green I guess - who deserves
more credit, but that's life.
Well, and others but it's a...
sometimes sordid past-

Donny is barely hanging in there, but he's enamored with Chelle.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

-You know, they were rockstars. And they lived that rockstar life. When that song came out, Dreams, in - I wanna say 78' - Mick was going through a divorce, and also so were John and Christine. And, Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham broke up too, so-

DONNY

They were dating?

CHELLE

Yes, they were dating. But not anymore. 1978. Or 77, one of the two. But Rumours, the album, was being made then.

DONNY

Wait, so even though like half the band was banging each other and splitting up, they still made music?

CHELLE

Good music-

DONNY

-Good music.

CHELLE

Yeah, can you imagine - you break up with your boyfriend and have to see him at work tomorrow?

DONNY

Wild stuff.

Celle mimes snorting coke from her finger.

CHELLE

Real wild. But good music-

DONNY

-Good music.

CHELLE

So anyway, Stevie wrote "Dreams" about Lindsey. Oh, and Stevie is a girl, and Lindsey is a boy... just to clarify.

(MORE)

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Yeah, so - they've just broken up, and now his ex has this new song she wants to make... and it's about him! Yikes! Except, the song is ehh. It needs some magic! You know, but there's only one guy who's got the magic-

DONNY

-Lindsey, the boy Lindsey.

CHELLE

That's right. So they make this song together, this really kinda sad song, a really opinionated song - they make it together. And it becomes huge. Huge hit!

DONNY

Bet.

CHELLE

And get this... the band is so big and the song is so big... they've had to play it together at every concert for the last 40 years.

DONNY

Major oof.

CHELLE

Big yike. Pretty sad, right? They must be tormented by their history! Seeing each other every day! That's so painful!

DONNY

Sure... I guess. They took something painful and made it beautiful. They made something sad into a great song that millions of people love, so. I don't know. It's best not to spend too much time in the past.

CHELLE

Huh. That's certainly... Agree to disagree.

Donny lets out a laugh at her stubbornness. She knows it; it doesn't bother her.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Maybe you might like Lindsey's
spin better-- Oh! This is my stop
- this is your stop!

DONNY

This is our stop.

They both exit the train. GORDO (17, eccentric fashionista, think Robert Downey Jr. in Back to School), Donny's best friend, waits at the steps of the subway station. He sees Donny come up from the stairs and starts toward him-

GORDO

Duuuuude. What's up, my guy?

Donny opens his eyes wide and shoos him away, silently motioning to Chelle in front of him. Gordo gets the message, improvises, and pushes past Donny to hug a startled middle-aged businessman behind him. Chelle turns to look but Donny brings her attention back to him.

DONNY

So how come you know so much about
them, Fleetwood Mac?

CHELLE

I don't know. I just like them I
guess.

DONNY

Bullshit.

CHELLE

Sorry?

DONNY

I like Taylor Swift. You love
Fleetwood Mac. That's not an "I
don't know" love.

CHELLE

Oh, I'm sorry doctor, I didn't
realize I was being analyzed. Tell
me, why I 'love' Fleetwood Mac?

DONNY

Well, the music's good-

CHELLE

-Good music!

DONNY

-But I think you must like the backstory. I think you like the idea - the grandeur - of nostalgia. 'What once was, what still is' kinda thing. The concept that what happened yesterday affects today.

CHELLE

And what happens today has consequences for the future.

DONNY

Maybe.

CHELLE

Well, that's quite a theory. I expect a report on my desk by Monday. I do-

All of a sudden, Chelle's phone alarm goes off.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Donny I really have to run, like run, but... I'll see you around?

DONNY

It was nice to meet you! Don't bump into anyone!

Chelle giggles to herself and runs off.

DONNY

(Inward)

It was nice to meet you? You friggin' idiot!

Gordo comes up behind him.

GORDO

Who's the friggin' idiot?

DONNY

I'm the friggin' idiot.

GORDO

Oh. You wanna go to class?

DONNY

No.

GORDO

Cool, me neither. Breakfast?

DONNY

Yeah.

INT. DINER, SAME DAY.

Gordo's ketchup bottle makes a fart noise as he draws a penis on his plate of fries. Donny has been talking for a long time.

DONNY

-and she's so clever and funny,
like we never let a moment pass.
It was like Aaron Sorkin, dude.
And she's so witty! And she
laughed at all my jokes, like-

GORDO

(bored)
That's so great.

DONNY

And she's so beautiful, Gordo.
Like, stunning! You saw her, isn't
she stunning?

Gordo begins to answer but Donny doesn't let him speak.

DONNY

She's so pretty. But not like in a
perverted way, you know? Like, I
like her, but I'm not jerkin my
gerk, okay? It's not like that. I
just really think she's smart!

GORDO

Did you get her number?

Donny stops talking finally.

DONNY

What?

GORDO

Did you get her number?

DONNY

No.

Gordo stares at him for a moment.

GORDO

...Did you get her name?

Beat, then-

DONNY
I'm a friggin' idiot!

GORDO
You're a friggin' idiot!

Donny puts his head in his hands.

DONNY
Imbecile.

GORDO
A beautiful-

DONNY
-Stunning.

GORDO
-girl falls into your lap on the
subway-

DONNY
-I was standing.

GORDO
-And you walk away knowing more
about the discography of Fleetwood
Mac than her? Her name!

Donny makes an exasperated noise. Gordo takes his plate of
fries from him and begins to dip it into the ketchup penis.

GORDO
You're a friggin' idiot.

INT. CAR, 2044

DONNY
I was a friggin' idiot.

CHELLE
You weren't a friggin' idiot.

DONNY
Did you just curse? You never
cursed.

CHELLE
I've got a teenager. Of course I
curse.

There's some amazement in Donny's eyes, if not a little bit of
sadness as well.

DONNY
How old is she?

CHELLE
Edge of seventeen, going off to college next year, can you believe it?

DONNY
I cannot.

CHELLE
She's the age I was when I met you.

They sit silent for half a second before Chelle reaches for her phone to find a photo. We don't show the photo, just their reactions to it.

CHELLE (CONT'D)
Baby girl all grown up.

DONNY
If she's even half the woman you were, you've raised a good one.

CHELLE
If she's even half the woman I was, I pray for her mother.

They both laugh knowingly.

INT. UPSCALE NEW YORK CITY APARTMENT, KITCHEN - 2018

MARGE
You're not dropping Calculus, Michelle!

Chelle's mother, MARGE, is cooking eggs on the stove. She is a no-nonsense, hard-working, independent woman - who just happens to have a daughter with the same traits; suffice it to say, the two butt heads often. Sometimes, when she gets mad, her accent reveals her Long Island roots. Marge is dressed in a woman's business suit. She looks just like the older Chelle, if only she'd stayed in New York and became a hedge-fund manager.

CHELLE
I'll take French!

MARGE
You most certainly will not! Why would you take French? Nobody speaks French but French people!
(MORE)

MARGE (CONT'D)

Why would you wanna talk to French people? Does it give the same number of college credits as Spanish - why switch... unless you wanna do both?

CHELLE

Fine! You know what? I will take both! I'll transfer to the eighth-period Calculus class and take French 1st period; how about that? I just have to wake up earlier, that's all!

MARGE

You'll have to wake yourself up. I'm not getting up any earlier to wake you just so you can read poetry with those Frenchy flirts

CHELLE

Is that what this is about? Mom, they're my friends!

MARGE

Yeah, they're your friends now - but in a few months - they'll be your baby's father! And now what? Say au revoir to any scholarships, honey! That's what your aunt did - and look what she is now.

CHELLE

Happy? I love Aunt Mona - and she didn't have a kid in high school. She got pregnant during her gap year and then decided against a traditional education. And she and Uncle Todd are good together.

MARGE

Your father and I are good together. And we didn't have to have premarital sex to be happy! We had semi-fulfilling careers!

CHELLE

Oh mom! I'm not asking to have premarital sex - I'm asking to go to French club!

MARGE

You wanna go, go.
(MORE)

MARGE (CONT'D)

But don't come to me when you need
an abortion.

Chelle is annoyed - but will take what she can get. Chelle's dad enters. JERRY Bergmann is a kind-eyed man with an even kinder smile.

JERRY

Abortion! You're telling her about
when we tried to-

Jerry comically points to Michelle and nicks his throat. Chelle laughs.

MARGE

Oh, don't even joke!

JERRY

A joke! That's what the doctor
said when I asked about getting an
abortion. Sir, your child can't be
aborted - she's eleven!

Chelle laughs even harder. Even Marge - though she won't admit it - finds this joke just stupid enough to be amusing. She places two plates of bacon, eggs, and toast on the table in front of them. Michelle stares at the plate.

CHELLE

Mom. I'm a vegan. You know this!

MARGE

Oh, hush up. Since when?

CHELLE

Since your generation ruined our
planet! 12 years, Mom. We have 12
years! I don't eat anything with a
face! Or that had a face!

JERRY

Let's face it, Margie, she doesn't
want it!

Jerry reaches over, pulls her bacon away, and takes a bite right out of it. Marge rolls her eyes and tries to hide her smile.

MARGE

Well Mademoiselle, don't you have
a class to be at?

CHELLE

Ooh!

Chelle darts up from her chair suddenly, grabs her jacket and bag, kisses her parents on the head once each, then runs out the door.

CHELLE
Byemombyedadloveyou!

Marge stares at her seat and smiles - a bit poignantly. Then she snaps to Jerry who is sucking down food like a vacuum.

INT. SCHOOL, DAY - 2018

Montage of Chelle and Donny in separate classes throughout the day. We stay on the back of their heads, foreground; the teacher in the center of the frame and the room change with each cut. Chelle enters and sits in the front row before the bell rings. The first teacher in the montage mimes each word said in French. She is very enthusiastic. Her class is not.

MS. BENCHIMOL
Bonjour class! I hope you are all
fantastique! Today we're going to
be going over conjunctive adverbs.
In your livres, turn to page six
cent soixante cinq!

We cut to the next class - English with an old, monotone teacher.

MR. BEASLEY
-to page six-six-six.

Cut to next class. Science. A student mixes baking soda and vinegar.

MS. MONTEIRO
-Six-six-seven in your textbooks.
Wait, don't touch tha-!

Her warning to the student is cut short by a small explosion of foam, then an immediate cut to the next class.

MS. LEVY
-six-hundred and sixty-eight, if
you will! Donatello, please put
problems one through four on the
board.

Donny gets up from his seat and leaves frame - we cut to the next class - where he re-enters frame to sit in his new seat. The ever-stern MR. BROWN (40s) stands at the board.

MR. BROWN
Mr. Moretti. You're late.

DONNY

So sorry Mr. Brown... I was on the 1 train and all of a sudden this woman started giving birth - the good news is, little Albert is healthy! 8 pounds, 11 ounces! God is good, am I right fellas?

There are scattered snickers.

MR. BROWN

A joker too, hmmm? You're quite the renaissance man, Mr. Moretti. Speaking of the Renaissance, would you care to tell us the thesis of the reading last night?

DONNY

Uh, no sir - I would not care to... See, I didn't have time last night-

MR. BROWN

You didn't have time. Mmm. Too busy? I was also busy last night, Mr. Moretti, writing your report card. It was a distinct privilege.

CUT TO:

INT. FRENCH CLUB, DAY - 2018

A teacher points to a strip of letters on the wall:

MS. BENCHIMOL

F!

A line of students repeats after her; Chelle is in the front row.

STUDENTS

Eff.

MS. BENCHIMOL

G!

STUDENTS

Zgeh.

Chelle looks around for Donny but he, true to character, has not shown up for class. Chelle returns to her work, disappointed. Then, Gordo peers out from behind her.

GORDO

Bonjour. Je m'appelle, Gordeaux.

INT. DONNY'S APARTMENT.

An instrumental version of "As Long As You Follow" by Fleetwood Mac plays under the scene.

Donny gets home from school. His apartment is colder than Chelle's.

DONNY

Jesus.

There is a clutter of crushed BEER CANS and snack wrappers in the living room. Donny cleans up and recycles the cans; he drinks what's left of the six-pack.

Donny loses himself in his thoughts as he looks at the CLOSED DOOR at the far end of a hallway. He returns to reality, enters his room, and locks the door behind him. He sits on the edge of his bed and stares at nothing in particular for a long time. Without meaning to, he begins to play with a loose thread on his comforter. A photo of his mother on his nightstand is one of few decorations of any sort in the small, Ikea-furnished grey room. He looks at the photo, then reaches into his bag and pulls out a history textbook. He opens it, reads it for all of ten seconds, then shuts it and pulls out his phone. He misspells Fleetwood Mac, but his phone autocorrects it. He selects the first song listed, "As Long As You Follow," and lays back onto his bed, staring at the ceiling.

INT. GROCERY STORE - AISLE

Donny scans the aisles; he's on the phone with Gordo.

DONNY

Captain Crunch would kick Tony the Tiger's ass, dude. He's got a gun.

Pause

DONNY (Cont.)

Who said anything about Count Chocula? If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times: Count Chocula is a pussy!

An old woman gives him a look as she passes.

DONNY (Cont.)

Okay, fine, you got me. Toucan Sam, sure.

He rolls his eyes and shakes his head at another customer in the aisle, then grabs a box of Honey Smacks off the shelf.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CHECKOUT

Donny, still on the phone, sidles up next to the checkout counter.

DONNY (Cont.)

Nobody even knows the Leprechaun's name, jackass, he can't be the best!

Donny absentmindedly begins to take items from his cart and place them onto the conveyor - energy drinks, Doritos, and cereal. He has not realized that Chelle is his cashier.

CHELLE

Sir Charms.

Donny looks up, does a double take, notices her for the first time, and immediately hangs up the phone on Gordo mid-sentence.

DONNY

(Flustered)

Wh-hey-wha-what?

CHELLE

His name is Sir Charms - Lucky the Leprechaun, that's what everybody calls him... that'll be \$8.75

DONNY

What are you, what are you doing here?

CHELLE

I work here. Cash or credit?

DONNY

Well, er, actually I wasn't... finished.

Donny grabs the first thing he sees from the shelf next to the register and places it on the conveyor belt.

CHELLE

Ring pop? What are you going to a sleepover?

DONNY

...No! It's for my little sister.

CHELLE

You have a sister? What's her name?

DONNY

..Credit.

Donny thinks he's bombed the conversation. Chelle is just getting started; she's having a lot of fun.

CHELLE

You know, we're running a two-for-one deal on ring pops right now-

Donny grabs another from the shelf.

DONNY

So do you come here often?

Chelle points to the name tag on her apron.

CHELLE

I'm guessing you don't.

DONNY

I... lost a bet. See, usually, my friend gets the snacks; you probably see him here all the time!

Chelle nods her head. Donny puts two and two together.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Oh fuck me.

CHELLE

No thanks, I'm on duty, maybe later.

A line has started to form behind Donny.

CUSTOMER

If you're not gonna buy anything else...

Donny reaches for the shelf without breaking eye contact with Chelle.

DONNY

You know, I never got your name.

CHELLE

Michelle. Chelle.

Donny puts another candy on the belt.

DONNY

Michelle! That's a lovely name!

CHELLE

Is it?

Donny puts another candy on the belt.

DONNY

Well sure! Are you named after anyone?

CHELLE

Nope.

Donny puts another candy on the belt.

DONNY

No? Michelle Pfeiffer. Obama. Williams. Wolf. Rodriguez.

CHELLE

Nope... I think my parents liked the Beatles song?

Donny puts another candy on the belt.

DONNY

Oh wow, your parents conceived you to the Beatles. Neat!

CHELLE

That's not what I said at all-

Donny puts another candy on the belt.

DONNY

-I'm pretty sure my parents got it on to whatever was playing in the bathroom at the cracker barrel.

The impatient customer stifles a laugh. Chelle doesn't stifle hers. Chelle herself adds another candy onto the belt.

CHELLE

You're not named after anybody, Donald? Duck. Glover. Trump. Trump Jr. Mc.

DONNY

McDonald? No, none of the above. Donatello not Donald.

CHELLE

Ooh, fancy! Donatello? Like the Ninja Turtle!

DONNY
Like the ninja turtle.

Donny puts another candy on the belt. He has emptied the shelf.

DONNY
What are you doing tomorrow night?

CHELLE
I get off at 4:30.

Donny grabs an onion from the basket of the customer behind him. The customer lets him do it because he kinda wants to see where this goes.

DONNY
Do you like Mexican?

CHELLE
Dinner and a movie?

DONNY
Dinner and a movie? What am I made of money?

CHELLE
Let's find out. \$48.94. Would you like to donate to St. Jude's Children's Hospital?

Donny freezes. He turns to the guy behind him.

DONNY
...Can I borrow some cash?

The man shakes his head gleefully.

CHELLE
...Do you have a rewards card with us? It's 50% off your first purchase.

DONNY
...No, I don't believe I do. How does one go about obtaining this elite privilege?

Chelle flips the screen of the card reader around.

CHELLE
I just need your phone number.

INT. GORDO'S HOUSE

Donny enters the apartment and immediately begins dancing. Gordo joins along. They party, just the two of them, celebrating. They wander around the house grabbing various props to sing into (spatulas, cucumbers, etc.) It's goofy.

INT. CHELLE'S BEDROOM

Hard cut to Chelle's much more reserved celebration. She sits in bed, looking at her phone; she's got a smile on her face. Her hand hovers over the 'call' button. She shuts the phone off and the light is removed from her face.

INT. GORDO'S HOUSE

Donny stares at his blank phone on the counter. Gordo is in the background, on his hands and knees cleaning cereal off the floor post-celebration.

DONNY

When do you think she'll call?

GORDO

Thursday proolly.

DONNY

Thursday! What? Why?

GORDO

Three days, my friend. That's the rule. But it's not rare to go four - so I think she'll leave you hanging on for a bit. Sometimes they never call at all.

DONNY

Never? You don't think she'll never call do you?

GORDO

Good thing you didn't use the self-checkout.

DONNY

Oh, trust me, she checked me out.

GORDO

You're doing the old "self-checkout" a lot without a girlfriend, aren't you?

INT. CHELLE'S BEDROOM.

Chelle makes up her mind. She hits dial and calls Donny.

INT. GORDO'S HOUSE

Donny and Gordo hear the phone ring at the same time. They both rush for it, but Donny gets there first.

GORDO
Wait wait wait! You gotta let it
ring first!

DONNY
What?

GORDO
You don't want her to think you
were waiting by the phone!

DONNY
I was waiting by the phone!

Donny takes a deep breath and answers the call // just as Marge enters Chelle's room. Chelle immediately hangs up and hides her phone.

Donny looks at the silent phone and then to Gordo.

GORDO
You waited too long.

INT. CHELLE'S BEDROOM

MARGE
What is this?

Marge holds up a sheet of paper with a prominent red B+ written on the top.

CHELLE
Did you go through my bag?

MARGE
You're hiding things from me!
Whose class is this for?

CHELLE
Stop micromanaging me! It was a
unit review, it doesn't even mean
anything-

MARGE
Whose class, Chelle?

CHELLE
Mr. Brown's. History.

Marge speaks very calmly. It makes it sting harder.

MARGE
Go speak to Mr. Brown tomorrow and
convince him to let you retake it.

CHELLE
Mom! Mr. Brown hates me, he'll
never let me redo it-

MARGE
His letter of recommendation is
considered very highly, Chelle. If
you want to get into a good
college and not some podunk-

CHELLE
Mom! I get it!

MARGE
Obviously you don't.

CHELLE
Can I do anything about it right
this minute? No. Stop yelling at
me!

MARGE
You think this is yelling? My
mother yelled at me - you don't
know what yelling is!
(Pause)
We all have people to answer to.
And sometimes we don't want to do
things, but they have to get done,
and somebody's gotta do it. So,
just... get it done, Chelle.

Marge is furious but regains her composure. She is exceptionally strong and will not succumb to emotion so easily. So is her daughter. Marge exits, closing the door on her way out; the light from the hallway disappears with her, leaving Chelle in the dark. After a moment, the blue light of the phone lights her face. She stares at Donny's number for a moment, then shuts her phone and makes an aggressive attempt to go to sleep.

INT. SCHOOL, ROOM 705

The school bell rings. Immediately, MR. BROWN begins to lecture the class.

MR. BROWN

Put your books away, we're not reading today. You are going to be listening and I will be talking, is that understood? Marvelous. It has come to my attention that one or more of you has not done the assigned reading, instead, copying your peers on a shared Google Doc as it were. From now on there will be no computers, no phones, no pads, no pods, nothing - no devices whatsoever in this classroom. If I so much as hear a ping it is an automatic detention.

Just as he's finished his rant... Donny walks into the room, quite late. He finds a seat next to Gordo in the back row and pulls out a textbook and a laptop.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

Mr. Moretti. What page are we on?

Donny looks over to Gordo's book-

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

Don't look at him. Look at me.

Donny stares at him, caught in a spotlight.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

What page, Mr. Moretti?

Donny cannot answer. They both know this. Everyone in the room knows it. And yet, Mr. Brown does not give him a merciful death.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

My room, 3:00.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ROOM 705, LATER THAT DAY

Donny sits in the same seat. A thick history textbook lies before him. Mr. Brown scrolls through Instagram, his feet on his desk. They'd both rather be somewhere else.

A knock sounds from the door. Chelle enters. Donny perks up.

CHELLE

Mr. Brown? I was looking over the test results from Tuesday's Chapter 6 review and I wanted to know, if it would be alright of course, if maybe I could retake it, and if not - that's okay - but maybe there might be a way to raise my average some other way? I know sometimes you assign optional essays - I'd be happy to write a paper on-

Mr. Brown isn't really listening - his focus is on Donny, who is eyeing Chelle's posterior intently.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

-So if that would be okay with you, I could certainly find time to make up an-

MR. BROWN

Sure sure, yeah definitely. Listen, I'm late for an appointment, but I'm tied up here at the moment. Perhaps, you could do me a service and help Mr. Moretti here with his assignment.

Chelle turns and notices Donny for the first time. She blushes a little. He averts his eyes, pretending to be deep in thought at the footnotes.

CHELLE

I... it would be my pleasure, Mr. Brown.

MR. BROWN

I'm sure it will. Moretti...

Mr. Brown finds nothing to say, and leaves. Chelle stands awkwardly.

DONNY

Hi.

CHELLE

Hi.

DONNY

...do you wanna sit?

Chelle obliges, sitting at the desk next to him.

CHELLE
 So, what is it that you're...
 reading?

Donny checks the cover of the book.

DONNY
 American Education: A History

CHELLE
 Oh, that's a good one.

DONNY
 Riveting stuff.

CHELLE
 Do you... like history?

DONNY
 I'm better with Chemistry.

CHELLE
 Oh. Neat.

Chelle bites her lip anxiously.

CHELLE
 (reading from the book)
 What do you think Thomas Jefferson
 meant by "I sincerely believe that
 banking establishments are more
 dangerous than standing armies?"

Donny is silent.

CHELLE (CONT'D)
 Well, I think what he means is
 that economic strategy is more
 powerful than brute force when it
 comes to nations. Do you agree?

DONNY
 Sure.

CHELLE
 Great! Why don't you do the next
 one.

DONNY
 (reading from the book)
 What do you think Thomas Jefferson
 meant by "Determine never to be
 idle.

(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)
 No person will have occasion to
 complain of the want of time, who
 never loses any?"

There is silence between them. Donny's leg is bouncing like a jackhammer. Chelle's teeth might just bite through her lip.

CHELLE
 I think-

DONNY
 You didn't call.

Reaction on Chelle. Donny is not the type to let something go.

DONNY (CONT'D)
 Would you like to have dinner?
 Tonight.

CHELLE
 ...I would like that very much,
 please.

Donny is relieved.

CHELLE (CONT'D)
 But my mother is kinda...
 overbearing. She really wants me
 to do well in this class, and...
 I don't think she'd let me hang
 out with someone on a school
 night.

DONNY
 Not even for extra credit?

CHELLE
 Pardon?

DONNY
 Tell her you're tutoring someone,
 a very important assignment at the
 request of Mr. Brown himself. I'm
 sure he'll be very impressed if
 you were to get this bright young
 man to improve his grades.

CHELLE
 It's a date- Er, a study date!

Donny nods. This scheme just might work!

CHELLE (CONT'D)
 ...where? What time?

DONNY
Oh! Cancún? 56 and 8th. 7...ish

CHELLE
Okay. Cool.

DONNY
Cool.

CHELLE
Goodbye.

DONNY
Goodbye.

Chelle very quickly exits the room, leaving her bag behind. Outside in the hall, she does a happy dance and twirls like Stevie Nicks. Some 5th graders laugh at her. She corrects herself, realizes she left her bag, and runs back in to get it. Donny is standing with the bag, starting toward the door when she reenters.

CHELLE
I just forgot-

DONNY
Oh, I was just-

Donny hands Chelle her bag. He steps toward her as to hug her, but then adjusts and offers a fist bump. She taps his knuckles with hers and makes an explosion sound. He does not. She laughs awkwardly and runs away with her bag. The door shuts. Donny smiles.

Cut to:

INT. CHELLE'S APARTMENT, DAY / INT. DONNY'S APARTMENT

Montage of Chelle and Donny getting ready for their date.
Intercut:

Chelle loads up a RECORD PLAYER in her bedroom.

Music up: "Say You Love Me" by Fleetwood Mac

Chelle grabs roll-on deodorant and applies it liberally,

Donny raises his arm and checks his pits.

Chelle reaches for an expensive bottle of perfume and sprays one burst on each wrist.

Donny grabs a black collar shirt from the ground and sniffs it.

Chelle decides to spray two more bursts on her neck.

Donny begins to tuck in his shirt, then gets distracted by his phone. Only one half is tucked in.

Chelle sprays a mist in the air and walks through it. It gets in her eyes and she sneezes.

Donny slides into a pair of sneakers.

Chelle pulls a small tin box from under her bed, the lid says "lucky" and is decorated with stickers and beads; she opens it and pulls out two bright green shoelaces and begins to replace the ones on her current pair of sneakers.

Donny meticulously brushes each individual hair on his head, making sure that a strand hangs down just over his right eyebrow.

Chelle looks at herself in the mirror; her eyes raise to her head, then stop at her messy hair. She sighs, pulls it all together, and wraps it into a tight, no-hassle bun. It's good enough.

Donny's hands grab his phone and keys from the table and makes for the door.

Chelle's hands run over a display of crystals and gemstones. She plucks one and adds it to a charm on her bracelet. She puts far too many things into her purse, takes an umbrella, kisses her father on the cheek, and turns the music off.

The shots line up side by side in split screen as they simultaneously exit their respective doors. A clock visible on each side notes the time; they do not match (Donny's reads 4:43, Chelle's reads 5:21).

The camera stays on Chelle's door as the clock fades to 6:14. Marge gets home from work, exhausted, and sees Jerry at the kitchen table, sitting before a plate of what used to be a turkey sandwich.

MARGE

(a whirlwind)

Jack has gotten on my last nerve,
he's impossible. I'm the only in
the company who does any work!

(then)

Where's Chelle?

JERRY

She's tutoring someone. Says she's
getting extra credit.

MARGE

As long as she has her own
homework done and is home by 11.

Marge immediately finds something to keep her hands busy.

JERRY

...She's wearing that perfume you
bought her for Hanukkah.

Marge stops cleaning dishes.

MARGE (CONT'D)

She never wears that. She saves it
for special...

Jerry nods contently.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Date?

Jerry and Marge converse with nothing more than knowing facial
expressions. Like a tennis match. Marge is uncomfortable, but
maybe also a little proud.

MARGE (CONT'D)

How was her hair?

INT. CANCÚN MEXICAN RESTAURANT, NIGHT - 2018

Chelle peers through the window, brushes her hair with her
hand, takes a deep breath, and enters the dimly lit restaurant.
She approaches the young woman (16) at the reservations desk.

CHELLE

Hi, hello! I'm supposed to meet
someone here at 7. I know I'm a
little early...

The hostess looks at her watch.

HOSTESS

It's 6:20

Chelle smiles awkwardly.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)

What name is your reservation
under?

CHELLE

Oh, well I don't know if he got a
reservation, but Donny. Donny
Moretti.

The hostess looks up from her keyboard. She is shocked, then eyes Chelle up and down, and is impressed. She smirks mischievously.

HOSTESS
I'll go get him.

She walks to the back of the restaurant and enters the kitchen. Chelle tilts her head slightly to see the hostess playfully shove Donny and say something indistinctly. Donny pales, looks into the dining room and sees Chelle standing there. The hostess ruffles his perfect hair just as he enters the dining room to greet Chelle.

DONNY
Chelle! You're 55 minutes early.

CHELLE
Yeah, sorry. I mean, it's only 40 minutes early.

DONNY
7-ish.

CHELLE
Yeah, 7.

DONNY
No, 7-ISH that's 7:15

CHELLE
Oh, I'm sorry. I just, like to be prepared is all. I can come back!

Immediately, it begins to rain behind Chelle.

CHELLE
...you're early too.

Donny laughs nervously. Chelle looks down and notices a tray in his hand.

CHELLE
Oh.

Just then, the hostess re-enters.

HOSTESS
Right this way, ma'am. Your table is ready.

Chelle follows the hostess to a table below a mural of the Virgin Mary. Donny begins to sit when-

BOSS
Moretti. Aqui!

A stern Mexican man wearing suspenders calls Donny back over to the kitchen. He hands him a tin pitcher and walks away. Donny looks down at the pitcher, then to Chelle, then to his Boss's back, then to the hostess, and then to another table of customers in the restaurant; his eyes bounce like pinballs. He rushes to a table and fills an already mostly full glass to the brim. He does the same at every other table (spilling some on vocal customers) until he reaches Chelle. He slowly pours her a glass of water.

DONNY
I work here.

CHELLE
I can see that.

DONNY
I really need this job. I'm so sorry, Chelle. It wasn't supposed to be like this.

Donny begins to run back to the kitchen, but not before Chelle calls him back.

CHELLE
Donny!

Chelle holds up an empty glass of water. She taps the rim politely. Donny cautiously returns to her and refills her glass. She chugs it, not breaking eye contact with him, then says-

CHELLE (CONT'D)
Tom Brady drinks 37 glasses of water a day.

Donny smiles. She lifts her empty glass to him and smiles back.

DONNY
Do you like sports? Don't tell me you like the Patriots.

CHELLE
My dad does. He's from Boston originally.

DONNY
My condolences.

Chelle smiles and lifts an empty cup.

CHELLE
How about you? Do you like
football?

DONNY
Jets. New York, born and raised.

CHELLE
That's a shame.

Donny spills a little bit of water on her leg on purpose.
Chelle reacts dramatically but they both laugh.

INT. CANCÚN - LATER THAT EVENING.

The hostess has taken up Donny's tables.

CHELLE
(referring to the hostess)
Does she go to our school?

DONNY
Who? Gabby? Yeah, she's in the
grade below us.

There's a pause.

DONNY (CONT'D)
Were you nervous?

CHELLE
About Gabby? No, why?

DONNY
Not her - us.

Chelle softens, then-

CHELLE
I was nervous I wouldn't be good
enough for you.

DONNY
Good enough for me? The busboy
with the lowest GPA of all time?

CHELLE
Were you nervous?

DONNY
Very.

CHELLE

I was afraid we would exhaust conversation topics within ten minutes. I actually found questions online in case.

DONNY

Questions?

Chelle sheepishly pulls out her phone.

CHELLE

"15 Questions to Actually Know Someone."

The article's title actually reads "12 Questions That Lead to Love." She conveniently misreads it.

DONNY

Well shit, go for it!

CHELLE

Wait, what? Really?

DONNY

Yeah, why not?

CHELLE

Uh, okay. You have to be super honest though, that's the only way this works. Um, first one- "Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you're going to say?" I definitely do. And I imagine what the other person is going to say too.

DONNY

I never make phone calls, Facetime, nothing.

CHELLE

Never? What about like when your parents call?

Donny shakes his head and drinks from an already empty cup.

CHELLE

"What would constitute a perfect day for you?" Let me guess, Fortnite and pizza.

DONNY

For your information, ma'am, you have me totally wrong! It's Call of Duty and nachos.

Chelle laughs.

DONNY (CONT'D)

...okay, but actually. Don't laugh. I don't know if it's like, the perfect day, but I've always had a fantasy of like doing a picnic on the grass. Peanut Butter and Jelly sandwiches, juice boxes, the whole shebang.

CHELLE

Wow. That's. That's very sweet, Donatello.

DONNY

Ugh, God. What about you?

She thinks for a bit.

CHELLE

My mom took me to Six Flags when I was seven. She took the day off of work, and she and I rode roller coasters, and she bought me hotdogs, which - now that I think about it, is totally gross - but... I liked it then. I remember her making me try funnel cake. She told me I'd like it, but I didn't want to try it because it looked like fried worms with asbestos on top, but she told me she'd buy me a Lego if I ate it. Any one I wanted.

DONNY

Which one?

CHELLE

What?

DONNY

Which Lego?

CHELLE

Oh. Hogwarts Castle. Massive. Took me two weeks to build.

(MORE)

CHELLE (CONT'D)

And it had all the minifigs - Harry and Ron and Hermione and it came with Hagrid! Oh, I loved it.

DONNY

So was she right? Did you like funnel cake?

CHELLE

No. Hated it. Can't stand it. But I got that Lego out of it! So, I won.

DONNY

That's really nice.

CHELLE

Yeah. It was. She probably shouldn't have wasted a vacation day on me though.

DONNY

I'd doubt that she'd consider it a waste.

CHELLE

Maybe. "When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?" Literally every day - I sing in the shower, on the train, during tests.

DONNY

You sing on the train?

CHELLE

I've been known to get into it. What about you? When's the last time you sang?

DONNY

When I was in 6th grade, my dog Magoo - my blind dog, Magoo - had diabetes or kidney failure or something like that and she had this tube up her nose that she took her medicine through. She basically got sick overnight, and I took her to the vet, and they gave me like 30 pastes and liquids to feed her. I sat on the floor with her, she was shaking so much.

(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)

She had this cone on her head and she didn't know what was happening, and I had to put the goo into her tube but she wouldn't sit still so I sang to her. "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." Mary Poppins. But that was the only part of the song I knew so I'd sing that little verse over and over again, her sitting in my arms until she calmed down.

CHELLE

You're a good brother.

DONNY

My dad put her down the next morning. It's okay. Do you wanna order dessert?

CHELLE

Oh, uh - not really.

Donny signals to the hostess.

DONNY

Tráigame uno de esos plátanos fritos, Gabby.

GABBY

Buen trabajo, hablando de tu perro muerto en una cita. Suave.

Donny makes a face at her. She steps on his foot while clearing their table.

DONNY

What's the next question?

CHELLE

Ugh. "Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?" Low-key morbid.

DONNY

Liver damage.

CHELLE

What?

DONNY

Nevermind. Uh, Pothole.

Donny uses his fingers to mime disappearing down a manhole. Chelle giggles.

CHELLE

"If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?"

DONNY

That's the next question?

CHELLE

I mean, I wish my mom was home more, I guess. I wish that my "perfect day" wasn't something from a decade ago. Donny?

DONNY

How many more questions are there?

CHELLE

Um, we're on #5. There's 7 more. Are you-

DONNY

I have to use the bathroom.

Donny gets up from the table and makes for the back of the restaurant. He looks around, grabs a Corona from the fridge and takes it into the bathroom. Meanwhile, Gabby sets his dessert on the table, winks at Chelle, and takes a bite out of his ice cream while he's gone.

INT. BATHROOM

Donny locks the door of the small bathroom. He pops the bottle cap off and drinks half the bottle in one go. He looks at himself in the mirror, fixes his hair, tucks in the other half of his shirt, and checks his teeth for debris. He lets his forced smile fall. Then he hears the song playing softly on the radio from overhead. "Songbird" by Fleetwood Mac. He takes a deep breath and exits.

INT. CANCÚN

Chelle takes a bite out of one of the bananas on his plate, hears him coming, and hides the spoon under her napkin.

CHELLE

We don't have to do these, they're pretty dumb-

DONNY

-read the next one.

Chelle reacts, looks at her phone, and back to him.

CHELLE

"Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible." We don't have to-

DONNY

My mother died when I was born. My mother died because I was born. My father fixes roofs for a living. He's a... barfly. I have an older brother. He lives in California and pays for my tuition. He's got a daughter; I've never met her. When I was 15 I got suspended for pulling the fire alarm at school to impress a girl. My favorite movie is Big. Tom Hanks. I'm a Scorpio and I like funnel cake. Pepsi is better than Coke.

Chelle sits silently.

DONNY (CONT'D)

How long was that?

Chelle looks down at her phone.

CHELLE

You've got three minutes and eleven seconds left... if you want to use them.

DONNY

I don't.

CHELLE

My name is Michelle Eleanor Bergmann. I'm from Manhattan, New York. My mom is from Long Island. My dad is from Boston, which you already know. She went to Barnard, he went to SUNY Purchase. She's an account executive at Porter Group. My dad used to be a sales intern. He worked for her, then he married her. He jokes that now she'll always be his boss. He doesn't work there anymore, but she does.

(MORE)

CHELLE (CONT'D)

She hates it. I mean, really hates it. She knows more than anyone there - she's, like, overqualified and underpaid, but... I don't know. What else? I have a summer home in the Hamptons. I don't really watch movies, but I guess my favorite movie is Good Will Hunting. I don't know... I don't drink soda, so...

DONNY

You don't watch movies... That's okay... Y'know... the question didn't ask you to tell your parents' life story.

CHELLE

What do you want to know about me?

DONNY

What do you want to tell me?

CHELLE

I hated my old school. Total New York Upper East Side private school; very competitive, elitist, snobby. I hated that, so I finally switched. I like it here. But I'm afraid I fit in better there than I do here.

DONNY

Why?

CHELLE

Because I'm competitive, elitist, and snobby.

DONNY

I don't think that.

CHELLE

Well, you don't know me all that well.

DONNY

I'd really like to. Why do you think we're still answering these questions?

Donny and Chelle smile coyly at each other.

CHELLE

"Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items."

DONNY

Actually? Just compliment each other?

CHELLE

Hey, I didn't write these questions.

DONNY

I like your hair.

She thinks he's lying. He is not.

CHELLE

Well I like your hair.

He knows she isn't lying.

DONNY

I think you have... nice eyes.

CHELLE

I think you have nice eyes.

DONNY

You can't just copy what I say!

CHELLE

I'm not! I also like these things.

DONNY

I like your work ethic!

Chelle makes a face; she won't return the compliment. They both laugh.

CHELLE

I like your smile.

DONNY

I like your laugh.

CHELLE

I like how you make me feel.

DONNY

I like how you make me feel.

(Pause)

And I like how you look at me.

CHELLE

I like how you can't count. That's 6, bud.

They break from the intimacy they fell into. He laughs and takes her phone.

DONNY

"When is the last time you cried in front of another person? By yourself?"

CHELLE

Oof. Monday through Friday? You?

DONNY

I don't know. Never. Next question. "If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?"

They sit in silence for a few moments. They both have an answer. Donny plays with the bottlecap he kept.

CHELLE

I honestly don't know.

DONNY

Yeah, that's a tough one! Let's go to the next one! "What's the most critical thing someone has ever told you?"

CHELLE

Is it the *most* hurtful, probably not, but my mom always nitpicks my essays. I'm a good writer! I'm good at it! She doesn't have to wipe my butt for me too, I'm an adult.

DONNY

My father told me he wished I'd died instead of my mother. He didn't mean it, he was just drunk. The Jets were losing.

CHELLE

(under her breath)
The Jets are always losing.

She takes back the phone.

CHELLE

"What's the most encouraging thing someone's ever said to you?" I... I don't know why that's so much harder to think of than a bad thing someone's said. I don't know.

She reads the question again.

CHELLE

"What's the most encouraging- what's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to you?"

DONNY

"I like how you make me feel."

Chelle doesn't look at Donny when she asks the next question.

CHELLE

Which one meant more? The hurtful one or the nice one?

Chelle and Donny both stare blankly at the tablecloth. There's only one thing left to do on the list.

CHELLE

"Stare into your partner's eyes for four minutes."

DONNY

Four minutes is a lot of time.

CHELLE

We don't have to do it...

Donny looks up at her. She sees him, then looks away. We cut between them for the next several minutes as she gradually keeps her eyes on his. It's a struggle - the intimacy - the vulnerability. But they commit.

They break when Gabby drops off the check. Chelle, still staring at Donny, says-

CHELLE

I've needed to pee this entire time.

She runs off to the bathroom. Donny takes a moment to stop his head from spinning.

Music up: "Never Forget" by Fleetwood Mac

Donny grabs the bill and sees a message scrawled on it. *On the house.* Donny turns and sees his boss with his arm around Gabby, his daughter. He smiles softly, then points to a stack of dishes and mouths "tomorrow."

EXT. CANCÚN RESTAURANT - A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Chelle and Donny stand underneath the awning of the restaurant. It is still raining.

CHELLE

Where do you live? I'll walk you there.

DONNY

Oh, no. That's okay.

CHELLE

You don't have an umbrella. You'll get all wet.

DONNY

It's really okay. It's just rain.

CHELLE

...if you walk me home, I can give you my umbrella...

Donny is slow on the uptake.

DONNY

Ok.

The music fades up and replaces any other audio. Chelle and Donny, nestled close, share an umbrella. Fluorescent neon lights of Columbus Circle shop windows highlight them. They cross and walk through Central Park, not giving the slightest thought to the time nor the rain.

HARD CUT:

CHELLE

Well this is me!

Donny stops, realizing this is the end of the line. They face each other under the umbrella. Both are quiet.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

I had a really nice time.

DONNY

Me too.

CHELLE
Do you want to do it again
sometime?

DONNY
Very much.

CHELLE
Yeah, me too.

There are several moments of will-they-won't-they tension.
They're very close.

DONNY
Okay, well, goodnight.

Donny abruptly turns and scurries off with the umbrella.

CHELLE
Goodnight.

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE
You know that place isn't there
anymore? Cancún? Whole building is
gone. There's a Duane Reade there
now.

DONNY
Of course there is. Bet the rent
is through the roof.

CHELLE
Oh, I'm sure.

There's some quiet reflection.

DONNY
I really wanted to kiss you that
night.

CHELLE
I know.

INT. CHELLE'S HOME, 2018

MARGE
Chelle, do you know what time it
is?

Chelle really doesn't. She barely even hears what her mom has
said. She looks at her phone.

CHELLE

Oh. I'm sorry momma.

MARGE

You have a curfew for a reason, baby. Don't push it. Your father and I trust you, don't make us regret it.

CHELLE

Ok Momma.

Celle's head is still in the clouds. She's more docile than she usually is. Marge knows this.

MARGE

Did you have a nice time?

Celle barely registers this.

CHELLE

Hmm?

Marge hides a delighted smile.

MARGE

Is he French?

Celle is already gone.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Nevermind. Go to sleep, Bear.

She closes the door to her room and shakes her head proudly at Jerry.

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE

I don't know how you remember so much about that night.

Donny almost looks offended.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Oh stop, you know what I mean. You remember what you were wearing two and a half decades ago? You remember what you ordered for dessert?

DONNY

Oh, believe me, I remember that God-awful uniform, and to this day, I still think about that dessert.

Chelle laughs, but they drift into thought once more.

DONNY (CONT'D)

Do you remember those questions?

CHELLE

Some. I probably have it written down somewhere.

DONNY

If you could change anything about the way you were raised, would you?

CHELLE

Not a single thing. When did you last cry in front of another person?

Donny smiles at her but doesn't answer. She smiles too, then lets it fall.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

You know which one got me? What's the worst thing someone ever said, what's the best, which meant more? That one stayed with me for a while.

Reaction on Don. A memory.

His eyes are at his shoes. Chelle stares at him. The shot mirrors the staring scene in the restaurant, but this time Donny is the one having trouble looking her in the eyes.

GABBY (PRE-LAP)

You're not a friggin' idiot.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY, DAY - 2018

Gordo is lying down on a sofa; he's wearing a tight-fitting, white tennis uniform - headband and all. Gabby, the hostess, is sitting on top of his ankles. Donny sits opposite of them, struggling through George Eliot's Middlemarch.

DONNY

I could have kissed her!
(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)

I should have kissed her! I'm so stupid!

GORDO

Hey hey hey, stop that. You said it went well! What's the big deal?

DONNY

I didn't- I don't know -seal the deal!

GABBY

That doesn't matter. You had a great time-

DONNY

I had a great time! It was perfect! She's perfect!

GORDO

And she said she wants to hang out again, so what's the big deal?

Donny makes a frustrated noise and shuts his book. He takes a deep breath and leans in closer to Gordo.

DONNY

Come on, man. You know I haven't had my first... kiss.

GORDO

And you think she has?

DONNY

Probably! She's probably been with loads of guys! Not, like, cause she's a slut or anything - but just because she's gorgeous, like...

Gordo and Gabby share a look.

GORDO

Donny, Donny, get a hold of yourself. People say be yourself. Don't be yourself. Don't Donny this.

DONNY

I'm gonna Donny this!

GABBY

You're not gonna Donny this. Stop.

DONNY

I'm gonna Donny this! I know it!

GORDO

Hey hey hey, stop it. It's easy. You pucker up just a little- oh God, less- and then you go for the bottom lip! It's that simple! Like you're eating a Chipwich. You just want that bottom cookie - the ice cream is an advanced maneuver, my guy.

A student stands up and leans over a bookshelf.

LIBRARY STUDENT

Shh!

The camera reveals that a number of people in the library are praying to unhear everything they just heard. Suddenly, Donny's phone (on a table between the three of them) vibrates. A text from Chelle. There's a moment of stillness, then all three of them rush for it. Gabby gets away with it.

GABBY

(reading from the phone,
mimicking Chelle)

Hi, it's Michelle. From dinner. I had a really great time the other night and I was wondering if maybe, if you're up for it- blah, blah, blah - God, you picked a real winner here, huh?

Donny grabs the phone from her.

DONNY

(reading from the phone)

Anyway, if you're up for it, I was thinking maybe if you wanted, we could possibly go see this documentary, next Saturday. I don't know if you like documentaries but its gotten good reviews, so. Anyway, sorry for the long message. Thank you. Hope this finds you well.

Gordo is ready to blow his brains out listening to the verbose message. Donny is struggling to hide his delight. He types a reply into his phone.

C/U phone: he writes 🙄

Montage up:

Music up: "Monday Morning" by Fleetwood Mac

INT. CHELLE'S ROOM, MORNING

C/U on a Cat calendar on her nightstand; it reads Monday September 24th. There's a photo of a kitty sitting on a cloud with the caption "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

Chelle wakes up with a big smile, removes a beauty mask and two cucumbers from her eyes, and takes a deep breath. Cut to her packing her bag for school: quick cuts of various color-coded binders and pens and Walgreens nonsense. She just barely makes it fit into her backpack. She kisses her parents goodbye.

CHELLE
Byemombyedadloveyou!

INT. DONNY'S ROOM, MORNING

Donny's phone alarm rings. He throws it against a wall and returns to sleep.

EXT. STARBUCKS, MORNING

Chelle leaves with a tall cup of something terrible. She smiles at strangers.

INT. DONNY'S ROOM, MORNING

His phone alarm again, but now its on the other side of the room; he's played himself. Quick cuts: showering, brushing his teeth, fixing his hair, and leaving. A moment later, the door reopens; he's left his backpack.

INT. SCHOOL, DAY

Chelle settles down into a desk, takes out one sharpened pencil and one pen and lays them into the appropriate groove on the table - along with last night's (annotated) homework. She interlaces her fingers, sits up straight, and stares straight ahead. Wide shot: the room is empty.

EXT. SCHOOL, DAY

Donny sprints into the building just as the bell rings.

Smash cut to: Cat calendar - it reads Tuesday September 25th. Today, there's a photo of a cartoon cat biting into a cookie. "That's the way the cookie crumbles!"

Chelle rolls over and reaches for her face-mask. There's a wet print of her face on her pillow / Donny's phone rings. He opens his drawer without looking and drops it inside / Chelle kisses her parents goodbye / Starbucks / organizes pencils. Donny sprints into the building as the bell rings.

C/U: Cat calendar - Wednesday, September 26th - A black cat has his back arched - "Happy Hump Day!"

Quick shots: Chelle takes a cucumber slice off of her face and eats it / Donny's phone rings. He yells at the ceiling / goodbyes / Starbucks / pencils / Donny jogs into school as the bell rings.

C/U: Thursday, September 27th - A cat dressed as a firefighter rescues another cat from a burning tree - "It's getting hot in here!"

Quick shots: Chelle is no longer wearing a face mask, but she is chewing a full cucumber / Donny is wide awake in bed. He begins to nod off - immediately, his phone rings. He says nothing - but his expression screams / Chelle shoves the Starbucks door open aggressively as she slurps down a black coffee / she lets pens scatter onto her table, then begins to cry / The bell rings. Donny walks into the building - in no rush.

C/U: Thursday, September 27th - again

Chelle (bags under her eyes, smile gone) haphazardly tears the page from the wall to reveal Friday, September 28th - a cat swings from a rope - "Hang in there!"

Reaction on Chelle.

Music cuts.
End montage.

INT. DONNY'S ROOM, MORNING

The mood is immediately different than the scene before. Donny opens his eyes slowly. There's a contentedness on his face, maybe even some excitement in his eyes. He rolls over onto his back and looks at his phone, holding it about a foot above his face. He scrolls through Chelle's Instagram page, pausing on photos of her and ignoring photos of scenery, food, and other nonsense. He finds one particularly sweet photo of her. The comments are a mess of "ILY," "LITERALLY PERFECT," "HOTT 💧," and "QUEEN!!!"

The camera pushes in slowly on the photo and of his reaction. It's a nice moment. Then he drops the phone on his nose.

INT. CHELLE'S APARTMENT, DAY

Chelle steps out of her room wearing an outfit she's put effort into. She holds a SCARF to her chest.

CHELLE
How does it look-

Marge holds up her finger; she's walking around, talking on the phone.

MARGE
(On the phone)
Yes sir, of course. Well I can't do the revisions until Thursday cause- Tuesday is tight... okay. Well, I'm meeting with Jack on Wednesday to go over it with marketing, but you know how he is... Yes sir. If I must. Right away. Have a good weekend.

She hangs up and falls into a couch, exhausted and the day has only just begun.

MARGE
(to Chelle)
These people are impossible! What do they want from me? I sent in the first draft, I waited two weeks, I gave them their revision - the revisions Jack asked for-

CHELLE
Who's Jack?

MARGE
(Not hearing Chelle)
-Now they say they liked the first draft better. That is just like him. I'm constantly undermined. You know if I send in the first one again they're going to find some new issue with it. Now I have to go into the office over the weekend and clean up their mess - which I warned them about -

Marge goes sotto. We watch Chelle's jubilation dissipate under the weight of being used as an involuntary therapist. Her excitement for her date has all but vanished.

MARGE (CONT'D)
 Whatever. C'est la vie.

She puts her reading glasses on and hammers on her keyboard. Chelle stares at her - her glasses, her face, her hands. Chelle heads for the door.

MARGE
 Where are you going?

CHELLE
 I told you. I'm tutoring someone.

MARGE
 Right, right. Math.

CHELLE
 History.

MARGE
 I know, I was just joking.
 (Then)
 Don't wear the scarf, honey, it's too busy. It doesn't go with anything.

Off Chelle-

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK, LATER

Chelle and Donny walk alongside the Hudson River. We enter mid-conversation.

CHELLE
 -She had a hole in her nose from doing so much cocaine.

DONNY
 Oh my God! That's crazy.

CHELLE
 I'm sorry, I'm talking your ear off.

DONNY
 What was that?

CHELLE
 What?

DONNY
 That voice that walked into your head?

CHELLE

Ugh. I just... my mom can go on and on sometimes. I didn't... wanna do that to you.

DONNY

We're not our parents. We don't have to be. My brother is nothing like my dad.

CHELLE

Tell me about him.

They walk past a playground; children scramble the monkey bars.

DONNY

Sylvester? He's the funniest person I know. He always makes me laugh. About nothing, too! He'll find a way to make anything funny! And I love him. But you know, sometimes... sometimes he's too funny. Right? You can never take him seriously because you laugh at what he says 99% of the time. Sally, uh his wife, thought he was pranking her when he proposed. He's the funniest guy I know. And he's also the smartest. But people don't know that because of the first thing. Nobody ever tells you about the downsides of being funny all the time.

Chelle can't help but look at his lips as he talks.

DONNY (CONT'D)

He and I used to speak in codes when we were little. Like if my dad was around, we'd say Tomato Paste so that we knew not to curse or something. We had a code word for when he was being serious, too. Fondue. He took me out for fondue during Spring Break of his sophomore year in college. I was... asking him how many girls he'd... hooked up with, and - stupid, I know, but... but he smiled and told me he had found the love of his life. And I thought he was joking, right! Like, Sylvester Moretti?

(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)

This guy? He's telling me he wants to settle down with her and raise a family and I'm just thinking, he's gotta be joking. Somebody's gonna pull out a hidden camera or something. But... he wasn't joking. Swore on the fondue. He pulled out a ring then and there, no joke. He waited another three years to ask her, but it was legit. He wasn't joking then. Anyway, so anytime we wanna pause the jokes, we say fondue and you gotta respect that.

CHELLE

Fondue.

DONNY

I really enjoy your company.
Thanks for... you know. Fondue.

They face the water - the sky is beautiful. Chelle looks at Donny. He looks at her. They both turn away from each other and look back out at the river, embarrassed.

C/U on their fingers, an inch from one another on the railing of the pier. Like caterpillars, they gradually move closer - not yet touching.

Chelle smiles softly. They stare at each other for what feels like a long time. For a few frames, a Chipwich appears in her mouth, then disappears.

DONNY

I would really like to kiss you.

CHELLE

Me too.

Donny turns to her. He puts his hand through her hair, onto her cheek. He lifts his face, kisses her forehead, kisses her nose, and waits. She lifts her chin, looks at him, and kisses his lips.

Music up: "Love in Store" by Fleetwood Mac.

Montage: several weeks pass, dozens of cat pages are torn away, their love blossoms. Life is good. He's still distracted in class, but his messages are no longer empty. Gifs and inside jokes are sent back and forth. Chelle giggles in a class. Mr. Brown notices it but returns to teaching. A new message pops up in Donny's computer: an invitation to a Halloween party.

Donny and Gabby take turns trying on clothes from Gordo's personal collection. Most of it fits Gabby better than Gordo. Cut to Chelle ripping off the newest page of her calendar: Wednesday, October 31st - a cat with a pumpkin on his head - Happy Halloween BOOS and GHOULS!

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HOUSE PARTY, HALLOWEEN NIGHT

Sheck Wes' "Mo Bamba" is playing very loudly. A lot of blonde girls are 'singing' the N-word. Chelle and Donny (as Daenerys Targaryen and Jon Snow from Game of Thrones) stand off to the side of the kitchen. He's having a blast (and is a little tipsy). She is not having much fun.

CHELLE
ARE YOU HAVING FUN?

DONNY
WHAT?

CHELLE
NEVERMIND!

Chelle takes a red solo cup and fills it with water from the sink. A man dressed as a pickle walks by and waves at Donny.

DONNY
I HAVE NO CLUE WHO THAT WAS!

CHELLE
HA HA.

She doesn't know what he said. Gordo, dressed as Elton John, comes over - says something unintelligible and whisks Donny away. Chelle sips from her cup alone. Gabby (wearing a very revealing Suicide Squad Harley Quinn costume) sidles up next to her.

GABBY
HEY!

CHELLE
HEY!

GABBY
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU DRANK!

CHELLE
I DON'T!

Gabby sniffs her cup and laughs. She grabs a beer and clinks cups with her.

CHELLE (CONT'D)
WHAT TIME IS IT?

GABBY
WHAT?

CHELLE
HOW LONG HAVE WE BEEN HERE?

Gabby takes her phone out of her back pocket.

GABBY
ELEVEN!

CHELLE
O' CLOCK?

GABBY
ELEVEN MINUTES!

Ariana Grande's "Thank U, Next" starts. Gabby screams at some friends off-screen and runs off. Chelle chugs the rest of her water. Donny returns. They communicate without words. He chugs his beer and grabs her hand.

EXT. STREET, HALLOWEEN NIGHT

Donny and Chelle walk together. He does a poor impression of Kit Harrington. She thinks it's hilarious. They arrive at her apartment, laughing - holding each other tight. Marge is sitting on the steps outside of the building. Chelle freezes. Panic.

MARGE
Go inside.

CHELLE
Momma, I didn't know what time the party ended. I di-

MARGE
Inside, Chelle.

Chelle looks to Donny, then rushes inside. Marge stares at Donny, daggers in her eyes.

INT. CHELLE'S APARTMENT, TEN MINUTES LATER.

Marge enters, a grin on her face, tears in her eyes. She's laughing.

MARGE (CONT'D)
 -hohahaha, he's a good one, baby!
 Hahaha! He can come over whenever
 he wants.

Chelle is dumbfounded.

MARGE (CONT'D)
 Jerry! He does the best impression
 of that actor!

Marge exits into the next room, singing praises. Chelle lies down into bed, still wearing her costume. Her confused expression turns into a wry smile.

Fade in: "You Make Loving Fun" by Fleetwood Mac

Chelle grabs her cellphone and looks at a photo of them they took together. The camera pulls away and he's at home looking at the same photo on his phone; as he's looking, the phone rings - it's her! They can't get enough!

MUSIC OFF / HARD CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM, THE NEXT DAY

Mr. Brown drones on at the board. Donny is falling asleep. A text pops up on his computer: *Turn around!*

Chelle is peering through the window in the door to the classroom. She motions him over. He gestures around him at class in session. She nods. Donny is surprised but quickly accepts. He turns and flicks Gordo on the head and whispers something. Gordo looks around, then stands and walks over to the corner, and faces the wall a la Blair Witch Project. Mr. Brown looks at him in disgust.

MR. BROWN
 What the hell's the matter with
 you?

Donny grabs his bag and sneaks out the door while Mr. Brown is distracted.

RESUME: "You Make Loving Fun" by Fleetwood Mac

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

Chelle and Donny run through the halls, laughing.

CHELLE
Do you think they know... about us?

DONNY
No.

INT. MR. BROWN'S CLASSROOM

Mr. Brown smacks Gordo on the head and sends him back to his seat, then notices an empty chair. The class giggles. Some make kissy faces at one another. Others moan. Gordo raises his hand.

GORDO
May I go to the bathroom?

MR. BROWN
Shut up!

INT. SCHOOL STAIRWELL

Chelle and Donny sit in a secluded part of the stairwell.

CHELLE
I've never skipped class before.

DONNY
Never? Not even for an exam you were unprepared for? Called in sick? Nothing.

CHELLE
There's never been an exam I wasn't prepared for.

DONNY
Pop quiz.

Donny leans in and pecks her on the lips.

DONNY
I used to come here during lunch.
All of Freshman year.

CHELLE
By yourself? Donny!

DONNY
...I wasn't so good at making friends.

CHELLE
Oh really?
(MORE)

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Who was the one that went out of
their way to woo me the day we
met?

DONNY

I've never really done anything
like that before. For some reason,
I'm different when I'm with you.
Better, much better. I wish people
saw me as I am when I'm with you.
I wish they saw who I can be.

CHELLE

So show them.

MUSIC UP: "Empire State" by Fleetwood Mac

Montage: Chelle and Donny go to several different New York landmarks. Improvised affection through the duration of the song (and of the day). This scene should be as loose and free as they are. They go to the observation deck at the Empire State Building and play around with the view-finders. Donny types some notes into his phone then puts it away and continues enjoying Chelle's company. They end in Central Park and run through the fields. Finally, they fall to a heap below the shade of a tree as the sun sets. They've brought the makings for a picnic with them. They eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and laugh more. When they're done, Chelle neatly cleans everything. Donny rests his head on her leg. We join them mid-conversation, where they've taken to dubbing other park-goers.

DONNY

And what about them?

Donny points to a couple at the far end of the field.

CHELLE

Oh, well she's the breadwinner.
She wears the pants. He's a part-
time Hamster broker and she works
at Neiman-Marcus.

DONNY

(as the man)

Babe, they need a loving home! We
have to take care of them!

CHELLE

(as the woman)

We have four-hundred already! I'm
sick of your flipping Hamsters,
Chuck!

They improvise other scenarios with other people they see.

DONNY

-Mom! They're not dolls, they're action figures! You're not supposed to take them out of the box - they're valuable!

CHELLE

Come over for Thanksgiving.

DONNY

They're collector's editi- what? What did you say?

Donny sits up and looks at her.

CHELLE

Come over for Thanksgiving. My mom seems to like you for whatever reason. My dad wants to meet you. And, well... I don't know... what else do you have going on?

DONNY

Well, I'd love to but my dad's going to piss himself watching the Lions game, so - can't miss that! It's tradition!

Chelle smiles but doesn't laugh.

DONNY (CONT'D)

...You really want me there?

CHELLE

I want you everywhere.

She slides down and lays down next to him. They stare at the sky as stars begin to appear.

DONNY

Then I'll be with you everywhere. You just look at the stars, I'll be there.

CHELLE

Which one?

DONNY

All of them.

Chelle rolls over on top of Donny playfully.

MUSIC UP: "Everywhere" by Fleetwood Mac

CHELLE

I love you.

Donny doesn't reply, but he does kiss her intently, passionately. A park guard comes by-

PARK GUARD

The field's closing in ten, y'all better-

He reacts to them grossly, then swats the air and leaves them alone. They don't notice him at all. When they surface, they find themselves alone in the field - it's dark. They walk to the gate to exit and find it locked closed. They laugh and walk the perimeter, not really worried. Chelle convinces Donny to hop a short fence. Visual gag ensues - she scales it easily, he rips his pants.

The kitty calendar's pages flutter by until - November 22nd, Thanksgiving - a cat dressed as a turkey.

EXT. CHELLE'S HOME, DAY

The doorbell rings, the door swings open and reveals Donny - dressed in his waiter uniform - the finest clothes he has. He's scared stiff. Jerry answers the door.

DONNY

Good morning, sir. My name is Donatello-

Jerry grabs him in a big hug, cutting him off.

JERRY

Donny! It's so good to meet you, son! Come on in! Happy Thanksgiving!

INT. CHELLE'S HOME, LATER

Chelle, her mom and dad, and Donny sit around the kitchen table for a Thanksgiving feast. There's a regular turkey and a smaller Tofurkey next to it. Donny is in the middle of telling a joke.

DONNY

-so I'm sitting there, minding my own business. And he says to me, you don't happen to have any ketchup do you?

Marge and Jerry laugh madly. Chelle has her head in his hands. The laughter simmers down.

MARGE

We're really very glad you joined us, Donny.

JERRY

Yeah, it's a pleasure to finally meet the boy Chellie talks so much about!

CHELLE

Dad!

DONNY

The pleasure is all mine! I have never had stuffing like that in my life! I'm stuffed!

MARGE

And you're sure it's alright that you're here for the holiday? You're not expected home?

Chelle stiffens. She hasn't prepped them.

DONNY

Oh, no I think it'll be alright...

JERRY

What do your parents do?

DONNY

My father? Well... he's a consultant at a tech startup.

He doesn't look at Chelle. She won't look away from him.

MARGE

Well we'd certainly love to have him over for dinner sometime! He's raised a fine young man.

Donny smiles gently, retreating to a wine glass. Chelle notices.

MARGE (CONT'D)

Oh, Chelle never tells us anything. Where are you looking at for college?

DONNY
I'm, uh - I'm not going to college.

MARGE
You're taking a gap year?

DONNY
No.

MARGE
You're not going at all?

DONNY
No.

MARGE
Well... why?

Tension grips the table like a vice. Marge stares at Donny, unsure if he's unwilling to share his answer or simply doesn't have one.

DONNY
Because I don't want to.

Before Donny can dig himself deeper, Jerry saves him.

JERRY
Oh, the games on! You watch football, Donny? I'm a Patriots fan myself but I don't mind watching the Lions get their ass handed to em'.

Donny follows Jerry into the next room. Marge clears plates.

MARGE
He's cute.

CHELLE
He's smart.

MARGE
I'm not starting a fight, don't get defensive.
(then)
I thought my first boyfriend was the one.

Chelle stabs the string beans on her plate.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Jerry sips a ginger ale and watches the game. Donny sits on the same couch; they're both quiet for a while.

JERRY

I was really nervous this morning.

Jerry speaks slowly. They both stare straight ahead.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I've never had to be the intimidating dad. "Careful with my daughter" and all that. But you're alright. If you hurt her, it's not me you'll have to worry about; she takes after her mother. A woman scorned...

Jerry is just kinda finding the words as they come; he hasn't planned to say any of this.

JERRY (CONT'D)

...but no, you're a good kid. I see why she likes you.

DONNY

I like her too.

A small smile appears on Jerry's face. They sit quietly and watch tv. Chelle comes in and sits between them. They both go to put their arm around her. Jerry pulls away. The smile stays.

INT. SCHOOL, DAY

It's snowing. Donny stares out the window. The bell rings and everyone hands in their tests.

MR. BROWN

Have a restful winter. Remember that your landmark essays are due when you come back - every day late is one letter grade off!

Donny hands in his test, then reaches into his backpack and lays a small stack of papers on Mr. Brown's desk. He begins to leave, then-

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

Mr. Moretti. What is this?

DONNY

My landmark essay.

MR. BROWN

I see that. And what is it doing on my desk... today? You know this isn't due until January, right?

DONNY

Yeah.

MR. BROWN

Which landmark did you choose?

DONNY

The Empire State Building.

MR. BROWN

I see. You're going to be late for your next class, go.

Then-

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

Happy holidays...

Mr. Brown leans back in his chair and stares at the empty doorway in befuddlement... impressed, maybe even proud.

INT. FOOD COURT / PUBLIC EATERY

Chelle is sitting with Gordo and Gabby, discussing their plans for Winter Break.

GABBY

-I'm excited. I could use a vacation. Donny can handle my shifts.

CHELLE

Have you ever been to Montauk before?

GABBY

I went once when I was younger, but I haven't been since.

Donny arrives at their table with two trays of burgers in hand.

DONNY

Three milkshakes, two black-and-white, one peppermint swirl for Gabby; two double-cheese, one single cheese, one 'shroom burger, oh boy.

(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)
 Fries for the table *cough* Gordo
cough and some napkins, recycled.
 No straws.

Gordo and Gabby dig in. Chelle watches Donny unwrap his burger.

CHELLE
 Hey... so, something's come up. I'm...
 not gonna be here for the holidays
 either. My mom found some time off
 so we're going to the West Coast
 to look at schools. I'm actually
 really excited!

Donny slurps his milkshake.

CHELLE (CONT'D)
 So... we're not going to see each
 other for two weeks. Longer,
 actually, I don't get back until
 the 7th.

GABBY
 Aww! You're gonna miss our New
 Year's Party!

CHELLE
 I know I promised to work on the
 landmark essay with you-

DONNY
 I did it already.

CHELLE
 You submitted it?

He nods.

DONNY
 Wanted to make more time for you.

CHELLE
 (quietly)
 Are you mad?

Gordo spits out a french fry-

GORDO
 Omigod, guys! Guys! I got in,
 early acceptance!

Gordo holds up his phone for them to see his acceptance letter.
 Chelle and Gabby scream and hug him. Donny chews his burger.

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE
How's he doing - Gordo?

DONNY
Good. He's in Boston now, I think.

He checks his watch.

CHELLE
We should have taken the 10.

DONNY
When's your flight?

INT. CHELLE'S BEDROOM, 2018

MUSIC UP: "Silent Night" by Stevie Nicks plays on Chelle's record player.

Donny sits on Chelle's bed next to an open suitcase.

CHELLE
8:30 tomorrow morning. JFK to LAX.
We don't go to UCLA until Thursday
- then USC, then we drive up to
Stanford and all that. There's a
bunch. Then we road-trip it back
east, hitting some places along
the way - Harvard, Columbia,
Vassar - and we're back here by
the 7th.

DONNY
That's great.

Donny watches the flame on the menorah flicker. He seems very far away. She stops packing and looks at him.

CHELLE
I got you something.

Donny looks to her, then to her hands where she's holding a pair of panties.

CHELLE
Eww, no! Not this, you freak!

They both laugh. She throws her underwear into her bag and gets something from the back of her closet. She comes back with a box, expertly wrapped. She hands it to him and sits down next to him.

He begins to tear into it but she insists that he remove the tape by hand to keep the paper intact. Inside is a brand new Amazon Echo. The price tag is still on it. Donny blushes and starts to shake his head.

CHELLE

I've had enough of your ratty earbuds and I didn't want you to be without my amazing music taste and so I thought, maybe...

DONNY

Chelle... This is really expensive.

CHELLE

You can return it if you don't like it...

Chelle spots a lump in Donny's sweater pocket.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

What's that?

DONNY

It's nothing. Please don't-

Chelle tickles him and grabs the package from him; a much much smaller bundle wrapped in a brown paper bag. She looks up at him. He can't look at her. She opens it up. Inside is a ring pop. She takes it out and stares at it.

DONNY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry Chelle. It was all I could- lemme just have it back, I thought it'd be cute - it's so stupid! Chelle, please just-

She takes it out of the wrapper, sucks on it, then kisses Donny tenderly.

CHELLE

I love it.

EXT. STREET, DAY - 2018

MUSIC UP: "Sentimental Lady" by Fleetwood Mac

Chelle is in a car on her way to the airport, just like in 2044, but it's snowing. We cut to her on the tarmac, looking out the window. The plane takes off. Montage of her at different schools. They're all identical. She's back in a car, heading east.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - POUGHKEEPSIE, NIGHT

Chelle takes off her shoes and calls Donny. She holds the phone to her cheek with her shoulder and goes around cleaning the room.

INTERCUT BETWEEN CHELLE AND DONNY

CHELLE

Hey.

DONNY

Hey.

Donny is in his kitchen, pacing absentmindedly as he talks.

DONNY (CONT'D)

How'd it go today?

CHELLE

Oh Donny I had the best day!
Vassar is the one, my mom was right. I'm so tired, but I - oh yes! Just the best time! You know, I thought maybe I might not like it cause, Poughkeepsie, ew, but it's so beautiful! And the people there were so cool! My tour guide, Tyler, he's a freshman - he moved here from London! So when I heard him talk I was like, woah - uh-oh this place is out of my league, you know? But he was so nice and he introduced me to his friends and there was this girl- what's her name- Charlotte! Charlotte is studying environmental sciences and she's working on this app for like the bees or something! Oh, wait I have a photo - she followed me on Instagram, hold on-

As she's talking about her day, Donny taps on Charlotte's instagram, then finds Tyler's. He scrolls through photos of him shirtless at the beach, in a research lab, and other impressive things.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

-and there's an 8-to-1 student-faculty ratio which is, like, really good! There are tennis courts, Donny! And an art gallery!

(MORE)

CHELLE (CONT'D)
 After your gap year, maybe you
 should apply - they have
 scholarships!

DONNY
 I'm glad you had fun.

CHELLE
 I had so much fun. It was so cool
 Donny!

She smiles - which, of course, he can't see over the phone.

CHELLE (CONT'D)
 How was your day?

DONNY
 Eh, it was fine.

There's nothing more to the story. It's silent as she nestles herself into her bed. He does as well. They both turn out the light. The rest of the scene is 95% in the dark - no visuals except for the flash of headlights outside the window, the hotel alarm clock, and the occasional glow of the phone. Their phone call is more and more intimate as they go on - we hear them breathe. They speak softly.

A slow-paced instrumental of "Dreamin' the Dream" by Fleetwood Mac plays.

CHELLE
 I miss you.

DONNY
 I miss you too.

CHELLE
 You know I thought about you
 today.

DONNY
 What did you think about.

CHELLE
 Your lips.

DONNY
 Did you now?

CHELLE
 Mmmhmm.

DONNY
 I thought about you too.

CHELLE

Yeah?

DONNY

I thought about your shoes.

CHELLE

My shoes?

DONNY

I was worried you didn't pack the lucky laces.

CHELLE

Oh Donny! Of course I packed the lucky laces. You're sweet.

DONNY

I don't think you'll need luck.

CHELLE

Yeah, why's that?

DONNY

Because you've got me.

CHELLE

Oh ho ho, is that so?

Her laughter simmers down. After a moment, she says-

CHELLE (CONT'D)

I've got you.

DONNY

"You've got me - who's got you?"
Did you ever see Superman: The
Movie? Christopher Reeves?

CHELLE

Uh-uh.

DONNY

Oh, that's a good one. We're gonna watch that. We are going to watch that when you get back.

CHELLE

I look forward to it.

DONNY

Me too.

Silence. Breathing.

CHELLE
Donny?

DONNY
Yeah?

CHELLE
Nothing. I just wanted to hear
your voice.

DONNY
Michelle Bergmann.

CHELLE
Donatello "middle-name" Moretti.

DONNY
Chelle.

CHELLE
Donny.

Breathing.

CHELLE
Put your left hand on your right
shoulder. And then put your right
hand on your left shoulder. And
squeeze. Can you feel my hug?

DONNY
Yes.

CHELLE
Can I tell you something?

DONNY
Yeah.

CHELLE
I can see your eyes. When I open
my eyes I see yours. It's pitch
black in my room, but I see your
eyes. On the ceiling. Like little
stars. Do you feel the grass
underneath you? The breeze on your
shoulders? Can you feel my hand
holding yours? Do you feel my
love?

DONNY
Yes.

CHELLE

I've got you. You're here with me,
just like you said you'd be.

DONNY

Forever.

CHELLE

Forever.

Heavy footsteps, slow. Light enters the frame from the doorway of Donny's bedroom.

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm home... are you still up?

Donny's eyes are closed. He doesn't respond. After a moment the door closes, the light with it, and the heavy footsteps walk off.

DONNY

Fondue.

We stay in the dark for a moment - then a phone rings.

INT. CAR, 2044

Celle picks up her phone.

CHELLE

Hi baby... no that's alright, what's
up? It's in the bottom drawer...
well that's what happens when you
leave it lying around instead of
hanging it up... okay... no, we're
almost there... I ran into an old
friend... okay, bye baby - wait,
take your medicine... alright
alright! Bye, Little Bear.

Celle puts her phone away.

CHELLE

(to Donny)

She's going to this house by the
lake with her friends...
Friendsgiving.

DONNY

I doubt your mother would have
given you the same freedom.

CHELLE

Ha! I cannot even imagine.
Stephanie's much more...
independently minded than I ever
was.

DONNY

Oh I don't know about that.

They both smile, and let their eyes drift to their windows.

CHELLE

Donny?

DONNY

Yeah?

CHELLE

Nothing.

VOICE (PRE-LAP)

Happy New Year!

INT. NEW YEARS EVE PARTY, 2018/2019

Gordo wears neon glasses reading 2019. He kisses Donny on the cheek aggressively, takes a swig from his glass of champagne, and goes off into the crowd screaming. Donny laughs and watches the fireworks on tv. All around him are people with hope for their futures - concrete plans with actual destinations. All but him. He settles into an armchair in a secluded part of the room and nurses an entire bottle of cheap champagne.

INT. NEW YEARS EVE PARTY, MOMENTS LATER

Donny is in a corner, one finger plugged into his ear to hear Chelle on the phone.

DONNY

Happy New Year.

CHELLE

I miss you.

DONNY

I miss you too. You celebrating?

CHELLE

Are you kidding? Midterms are
coming up! I've got work to do.

DONNY

Chelle, it's almost 1AM, come on.
New year, new you, am I right?

CHELLE

It's important, Donny. If I get
waitlisted anywhere, these scores
could make or break my chances-

Donny cuts her off; he's heard the spiel a thousand times
before.

DONNY

Alright Chelle. Goodnight. I'll
talk to you later.

CHELLE

Did you study?

DONNY

Huh? I can't hear you.

He can.

CHELLE

I sent you my notes. Did you read
them?

DONNY

Yeah, I gotta go. I can't, uh -
I'll talk to you later.

Donny hangs up, leaving Chelle in silence. She continues
studying, turns the page, then pauses on a photo of Thomas
Jefferson.

Match cut to:

INT. MR. BROWN'S ROOM, JANUARY

Mr. Brown hands out packets of stapled pages with the words
"Midterm Exam - US History" and a black-and-white photo of
Thomas Jefferson. Desks are aligned equidistant from one
another. Donny sits next to Chelle - his exam is peppered with
one or two bubbles haphazardly filled in. Chelle's test is
filled with information; her pencil won't stop moving. Donny
watches her as she works. He looks at her face and at her
hands, then returns to his own sheet, a choice made.

C/U: Kitty Calendar - February 14th, Valentine's Day - a kitty
dressed as Cupid.

INT. SCHOOL, DAY

Chelle finds Donny at his locker.

CHELLE
Hey, happy Valentine's Day!

DONNY
Hi there. Be mine?

CHELLE
What are you doing tonight?

DONNY
Nothing... why?

CHELLE
Is your dad home?

Donny lifts his eyebrow.

DONNY
He's staying at his girlfriend's
place until Sunday, I think.

CHELLE
Okay. Super!

Chelle giggles to herself, kisses him on the cheek, and runs off to her next class.

INT. DONNY'S APARTMENT, LATER

The doorbell rings. Donny answers it. Chelle stands in the doorway. She holds up a copy of Superman: The Movie. Donny kisses her.

MUSIC UP: "The Flying Sequence" by John Williams

Donny and Chelle are snuggled together on the couch halfway through the movie. Donny looks away from the movie to look at Chelle. She's fully immersed in the film.

INT. DONNY'S BEDROOM, EVENING

Donny removes his shirt, preparing to sleep. Chelle enters. They stare at one another from across the bedroom for a moment until they slowly advance toward one another. They meet in the middle. She kisses him and the room spins around them. They fall into bed. It is gentle and slow. Donny pauses-

DONNY
Do you wan-?

CHELLE

Yes.

They resume. There is a giddy excitement. Donny pauses again to reach into his drawer. Still under him, Chelle says-

CHELLE

Alexa, play "Black Magic Woman."

ALEXA

Playing "Black Magic Woman" by Santana from Spotify.

CHELLE

Wait, no - the Fleetwood Mac one!

DONNY

You have to say Alexa first

The Alexa on the nightstand is triggered, then answers-

ALEXA

I'm sorry, I didn't understand that.

CHELLE

Fleetwood Mac. Fleetwood Mac!

DONNY

Resume, Ale- resume, Alexa! Oh for fuc-

DONNY (CONT'D)

Alexa! Play Black-Magic-Woman by Fleetwood Mac!

ALEXA

Playing "Black Magic Woman" by Fleetwood Mac from Spotify.

DONNY

Thank you, Alexa!

Donny very quickly reads the instructions on the back of the condom box.

CHELLE

I didn't expect you to scream another woman's name during sex!

Chelle and Donny both laugh and fall back into the excited romance. She curls a strand of his hair into an 'S' on his forehead.

INT. DONNY'S BEDROOM, THE NEXT DAY.

Sunlight streams in through the window. Chelle takes a long look around Donny's room - posters of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Superman: The Movie* - framed photos of a blind dog and Donny's mother. Chelle watches Donny sleep. She kisses his forehead and exits the room.

INT. DONNY'S KITCHEN, MORNING.

Chelle is wearing underwear and one of Donny's t-shirts. She rifles through the cupboards and finds herself a cup. She fills it in the sink and drinks from it.

VOICE (O.S.)

Good morning!

Chelle turns around and spits out her water. Donny's father, GABRIEL Moretti (50s) is sitting in the living room next to BETTY (40s), his girlfriend. She's no stranger to botox. Chelle pulls her shirt down to cover herself a bit.

GABRIEL

If he's okay with you borrowing his shirt, I'm sure he's okay with you borrowing some pants too!

Chelle scampers off back into the bedroom.

CHELLE

(whisper-yelling)
Donny! Donny, wake up!

Donny's eyes open peacefully. He smiles at her.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

Your dad's home!

Donny's spirit plummets. Gabriel calls out from the other room-

GABRIEL (O.S.)

Come on, Kids! I'm making breakfast!

INT. DONNY'S APARTMENT, DINING ROOM TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Chelle and Donny sit across from Betty. Donny is extremely uncomfortable. Gabriel brings a bottle of orange juice to the table.

DONNY

Do you have anything stronger?

CHELLE

Donny.

Gabriel doesn't hear the exchange. He speaks to them from the kitchen.

GABRIEL

I'm not quite Emeril Lagasse, but
I can do breakfast, all right.
Michelle, sweetheart, how do you
like your eggs?

CHELLE

Oh, I'm sorry Mr. Moretti,
I'm vegan.

DONNY

She doesn't eat eggs.

GABRIEL

Oh... no worries, sweetheart. Is
there anything else I can get you?
I have... bread?

Chelle sympathizes. She smiles politely.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Toast it is! How about you,
Donatello? How do you want your
eggs?

DONNY

I don't eat eggs. Don't call me
Do-

GABRIEL

Oh, since when? You're getting
scrambled.

(to Betty)

Baby? Sunny Side-up. I know how
you like it!

Gabriel is trying desperately to make everything nice. Chelle tries to help him stir conversation.

CHELLE

So, Betty, what do you do?

BETTY

I'm my own boss.

CHELLE

Oh! In what way?

BETTY

I'm a Mary Kay ambassador.

CHELLE

Oh.

Chelle feigns interest in the nutritional information on the orange juice bottle. Gabriel returns to the table with plates in hand.

GABRIEL

How did you two meet?

CHELLE

On the train, actually.

DONNY

School.

Donny won't stop answering on Chelle's behalf. Everyone notices it. Gabriel sets down some coffee and pours a bit of bourbon in his own, leaving the bottle on the table.

GABRIEL

Ah. That's nice. Donatello never tells me anything. Didn't even know he had a little girlfriend until I saw that, what is that, the little robot in his room-

DONNY

-Don't go in my room.

GABRIEL

He leaves it on when he sleeps; so loud, he's gonna go deaf. I hear Fleetwood Mac in the other room. At least it's the good stuff.

CHELLE

You like Fleetwood Mac?

GABRIEL

Are you kidding? Love em! Saw them live once.

CHELLE

You did? Omigod, really?

GABRIEL

Yeah, I sure did. 1987, Shake the Cage tour Tour. Wild!

CHELLE

Right after Lindsey left?

GABRIEL

That's right.

CHELLE

No way! Donny never told me that!

Donny doesn't say anything. He stares his father down. He hasn't touched his eggs.

GABRIEL

Yeah, I drove to Long Island for it. I was an awkward, gangly teen. I could not get a date to save my life. But if I had gotten a date that night, I wouldn't have met your mother. I bumped into her at the concert, she spilled her drinks on me, and the rest is history.

(then)

Then we had our first son and it was all downhill from there, haha!

He picks up the bottle of liquor and mimes chugging it.

DONNY

What's that supposed to mean?

Betty intervenes before Gabriel responds.

BETTY

So, Michelle - are you looking at any colleges?

Gabriel doesn't let her answer, instead using it as an opportunity to double down.

GABRIEL

There's no point to college. His brother went, \$145,000 out of my pocket, to be an engineer! Good job, no? But 6 years out of college and he's selling printers at Best Buy.

DONNY

He's the floor manager. He oversees the floor.

CHELLE

Well, that's a shame. Donny tells me he's very smart.

GABRIEL

Obviously not smart enough! 28, knocks up a girl. Great! A Goddamn printer salesman and an Olive Garden waitress. Of course they're splitting up! If they'd asked me, I'da saved em both the trouble.

Donny freezes. He didn't know.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Got straight A's all his life but that doesn't translate to the real world. School is nothing but a half-baked simulation, sweetheart. At least no teacher ever lied to Donny telling him he was smart!

Gabriel gives a guttural laugh. He doesn't see how it's hurtful, he really doesn't. Donny is still in shock from the news of his brother's divorce. Chelle feels a tension building inside of her.

CHELLE

Well... they should. Cause he is.

GABRIEL

Oh yeah? If he's so smart, then how come he doesn't get good grades? I assume you get good grades, I mean look at you. Unless... grades are arbitrary?

CHELLE

It's not like that. It's different. One person's opinion doesn't change the truth. Just because one teacher misunderstands him-

GABRIEL

But it's not just one teacher, is it? Not one of them is particularly fond of him.

CHELLE

People do like him! Maybe not the ones who don't matter, but people like him! Because he's kind and sensitive and yeah he's one of the smartest people I've ever met. And he makes me happy.

GABRIEL

What was it you said? "One person's opinion doesn't change the truth."

Chelle should let it go.

CHELLE

He doesn't need your truth.

Gabriel feels the air change. He reaches for the glass bottle. Donny's eyes open wide at the sight. Gabriel stares him down as he pulls the bottle toward himself and pours a drink. He takes a breath, then forces a smile.

GABRIEL

Well, At least we can both agree
he was smart enough to nab you.

(To Donny)

She's a... clever girl.

CHELLE

I'm a woman.

Betty sits uncomfortably. Gabriel sips his drink.

INT. STREET CORNER, LATER

Celle waits at the curb with Donny.

CHELLE

I'm sorry Donny, I'm sorry that
you have to put up with that man.
I finally get it. My mother's one
thing, but God! How did you turn
out so good, Baby?

She touches his face. He is distant.

DONNY

Why did you do that?

CHELLE

...Cause he insulted you. What, was
I supposed to just stay quiet?

DONNY

Yes.

CHELLE

Like you do? Why didn't you say
anything? Fine, sure, maybe you
didn't have to defend yourself -
but what about your brother? What
about me, Donny? If he came after
me would you speak then? I want
you to be your own person, Donny!

DONNY

You don't want me to be my own
person - you want me to be yours.
That, up there, that's who I am.

(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)

If that doesn't satisfy you... It's
only gonna be worse for me now.

They stare at each other.

CHELLE

My Uber is here. I'll see you at
school.

DONNY

Yeah.

She leaves. Donny stares at her car, considers getting into it with her, then decides against it. He returns to his apartment, passing Betty in the elevator. Gabriel is by himself at the kitchen table, his demeanor flipped on a dime. He looks like a little boy. Donny starts toward his room but doubles back and comforts his dad. Gabriel begins to sob.

GABRIEL

Don't leave me. Don't leave me.
Don't leave me. Don't lea-

DONNY

I'm not leaving Dad.

GABRIEL

They all leave! Sylvester, Janey-

DONNY

Mom didn't leave you, dad, she
died! She... I... I won't leave you,
Dad.

GABRIEL

I've never met my own
granddaughter.

Gabriel reaches for the bottle but Donny snatches it first. He pats his father on the shoulder, unable to show affection, and exits to his bedroom - the bottle still in hand.

INT. CLASSROOM, DAY

The bell rings; Chelle packs up her things.

MR. BROWN

Ms. Bergmann. A minute?

Chelle walks over to Mr. Brown's desk after class.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

I was a substitute teacher for a semester at an all-boys school on the East Side a number of years ago. Strong academics, good reputation, everything. I had one student, Ronald something-or-other; he was dumb as a rock. But he got perfect grades in nearly every class. And I thought, "This can't be," so I asked around. Turns out - Ronald's father worked for a very large investment firm. Ronald's mother was on the board of trustees for the school. The mystery was over before it even began. So the next day, I pulled Ronald aside, and I gave him a stern talking to. But he insisted he had no idea what I was talking about.

CHELLE

He lied even after you exposed him?

MR. BROWN

No... he was telling the truth. He really didn't know. His parents never told him. And he believed that he'd worked hard for those grades and that he deserved them because he never knew that his mommy and his daddy paid for the new auditorium and the furniture in the teacher's lounge. He didn't know he was cheating until I told him.

Chelle looks at the clock impatiently.

CHELLE

What happened to him?

MR. BROWN

I don't know. I left the next quarter.

(then)

I want to talk to you about Mr. Moretti. His grades have improved. Dramatically.

CHELLE

He's very smart.

MR. BROWN

As are you.

Chelle takes the compliment, then hears the subtext.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)

I put you two together because I thought you might rub off on him. Seems I was right. It's my mistake thinking he wouldn't rub off on you.

(Pause)

Mr. Moretti did exceptionally well on his term paper. As did you. How very interesting that you visited the same location.

CHELLE

Well, yes - we did the assignment together.

MR. BROWN

And how many assignments do you do together?

CHELLE

Pardon?

MR. BROWN

Us teachers know what goes on around the school, we're not deaf. I know that your relationship with Mr. Moretti has transcended tutoring.

(off her reaction)

Ah, relax, it's none of my business. I just hope that this transition hasn't compromised your principles.

She begins to understand.

CHELLE

I didn't cheat.

Her face is stone cold. Mr. Brown analyzes for a long time before letting out a deep sigh.

MR. BROWN

I know you didn't. But the Dean doesn't know you like I do. I'm willing to go to bat for you, but I ne-

CHELLE

Mr. Brown, I don't understand.

MR. BROWN

We suspect Mr. Moretti of academic dishonesty. His exam scores are nearly identical to your own; the things you got right, he did too. And the few that you got wrong...

CHELLE

Well, that's my fault as a tutor, surely? And he really has been making progress!

MR. BROWN

I know he has. Which is why I'm pushing for suspension and not expulsion. You will no longer be his tutor.

CHELLE

Mr. Brown, you can't, please! I gave him my test! He didn't even know! Please!

Mr. Brown knows this isn't true.

MR. BROWN

Michelle, this is on him. You did the best you could. But now he's on his own - he either sinks or he learns to swim. Don't let him sink you. If you want to maintain your average, you need to focus on you, not him. Your future should be your priority

CHELLE

He's my priority.

MR. BROWN

I'm sorry.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL, DEAN'S OFFICE, LATER

Mr. Brown stands behind THE DEAN OF STUDENTS. Donny is slumped, head hung low, on the other end of the desk.

THE DEAN

Is your father going to show up or
not?

Donny shakes his head no but doesn't look up. Reaction on Mr. Brown.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY, MOMENTS LATER

Chelle, crying, watches as Donny exits the Dean's office. She isn't the only one; students rubberneck at Donny from their lockers.

INT. DONNY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Donny sits up in bed, nursing a beer, alone.

An instrumental version of "Beauty and the Beast" by Stevie Nicks plays underneath.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER, DAY

Gabby sits opposite Donny; he's slurping down a banana milkshake. Gabby picks from his plate of fries.

GORDO

Guys! Guys! I got in!

Gordo holds up his phone for Gabby and Donny to see his acceptance letter. Gabby screams and hugs him. Donny smiles halfheartedly.

INT. GROCERY STORE, DAY

Donny hovers over Chelle as she stocks shelves.

CHELLE

I tried calling you... but you
already know that.

DONNY

I'm sorry.

CHELLE

That's a little overdue.

DONNY

I don't know why I did it.

(MORE)

DONNY (CONT'D)
I've never been afraid to fail
before - I've done it plenty of
times.

CHELLE
Are you sure you would have
flunked?

DONNY
I guess we'll never know.

Chelle looks up to see Donny has helped himself to a beer from
the fridge.

CHELLE
Are you kidding me? What is wrong
with you?

DONNY
You work here.

CHELLE
I wanna keep working here!

She pulls away the bottle-

CHELLE (CONT'D)
No more of this shit. Fondue.
Fondue!

DONNY
Fondue.

DONNY
Will you go to prom with me?

CHELLE
Will you let me work?
(then)
Of course.

Music up: "Dreams (Take 2)" by Fleetwood Mac

INT. DINER, DAY

Donny sits alone at his normal table by the window. He keeps
looking around him. Finally, the door opens, and a young man
with a baby walks in.

DONNY
Sylvester!

Donny gives him a hug. Sylvester hands him the baby.

SYLVESTER
Donny, meet your niece, Sofia.

DONNY
Hi Sofia! Hello there!

INT. MEN'S WEARHOUSE, LATER

Sylvester holds the baby as Donny talks to him from the changing room.

DONNY
She's never been late to a class in her life, let alone skipped one entirely! But she slept through her alarm - we were talking all night!

SYLVESTER
Sounds like you're a bad influence, bud.

DONNY
Maybe.

SYLVESTER
Sounds like she really loves you too.

Sylvester registers something in Donny's silence. He knows him too well.

SYLVESTER (CONT'D)
Do you love her? It seems like you do. I can hear it in your voice when you talk about her.

DONNY
I mean. She's the kind of person that donates to Wikipedia, you know?

SYLVESTER
So what's the matter? If you love her and she loves you, you're set my friend.

DONNY
I don't know if she knows.

SYLVESTER
Have you told her?

Silence from the dressing room.

SYLVESTER (CONT'D)

Ahh. I see. Look, Don... we never said things like "I love you" in our house growing up-

DONNY

That's an understatement.

SYLVESTER

Those words, "I love you" - they're very powerful. We all know the words - everybody knows them.. but it doesn't mean the same thing to everybody.

DONNY

What are you saying?

SYLVESTER

I'm saying... she loves you, Donny. And considering you haven't stopped talking about her since we got here, I'm fairly sure you love her back. But her relationship-her experience-with those words are very different than ours. Its an "upbringing" thing.

DONNY

She reminds her parents she loves them like every fifteen minutes.

SYLVESTER

But you've never told her once. You're just not fluent in her love language.

Donny is still confused.

SYLVESTER

Alright, look... remember when you were like seven? And you'd army crawl over to Magoo while she was sleeping? You'd sneak over, surprise her, wake her up cause you wanted to play with her?

DONNY

Yeah.

SYLVESTER

I bet that's pretty annoying to be badgered like that all the time.

(MORE)

SYLVESTER (CONT'D)

But I know you didn't mean it - even Magoo knew you didn't mean it that way. You just wanted her company. That's how you showed your love.

(pause)

If she's pulling away, it's cause she's scared, Don. She's just scared.

DONNY

So? I'm scared.

SYLVESTER

Good. Now you two have something in common.

Sylvester rocks Sofia as she sleeps.

DONNY

Dad told me what happened. I'm sorry.

SYLVESTER

I am too.

(Then)

You know something? We never fought. Not once. We had disagreements, I know I did, but we never brought them up. Why would we, things were fine the way they were. And then one day, I came back from the store and I bought the wrong kind of cereal. And it was over. We never fought until we did, and by then it was too late. Every marital feud was held at once. It wasn't just cereal.

Sylvester ends his sentence looking at Sofia asleep in his arms. Donny steps out of the changing room wearing a sleek white dinner jacket - worn by the likes of Sean Connery's Bond and Harrison Ford's Indiana Jones.

DONNY

I love you, Sly. Fondue.

SYLVESTER

I love you too.

DONNY

...Are you going to visit him?

Sylvester looks down.

SYLVESTER
Let's go get this hemmed.

INT. DONNY'S APARTMENT

MUSIC UP: An instrumental version of "Oh, Daddy" by Fleetwood Mac

Donny stands in front of a mirror and struggles with his bowtie. A YouTube tutorial is playing on mute. Gabriel enters - drunk, holding a bottle - and stands in the doorway.

GABRIEL
What'd you rob a goodwill?

DONNY
Sylvester bought it for me.

GABRIEL
He was here?

There's true pain in Gabriel's tired eyes.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
How nice of him. How much of his alimony check went to you instead of his little girl, huh? You have certain responsibilities as a father.

He sips.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
You do what's right by your family, even if they drive you nuts, even if you hate them, even if they're only alive cause you got a little too horny and a little too lazy one night. You have a responsibility. You know anything about that, boy?

Donny says nothing. Gabriel takes another swig then puts the bottle down on the table.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
I was a damn good father. I raised him right. I gave everything a father could give... everything... and he ended up just like me, didn't he? Just like me. Stuck.

Gabriel starts to tear.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 If you find something good in this world, you hold onto it, okay? You hold on and don't let go, you hear me boy?

Gabriel leans into Donny's ear-

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 Unless you wanna end up like me? That ain't so bad now, is it? You love me, boy?

Donny stares straight into the mirror still. Gabriel grabs him by the tie and pulls him close.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
 Say you love me.

Donny is forced to look at his father.

DONNY
 I love you.

Gabriel keeps him there for a moment, stuck against his hot breath, then ties his tie for him - a little too tight - and leaves. Off Donny-

MUSIC UP: "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac

Cue montage: slow-motion, somber-almost. It's a very moody series of silent scenes under the beautiful, haunting song.

Donny looks at himself in the mirror. He puts on his jacket; he's wearing the full suit now. He wipes away a tear. He's spent a lot of time making himself look as best he can. He sees a bottle of his father's WHISKEY in the mirror's reflection.

INT. CHELLE'S APARTMENT, LATER

The door swings open for Donny. Jerry and Marge greet him with fanfare and merriment. Gordo and Gabby are both there, and so is Gabby's dad. Chelle comes out from her room, dressed in a beautiful Stevie-esque chiffon-draped gown. Reaction shot on Donny.

INT. SUBWAY CAR, LATER

Chelle and Donny sit in the same seats of the train as they did when they first met. Donny holds an UMBRELLA across his lap.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM, NIGHT

Chelle and Donny take pictures in a photo booth, then find their way to the dance floor. They don't care for the upbeat techno song the DJ is playing, so they share a pair of earbuds and listen to their own. Donny and Chelle dance in slow motion. As the song ends, they kiss.

Chelle pulls away. The moment and the song are over very suddenly.

CHELLE

You've been drinking. Donny, you promised-

Donny interrupts her.

DONNY

Do you really love me?

CHELLE

What's that supposed to mean?
Donny, stop. You're drunk. Just stop. Drink some water.

She pulls him over to the drink table and pours a glass of water. He stumbles forward, rambling, and puts his whole weight on one end of the table. He falls; A LARGE BOWL OF NEON RED FRUIT PUNCH TOPPLES OVER AND ONTO HIS CLEAN WHITE SUIT.

CHELLE

What's the matter with you?

Chelle immediately goes to help him up, as does Gordo. Everyone's looking at them.

GORDO

Don't get lost in the sauce, man-

DONNY

Get off m-Get off me!

Donny pushes his way out of the gymnasium, soaking wet, and into the hall. Gordo holds Chelle back.

INT. MEN'S ROOM, MOMENTS LATER

Donny stands at the sink scrubbing at his ruined shirt. He holds back tears. A toilet flushes. Through the mirror, we see the stall door behind Donny open. Mr. Brown steps out hesitantly and washes his hands at the sink next to him.

MR. BROWN

Use cold water. Dab it.

Donny looks at him, then continues to scrub at his shirt the same way. Mr. Brown sighs; he wets a napkin and begins to work on Donny's jacket.

MR. BROWN
 You know, despite your best efforts, I like you. I believe in you.

Donny is perplexed by the sudden compliment. Then... starts to cry.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)
 Oh. Oh dear.

Mr. Brown puts his hand on his shoulder, unsure how to console him.

MR. BROWN (CONT'D)
 I believe in you. It's gonna be alright.
 (pause)
 It's going to be alright.

Off Donny-

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM, NIGHT

Donny rushes back into the gymnasium, sans jacket.

DONNY
 Where is she?

GORDO
 Huh?

DONNY
 Chelle! Where did she go?

GABBY
 She just left. What's wrong?

Before she can finish, Donny is gone.

EXT. SCHOOL, NIGHT

Chelle is standing out in the cold, failing to hail a cab. She slaps a tear from her cheek, as if scolding it for having the audacity to surface. Donny runs out of the building, without a jacket. It is raining around them.

CHELLE DONNY
 I don't wanna do this right now, Donny! Chelle, wait.

He gives her the umbrella she lent him on their first date.

DONNY
 Michelle, I am sorry. I am sorry.

CHELLE
 No, I don't want you to be sorry - I want you to be better!

DONNY
 I will be better - I will be better for you.

CHELLE
 I need you to be better for yourself. I can't be your motivation. Don't put that on me. What happens when you don't have me anymore? What are you going to do? To make a living? To get out of bed in the morning? I want you to care, Donny! You don't care about yourself - your future. What are your ambitions, what are your plans, what are your dreams? Don't you dream? What does your success look like?

DONNY
 I do have dreams! I have dreams! But I don't have the luxury of pursuing them for a hundred grand a year!

CHELLE
 There it is! You're jealous of me! You're jealous because I worked for a way out! You have no ambitions, Donny! I'm going to college and I'm getting a decent job and I'm-

DONNY
 Those are someone else's ambitions! See? That's the issue with you! Jobs! That's all this is for? A dead end 9-to-5 or, what is it now, 9-to-9?! Your future is hating Mondays and saving sick days to use on Six Flags. We don't have to be our parents!

CHELLE

Don't you say it. My mother has nothing to do with this.

DONNY

She has everything to do with this. I'm practically having this conversation with her right now! It's time to cut the strings.

CHELLE

Oh I am. You do not get to say that - you of all people.

DONNY

Say what you really mean, Chelle.

CHELLE

You want so badly to be some free spirit but I know you, without a leash you're going to flop, sitting around, drunk all day. Sound familiar? I'm not your therapist. I can't be your caregiver, I can't be your nanny, I'm your equal. You don't need a girlfriend, you need a mother!

Donny says nothing. Rain pounds around them like a drum beat straight off Tusk.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

I didn't mean that. I didn't mean that, Donny. I don't even know what we're talking about anymore.

DONNY

We're talking about us. We're talking about the future of you and me. You were my success. I love you.

CHELLE

I can't be your future, Donny. I can't be your one good thing.

DONNY

You're already my one good thing, Michelle! I don't have anyone else! You're right. For the first time in my life I was on track! I was so close! Because of you.

He's weeping now - a mess of snot and tears.

DONNY (CONT'D)

My present is very quickly becoming my past, and I'm trying desperately to cling onto it. Where am I supposed to go, Chelle? Nobody wants me! I'm broke. I'm broken. I have no prospects. I have no friends. They're all gone - they're leaving me for bigger and better things! And now you're leaving! I have nothing. My own father doesn't want me. You don't want me. I don't have anyone else. Where am I supposed to go, Chelle? Maybe I made mistakes! I know I did! But what am I supposed to do now? Where am I supposed to go?

CHELLE

You gotta go your own way, baby.

A cab pulls in next to the curb.

DONNY

Don't do this.

CHELLE

I still love you. I will always love you. Goodbye Donny.

Thunder.

MUSIC UP: "Storms" by Fleetwood Mac

All other audio fades away.

Chelle enters the taxi; it drives away. Donny begins to walk toward the car but stops. He stands in the rain and watches her drive away. As she drives away, he puts his left hand on his right shoulder and his right hand on his left shoulder and squeezes.

Chelle looks out the window of the car.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CAR, 2044

Chelle sits in the same position. They both stare out the window.

INT. CHELLE'S HOME, 2019

Chelle enters her bedroom sobbing. She tugs at her dress with frustration and curls into a wet ball beneath her covers. Marge enters and sits beside her. She says nothing but rubs her daughter's shoulder.

INT. DONNY'S HOME, 2019

Gabriel is sitting at the kitchen table - a glass in hand. As soon as Donny steps in he begins yelling. For the first time, Donny yells back. He's furious. Gabriel stops talking. Donny goes into his room and hurls clothes into a suitcase. He takes the photo of his mother off the nightstand and packs it too. He leaves the Alexa.

INT. CAR, 2044

C/U on Donny's eyes.

INT. GABBY'S HOME, 2019

Gabby's dad opens the door. Gabby and Gordo stand when they see Donny.

INT. GABBY'S LIVING ROOM, LATER THAT NIGHT

Donny takes off his jacket but struggles with his tie. It won't come off. He reaches into his pants and finds the photo booth pictures.

INT. CHELLE'S HOME, MORNING

Chelle stares at her red eyes in the mirror; she's been crying the whole night.

INT. SUBWAY, MORNING

Donny sits alone on the subway.

INT. SCHOOL, DAY

Chelle walks down the halls by herself. She sees Gabby and waves. Gabby smiles warmly her but keeps her distance.

INT. GROCERY STORE, EVENING

Chelle absentmindedly works the register. A ring pop slides across her conveyor belt. She looks up - but it's just a child buying candy.

INT. CANCÚN RESTAURANT, EVENING

Donny fills a customer's glass.

INT. MR. BROWN'S CLASSROOM, DAY

Mr. Brown watches proudly as Donny writes fastidiously on his final exam in an empty room.

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE

You wanna know something stupid?
Even after all that... some small
part of me wanted you to run after
me. The door would swing open and
you'd fight for me like some
delusional pre-war sexist fairy
tale.

DONNY

That is stupid.

They crack up and fade off.

DONNY

You wanna know something really
stupid? I could never listen to
Fleetwood Mac ever again.

The song ends with a wide shot of them each staring out their windows. 2019 Chelle's voice plays under it.

CHELLE (PRE-LAP)

Wow, there's a lot of you. Good
morning. My name is Michelle
Bergmann. It is my privilege to
speak at this - the 103rd
commencement ceremony - for the
class of 2019!

INT. THEATRE, GRADUATION 2019

Chelle is behind a podium onstage. She's wearing a blue cap and gown - with a gold Valedictorian sash. Donny scans the room for his father; Gabriel is not in the audience.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

For 13 years, I've woken up at 7am to go to school - 8 periods a day with 2 1/2 hours of homework on average every night, five days a week for thirteen years. That's thirty-five thousand, four-hundred ninety hours of my life. I hate to admit it, but... I haven't enjoyed every hour. At my old school, I fantasized about the last day of school, addressing my class at commencement - only, my speech then had a lot more expletives. Well I woke up this morning, and... all I wanted was to sit in my first period class and listen to Mr. Brown's thoughts on the Whiskey Rebellion. Just one more day behind a desk, waiting for the lunch bell to ring. One more Yearbook meeting. One more pop quiz... Well, maybe not that last one.

There are warm chuckles from the audience.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

But the most important thing I learned all year was taught outside the classroom. In fact, I only really understood it about 15 minutes ago. You could spend forever with someone and still have things left unsaid. Parents, teachers, classmates, friends. There's so much I wish I'd said, but it never felt like the right time. Now, it's the last time. And I'm afraid to leave. I've been afraid of changing... because I've built my life around you. But time makes you bolder - even children get older. And I'm getting older too.

Her words seem to pierce Marge and Donny as if she were talking only to them.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

My advice, which you didn't ask for, is to ignore the school bell and the calendar or the deadlines and impossible boss breathing down your neck - whether you're eighteen or eighty. Let the clock keep on spinning if you're spending the time right. And if you aren't... it's never too late.

Donny sneaks out of his aisle and heads for the back of the theater.

CHELLE (CONT'D)

In the fall, I'll begin a new chapter of my life at Vassar College for another 10,920 hours of higher learning. It is my pr-

Her voice goes sotto as Donny exits the theatre and goes out into the-

INT. THEATRE, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

He throws off his cap and tries to collect himself; it's all too much. He turns and sees Jerry sitting down on a bench. They both look at each other, tears in their eyes, silent. A mounted television monitor plays the live feed of Chelle's speech.

JERRY

Baby girl's all grown up!

Donny nods apprehensively.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You grew up too, kid. That's okay.

Jerry stands and retrieves Donny's cap. Donny begins to sob. Jerry hugs him and he cries harder. He says nothing but comforts him. Jerry wipes the tears from his cheek, then places the cap on his head and adjusts the tassel.

He puts his arm around Donny; they enter the theatre as Chelle finishes and people applaud.

INT. THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC UP: "Silver Springs" by Fleetwood Mac

Donny walks across the stage and receives his diploma with a handshake and a wink from Mr. Brown.

MONTAGE: 25 years in 1 minute - Chelle leaves for college, meets a boy, graduates, marries him, they have a child. Donny drives across the country to stay with Sylvester and Sofia, he takes classes, we see him in a museum on his first day, then an office, then a bigger office. Plane rides back and forth all over the world. He misses the field. Chelle raises her little girl - years go by. Her husband gets sick, she quits her job to take care of him. He dies by her side in the hospital. Chelle watches the sunset over her backyard; she's by herself. Donny watches the same sunset from an airport window. He's by himself.

INT. CAR, 2044

CHELLE

Do you remember it like I do?

DONNY

Probably not. We tend to put our own little spin on things, don't we?

CHELLE

I look back at it now with such-

DONNY

Reverence?

CHELLE

Shame. I cringe. Ha. But yeah... maybe a little bit of that too.

DONNY

...Thank you.

Chelle understands. She nods. The car pulls to a halt. The entrance to the airport can be seen in the rear windshield.

CHELLE

This is my terminal.

DONNY

Okay.

CHELLE

It was really good seeing you, Donny. If you're ever... we should get drinks sometime.

DONNY

I'm sober.

Chelle nods. She goes to say something else but stops herself. He gives her a gentle fist bump. She smiles one last time at him, then exits. She goes behind the car to retrieve her luggage; the trunk obscures her for a moment before she closes it. She stands there for a second, then turns and walks off - still visible in the rear window. We stay on Donny for a long time, pushing in as the music crescendos and Stevie Nicks' "Silver Springs" gets angrier and angrier. A curl of his hair falls over his forehead in the shape of an S. A million thoughts cross Donny's eyes but one stays firm. He opens the door and runs after Chelle.

Cut to black. Roll credits.