

THE BETTER SISTER

Episode 101

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4 **INT. CATHERINE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - EVENING** 4 *

CHLOE TAYLOR, early 40s, completes a trifecta of kisses as she bids adieu to a CATHERINE LANCASTER in the GARDEN ROOM.

 CHLOE
 Thank you. It was lovely. I love
 you. This was so fun. Thank you,
 thank you. Mwah.

Her make-up is clean, her skin glowing, she exudes perfectly put-together. She moves past BILL and CHUCK BRADDOCK.

 CHLOE (CONT'D)
 See You soon. Good night.

5 **EXT. CATHERINE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - EVENING** 5

Chloe walks across the perfectly-sized gravel toward her car. Behind her, up-lit perennials sway in the wind.

6 **INT. CHLOE'S CAR - SAME** 6

Chloe closes her door, pulls her phone from her purse. She looks at her (pinned) conversation with ADAM. Multiple texts from her regarding his ETA, no response from him. Her other pinned conversation, ETHAN: "Sleeping at Kevin's." Chloe hearts the message and starts the car.

9 **INT. CHLOE'S CAR - LATER - NIGHT** 9

From the backseat, we see the winding road through Chloe's windshield. A set of headlights appear in her rearview mirror. Chloe eyes the car. It stays with her past three different turn offs. After a beat, she pulls over. The car drives past. She watches it. After a longer beat, she pulls back into the road, driving until she turns left into her --

25 **INT. ENTRYWAY - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER** 25

Dark and still. The SOUND of keys. Chloe enters, purse on the chair, shoes off. She sees Adam's briefcase, his work shoes - he's home, probably already asleep to be ready for his 6am run in the morning. Phone in hand, Chloe moves into the --

26 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS** 26

She knows the room well, doesn't turn on the lights.

A27 **INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS** A27

She grabs a seltzer, moves back into the --

B27 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS** B27

Pauses at the window to drink it, look out on the water. But then something else catches her eye. A vase. Knocked over. As she shuffles across the rug to right the vase, she steps in something wet, sticky. She stops, looks down. It's blood. Adam lies there, stabbed, blood everywhere. She screams, falls to her knees. She grabs him, shakes him --

CHLOE

Adam! Adam! Jesus Christ, wake up!

She pulls him up by the shirt, listening for breath. Chloe lays Adam down, tries CPR, but her hands slip. She wipes her hands, grabs her phone from where she dropped it, dials 911.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I need an ambulance, my husband's covered in blood. He's not responding.

(a beat)

429 Lower Woodside.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

We're sending someone right away.
Are you alone in the house?

Chloe looks around, for the first time realizing that the person who did this may still be there.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Ma'am, can you get outside? To wait for the ambulance?

Chloe looks back at Adam's body. Not wanting to leave him.

SUPER: 36 HOURS EARLIER

11 **INT. CHLOE'S OFFICE - THE REAL THING OFFICES - DAY** 11

Chloe stands, commanding a gathering of a dozen women in the 'large meeting' area of her larger office (desk area, a dressing area, currently populated with a clothing rack, a light-box area to look at pages). The group is attentive to Chloe, but there's an electricity coursing, a charged energy.

CHLOE

So intros and thanks yous, Maria's speech, performance, then one more money ask, we all go to the after party and the issue is live at midnight. How's our traffic --

CHIEF PM
Over a million unique visits today.

CHLOE
Verified?

CHIEF PM
Had to add a server to keep the
site stable.

PUBLICIST
NY Times did a push notification --

CHLOE
'Alert you to anything these days --

PUBLICIST
(reading)
'Chloe Taylor, best-selling author
and editor-in-chief of *The Real
Thing* Magazine, took a break from
one of the more successful runs in
21st century publishing to deliver
testimony in support of a new labor
rights bill, continuing her efforts
on salary transparency and gender
equity in the workplace. The bill
would not only aim to increase the
minimum wage of essential workers,
but make pay disparity between male
and female workers in the sector
illegal. The magazine's next issue
is completely devoted to the Women
Are Essential movement that helped
shepherd the bill into being, even
as some on the right have
criticized Ms. Taylor for using the
magazine as her own political
mouthpiece and personal platform
while silencing opposing views.'

CHLOE
Got their lick in --

As the Publicist reads, Ethan slinks in. He makes to
apologize with his hands, but Chloe waves him over.

PUBLICIST
"...the viral clip, viewed more
than 15 million times in just 24
hours and shared widely on social
media, has some wondering if a
political run is in her future."

For her and Ethan's benefit --

CHLOE
Shut *that* down.

Chloe meets Ethan giving him a big hug.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Hi my love.

ETHAN
Sorry I'm early --

CHLOE
You're fine! C'mon. You want something to drink?

Chloe has her arm around Ethan, guiding him to sit next to her, immediately folding him into the meeting, into her life.

PUBLICIST
AOC posted, Rex Chapman, Cardi B --

ETHAN
(re who's posting)
Girls at school, tagging me in it.

CHLOE
You're welcome.

He blushes, she grabs his hand, loves to tease him --

PUBLICIST
Also Ben Shapiro and Dave Portnoy at Barstool.

CHLOE
Hate clicks count, too.

SONIA, Chloe's assistant, late 20s, smart, ambitious, Hispanic, deposits water in front of him.

ETHAN
Thank you.

There's something definitely awkward about the way he carries himself, but he is unfailingly polite.

SONIA
Hair and Make up here. As is Enzo.

CHLOE
(low to Ethan, giddy)
Tailor with your suit.
(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)
(to the group)
Thank you so much everyone.

ETHAN
You can finish up --

CHLOE
I'm all done.

Meaning *I'm all yours*. Ethan smiles at her, genuinely proud.
As she moves him over to the clothing rack and large mirror --

SONIA
MSNBC wondering if you can do a
spot for the 6' o clock --

CHLOE
After glam, before I pick up Maria.

Re the flowers on her desk.

ETHAN
Those are nice.

CHLOE
Aren't they? Dad sent them.

Off Ethan, watching his mother --

14 **EXT. GUASTAVINO'S - EARLY EVENING**

14

Chloe and Maria exit onto a red carpet. Photographers' bulbs flash. Behind them, a step and repeat adorned with #WOMENAREESSENTIAL. Through smiling teeth, low to Maria --

CHLOE
Everything's a fucking hashtag.

Maria laughs. It makes for a good picture, as Chloe knew it would. PHOTOGRAPHERS shout questions --

PHOTOGRAPHER 1
Magazine, books, testifying before
Congress -- what's next for the
Women Are Essential movement?

PHOTOGRAPHER 2
Chloe -- are rumors of a political
run true?

CHLOE
If anyone's running, it's Maria.

Another GROUP of WOMEN have arrived. Chloe motions to them.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Ladies, come on down --
(to the photogs)
May I introduce the rest of our
Women Are Essential Issue's
editorial board.

Maria and her fellow guest "journalists" from the issue pose:
GROCERY CLERKS, JANITORS, NURSES decked out and dolled up.
Letting them have their moment, Chloe moves off to join --

CATHERINE LANCASTER, 65, Black, first in her family to go to
Princeton, made a fortune twice, lost it once, earned her
money and isn't afraid to spend it. Grand dame of publishing
(à la Linda Johnson Rice), the elegance of Oprah, the edge of
Grace Jones (with whom she partied at Studio 54), recovered
addict, NYC Queen-maker, the magazine's owner and mentor to
Chloe. As they take in Maria and her cohort --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Gold, right?

Takes Chloe in, re her dress --

CATHERINE

Bold choice, I like it. They'll
write about it.

CHLOE

(faux modesty)
Oh this? Just threw it on.

Catherine smiles, gets a kick out of her protege. Then --

PUBLICIST

The Real Thing's Editor-in-Chief,
Chloe Taylor and the magazine's
Publisher, Catherine Lancaster --

CATHERINE

Endangered species up here, fellas.
(a beat)
Bulbs better not wash me out.

PHOTOGRAPHER 3

Chloe -- can we get one more?

Chloe poses, alone, for one final moment, awash in attention.

15

INT. BALLROOM - GUASTAVINO'S - A FEW MINUTES LATER

15

Crystal chandeliers, elaborate centerpieces, a jewel-box of
New York's publishing elite. Chloe moves into the ballroom,
where she is immediately intercepted by Ethan.

ETHAN
You look great, Mom.

She smiles at him adoringly.

CHLOE
So do you, kiddo.

ETHAN
(re her dress)
I thought you were wearing the
short-sleeved red one.

CHLOE
Red felt too showy.

Ethan laughs, gestures -- *isn't this whole thing a bit showy?*

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Dad here yet?

ETHAN
Haven't seen him.

The room has noticed Chloe. Though always a coveted target at events, her current celebrity makes a moment with her even more of a get. Nodding in the direction of approaching well-wishers, eager for her power and virtue to rub off on them --

ETHAN (CONT'D)
Go. I'll follow.

She smiles. He does a mock shooing motion. She goes in.

CATHERINE (O.S.)
Where's that husband of hers?

CATHERINE'S POV -- A different angle of Chloe mingling.

ANGLE ON - BILL BRADDOCK, imposing, rugged, gay septuagenarian, Adam's boss, chatting with Catherine at the table Bill's firm purchased. Bill and Catherine watch Chloe --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
He's always striding in at the last
minute --

Catherine's need for control unnerves Bill --

BILL
God, I wish you still used.

CATHERINE

(re her edge)

Oh, I know, it's awful isn't it?

(off Bill's cackle)

Although I am honored to be taking
his seat at the table of --

She lifts up the placard: 'Braddock and Braddock Law Firm'--

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Braddock, Braddock, Braddock and
Braddock.

BILL

Bought two tables, just to get 'em
all in.

Bill's trophy husband CHUCK, 40, Botoxed, mad for Bill --

CHUCK

I had his chart done -- all his
moons are in the house of ego.

BILL

Lest you forget I cut my teeth in
First Amendment law, always been a
big supporter of journalism --

CHUCK

Have you heard he argued before the
Supreme Court?

CATHERINE

Have I drawn fucking breath today?

Jake's across from them, swimmer's build more apparent
outside an iPhone. Chloe approaches, Jake rises --

JAKE

Hey there. Big night!

CHLOE

Thank you for being here.

Bill's next, gives her an air kiss --

BILL

Congratulations, you're a vision.
We were just wondering where your
lucky husband was --

CHLOE

'Firm of his works him like a dog.
He was finishing up with Gentry
Group. Though somehow Jake managed
to sneak away early.

Bill throws a look to Jake --

BILL

Adam's the only man I'd send to
wine and dine 'em. Offense
intended, Jake.

JAKE

All taken, Boss.

BILL

Those stadiums aren't gonna build
themselves.

And, just then -- Adam magically appears. In person, you can appreciate just how good-looking he is. Light, happy, exudes charm -- Adam at his best. He plants an appropriate but enviable kiss on Chloe's lips.

ADAM

Sorry I'm late.

As they pull apart, they share a look, the public version --

ADAM (CONT'D)

You look gorgeous.

He gives Ethan a side-hug, kiss on his head --

ADAM (CONT'D)

Hey bud.

Ethan lovingly recoils from Adam's embrace.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I apologize in advance for whatever
Bill said --

The lights dim.

BILL

Just when I was getting to my
proctology exam.

Catherine touches Adam's arm --

CATHERINE

Glad you could make it.

ANGLE ON - Chloe, standing in the wings, listening to Maria delivering her speech. And then, the clincher --

MARIA

Taken alone, our stories are
heartbreaking, but taken together,
they become revolutionary.

(a beat)

And sometimes that revolution comes
from where you least expect it,
like between ads for Rolexes and
Chanel perfume.

A big LAUGH. Chloe knew that line would kill.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I'm honored to introduce The Real
Thing's Editor-in-Chief, Chloe
Taylor.

As Chloe walks out on stage, the audience rises in rapturous
applause, Chloe beams at Maria, then looks out to see --

Adam and Ethan, staring up at her. Pride radiates off both of
them, but coming off Adam are waves of something else...

16

INT. CHLOE'S BEDROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT

16

We hear her pee, flush --

ADAM

It went well tonight.

CHLOE

I'm going to be very hungover.

ADAM

Lots to celebrate.

CHLOE

I promise Catherine's party is the
last event.

ADAM

The Summer Soiree, of course. I'll
come right from the airport.

(off her look)

Gentry wants to meet out near JFK,
so they can fly straight to London.
They're working on some huge
complex there.

CHLOE

Whenever you get finished. Arty's going to drive Ethan out.

ADAM

He's not taking the train?

CHLOE

It's easier. Plus, Arty can use the extra cash.

We're not sure why, but they're both treading lightly, the rush of post-sex endorphins softening their landing. With the foray into logistics successful, Chloe tip-toes to rockier ground. As if redress of an aforementioned issue --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I am sorry it's been so crazy.

ADAM

Yeah, sorry here too. I've been...

(a beat)

I'm proud of you. I just miss you.

It means something to her, that he sees value in her work.

CHLOE

We'll have a relaxing weekend -- the three of us -- doing nothing.

As he leans in to kiss her, still poking fun.

ADAM

Yes, of course, your specialty.

CHLOE

Shut the fuck up.

Chloe would rather not show that the dig stings, but she doesn't meet his eyes.

17 **INT. BEDROOM - CHLOE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING** 17

A bottle of Advil and a glass of water on the bedside table. As Chloe blinks her eyes open, she finds a note from Adam: "Thought you might need these. See you tonight, love you." Chloe smiles, grateful. She unscrews the top, downs four.

18 **INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S APARTMENT - DAY** 18

Chloe sips coffee in a silk robe, eyeing the round-up her publicist sent on her phone. The first link: pictures of her and Maria; she, Ethan, and Adam, the happy family.

Paparazzi pics from the after-party. Each link glowing coverage. As she scrolls, an embedded clip of her testimony plays --

CHLOE

"My mom cleaned houses to put herself through nursing school, I've seen the work that goes into care and how little that work is valued."

Then, a new tab. CLOSE ON -- Her phone, "Recently Visited Sites." First one is *Poppit* (à la *Reddit*) -- a thread "Feminazi Chloe Taylor." She reads the comments flatly --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

"For a self-righteous libtard trying to kill our livelihoods, she is hot. #CocksAreEssential" Why thank you, KillerChad69. "Ms. Taylor knows as much about running a business as her husband knows about fucking her. Look at that pinched face." Wrong on that front.

(reading)

"Tell me what this privileged bitch knows about essential work."

Chloe clicks the link: www.ad.com/at-home-with-therealthings-chloetaylor. Images of their apartment, immaculately staged --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

God, the built-ins do look nice.

Lost for a moment in the satisfaction of a job well done, Chloe remembers how she got there. CLOSE ON -- Her phone, another post and link: [this one to her exact apartment](#). *Either way, I'd fuck her to death. And I know where she lives.* <https://www.cityfinds.com/nyc/68cpwPENTHOUSE/SMNEEuvWZ>

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Jesus.

Chloe looks to the terrace, the glass door. How easy it would be for someone to get in, watch her. Being so exposed sends a chill down her spine, somehow both unnerving and arousing.

Her hand hovers near her waistband before she thinks better of it. What the fuck is wrong with her? She puts down her phone, half-disgusted, before moving to get dressed.

19 I/E. LOBBY - CHLOE'S BUILDING - DAY

19

Chloe strides out of the elevator, sunglasses on. She holds two coffees, one in a mug, one in a to-go cup. DOORMAN ARTY, 50s, Queens-born and raised, loyal as they come, nods --

ARTY

You're the best. Hubby said the night was a smash on his way out for the 6am run -- that's dedication.

CHLOE

I might call it something else.

Arty chuckles politely. And then slides a BOX with a bow on it across the desk. A congratulations gift, no doubt.

ARTY

This came for you.

She gathers it, inspects for a name, not finding one --

CHLOE

Do you know who it's from?

ARTY

(shakes his head 'no')
Looks nice, though.

As he opens the door for her and she exits --

CHLOE

And you're sure you're good to take Ethan out later?

ARTY

My pleasure. Gonna see a buddy out in the Bays, way back.

CHLOE

Thank you.

ARTY

Kid's good company. I'll make him listen to the Mets game, he'll be miserable. It'll be fun.

20 INT. CHLOE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

20

The box is now on the passenger's seat. She eyes it, sees the clear tape securing its top. Chloe reaches into the glove compartment, takes out a small KNIFE, opens the gift --

But instead of a bowl, it's "CHOKED", a porn DVD, a picture of her face pasted onto the bound woman on the cover. A note: "Women are Essential for some things. Shut your trap or we'll shut it for you. xx, Concerned Business Owners of America"

CHLOE

Oh God.

BUZZ -- her cell phone rings. She jumps. It's "Adam."

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hi babe.

INTERCUT -- Adam, in an Uber, looks over documents --

ADAM

How's the belle of the ball?

CHLOE

Fine.

Her voice rises at the end of the word, indicating *not fine*.

ADAM

What's wrong?

CHLOE

There was a package for me. At the front desk. An X-rated DVD. Some asshole put my picture on the naked body of a girl being choked out.

A flash of familiar anger comes across Adam's face --

ADAM

Jesus, Chlo --

CHLOE

Very retro, the DVD --

ADAM

(dead serious)

You think this is funny? They brought it to our building. I knew that magazine spread was a terrible idea. God forbid people didn't know we have a fucking wrap-around terrace.

He's been on his soap box about this issue --

ADAM (CONT'D)

You need to call the police.

CHLOE

No, no, I'm already on the road.

Chloe still sits in her car, engine off, in her parking spot.

ADAM

I'm hiring private security. Those guys are all retired FBI, they'll take care of these assholes.

CHLOE

We'll discuss it tonight, okay?

ADAM

Yes, we will. Fuck.

Sweeter, a statement and a question --

CHLOE

I'll see you at Catherine's.

ADAM

I'll text you, but most likely I'll just meet you at home.

CHLOE

You'll make it if you can. Love you.

ADAM

Love you, too.

Off Chloe looking at the threatening "gift" as she turns on the car and pulls out of the parking spot.

BILL (PRE-LAP)

Mountains of blow you could ski down, hot lays in every direction, plastic-lined private rooms --

21 **EXT. POOL AREA - CATHERINE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - EARLY EVENING**

Well-heeled, diverse-by-design PARTY GUESTS mill and laugh, moving towards the dinner table as Bill finishes a story --

BILL

-- Not that anyone left the dance floor to screw. It was all very inclusive and democratic.

Chuck rolls his eyes --

BILL (CONT'D)

My husband disapproves.

Chloe's in step with him, but her eyes are still glued to her PHONE, where Adam has still *not* reached out.

BILL (CONT'D)

Sorry you don't find my tales of illicit disco-era sex entertaining.

She means this next to be funny, but it sounds harsh --

CHLOE

Only you could make a public fuck boring.

CHUCK

Ouch.

She places her PHONE down, grabs Bill's arm with affection --

CHLOE

I'm teasing, my timing's off tonight. Forgive me.

(a fib)

Adam just texted, meeting's running late. He's sorry to miss you all.

Catherine, wired as ever, rarely seated, stops behind Chloe --

CATHERINE

It's not Adam. It's those trolling pricks on the internet.

BILL

What's the worst they can say about you? Unless you're hiding something hideous, then you get in front of it, right Catherine?

Catherine addresses the GUESTS, enjoys the banter --

CATHERINE

Bill's right -- there's nothing they can say I haven't said about myself. Miserable cunt? Check. Addict in Recovery? You bet. Power hungry bitch? Oh yes. Not Black enough, too Black, married white, hates herself -- ding, ding, ding.

BILL

-- well, now you're just bragging.

CHUCK

That flowed so naturally --

Chloe uncomfortable now, feeling exposed --

CHLOE
Welcome to being a woman on the
internet --

BILL
-- there's a lot we can do if the
language is threatening enough.
Libel, defamation, cease and
desist. Turn us loose, baby.

Catherine, hands on Chloe's shoulders, Mama Bear with edge --

CATHERINE
Shut this shit down or we will --

Chloe's hand on Catherine's -- a *thank you* and an *enough now*.

CHLOE
Mom, Dad.

BILL
I'm the mom.

CHLOE
I appreciate your concern.

Catherine and Bill laugh *okay okay*. His hand on Chloe's now --

BILL
Just remember, we're capable of
whatever the moment calls for.

What one might take as sinister, Chloe takes in jest.

22 **INT. CHLOE'S CAR - NIGHT** 22

BACK TO WHERE WE'VE BEEN. Chloe's on her phone, still in Catherine's driveway. Despite her fib, there's no text from Adam. From Ethan: "Sleeping at Kevin's." She hearts it, tosses her phone in her purse, and starts the car.

7 **EXT. BEACH - EVENING** 7

ETHAN MACINTOSH, 17, tall, pudgy, body newly-unwieldy from puberty, sits on a cement jetty near the pull-off with KEVIN DUNHAM, also 17, Kevin's car parked close behind them. Between them, a mini operation -- grinder, papers, finished joints. Ethan adds one to the pile.

ETHAN
Yours look like shit compared to
mine.

KEVIN

Fuck you.
(eyes his phone)
I gotta roll.

They both rise, gathering the stuff, Ethan grabbing a joint from the pile. Off Kevin's look --

ETHAN

One for the road.

KEVIN

You're not coming?

ETHAN

My dad would kill me if he knew I was hanging out with a drug dealer.

Kevin smiles. Ethan surveys the beach before walking off. Kevin looks back to his work --

KEVIN

(under his breath)
Your dad's a fucking asshole.

8 **EXT. ROAD NEAR THE BEACH - EVENING** 8

Ethan makes his way, alone, along the dark road. From a distance, he looks like a hulking figure moving slowly along.

23 **INT. CHLOE'S CAR - HAMPTONS ROAD - LATER** 23

From the backseat, the same winding road. The same headlights in her rearview mirror. The same pull over as the other car passes. Chloe watches it out her window, catching her breath.

10 **EXT. DRIVEWAY - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - NIGHT** 10

She turns off the car. We stay on the house as Chloe moves toward the front door, enters. For a beat, all is quiet. Then we hear a SCREAM. After a longer beat, the FRONT door opens and Chloe runs out, barefoot, and covered in blood, her feet leaving bloody marks behind her.

CHLOE (V.O.)

And that's where you found me.

28 **INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - NIGHT** 28

Chloe sits underneath fluorescent lights, staring at her hands, still in her bloody dress. Finally, she looks up at the DETECTIVES across from her.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

29 **INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - NIGHT** 29

MATT BOWEN, 30s, detective, first generation Iranian, sits across from Chloe, nodding, compassionate gaze --

BOWEN

I understand it's difficult to move through all this. We appreciate you being so thorough.

(a beat)

We have a few more questions, if you don't mind, though we can stop whenever you like. Or, again, if you prefer a lawyer present --

CHLOE

(avoiding their gaze)

No, it's fine.

NANCY "NAN" GUIDRY, 50s, a gay woman conventional in some ways, outrageous in others. Damn good detective, loves the hunt. Relentless and indefatigable. She's eyeing Chloe --

GUIDRY

What about the cuts?

Chloe blinks back at her, shocked, still not fully in the room after reliving the last few devastating hours --

CHLOE

Could I have some water?

BOWEN

Of course.

He pours her some, she drinks. Guidry presses on.

GUIDRY

'Ambulance arrived, you had cuts on your face, your knees, your hands.

Chloe turns her palms out, almost as if in prayer, revealing the scrapes. She shakes her head, as if remembering --

CHLOE

I fell. When I ran out. When the Operator asked if I was alone.

30 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - RECALL - NIGHT**

Chloe's with Adam's body, phone to ear. The same scene we've seen before, but this time, with edits.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Are you alone in the house?

Chloe looks around, panicked. She's covered in Adam's blood. She gets up and runs out of the front door.

31 **EXT. CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - RECALL - NIGHT** 31

And as Chloe scurries down the front steps, looking back, she trips and crashes into the pebbled driveway face first.

ANGLE ON - Chloe, cheek to the ground, as flashing ambulance lights illuminate her tear-soaked face. She gets on her feet and runs, barefoot, bloodied, freshly bruised.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
*So you got injured after you found
Mr. Macintosh's body?*

32 **INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - RESUME** 32
PRESENT - NIGHT

Chloe eyes Guidry, not thrilled with what's being implied.

GUIDRY
Just trying to get the timeline
straight.

Guidry and Chloe hold each other's stare. But it's clear Chloe's not all there. Bowen breaks the detente --

BOWEN
Is there an alarm at the house? One
you disarmed when you walked in?

CHLOE
We never use it.

BOWEN
So it wasn't set last night?

CHLOE
Like I said, we never use it.

GUIDRY
According to phone records, you
called 911 at 9:34. You said you
left Mrs. Lancaster's at 8:45?

CHLOE
Yes.

GUIDRY

That time of night, Sag Harbor to
East Hampton, twenty minutes tops --

CHLOE

I don't text and drive.

GUIDRY

Okay...

CHLOE

That guy was on my ass, I pulled
over, saw I'd gotten a text.

33

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - RECALL - NIGHT

33

A winding road, dark trees. Chloe's pulled over, the car
passes her. Then her phone buzzes --

CHLOE (V.O.)

I'd been waiting to hear from Adam,
But it was Catherine.

From Catherine: "Wonderful night. Hope you felt feted, get
home safe." Chloe texts "It was perfect. Thank you, thank
you, thank you." She puts three heart emojis, then just one.

CHLOE (V.O.)

But I still hadn't heard from him.
So I texted him again.

Chloe texts Adam: "Home soon. Where are you??? This is why we
should turn on Find My Friends." Chloe checks email.

CHLOE (V.O.)

And then, you know how the vortex
of the phone can be.

After a beat she puts the phone down, looks around. And then,
as if hiding the decision even from herself --

CHLOE (V.O.)

Instagram gets opened, then
Twitter, lately these comments --

-- She reaches an arm into the backseat, snaking its way into
the pocket of a car jacket kept in back for impromptu beach
walks. Her hands finds what it's looking for, something
small, retracting back into the front seat.

ANGLE ON -- a burner phone in Chloe's hand. She types out a
message to an unsaved number.

"Are you there??"

She hits sends, then puts the phone in the cupholder.

CHLOE (V.O.)

All of a sudden twenty minutes have disappeared into the social media ether.

She tries to not look at it, not wait for a response, not feel guilty already. After a beat, from the back seat, we see the burner phone get put back in its hiding place. Chloe has left it out of her retelling entirely.

34 **INT. HAMPTONS POLICE STATION - RESUME PRESENT - NIGHT** 34

Both taking in her story. Bowen's listening intently. Guidry's expression is neutral --

GUIDRY

So you pulled over, alone, at night, for twenty minutes, after receiving violent threats? Threats at your residence, threats so concerning you thought you were being followed, so concerning you'd been contemplating security?

Chloe shrugs -- doesn't like this cop Guidry.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

You ever report the threats?

CHLOE

A lot gets said online. Doesn't mean it's going to crossover into real life.

GUIDRY

Maybe not five years ago, but now... welcome to the new cesspool.

BOWEN

(keep her talking)

It's incredibly helpful to have that part of the night filled in.

GUIDRY

Do you and your husband usually socialize separately?

Chloe chafes at the question --

CHLOE

He was working with a client -- Gentry Group. Logging late nights.

GUIDRY

More understanding than my wife.

Bowen gives a playful, kind eye-roll -- *'You'll excuse her, always talking about the wife.'*

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

-- get one pass a year then believe me I'm back at Arlene's barbecue.

Bowen redirects, their dance --

BOWEN

Anyone else might've been with him at the meeting?

CHLOE

His colleague, Jake Rodriguez.

Chloe watches Bowen write it down. Guidry, not done yet --

GUIDRY

How long you two been married?

CHLOE

Ten years this fall.

GUIDRY

Practically newlyweds.

CHLOE

We've known each other since we were kids.

GUIDRY

High school sweethearts?

CHLOE

Kind of... but early on, things were complicated.

A pause. Bowen and Guidry will get back to that part later.

BOWEN

Is there anyone else, specifically, who might have reason to harm Adam?

CHLOE

I have no idea. He's a lawyer, but it's all white collar stuff.

Guidry stifles a smile -- yeah, those folks are peaches. Never involved in anything shady or violent.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

And the threats online were for me.

And then it hits her.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh. They meant to kill me.

GUIDRY

Too soon to know.

Bowen leans in, doing his best 'I feel for you face.'

BOWEN

We'll get to the bottom of whoever did this to your husband.

CHLOE

Thank you. If you have everything you need, I would really love to get my son. I would love to change.

BOWEN

Of course. We just need to take some samples, photos. And your dress.

CHLOE

Whatever.

Chloe looks down, having almost forgotten her dress is still covered in Adam's blood.

QUICK FLASHES -- of Chloe's cheek being SWABBED, getting FINGERPRINTED, being photographed for evidence. Her HANDS, ELBOWS, NECK, FULL BODY in the DRESS. Then the dress NEATLY FOLDED and being placed in a BAG.

35 **EXT. DUNHAM HOUSE - DAWN**

35

Chloe, now in police sweats, sits in back of Guidry's car, staring out. The door opens --

GUIDRY

Mrs. Dunham's waiting for us.

Chloe snaps to, gets out of the car, sees Kevin's mother, ANDREA, 40, has an innate distrust for other women, robe on, standing in the frame of the modest home's open side door.

36 **INT. KITCHEN - DUNHAM HOUSE - A FEW MOMENTS LATER**

36

Guidry, Bowen, Andrea, and Chloe stand around the island. Chloe's far way, in shock, ears ringing --

ANDREA
...coffee or water.

GUIDRY
No, thank you. We'll let you know
if we need anything else.

ANDREA
Boys are in Kevin's room, up on the
left. I haven't woken them.

BOWEN
Thank you.

Chloe looks towards the stairs, to where Ethan still sleeps, completely unaware of how his life's about to change. The Detectives nod thanks, move. Like a zombie, Chloe follows.

ON THE STAIRCASE -- Halfway up, Bowen realizes Chloe isn't with them. He turns back. She's rooted in place, paralyzed. Eyes welling, she shakes her head, meeting Bowen's gaze.

CHLOE
I can't.

He moves back toward her, as if to embrace her, but stops short when he feels Guidry's eyes on him. Low, tearful --

CHLOE (CONT'D)
I can't do it.

BOWEN
That's all right.

Bowen glances at Guidry briefly. Then, off her nod --

BOWEN (CONT'D)
'Your permission, we can tell him.

Chloe nods, agreeing to the unimaginable, living a nightmare. She watches the detectives share a loaded look, continue up the stairs. She listens as they knock on Kevin's door.

KEVIN (O.C.)
What's going on? Mom?!

BOWEN (O.C.)
I'm Detective Bowen, this is
Detective Guidry, we need to speak
with Ethan a moment.

Dread pools hot in Chloe's stomach. She turns back --

40

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - MORNING

40

The pebbled driveway's cluttered with cop cars, yellow caution tape's strung across the house's front door.

Chloe and Ethan get out of the car -- she instinctively snakes her arm around Ethan's waist, a shield that can hardly protect him from their neighbors' prying eyes. A POLICE OFFICER approaches, speaks in a low tone to Guidry --

POLICE OFFICER

I need to bring the body out.

Frustration flashes on Guidry's face -- *they haven't removed the body yet?*

GUIDRY

They need a little more time inside. Would you like to wait in the car?

Guidry looks to Chloe, who's picked up on it --

CHLOE

We'll be by the pool.

Guidry and Bowen watch them walk off, Chloe stopping at her car on the way, grabbing a jacket from the backseat. Alone for the first time, they process what they've witnessed. By way of excising her frustration, Guidry makes it a teaching moment.

GUIDRY

When first breaking the news, worth giving them a beat, to digest. See how they react to the information.

BOWEN

His father's dead. How's he supposed to react?

GUIDRY

Depends if he killed him or not.

Guidry eyes Ethan and Chloe, then moves towards the house.

41

EXT. POOL HOUSE - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

41

Chloe and Ethan sit by the pool.

CHLOE

You hungry?

He shakes his head. Finally, he looks at her.

ETHAN

What happened?

Chloe's gathered herself, steeled herself to be his mother once again. But she doesn't want to lie.

CHLOE

I don't know.

Ethan looks down.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I wish I could tell you more.

He nods. Leans back on the pool chair.

ETHAN

My head's killing me. Just gonna close my eyes.

CHLOE

Yeah, of course. I'll come get you when they need us.

After a beat, knowing he's settled, Chloe rises, moves towards the water --

42

EXT. BEACH - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - SAME

42

Chloe walks on the beach, her mind filling with memories -- or it would look that way. She glances over her shoulder -- she's a good distance from the house. If anyone were watching they'd see a grieving widow, but the cops are hard at work. Not much visibility anyhow.

She takes a phone out of her pocket -- not the iPhone we've seen, but an the BURNER from her car.

She pops off the back of the phone, ejects the SIM CARD, and tosses it into the ocean. As she moves from the sand to the planks of the boardwalk, she drops the phone into the trash.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

43 **INT. FRONT OFFICE - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - SAME** 43

Guidry and Bowen enter the marked-up scene. Drawers opened, overturned. Window broken. Guidry starts photographing, digital camera in hand.

BOWEN

You know we have people for that.

GUIDRY

And what I see might be different.

Meaning 'and what you see might be different,' that's how you do the work. She continues taking photos, focuses on the broken window, something not squaring for her --

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

See this? Glass contained over in this section. Not even on the floor really. On *top* of the chair.

BOWEN

Window was broken *after* the room was tossed.

She nods, giving him a good mark.

GUIDRY

And why break in using this window -
- not a side one out of view of the street?

We see them through the jagged glass of the broken window.

BOWEN

Easy access, first thing they saw.

GUIDRY

Maybe. If you're an amateur. And if you're an amateur, you don't end up stabbing a guy to death.

Guidry crouches down to look under the desk. Her phone out for photos.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Burglary gone wrong's quickly falling outta the lead for me. Oh, that's a selfie.

Bowen examines her as she stands.

BOWEN
Replaced by?

GUIDRY
Someone staged this.

44 **EXT. DRIVEWAY - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - SAME**

44

Chloe enters the driveway street-side, having looped around. As she enters, Catherine's car pulls in. Catherine gets out, pulls Chloe in for a hug. They both hold tight. Nothing cynical about this embrace.

CATHERINE
I came as soon as I heard.

CHLOE
How did you --

CATHERINE
'Friend at the Daily News.
Husband's NYPD. How's your boy?

Chloe just shakes her head, no words --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
(re gathering gawkers)
Fucking bottom-feeders.

Chloe turns her back on the neighbors --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I know it's the last thing you want
to think about, but we have to
prepare a statement from you.
Before speculation sets in --

CHLOE
-- oh Christ. Yes, of course.

Catherine tries to be sensitive, takes her hands --

CATHERINE
And stay away from that online
bullshit. Be kind to yourself.
(a beat)
I called my online security guy
McCabe, 'filled him in. He's going
to call you.

Chloe's eyes well with tears, guilt. Catherine intuits why --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Listen to me. You are not to blame.
This may have nothing to do with
the threats. But let's be smart and
track these assholes down before
they hurt you.

Chloe looks around, as if dropping back into the very real
danger she's in. This person is still out there.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

You'll come stay with me.

CHLOE

And put you through this circus?

CATHERINE

I'm the fucking lion tamer of the
circus baby. Bring it. You
shouldn't be alone.

Why are you alone? By circumstance and by her own making. But
by way of explanation --

CHLOE

The city will be better. For Ethan,
too.

GUIDRY (O.C.)

Ms. Taylor?

Chloe turns to see Guidry poking her head out the front door.

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

We're ready for you and Ethan now,
if you could come inside.

Chloe nods. She turns back to Catherine, low --

CHLOE

This one's a real piece of work.

Catherine, heartened by the snark, kisses Chloe --

CATHERINE

Anything you need.

As Chloe walks away, her face falls, alone in the heartbreak
and fear once more. She looks to the front door where Guidry
stands as she moves to the pool house to grab Ethan.

ANGLE ON - Catherine, in her car, watching Chloe through the
windshield. Her phone rings (Bill), brings it to her ear --

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Yeah, just saw her.
(fighting tears)
How do you think she's doing? This
is a fucking nightmare.
(a beat)
Honestly, good fucking riddance.

ANGLE ON - GUIDRY, still standing in the doorway, watching Catherine back out. Bowen joins her, PHONE to his ear.

BOWEN

Thanks.
(as he hangs up)
Office got paperwork for the kid's
legal guardian.

GUIDRY

We'll give it to her.

BOWEN

That's the thing. It's not her.
(off Guidry's look)
It goes to Nicky Macintosh, his
biological mom. Adam's ex.

Guidry processes the revelation, alluding to the tricky relationship origin story Chloe mentioned at the station.

GUIDRY

'Guess that explains the
complications.

BOWEN

Yes it does.

GUIDRY

You gonna call her?

BOWEN

Yeah, I'm gonna call her.

GUIDRY

Yeah?

BOWEN

I'm gonna do that now.

GUIDRY

Great.

BOWEN

Yep.

SUPER: CLEVELAND, OHIO

A3 **INT. DOUBLE WIDE - OHIO - PRESENT DAY - EARLY MORNING** A3

A WOMAN we don't know yet (but will), 70s, is passed out in a motorized wheelchair, TV on. We hear the DOOR creak open. A FIGURE moves past.

B3 **INT. BATHROOM - MOBILE HOME - MOMENTS LATER** B3

A PACKED medicine cabinet. That of an elderly sick person, a drug seeker (or in this case, both). A HAND (chipped nails, a couple band aids) peruses the bottles anxiously until it finds what it's looking for, grabs the bottle, closes the cabinet. In the reflection we reveal NICKY, now in her 40s, make up smeared, hasn't slept in a couple days. She sneaks out.

3 **INT. NICKY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER** 3

Nicky slams the door. There's wrappers everywhere, empty cans. She hastily unscrews the pill bottle, pops two in her mouth. She finds an unfinished Dr. Pepper, downs it. She closes her eyes, rolls her shoulders back. Her phone rings, the cracked screen reads "Southampton Police." She shakes her head, gathers herself, and reaches for the phone.

45 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - DAY** 45

Ethan stands with his mouth open as POLICE TECHNICIAN FRAN, 40, sporty butch, swabs his cheek, Guidry and Bowen watching.

GUIDRY

These are elimination samples.
Collect them from anyone who
might've shared space with the
victim, just to identify the
presence of your DNA at the scene.
Same'll go for fingerprints.

Chloe watches as Fran finishes --

BOWEN

Did your mom's at the station, just
protocol --

FRAN

Thank you.

Fran departs. Guidry and Bowen exchange a look.

GUIDRY

Okay. So, you came home. You kick off your shoes, put down your things. Went to the kitchen, got a couple grapes. Came over here -- beautiful view. Turn, you see the vase. So, you go to right the vase, but you feel something at your feet. And that's when you see your husband.

CHLOE

Just as I told you.

GUIDRY

The crime is contained in this room, and in the office, where the intruder appears to have entered through the window, clearly looking for something.

BOWEN

Do you have any personal items in there? Birth certificates, passports -- could be used in identity theft?

CHLOE

Everything's in the city. This is our second home.

Bowen gives her a reassuring smile, but inside he's more judgmental. A bit envious. Guidry lets "second home" linger --

GUIDRY

Right. Well maybe they thought the second home was empty. Made their way to the bedroom to look for valuables. Adam may have heard the noise, and come to check it out. After the -- confrontation -- perpetrator panicked and fled.
(more to Ethan than Chloe)
'That make sense to you, Ethan?

CHLOE

Are you asking him to put himself in the mind of his father's killer?

GUIDRY

Just trying to let you in on our thought process. Maybe we take a look in the next room? See if any items are missing.

Chloe nods, they all start walking. A quick look between Guidry and Bowen. Divide and conquer.

BOWEN

I actually had some questions for you about the package Ms. Taylor --

CHLOE

The package?

Bowen sends a look toward Ethan, 'maybe we don't want to discuss it in front of him.' Ethan picks up on it.

ETHAN

Other room's mine. I can show you.

GUIDRY

Great.

Chloe watches them move off. Then, lower --

BOWEN

The -- DVD.

CHLOE

Oh. Yeah, it's in the car.

He nods, gives a small hand gesture. *After you.*

47

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - DAY

47

Chloe and Bowen descend the steps, see the crime scene markers where her bloodied feet moved across the pebbles. Chloe opens her passenger door so it's between her and Bowen. She hands him the package. Bowen takes a glove, moves the top, sees the DVD.

BOWEN

That's unfortunate.

CHLOE

Not my best angle.

He signals to a UNIFORMED OFFICER. While the Officer approaches, something catches Chloe's eye under the tire of her car. The blade of a knife.

BOWEN

Bag this and get it fingerprinted.

She tries to keep her cool as the Uniformed Officer takes the box. He looks inside, gives a quick raise of the eyebrow --

ANOTHER COP (O.C.)
 Detective Bowen --

He holds up a finger, moves off, Chloe looks to the knife.

48 **EXT. CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - RECALL - NIGHT** 48

A scene we have seen before. But this time, as Chloe scurries down the front steps the night of the murder, she has this bloodied KNIFE in her hand. A detail left out of her story.

And as she looks back, making sure no one is behind her, she trips, crashes into the driveway face first. The KNIFE flies out of her hand and gets lodged under the car's tire.

ANGLE ON - Chloe, cheek to the ground, as the flashing lights of an ambulance illuminate her tear-soaked face.

49 **INT./EXT. CHLOE'S CAR - RESUME PRESENT** 49

Chloe calculates her moves and makes a decision. Shielded by the car door, she bends down and quickly pulls the knife out from under the wheel. There's dried blood on the tip. She shoves it into the glove compartment, closing it just as --

 BOWEN
 Ms. Taylor --

She looks up at Bowen --

 BOWEN (CONT'D)
 We can head back inside --

50 **INT. ETHAN'S ROOM - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS** 50

Ethan half-heartedly pokes around, Guidry watches him.

 GUIDRY
 So Kevin's a good friend of yours?

 ETHAN
 He lives out here. We hang out in the summer, whenever we come out.

 GUIDRY
 Do anything special last night?

Guidry clocks a cut poking out from under his right sleeve.

 ETHAN
 Friday night stuff -- drove around, sat on the beach, came back.

GUIDRY
You've read all these books?

ETHAN
Half maybe. During the summers.

GUIDRY
That's pretty good.

Kid's inscrutable. She's debating whether to ask about the cuts, or the legal guardian, but then --

ETHAN
Couple things missing in here.

51 **INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - DAY** 51

Chloe enters, mind still on what she's just done. Bowen takes her in, notes they're alone, thinks now might be a good time.

BOWEN
Ms. Taylor, you should know we've contacted Nicole Macintosh.

Chloe snaps out of her haze --

CHLOE
Nicky? What? Why?

BOWEN
Ethan's a minor. It's protocol to alert his legal guardian.

Chloe tries to process that Nicky knows Adam is dead.

CHLOE
Yes, but clearly in this case, that's just a technicality.
(low, confiding)
Nicky's an addict, she hasn't seen him in years.

BOWEN
I understand, but she's still his legal guardian --

CHLOE
Because if we had tried to change it she would have hurt herself. Sorry, it's just -- I know it might seem like an odd arrangement, but there are reasons for it. At one point, we had a restraining order against her.

BOWEN

We saw that. But it's expired. And applied to your husband. Not Ethan.

She eyes him, trying to figure out what other information he has access to, what else he knows. With gentleness --

BOWEN (CONT'D)

Right now Ethan needs to be with his legal guardian who, in this case, is his biological mother.

Mother. The words hang in the air. She stares daggers at him.

BOWEN (CONT'D)

Said she'd be here soon as she can.

CHLOE

Nicky's coming to New York?

Just as Chloe digests this information, Guidry and Ethan rejoin them. Chloe gathers herself. Reads from her NOTEPAD --

GUIDRY

Gucci sneakers and a set of Beats headphones missing from the closet.

Bowen raises his eyebrows at the mention of the sneakers --

BOWEN

Nice kicks.

Guidry eyes him. Chloe spins her wedding ring.

CHLOE

If there isn't anything else, I'd like get us back home. To the city.

GUIDRY

Of course.

BOWEN

We'll keep in touch Ms. Taylor.

52

EXT. CHLOE'S HAMPTONS HOUSE - DAY

52

Ethan and Chloe walk, both trying to assess how the other fared in their alone time with the detectives. Guidry and Bowen stand on the front steps, watching Chloe and Ethan move to the car.

ETHAN

I left my backpack at Kevin's, if we can stop on the way home.

CHLOE

Of course.

After a beat, Ethan throws a quick glance over his shoulder--

ETHAN

That lady cop is staring at me.

Bowen and Guidry keep watching, but address each other now --

BOWEN

Told her about the ex.

GUIDRY

Didn't think I'd want to be there?

BOWEN

Had a moment with her. Saw an opportunity.

GUIDRY

Too quick to get where you're going. Fast isn't always right.

He nods, an apology, taking it in. Then --

GUIDRY (CONT'D)

Kid has a cut on his right arm.

BOWEN

Oh, well you didn't tell me about that.

GUIDRY

I'm telling you now.

BOWEN

Well I told you too.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

53

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - DAY

53

Ethan and Chloe are quiet as they cruise down the L.I.E. Chloe's hands are tight on the wheel, mind racing. Ethan's in his phone. Chloe glances at him, trying to get a read. She dropped the ball before, didn't step up, but she can try now.

CHLOE

Nicky may be on her way here.

Ethan turns away from the window to face her --

ETHAN

Here, as in New York? Is she coming to our house?

CHLOE

I haven't heard from her. But she knows about your father.

(pushing forward)

Whenever she gets in, I'll give you guys some time alone.

Chloe's proud of herself for getting it out. Ethan processes.

ETHAN

But I'm not gonna go with her, right? Like to live?

She puts her hand on his arm, squeezing it --

CHLOE

I'd never let that happen.

She can feel his wheels turning. Suddenly she's insecure --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Unless you --

ETHAN

No, no, of course not.

They're both relieved for a moment. Then, tiptoeing --

ETHAN (CONT'D)

When was the last time she was in New York?

Chloe exhales, shakes her head, remembering --

55

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - TWELVE YEARS EARLIER - FLASHBACK - DAY

A knight-themed birthday party. Ethan, 5, play-fights with a styrofoam sword. He's in full knight regalia. Adam and Chloe look on -- Adam also in full knight regalia. Chloe some kind of medieval wench. A GUEST comes over to Adam and Chloe.

PARTY GUEST

Above and beyond. Where'd you find a chain metal vest in kid's size?

ADAM

Uncle of a guy I work with at the DA's is big into metallurgy.

CHLOE
He looks adorable in armor.

PARTY GUEST
(to Adam)
Don't know how you do it all alone.
We struggle with two on one!

Adam and Chloe exchange a look, neither says *well actually Chloe's been around plenty*. Then Chloe spots someone in the distance, color drains from her face --

NICKY
Ethan!

CHLOE
Oh my God, Nicky's here.

NICKY
Hi buddy, hi! Do you remember me?

All eyes turn to see a barefoot Nicky striding towards them, doting date, RONNIE, 30's, beside her holding a STUFFED WOLF.

ADAM
It's okay, I'll handle it.

PARTY GUEST
Who's that?

CHLOE
Ethan's mother.

Chloe knew this moment was inevitable, but thought she'd have more control over it. Nicky's focused on her son whom she hasn't seen in two years. She kneels down to Ethan's level --

NICKY
Ethan, baby, I love your costume!
(proud of her gift)
Do you want a bear for your
birthday? I brought this for you.

But Ethan recoils. Adam swoops down to pick him up --

ADAM
What're you doing here?

NICKY
Can't a mother show up to her son's
birthday party -- I mean, his
aunt's here.

CHLOE

Hi Nick.

NICKY

Chloe. What are you supposed to be?

CHLOE

Medieval something.

Okay. Nicky's date eyes her, confused by the tension --

NICKY

This is my sister and my ex-husband. And the tiny knight is my son. I forgot to mention I wasn't invited.

RONNIE

Cute kid.

NICKY

But since I was in town. Last minute trip. Hey, you sure you don't want this bear?

Nicky moves closer to Ethan, Adam passes Ethan to Chloe --

YOUNG ETHAN

No!

NICKY

Are you sure? Oh come on buddy.

CHLOE

It's okay.

Nicky steps in, desperate to touch him, smell his hair.

NICKY

Can I hold him. Please let me hold him. Please Chloe, let me hold him.

Adam puts his hand on Chloe's lower back as he leans protectively in their direction. Chloe tries to subtly move away from his touch, but it's too late. Nicky knows. She staggers back, her breathing shallow, insides churning.

NICKY (CONT'D)

Holy... you two are, oh my god. You two are fucking.

Nicky waits for a denial that doesn't come.

NICKY (CONT'D)

You two are fucking!

Chloe can't look at her. The guests are riveted, deepening Chloe's shame. No one knew Adam and Chloe were involved. Harsh, to Nicky --

ADAM

You need to leave.

CHLOE

Come on, Adam, take it easy --

Ethan hides behind Adam's legs. Nicky addresses the party --

NICKY

Yeah, they're fucking!

To Nicky --

ADAM

You're drunk. You're scaring him --

Nicky instinctively backs up, but keeps eye contact.

NICKY

You are scary. You are scary! The both of you. What the fuck, Chloe?
(she steps on something)
Ow, fuck!

She stumbles, reaching back to her foot. As she brings her hand up from her foot, it's bloody.

RONNIE

Oh, shit.

NICKY

Oh fuck. Here, hold that. You know what? Let's go. Ethan, bye baby!

Nicky and Ronnie walk away. Chloe watches them cross the grass then follows. Catching up, grabbing Nicky's arm --

CHLOE

Nicky, a Band-Aid for your cut --

NICKY

-- is that a joke?

Nicky throws Chloe off, gets her wrist bloody in the process.

RONNIE

I'll wait by the car.

Ronnie touches Nicky's shoulder, keeps walking.

NICKY

You are so fucking twisted. Ethan is mine. No matter how hard you try or how hard you fuck him. Do you understand? Mine. He's mine.

CHLOE

I was gonna tell you.

Chloe's terrified. Nicky levels her with a brutal look --

NICKY

You get your own fucking family. Fuck. You look so fucking stupid in that outfit. Good luck with that.

Then Nicky's gone, leaving Chloe feeling stupid and pathetic standing there with her plunging medieval neckline. If she were six she'd piss herself. Adam's beside her now --

ADAM

Come on, time for cake.

CHLOE

I'm not going back there.

ADAM

You didn't do anything wrong.

Then the shame morphs into rage, she turns on him --

CHLOE

She's my fucking sister. I did everything wrong.

She leaves him, wiping her sister's blood as she walks away.

54

INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT

54

Chloe stares into the abyss of the fridge, the eerie, bright glow showing just how tired she is. Her cell phone buzzes. She closes the fridge, grabs the phone -- texts and emails failing to find the words to express condolences for something so violent and awful. Ethan watches her scroll.

ETHAN

People don't know what to say.

CHLOE

If only there were a murdered-husband-sad-face-emoji.

She catches herself, unsure if she should have said that. But then Ethan laughs. And so does she. The first time since... She looks at him, filled with so much love she could burst.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm starving. You want to run down to the deli? Grab some sandwiches? I'll hop in the shower.

ETHAN

Roast beef?

CHLOE

Something sweet, too.

Chloe watches him leave, realizing it's the last time he'll be in the world before the news reaches the wider public. She wonders if he realizes it too.

A55 **INT. HALLWAY - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT** A55

Chloe, hair wet, freshly showered, in comfy clothes, walks down the hall, moving toward the kitchen.

B55 **INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** B55

Chloe's back in the fridge, reaching in -- still nothing. But now the light illuminates a patch on the metal of her bracelet. Blood. Dried and brown. Chloe brings the bracelet to her mouth, and licks it. Another KNOCK --

CHLOE

Ethan? You forget your keys?

No response. She rises, moves towards the living room.

57 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 57

She looks through the peephole, about to remark what a quick trip that was. But on the other side isn't Ethan.

CHLOE

(whispers)

Fuck me.

Chloe opens the door --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hey Nicky.

Nicky, hair wildly gathered atop her head -- sober, older, clear-eyed, and more beautiful than ever --

NICKY
Hey, sis.

ACT FIVE

58 **INT. LIVING ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - SAME** 58

Chloe's rooted to the spot. Nicky quickly closes the distance between them, winds her arms around her little sister --

NICKY
Chloe. I don't know what -- it's so awful.

After a few long moments, Chloe untangles herself --

NICKY (CONT'D)
How are --

CHLOE
-- not sure, really.

Nicky looks at her sister, takes her in. She's thought about this moment for years, played it out in her head on a loop for the last twelve hours. There's so much unsaid between them, so much Nicky wants to tell her. But she starts with --

NICKY
Listen I'm not going to bullshit, pretend I know what to say. I loved Adam -- even after all we went through. I'm sick inside, actually. This is just horrible. Awful. So fucking awful. All of it. I'm just so sorry, Clo.

And despite the somewhat rehearsed nature of this speech, Nicky is shaking, tears flowing. The whole act offends Chloe. But bound by courtesy, she manages to mutter --

CHLOE
Thank you.

NICKY
I got here 'soon as I could. The police said Ethan needed to be with me.

Chloe's trying to remain calm --

CHLOE
The detectives told me that, too.

NICKY

How is he? Is he in his room?

Nicky moves a few steps further into the apartment, (each step the collision of two worlds Chloe's kept separate) --

CHLOE

Come in --

NICKY

Jesus, this place is enormous --

CHLOE

Ethan's not here, he --

But then, the DOOR opens. Ethan, carrying bags filled with greasy food. Nicky lets out a small gasp, low, to Chloe --

NICKY

My God, he looks just like Dad.

CHLOE

(trying to steady herself)
Hi sweetie.

NICKY

You're tall as a tree.

Ethan walks towards them, Nicky pulls him into a hug. She inhales him deeply. Low, into his neck --

NICKY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry, baby.

After a moment he gently pulls away. It's a relief to both him and Chloe. Nicky's searching his face --

NICKY (CONT'D)

How 'you holding up?

Before Ethan can answer, a loud, cheerful MAN, 40's, with THREE LARGE FLORAL SUITCASES comes through the door --

SUITCASE RICK

Ho, hey. Coming through. Holy cow, nice digs.

NICKY

Rick, suitcase angel. Saved my ass at the airport. Luggage got stuck in the revolving door. So embarrassing. We shared a cab.

SUITCASE RICK

Chivalry's not dead after all.
Well, half-dead. You know,
confusing times for us guys. You'll
see.

Chloe is in no mood for small talk --

CHLOE

Nicky --

NICKY

That's my sister Chloe --

An introduction is not what Chloe meant.

SUITCASE RICK

From the video in the cab, big
time. Was playing a clip of you.
The hearing, from Congress.

Chloe's not receptive. By way of explaining --

SUITCASE RICK (CONT'D)

The TVs, there's no way to turn
them off.

CHLOE

You actually can turn them off.

Nicky gives Ethan's arm a motherly touch --

NICKY

And this is --

ETHAN

Ethan. We met in the elevator.

Ethan looks uncomfortable with Nicky's hand on him,
especially in front of Chloe. Rick studies him --

SUITCASE RICK

And you belong to which sister?

An awkward, unclaimed silence. Ethan holds up the food --

ETHAN

I got extra. Grilled cheese.

Ethan moves into the dining room, Nicky follows him, leaving
Chloe with Rick. Sensing his time has come to an end --

SUITCASE RICK

Well, I'll get out of your hair --

CHLOE

Yes that would be good, thank you.
Death in the family.

SUITCASE RICK

Yes, your sister said. So sorry.
(a beat)
Nicky, I'll email you --

NICKY

Okay, thanks again Rick.

Chloe closes and locks the door.

59

INT. KITCHEN - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - LATER

59

Ethan's settled at the table hovering over his takeout container. Nicky's watching him. It's weird. Then she rips a length of paper towel off a roll, extends it to him --

NICKY

Here, bud.

Ethan eyes it, unsure, then takes it, wipes his mouth. Chloe's watching them, clocking their comfort level with each other. Her head is spinning. Panic creeping up, but she calms herself for Ethan. Arranges her face in a polite mask --

CHLOE

Nicky, where are you staying?

She may as well have said *get the fuck out*. It's tense.

NICKY

Here. With Ethan. If that's okay.

Chloe sees Ethan perk up at the thought. Nicky's thrilled. She sits next to him, eyes glued, watching him eat like it's the greatest show she's ever seen. Ethan's uncomfortable but would never move away. Chloe can't watch the spectacle a second longer. She bites the inside of her cheek.

CHLOE

For tonight, sure, of course.

Off Chloe, excusing herself --

60

INT. OFFICE - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT

60

Chloe finishes rage-making the bed. Moves to her desk, puts things away, safe from her sister's snooping. Winces at Nicky's LOUD LAUGH from the hallway. Then she hears the sink in her bathroom turn on. Chloe rises, moves towards --

61 INT. CHLOE'S BEDROOM/BATHROOM - CHLOE'S APT - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe peers through the cracked bathroom door, takes in Nicky's reflection. Chloe loved watching her sister when they were younger, how she met her own gaze without flinching, confident in her looks. And she is beautiful. When she's not sucking the air out of the room.

Nicky uses Chloe's comb to scratch a spot she can't reach on her back. For the first time, Chloe notices the cuts on Nicky's fingertips, a couple of them wrapped in bandaids. Nicky opens the cabinet. Chloe watches as Nicky bypasses the expensive creams and stops instead at the pills. Chloe's stomach drops. Nicky peruses the Xanax (just in case), Hydrocodone (left over from the dentist). Chloe steels herself -- Nicky's going to take them, Chloe's going to have to kick her out, and Ethan will be even more heartbroken. But then Nicky pops two Tylenol, washes the pills down.

She's about to leave when she spots Adam's things -- cologne, aftershave. She opens his deodorant, smells it, inhaling deeply. And then... Nicky puts on Adam's deodorant. Chloe's eyes go wide in disbelief. *This crazy bitch.*

Nicky puts Adam's deodorant back, shuts the mirror. Both sisters reflected together. Nicky's non-plussed to see Chloe -- she's used to Chloe watching her. Re the Deodorant --

NICKY

Forgot in the rush this morning.

Nicky's about to leave, when Chloe drops back into herself.

CHLOE

I don't think it's the best idea
for you to stay here.

Re the apartment, sounding like their mother when she used to speak of the rich people's homes she cleaned.

NICKY

Not enough room?

Chloe smiles patiently, the mature one --

CHLOE

It's disorienting for Ethan.

Chloe's still using the polished language of her world, words like 'disorienting' when 'confusing' or 'fucked up' would do.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

It's not what he needs right now.

NICKY

I think it's exactly what he needs.

CHLOE

I may be a better judge of that.

NICKY

Not up to you, legally speaking.

Chloe studies her, proceeds with an even tone --

CHLOE

Are you high right now?

NICKY

Sober five years.

CHLOE

Yippie for you.

NICKY

You ever consider it might be a good thing I'm here?

CHLOE

Tomorrow I'll put you up some place nice. There are so many beautiful hotels in the neighborhood.

NICKY

Fine. Then Ethan's coming with me.

A threat. Shots fired. Nicky does have the legal right to take Ethan, as his guardian. Chloe doesn't want a scene --

CHLOE

I'm sure we can come up with an arrangement that makes us all comfortable.

NICKY

Sounds good.

Nicky nods toward the office --

NICKY (CONT'D)

So this one's me?

CHLOE

That's the one.

Nicky exits. Chloe is trying hard not to lose her cool.

63 **INT. KITCHEN - DUNHAM HOUSE - NIGHT**

63

Guidry and Bowen sit across from Kevin, leaning back, a posture. His lemonade sits on a floral coaster. BG, his mother, Andrea, putters in the kitchen --

ANDREA

You're in luck. This is my last peppermint tea. Cookies, if anyone wants.

BOWEN

Thank you.

KEVIN

Thank you.

GUIDRY

You picked Ethan up at five?

KEVIN

Mm-hmmm.

GUIDRY

And then what'd you do?

KEVIN

Played some video games, ate dinner, drove around.

She gives him a withering stare, studying him. The nice watch, the red eyes -- doesn't totally jibe with the house.

GUIDRY

We're investigating a murder. You know that right?

64 **INT. ETHAN'S ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT**

64

Ethan gets on his hands and knees, pulls a pair of balled up pants from under his bed, feels around for something else --

GUIDRY (V.O.)

Whatever oregano-laced dime-bags you're peddling don't interest us.

(a beat)

Though I'm sure they'd interest your mother.

Ethan snaps his head toward the door as he hears a noise.

65 **INT. KITCHEN - DUNHAM HOUSE - SAME** 65

Kevin throws his glance down and over his shoulder, as if to get a read on his mother's proximity. He shifts in his seat.

GUIDRY
You tell us the truth, we won't bust your balls for whatever you got up to last night.

BOWEN
Unless it was murdering someone.

Guidry squints at him -- *what the fuck is wrong with you?*

KEVIN
After we'd been hanging for a bit, I had -- business to attend to.

BOWEN
And what time did you and Ethan meet up with these 'clients'?

Bowen gives a quick look to Guidry. Maybe the kid has a solid alibi. But then something else comes across Kevin's face.

KEVIN
Ethan didn't want to come.

Guidry and Bowen both sit up straighter.

66 **INT. ETHAN'S ROOM - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT** 66

Ethan gets up, locks the door, drops down next to his bed --

KEVIN (V.O.)
So I left him.

-- and pulls out a MEDIEVAL KNIGHT'S CHAIN METAL VEST (the one Adam wore at Ethan's childhood party). As he does, his sleeve gets pushed back, the cuts on his right arm exposed.

GUIDRY (V.O.)
Left him where?

It's big and bulky, but he gets into it pretty easily (he's been here before). He puts on the helmet.

KEVIN (V.O.)
At the beach. Near his house.

-- and climbs into bed. Fully armored, he shuts the tin door that covers his eyes. Ethan's big chest rises and falls as he exhales and relaxes for the first time all day.

67 **EXT. DUNHAM HOUSE - NIGHT**

67

Guidry and Bowen walk to the car, each processing --

GUIDRY

Time in Ethan's night unaccounted
for.

Bowen's phone buzzes, he answers --

BOWEN

Bowen --
(a long beat)
Yep -- okay, thanks.

He hangs up, looks to Guidry.

BOWEN (CONT'D)

Lab found Ethan Macintosh's DNA
under Adam's fingernails.

As it dawns on Bowen, that his first high-profile arrest
could be in sight --

GUIDRY

(genuine)
Well, that's a shame.

68 **EXT. TERRACE - CHLOE'S NY APARTMENT - NIGHT**

68

Chloe pulls a pack of cigarettes from a plant -- for
emergencies, and this is certainly one -- lights one, takes a
drag, leans on the railing, looking out. She closes her eyes,
exhales. The first full breath she's taken since. And at the
bottom of the breath, it's there. The feeling deep within
her, the one she's been trying to ignore. But for the first
time, here, alone, she acknowledges it -- *relief*.

She feels Nicky before she sees her, on the far side of the
terrace. She opens her eyes to meet her sister's stare. Their
eyes hold. But it's too much. Chloe can't take it. She closes
her eyes again, breathing in the night, breathing away the
truth.

And then there's a HAND ON HER SHOULDER. Chloe startles,
lurching forward, dropping her cigarette over the edge. She
turns to see Nicky behind her --

END OF EPISODE.