

Life Sentence

"Pilot"

Written by
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CHARACTERS

STELLA - 25, our narrator/a formerly-dying, manic pixie dream girl. Stella is a confident, decisive, strong, young woman, with a dry disaffected sense of humor. Loves giving unsolicited advice.

WES - 27, Stella's husband/a guy's guy. Totally unhappy working in finance in New York until Stella inspired him to change his life, Wes is now cool, laid back and very happy making hand-hewn wooden furniture and living in the moment with Stella.

PAUL - 55, Stella's father/a real rock. Paul is a sturdy, stoic man, who loves his wife, golf and hugs his grandkids more than he ever hugged his kids. Great at investing, not great at feelings.

IDA - 55, Stella's mother/a true nurturer. Ida is gregarious, kind, emotional, never stops moving, and loves put attention on others. Co-owner of a cheese shop called *Brie Yourself*.

AIDEN - 28, Stella's brother/the slighted middle child. Aiden is a super charming, though emotionally immature, womanizer, who still lives at home with his parents and sells Adderall to socceer moms.

ELIZABETH - 30, Stella's sister/the type-A oldest child. An aspiring writer who often puts her dreams aside to take care of her family and is obsessed with keeping it all together.

DARRIUS - 35, Elizabeth's husband/ the extremely positive Pharma rep Elizabeth met during one of Stella's hospital stays. Darrius is bright, loves his family deeply, and travels often work.

FIONA & FRANK - 5, Elizabeth and Darrius' precocious twins who often overwhelm Elizabeth. They're both old souls.

DR. HELENA CHANG - 39, Stella's oncologist/a cancer-curing rock-star-geek. Helena is a brilliant doctor, and the closest thing Stella has to a best friend. A little socially awkward.

SANTIAGO - 45, a warm, boisterous, larger than life man who Wes bonds with in his support group.

POPPY - 50, Ida's best friend/the super Portlandy co-owner of *Brie Yourself*, who has become an "aunt" to Ida's kids.

SADIE (AKA CANCER GIRL) - 15, An unabashedly candid, currently dying girl that reminds Stella of herself ten years ago.

ACT ONE

OPEN ON: A WOODEN BRIDE AND GROOM WEDDING CAKE TOPPER

STELLA (O.S.)

Look at these two. She's been dreaming about this day since she was a sapling. He's got a tiny stick up his butt. But, you can't deny they were made for each other. Literally. Still, something's off. They never talk. I mean, how could they? Their mouths are painted on.

WES (O.S.)

Stella, who are you talking to?

INT. HAVE YOUR CAKE, CAKE SHOP - PORTLAND - DAY (D1)

The shop is charming and rustic. STELLA (25) stands over the topper as WES (27) ponders a cupcake clear across the shop.

STELLA

I thought I was talking to you.

Wes joins her, as a SMARMY CAKE SHOP EMPLOYEE (30s) ambles up.

SMARMY CAKE SHOP EMPLOYEE

Let me guess. You need a wedding cake.

STELLA

Actually, we're already married.

WES

(shows their ringed hands)

Boom.

STELLA

We need a funeral cake.

SMARMY CAKE SHOP EMPLOYEE

I don't think people do cakes at a funeral. It's more of a cobbler affair.

STELLA

True. But I love cake. And it's *my* funeral... my living funeral. I'm dying. Of cancer. But I figured I should have my funeral now, so I can hear all the wonderful things people say about me.

SMARMY CAKE SHOP EMPLOYEE

Oh... wow, I'm really sorry--

STELLA

Don't be. I've come to terms with my fate. My life's been amazing. I can honestly say I wouldn't change a thing.

INT. HOSPITAL - DR. CHANG'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Stella (15) sits with her mother IDA (45), her father PAUL (45), her brother AIDEN (18), and her sister ELIZABETH (20) opposite her oncologist, DR. HELENA CHANG (29).

CHYRON: 10 YEARS AGO

STELLA (V.O.)

From the minute I was diagnosed, my family was there for me, no matter what.

PAUL

We're here for you. No matter what.

They all share an emotional group hug.

EXT. SLEDDING HILL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Stella (16) and Aiden (20) sit at the top of a sledding hill.

STELLA (V.O.)

In between treatments, they encouraged me to "live like I was dying..."

Stella sleds directly into a bale of hay. But she's okay!

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella (17) and Elizabeth (22) dance their butts off as flashing, colorful lights paint their bodies.

STELLA (V.O.)

Because I was.

Stella stops to cough. Elizabeth puts a hand on Stella's back.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHEMO WARD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella, now sicker, sits in a chair getting chemo.

STELLA (V.O.)

But, they never let me miss a beat.

Suddenly, the lights go out. Aiden, Elizabeth, Paul & Ida pop out with flashing lights, dancing around like they're back at the nightclub. Stella laughs and tears up a little.

INT. PDX AIRPORT - DEPARTURES - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Stella (18), wearing a backpack, collects a plane ticket from an AIRPORT EMPLOYEE as her whole family sees her off.

STELLA (V.O.)

They never let my cancer stop me.

Paul slips Stella a credit card, as Ida gives her a hug. She stands there for a minute, then they urge her to go.

INT/EXT. VARIOUS COOL LOCATIONS - DAY/NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

SERIES OF SHOTS: Stella rides a helicopter through the Grand Canyon, safaris in Africa, skis the Alps, dances at Jazz Fest in New Orleans and dives at the Great Barrier Reef...

STELLA (V.O.)

They helped me live every dream I ever had. Even a couple of nightmares...

Stella jumps out of a prop plane, panicked. But once her parachute opens... a huge smile crosses her face.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - EVENING

Stella (20) sits in bed watching one of those super, sappy cancer movies on TV. Elizabeth (25, pregnant) talks to DARRIUS by the door (30, her husband, a PHARMA REP).

STELLA (V.O.)

I thought I'd done it all. But there was one thing I still hadn't done...

ON SCREEN: The DYING GIRL has a magical kiss with a HOT BOY.

STELLA (V.O.)

Find true love. So, after we'd given up on my treatments actually working, I went to the birthplace of true love...

EXT. THE EIFFEL TOWER - PARIS - TWILIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella (24) sits across from the Eiffel Tower, dressed in a striped sweater and beret, eating a crepe.

STELLA (V.O.)

...dressed up like a sexy mime and waited for my soulmate to appear. And he did...

Stella spots Wes, looking at a map under the tower. Suddenly, the TOWER LIGHTS UP, turning him to SILHOUETTE.

STELLA (V.O.)
He was lost. Literally.

Stella gets up and walks up to him. He notices her.

WES
Excuse me. How do I get to the Marais?

STELLA (V.O.)
But he was also figuratively lost. See,
he was afraid to live...

WES (V.O.)
And she was afraid to die.

INT. HAVE YOUR CAKE, CAKE SHOP - DAY (D1)

Stella, Wes and SCSE are where we left. Stella turns to Wes.

STELLA
Babe, you have to stop interjecting that.
I wasn't afraid to die. You know that.

WES
But it just sounds more cinematic-- She's
dying to live, he's living to die... Or,
I could let you tell it your way...

EXT. THE EIFFEL TOWER - PARIS - TWILIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella and Wes are where we left them, looking at his map. Wes
looks at her curious. She smiles. He smiles back.

STELLA (V.O.)
Okay, so there we were. Two Americans,
alone together in Paris... I know, alone
together is an oxymoron, but we didn't
have time to be self-aware. We were too
busy falling in love. The way only two
people with nothing else to do truly can.

INT. COZY WINE CAVE - PARIS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella and Wes drink by candle light. They are laughing.

STELLA
I want to show you something.

WES
What?

STELLA
(dead serious)
The whole world...

Stella grabs Wes's hand. Tim McGraw's Live Like You're Dying plays over A SERIES OF SHOTS show them criss-crossing Europe; taking trains, kissing in the rain, dancing under the moon...

STELLA (V.O.)

One of the upsides of dying was, it gave me a super power. Like how blind people's hearing increases. My inability to have a life, gave me the ability to change other people's lives for the better. And boy did I change his. But then something unexpected happened... he changed mine.

EXT. A BRIDGE OVER A CANAL - AMSTERDAM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella stands with Wes who holds out something more unique than an engagement ring that we haven't thought of yet.

WES

Stella Jane, will you spend the rest of your life with me?

STELLA

I don't see why not. That's probably only like six months, give or take.

WES

I'm serious. I love you.

STELLA

I love you too. No joke.

EXT. SCENIC WEDDING VENUE - PORTLAND - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Stella (25), Wes (27) and a MINISTER stand in front of Ida (55), Paul (55), Aiden (28), Elizabeth (30), Darrius (35), their twins, FIONA & FRANK (5), Dr. Chang (39), Stella's "aunt" POPPY (50) & Wes' MOM & DAD (50s, dour New Yorkers).

STELLA

When I die, I promise to haunt you, cause I know you always wanted to meet a ghost.

Wes doesn't wait. He kisses Stella. Everyone applauds.

MINISTER

Husband and wife! Have to say that part.

STELLA (V.O.)

So he picked up his whole life in New York and moved to Portland just for me.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Stella and Wes have movie caliber sex, complete with eye contact, as Sarah Bareilles plays softly in the background.

STELLA (V.O.)

Don't worry, I made it worth his while. Every single night. I know what you're thinking, nobody has sex like that every night. But we do. Because we never know if it will be my last night on earth.

INT. HAVE YOUR CAKE, CAKE SHOP - CONTINUING (D1)

SMARMY CAKE SHOP EMPLOYEE

(verge of tears)

That was the most beautiful story I've ever heard. Your life is like one of those romantic cancer movies... *Fault In Our Stars, Me, Earl and the Dying Girl...* You know, I think this is the scene where the nameless cake store employee gives the dying girl a free cake.

STELLA

Is it? That's awesome. Thank you so much. Now, do you happen to know where I could find balloons that say "It's my party and I'll die if I want to?"

SMARMY CAKE SHOP EMPLOYEE

Sorry, we just do cake.

EXT. HAVE YOUR CAKE, CAKE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER (D1)

Stella and Wes exit with a cake, get on a VESPA and...

STELLA (V.O.)

Now, I know what you're thinking. You think I played the cancer card to get a free cake. Well, in life, you play the hand you're dealt. Some people have big brains or big boobs... I have tiny tumors circulating through my blood stream. It's only fair I get the celebrity treatment now and again. After all, I'm dying.

DR. CHANG (PRE-LAP)

You're not dying.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - DR. CHANG'S OFFICE - DAY (D1)

Stella and Wes sit opposite Dr. Chang, totally in shock.

STELLA

I'm sorry... What did you just say?

TITLE CARD: LIFE SENTENCE

INT. THE HOSPITAL - DR. CHANG'S OFFICE - CONTINUING (D1)

DR. CHANG

The oncolytic virotherapy worked. The genetically modified AIDS virus we gave you totally eradicated your cancer. You're cured. Not in remission. Cured. 100% healthy. Except for a mild case of eczema. But I can prescribe a cream for that and it'll clear right up.

STELLA

This is...

DR. CHANG

Badass. I know. You're welcome.

STELLA

Thank you. Wow, thank you. I'm just...

STELLA (V.O.)

Overwhelmed. Totally overwhelmed.

DR. CHANG

It's normal to feel a flood of emotions when you get news like this. Especially, if you've already made peace with dying.

STELLA

It's just, I've thought about this moment a lot. I actually scripted out how this entire scene would go. You'd tell me the news, I'd shed joyful tears, and then my husband, Ian Somerhalder, would say he felt it was time to start a family. I'd say we were too young. He'd disagree...

DR. CHANG

Okay, how about we hear what your *actual* husband is feeling?

WES

I'm feeling... great. This is gonna be great. Nothing is going to change. Except the thing where you die. I'm botching this moment. Let's just hug. Can we--

Wes hugs Stella tight, sweetly emotional. Dr. Chang joins in.

DR. CHANG

(then; breaking the hug)

That's right! I cured cancer, bitches! I mean, I'm obviously not the first person to "cure cancer." There have been other cases. But, I cured *your* cancer. So, will you come to a fund-raising gala for the hospital next week and say a few words about how incredible this is and, if it feels natural to work it into your speech, how incredible *I* am? Oh, and please bring your family.

STELLA

Of course. We'd be honored. I can't wait to tell them the good news tonight.

INT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul, Ida, Aiden, Elizabeth, Darrius, Fiona, Frank, Poppy, and a RANDOM BLONDE GIRL (30) all sit around the table. Ida stands, reading off a paper. A SCRUFFY MUTT plays underfoot.

STELLA (V.O.)

Unfortunately, my mother was so excited about giving her eulogy, she wouldn't let me get the good news out.

IDA

As a parent, you try to teach your child everything you know, so when you're gone you know they'll be okay. But Stella, you've always been the one to teach me... And I want you to know that once you're gone, I'll be okay. It won't be easy but--

STELLA

Mom, stop! There's something I need to tell you guys...

INT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Everyone cheers and jumps for joy. Aiden sabers a champagne bottle. Glass shatters everywhere.

AIDEN

Wow. That's harder than it looks.

IDA

Oh, this is just the most magical news!
(tears up; then)
I'll get more champagne.

As Ida leaves the room, Poppy moves to Stella.

POPPY

And here I thought your mom didn't have any tears left... Can't blame her for being weepy though. She knows the world's just a better place with you in it, kid.

STELLA

Thanks aunt Poppy.

Stella hugs Poppy, as the Random Blonde Girl watches.

STELLA (V.O.)

Poppy's not my real aunt. She's my mom's best friend. They own a little cheese shop together called *Brie Yourself*.

(off the RBG's stare)

But I have no idea who that lady is.

STELLA

(to Random Blonde Girl)

I'm sorry, who are you?

RANDOM BLONDE GIRL

I'm Aiden's special friend Betsy.

STELLA

Oh. Well, thank you for coming to my very intimate, living funeral, Betsy.

ELIZABETH

So, Stel, what are you going to do with the first day of the rest of your life?

STELLA

Well, now that I'm not dying, I should probably start "living like I'm living." So, maybe I'll trade in my death trap of a Vespa for something more sensible. Like a Buick. Or maybe I'll apply to college.

(Paul coughs)

Everything okay, Daddy?

PAUL

Me? Yes! Never been better--

DARRIUS

Well, I could be better. I wrote a killer eulogy that's going to waste. Nobody minds if I just... read it, do they?

Everyone shrugs. Stella nods Darrius on. As he begins...

STELLA (V.O.)

But as Darrius shared that I was...

DARRIUS
One in a million, girl!

STELLA (V.O.)
I noticed my dad's eyes glaze over in the way they always did when he was bracing for something bad to happen. But I didn't want to confront him at the party. So, I figured, I'd just come back tomorrow...

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY (D2)

Stella walks up the driveway. Ida comes out the door, carrying a suitcase as Paul follows behind her.

STELLA (V.O.)
Right as something bad was happening...

PAUL
Ida, can we please talk about this?

IDA
No, we can not. If any of the kids need me, I'll be at Poppy's.

Ida gets in her car and drives away. Stella turns to her dad.

STELLA
Dad, what's going on?

PAUL
I'm sorry sweetie, can't talk. Tee-time's in fifteen minutes. And your rent check for this month is on the kitchen counter.

Paul gets in his car and drives off, as Elizabeth pulls up.

ELIZABETH
Hey, where'd mom go? She's supposed to watch the twins today.

Aiden comes out of the house in a robe, eating a waffle.

STELLA
Aiden, do you know what's going on?

AIDEN
I'm pretty sure mom left dad. You guys want some waffles?
(off their looks)
I also have access to three flavors of Toaster Strudels.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (D2)

Stella and Elizabeth sits at the kitchen island, as Fiona & Frank rough house nearby. Aiden prepares toaster strudels.

STELLA

But mom and dad are the perfect couple.

AIDEN

We've got apple, berry, snickerdoodle...

STELLA

I don't want a Toaster Strudel.

AIDEN

Trust me, it'll help with what we're about to tell you.

(Stella takes the strudel)

The way mom and dad act around you is a show. For your benefit.

STELLA

I don't understand.

ELIZABETH

They aren't the perfect couple. We don't know why mom left, but we do know they have problems. Just like everyone does. They just kept them from you because Dr. Chang told us not to "dump in." She said a positive emotional environment would give you a better shot at beating cancer.

STELLA

So, you all have problems you've been hiding from me? For the last ten years?

AIDEN

Not me. I'm great.

ELIZABETH

No problems here.

STELLA

Are you both lying to me?

ELIZABETH

Obviously.

AIDEN

I'm stress eating.

STELLA

Okay, so... what are your problems?

LONG BEAT. Elizabeth decides to share on Aiden's behalf.

ELIZABETH

Aiden's a grown man who still lives with his parents, sells Adderall to soccer moms and uses your cancer to guilt them into sleeping with him.

AIDEN

And Elizabeth married a black man just to get mom and dad's to notice her.

STELLA

Oh my God. Is that true!?

AIDEN

Betsy is married.

ELIZABETH

Darrius is black.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(off Stella's look)

Obviously, I'm joking! Not about Darrius being black. He clearly is. But that's not why I married him. Aiden is a moron.

AIDEN

Well, Elizabeth's a woman.

(off their looks)

What? I thought we were pointing out things that are totally obvious.

ELIZABETH

I married him because I love him. Though, I did have children quickly to give mom and dad something positive to focus on...

(Frank & Fiona SCREAM)

And I sort of regret that.

AIDEN

Just like I sort of regret selling drugs and sleeping with married women.

STELLA

You do?

AIDEN

No! I do what I have to. Dad doesn't give handouts to his loser son.

(re: Stella's rent check)

Just to his terminally ill daughter. And I sleep with married women 'cause I'm not looking for a relationship, and neither are they 'cause they're already in one.

STELLA

Wow. Okay, well... Aiden, I think a real relationship might motivate you to get your life on track, so I'm going to fix you up. And Elizabeth, if you need more help with your kids... I can babysit.

ELIZABETH

Can you? You know nothing about kids.

STELLA

That's not true. I know a lot. They're tiny people but for some reason they eat full sized food. Okay, I don't know much, but that's because you never ask me to babysit. Probably, 'cause you didn't want to "dump in." But I'm okay now, so I want you to dump all over me. You know what I mean. I'll babysit whenever you want.

ELIZABETH

It's okay. I don't need help. Now that my book's finished, I have plenty of time.

STELLA

Wait, you finished your book? That's awesome. I can't wait to read--

ELIZABETH

Stella, calm down. I didn't mean *I* finished it. I meant *it's* finished. As in... my publisher killed it.

STELLA

That sounds like a bigger problem than your kids. Why didn't you lead with that? And why would he kill your book?

AIDEN

Probably because it's a personal memoir called "Stella Dies at The End."

Elizabeth shoots Aiden a look. Stella takes this in.

STELLA

Now I know why you never let me read it. You didn't want to spoil my own ending.

ELIZABETH

Are you mad?

STELLA

Of course. But not because you wrote it. And not because the title is lazy and obvious. I'm mad because you're not going to finish it. So, I don't die at the end? So what? Come up with a new ending.

ELIZABETH

It's a memoir, I can't make something up. I'd have to pitch my publisher a whole new story. And I don't have one to pitch.

STELLA

Then, it's settled. I'll babysit, so you have time to figure it out. Right, guys?

Stella puts her hand up to high-five Frank as he runs by, but Frank moves to avoid her... and topples over into a chair.

STELLA (V.O.)

Not surprisingly, Elizabeth did not immediately take me up on my offer to care for her children. So, I decided to go talk to my dad and find out what was really going on with him and mom.

INT. GOLF CLUB - PRO SHOP - DAY (D2)

Stella enters and marches up to a a GOLF PRO (30s).

STELLA

I'm looking for my father, Paul Ambrose?

GOLF PRO

I'm sorry, Mr. Ambrose cancelled his membership a few months ago. I've heard he's been hiding out at Powell's Books a lot lately... if that helps.

STELLA (V.O.)

It didn't help...

INT. POWELL'S BOOK SHOP - DAY (D2)

Stella wanders through the iconic store until she finally finds Paul, tucked in the corner reading a book on finance.

STELLA (V.O.)

I mean, it helped me find him. But I didn't like what I found. My father was always so strong-- like the Brawny Paper Towel guy sans flannel-- but today, he seemed... disturbingly human.

STELLA

Hey, Dad. Elizabeth just told me about the "dumping in" thing while Aiden forced me Toaster Strudel and claimed you thought he was a loser.

PAUL

He is a loser. He spent an entire week hiding our garden gnomes in places that would scare me in the dark.

STELLA

(laughs; then)

Sorry. That's just... funny-- Anyway, what's going on with you and mom?

PAUL

She's mad at me because I told her she might have to sell the cheese shop.

STELLA

What? Why? I thought it was doing great.

PAUL

It is doing great. I just... dipped into our retirement fund. And if we don't take the money from the cheese shop and invest it in something more aggressive, we'll probably never be able to retire.

STELLA

Why did you dip into your retirement?

STELLA (V.O.)

Part of me already knew the answer to that question... It was for me.

PAUL

Even with insurance, cancer is expensive. Then you add your trips, your wedding, your rent, the money for you to live on... before I knew it, it was all gone.

STELLA

All gone!? You said you "dipped."

PAUL

I did. Then I scooped. Then I shoveled. Now it's empty. It's like I dug my own grave. Sorry. Poor choice of words.

STELLA

It's okay. I was planning to be cremated.

PAUL

Look, I know I should have told your mother sooner, but I thought I could get us back on track once-- You know...

STELLA

I died?

PAUL

(nods; then)

But now that you're not dying, now that you want to go to college, I didn't know what else to do, so I told her the truth.

STELLA (V.O.)

I'd never seen my Dad not know what to do before. It was weird. And scary. And, apparently... my fault. So, it seemed like knowing what to do was on me now.

STELLA

Here's what you're gonna do. You're gonna figure out how to get your finances back on track without selling the shop. And I'm going to cut myself off. Right now.

PAUL

But what about college?

STELLA

I don't need college. I'll just find a job. I'm relatively competent and I fall somewhere between pretty cute and very pretty depending on ambient lighting and humidity so... I'll be good. Besides, I hear there's a very successful artisanal cheese shop that's hiring... Though that wouldn't really be cutting myself off, it'd be you embezzling my allowance, so... I'll find something on my own.

(off Paul's smile)

And, I'll go talk to mom.

PAUL

Really? You'd do that?

(Stella nods; then)

Thank you. But you may want to give her a day or two to calm down, first.

STELLA

Sure. I can do that. In the meantime, if there's anything else I can do...

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT (D2)

Stella stands in front of Wes holding the Scruffy Mutt. All their furniture is wooden & handmade.

WES

I don't understand why cutting yourself off means we have a dog now.

STELLA

Because Tumor is my dog. Well, he was. I adopted him when I was sick and then I decided to travel, met you, and I totally ditched him at my parents' house.

WES

And he clearly blames me for that. He peed right into my shoe. Not on my shoe, not around my shoe, but directly into my shoe so that it would puddle up. That's no accident. That's wet vengeance.

STELLA

No, it's not. He probably just got confused because your shoe smells like a public bathroom.

WES

It does? Why didn't you tell me sooner?

STELLA

I just realized. Chemo surpresses your sense of smell and mine's just starting to come back.

WES

If you couldn't smell anything, why have I been going out into the rain every time I have to fart?

STELLA

Because I hate the sound. Can we please stop talking about farts now?

WES

Yeah. Sorry.

STELLA

Will you just give Tumor a chance? I think he just might... grow on you.

WES

Cute. Fine. But I think we should change his name? Now that you're not sick, calling him Tumor feels kind of morbid.

STELLA

What about a nickname? Like... Tumi? Or Benny. Short for benign tumor.

WES

I guess I can live with Benny.
(Stella kisses him sweetly)
Alexa, play Sarah Bareilles.

STELLA

Actually, do you mind if we take the night off from sex? Since we're not worried this could be my last night on Earth, I thought we could get an extra hour or two of sleep. I have to work on my gala speech and find a job tomorrow.

WES

I wish my job could support us, but building hand-hewn furniture just ain't what it used to be. Actually, I have no idea what it used to be, but it's not lucrative. Should I go back into finance?

STELLA (V.O.)

Tempting. But I couldn't let him do that. After all, I'm the one who told him to get out of finance.

EXT. FLORENCE, ITALY - DAY (CANCER MOVIE FLASHBACK)

Stella and Wes stand in front the Statue of David, complete with a tiny, but very visible, penis.

WES

At the bank, all I do is move money that only exists in a computer from one screen to another. I wish I could make something like that. Something that lasts.

STELLA

Then quit your job. What have you got to lose. Besides a job you hate. Life's short. Like David's penis. Grab it by the balls and-- you look convinced, so I'll stop with the dick jokes now.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - CONTINUING

STELLA

You're not going back to finance. I want you to follow your manly Jesus dream. And I want to contribute. I need to learn to take care of myself. After I get a solid 8 hours of sleep.

WES

You know, sex doesn't have to take hours. What if we skipped the heavy foreplay, light massage, thirty minutes of sensual kissing and... just did it.

STELLA

Don't you like the sex we've been having?

WES

Of course I do. I'm just saying, now that we have our whole lives together... it might be fun to change things up.

STELLA

I thought you said nothing would change.

WES

I feel like you're doing that thing where I'm trying to talk about what's happening right now and you're talking about something much bigger.

STELLA (V.O.)

He was right. I was doing that. But I didn't want to admit it, so...

STELLA

Let's just go to bed.

Stella climbs into bed. Wes follows. He rolls over.

STELLA (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

WES

Going to bed?

STELLA

But I always fall asleep with my head on your chest. Unless... you don't like being my pillow anymore, either.

WES

What? No. I love being your pillow.

He offers his chest. She lays down and stares at the ceiling.

STELLA (V.O.)

As I settled in, I realized I was feeling... unsettled. Wes was too. So, he went to talk to his friends...

INT. PUBLIC REC CENTER - DAY (D3)

A GROUP of mostly middle-aged men and women sit and listen to Wes. A sign reads "Spousal Support Group for Terminally Ill."

WES

No sex last night. First time since we met. And then, this morning, she got up early to write a resume, realized she needed help 'cause she'd never written one before, but refused to ask me. It's like she wants to be *totally* independent.

An AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER (50s) chimes in.

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER

She may think that's what's expected.

WES

Maybe. But she can still lean on me. Not that she ever did. It was sort of the opposite. She always had an answer for everything. But now... I think she's scared to admit she might not.

SANTIAGO (50s) puts his hand on Wes' shoulder.

SANTIAGO

It's a scary thing to admit. Just give her some time. When she's ready, she'll ask for your help.

WES

Thanks, Santiago. I don't know what I'd do without you guys. You're the best.

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER

Wes, I want to take a moment to echo that back to you. You've been a real asset to this group. So, in honor of your amazing news... I ordered celebratory pizza.

As a SAD FAT GUY wheels in some pizza, Wes tears up.

SANTIAGO

Are you crying?

WES

No, it's the jalapenos on the pizza.

INT. TRAVEL MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY (D3)

Stella, sits in a swanky office opposite a STERN EDITOR.

STELLA (V.O.)

While Wes was weeping, I was trying to get a job with a totally bullshit resume.

STERN EDITOR

It says on here you have two years experience as a travel writer.

STELLA

(winks at him)

Well, then it must be true.

STERN EDITOR

Did you just wink at me?

STELLA

I think I did.

STERN EDITOR

Any particular reason?

STELLA

Nope.

(he stares her down)

Okay, so I may not have "worked" as a travel writer. But I did spend the last two years traveling. Because I was dying. I'm not anymore. It's a long cinematic story. Point is, I got to do the things people only dream of. So, I am qualified to write about that. I could do a column called ... "100 Vacations to Die For."

STERN EDITOR

Do you have any *writing* experience at all?

STELLA

I wrote my own wedding vows. I jot down deep thoughts on cocktail napkins.

STERN EDITOR

Sorry, it's going to be a no.

BEGIN JOB HUNTING MONTAGE:

- Stella is at a LOCAL RADIO STATION interviewing to be a DJ.

STELLA (V.O.)

I thought maybe I could be a DJ who gives advice to lost people. Turns out, you need to know how to DJ. I did not.

- Stella sits in an office next to a "Marlowe for Mayor" sign.

STELLA (V.O.)

Then, I thought I could work in politics. I know how to put a positive spin on negative situations. Turns out, you need to know about politics. I did not.

- Stella walks in and out of a VARIOUS BUSINESSES.

STELLA (V.O.)

And it just got worse from there. In movies like Rocky, montages make a period of painful transformation, look fun. But it turns out getting hit in the face a lot just hurts. Even if there's music.

INT. BREW-HA-HA COFFEE SHOP - DAY (D3)

Stella stands with a GRUFF MANAGER who puts a hat on her.

STELLA (V.O.)

So, I decided to lower my standards.

GRUFF MANAGER

Never show up without the hat.

STELLA

It wasn't exactly my dream job, but it was a start. So, I thought now might be a good time to go check on my mom.

EXT. POPPY'S HOUSE - EVENING (D3)

Stella walks up to an old craftsman house. She notices Ida and POPPY on the front porch. Suddenly, THEY KISS!

STELLA (V.O.)

I thought wrong.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. POPPY'S HOUSE - EVENING (D3)

We return to Stella still watching her mother and Poppy kiss.

STELLA (V.O.)

As I stood there, watching my mother make up for missing thirty years of The Lilith Fair, I realized why she loved her Subaru so much. Apparently, mildly offensive lesbian cliches were all my brain could handle. But, I had to say something...

STELLA

("bleeped" out)

WHAT THE FUCK?!!

Ida and Poppy break their kiss and turn to see Stella.

POPPY

Okay, I should probably stay out of this. I'll be inside if you need me--

STELLA

She doesn't. She's married!

Poppy goes inside, as Ida turns back to Stella.

IDA

Let's not attack Poppy. This isn't her fault. And it's not mine. Or your father's. In fact, I blame your cancer.
(off Stella's look)

It was eating away at all of us. I just didn't notice how far apart your father and I had grown until he told me about our retirement. He's been so closed off--

STELLA

He was trying to be a rock--

IDA

For you. But I need a partner. Who is honest with me. Who lets me in.

STELLA

So, you're having an affair with Poppy?

IDA

No. That was the first time anything has gotten physical with us. Well, the second time. Our connection is mainly emotional.

STELLA

So, you're having an emotional affair?

IDA

Will you stop saying affair? It makes it sound deceitful and tawdry.

STELLA

It is deceitful and tawdry.

IDA

You know, the end of my eulogy was all about how you taught me to live my truth. And how valuable that lesson was to me--

STELLA

How dare you throw my plucky, dying girl advice back in my face when it's not at all convenient to the point I'm making.

IDA

I'm just trying to explain that my truth right now is that I'm very confused. I'm upset and going through menopause... Do you know, when your father asked me to give up the shop for our retirement, I cared more about the shop?

STELLA

What are you saying? You don't want to retire with Dad?

IDA

I don't know what I want. For 30 years I've put our family first. And in the last 10, since you got sick... even more so. I just need some time to think about my needs. And Poppy's helping me.

STELLA

Well, when you figure out your needs, you need to talk to Dad about them. And give *him* a chance to fulfill them. After 30 years, you owe him that, don't you?

IDA

I'll talk to him. I promise. But, until I do, can we please keep this between us?

STELLA (V.O.)

I told her I would, but I had to tell someone. And everyone knows telling the person you're married to doesn't count.

EXT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING (D4)

Stella and Wes come walking out of their apartment building.

WES

I still can't believe your mom has a
lesbi-friend--

(off Stella's look)

I'll stop saying that. Look, I know
you've had a tough couple of days, but
this should cheer you up.

Wes stops them and points Stella towards a USED BUICK.

WES (CONT'D)

It's a Buick! Just like you wanted. Very
used, but very safe. And get this, it was
an even trade for the Vespa.

STELLA

I never said I wanted a Buick.

STELLA (V.O.)

I know, I said it. But the truth is, I
wasn't ready to be the girl from a broken
home who drives a Buick to her survival
barista job. I missed being the carefree
dying girl who knew how the world worked.

EXT. A BRIDGE OVER A CANAL - AMSTERDAM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Moments before Wes proposes, Stella & Wes lean over the water.

STELLA

*And that's how the world works. You just
stop resisting and go with the flow...
like the water under a bridge.*

Wes, enamored, kisses her passionately.

EXT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUING (D4)

STELLA (V.O.)

But I barely wanted to admit that to
myself, let alone Wes, so I stuck with...

STELLA

I never said it. Maybe you heard it, but
I never said it.

WES

How did I hear something you never said?

STELLA

I don't know. But, I have to get to work
and it's a fifteen minute walk.

WES

Why don't you drive your new car?

STELLA

Why don't *you* drive *your* new car?

STELLA (V.O.)

I should've appreciated the effort Wes
was making. And I should've driven my new
car because walking made me late for my
first day at Brew-Ha-Ha...

INT. BREW-HA-HA COFFEE SHOPPE - DAY (D4)

Stella stands at the counter in front of an IRRITATED WOMAN.

STELLA (V.O.)

...where I learned there are twenty-three
distinct ways to spell the name Julie.

Stella writes "Julie" on the side of a cup.

IRRITATED WOMAN

It's J.O.O.L.I.E. Joolie.

STELLA

Of course it is.

Stella scratches out "Julie" and rewrites "Joolie," then turns
to put the cup down and knocks over a bunch of other cups.
Stella's KNOW-IT-ALL CO-WORKER (16) turns to her.

KNOW-IT-ALL CO-WORKER

Wow, you are kinda tragic. How can you
not handle this job? It's meant for a
teenager and you're like thirty.

STELLA

I'm twenty-five.

KNOW-IT-ALL CO-WORKER

What's your point?

STELLA

That I'm not thirty.

KNOW-IT-ALL CO-WORKER

Stop talking about how old you are.
You'll scare off the inbound man-meat.

Stella turns to see Aiden duck into the shop.

STELLA
Gross, that's my brother.

KNOW-IT-ALL CO-WORKER
Well, I call dibs.

STELLA
You don't have to call dibs, because
that's my brother.

Stella waves the KIACW away, but she lurks nearby.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Aiden, what are you doing here?

AIDEN
You remember Betsy, that married girl--

STELLA
Yes. You brought her to my funeral.

AIDEN
Her husband found out we've been sleeping
together and now he's trying to kill me.

STELLA
What is wrong with our family?

AIDEN
I don't have time to go into the detail
necessary to answer that question.

Aiden notices an IMPOSING MAN out the window.

AIDEN (CONT'D)
Hide me.

Aiden hops the counter and hides. The Imposing Man enters,
looks around and leaves. Stella's Gruff Manager approaches.

GRUFF MANAGER
Why is there a man behind the counter?

AIDEN
She was hiding me from certain death. I'm
her brother Aiden. And I was just going.

Stella nods, Aiden flees. Stella turns to the Gruff Manager.

STELLA
Can't pick your family, right? Well, back
to the grind! The coffee grind.

GRUFF MANAGER
Hilarious. Where is your hat?

STELLA (V.O.)
For some reason this guy did not
appreciate my charm. And neither did Wes.

INT. PUBLIC REC CENTER - DAY (D4)

Wes enters the support group, already in progress.

WES
Hey, sorry I'm late. I think Stella and I
just had our first fight. Not sure why--

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER
Wes, I'm sorry to interrupt, but I
thought I made it clear last time that
you're no longer a part of this group.

WES
What? How did you make that clear?

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER
We had a party. I ordered pizza.

WES
That wasn't clear. Otherwise, my parents
have been trying to kick me out of my
family for my birthday every year since I
was five.

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER
Wes, this is a support group for spouses
of the terminally ill. And you... are no
longer that.

WES
You're kicking me out of my own group?

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER
It's not your group. The group belongs to
no one. And everyone. Except you.

WES
Wow. I am not going to handle this well.
I wish I had a supportive group of people
I could talk to about it. But I don't.

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - EVENING (D4)

Stella puts her phone away as she walks up to the house.

STELLA (V.O.)

After work, I stopped by to check on my Dad... and turns out, he wasn't handling his problems very well either...

INT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS (D4)

Stella enters to find clothes everywhere, and Paul sitting at his laptop, transfixed. His eyes are bloodshot.

STELLA

Dad, are you okay? This place is a mess. And you seem... twitchy.

PAUL

Your mother usually cleans. And Aiden gave me Adderall. Have you tried it? You can go days without eating.

STELLA

Okay. Uh, why don't we take a break from... that... and get you some food.

PAUL

I can't now. Besides there is no food. Your mother usually shops. Thankfully though, I've figured out how to get her back and save the cheese shop.

STELLA

You did? How?

PAUL

High tech crypto-currency. It's gonna be bigger than Bitcoin. I bought in at a penny a coin and it went up to seventy-two cents in three days. So, last night I bought more at seventy-two, and it's already grown to three dollars a coin--

STELLA

I don't understand anything you said. But, I think it'd be best not to do anything too risky. What if you lose everything?

PAUL

Honey, if I lose your mother... I have lost everything.

STELLA (V.O.)

It was too hard to lie to my father about my mother, so instead I went home to lie to my husband about my behavior earlier.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (D4)

Stella comes home to find Wes sitting in the living room, with Elizabeth's kids and the dog running around him in circles.

STELLA (V.O.)

Lucky for me, Elizabeth's publisher agreed to let her pitch a new take on her book so... she needed me to baby-sit.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (D4)

Stella and Fiona are dressed up like princesses complete with over the top makeup, as Wes helps Frank with science homework.

STELLA (V.O.)

Which meant Wes and I could act like real parents and use the kids as an excuse not to talk about our problems.

FIONA

Aunty Stelly, can I wear your ring?

STELLA

(giving over wedding ring)
Sure, Fiona. Why not?

FRANK

Uncle Wes, can you help me write five ways people are making global warming?

WES

Well, Frank, that's complicated. There's no evidence to prove that mankind is playing an active role in global warming.

STELLA

Hahaha! What are you, a Republican?

WES

Yeah.

(SFX: LOUD GULP)

Did you just audibly gulp?

STELLA

No. But I should have.

FIONA

It was me, aunt Stella. I think I swallowed your wedding ring.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. THE HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - NIGHT (D4)**

X-RAY IMAGES of Stella's ring inside of Fiona's stomach, as...

STELLA (V.O.)

Next thing I knew, me and Tucker Carlson had taken our fake kids on a very real trip to the hospital. And while I made Dr. Chang sneak us free x-rays, so I wouldn't have to tell Elizabeth about any of this... Wes was teaching Frank about trickle down economics.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT (D4)

Wes and a worried Frank share snacks from the vending machine.

WES

I know it seems like the rich will just keep getting richer, and they will--

FRANK

Is my sister going to die?

WES

What? No. Why would you think that?

FRANK

Because you go to the hospital to die.

WES

Actually, you go to the hospital to get better. Just like Aunty Stelly did.

FRANK

Why are you and Aunty Stelly fighting?

WES

How did you know we were fighting?

FRANK

I'm very observant. And I have parents.

WES

Right. Well, I'm not sure if it's fighting, or if she doesn't think I'm a very good husband.

FRANK

You know you can always get better at things you're not good at. I used to be bad at riding a bike, but now I'm not.

WES

What if I can't get better?

FRANK

Then you ask your mom if you can take an art class and do painting instead. Unless you're too old to do art now. Maybe you should ask a grown-up about this stuff.

WES

I would, but I got kicked out of my support group and I don't have any other friends in Portland.

FRANK

If you want to meet new people, come to my kindergarten. We're a good group.

WES

Thanks, bud. But I think I need my own group... So... that's what I'm going to do. Start my own group... Thanks, Frank. Good chat. I can't believe you're only 5.

FRANK

I'm very mature for my age.

(then)

I have to go pee-pee. Can you take me?

INT. THE HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - NIGHT (D4)

Stella and Fiona sits with Doctor Chang who holds up an x-ray.

DR. CHANG

All good. Your wedding ring will pass. You just have to keep a close eye on her stool. "One ring to stool them all." It's a *Lord of The Rings* joke. I'm a nerd.

STELLA

I can't ask my sister to see if her kid's shitting diamonds without an explanation.

FIONA

That's a bad word.

STELLA

Don't judge me. You ate my ring.

DR. CHANG

Hey, I hope you know how sorry I am about the whole "dumping in" thing. Nobody's ever taken it so literally before.

STELLA

We're all just trying to adjust to a post-cancer world. A world where my family's a mess and I'm married to a Republican. It's a confounding time.

DR. CHANG

Tell me about it. I was going to spend my whole life trying to cure cancer... but it didn't take that long. Now, I have no idea what to do with myself.

STELLA

I feel like you should probably keep curing cancer. Seems pretty selfish to do it once and then stop.

DR. CHANG

What I meant was, my whole life has been centered on this one thing, so I haven't done anything else. Like date. It's too bad I didn't cure a strapping, single man. Then he'd owe me his life and I'd collect on that debt all night long.

STELLA

You know, I may not be a single man, but... my brother is. And he could really use a bright, available woman to date--

DR. CHANG

I appreciate that, but I can't date my patient's brother.

STELLA

I'm not your patient. Not anymore.

Stella winks at her.

DR. CHANG

Did you just wink at me?

STELLA

Yeah, I've been doing that a lot lately. Not sure why. But give Aiden a shot. He's coming to the gala tomorrow...

DR. CHANG

I'll think about it. Speaking of the gala, how's your speech coming along?

STELLA (V.O.)

Crap. I forgot all about the speech!

STELLA

Great. It's practically writing itself.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (D4)

Stella and Fiona come out to find Wes, Frank and Elizabeth.

STELLA

Lizzy? How did you know we were here?

ELIZABETH

Wes told me. Question is, why didn't you?

STELLA

I wanted you to focus on your book.

ELIZABETH

Well, I've decided to give up. I tried, but I've got nothing. Did they eat?

FIONA

I ate fancy jewelry!

ELIZABETH

Okay. Come on, we'll pick up a pizza.

Elizabeth and her kids walk out. Stella calls after her.

STELLA

Please don't give up! And please keep a close eye on Fiona's stool!

(then; to Wes)

Thanks a lot, Narc.

WES

So, it's not okay if your family lies to you but it's fine for you to lie to them?

STELLA

No. That's why I needed you to do it.

WES

It's the same thing.

STELLA

Agree to disagree.

WES

That's not how that works. You can't just deny a fact and say agree to disagree.

STELLA

Yes, you can. You should know that, you're a Republican.

STELLA (V.O.)

I knew that comment was unfair. And so did Wes. But neither of us said so. It felt like a wall had formed between us.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT (D4)

OVERHEAD SHOT: Stella and Wes sleep with a wall of pillows between them. Benny lays atop the Great Wall of Pillows.

STELLA (V.O.)

Mostly because Wes built one out of pillows. Apparently, he was sick of my Republican jokes, but didn't realize the irony of building a wall to keep them out. Regardless, I didn't sleep that night. Instead, I laid awake wondering how I could have been so blind to reality for so long. Then, just before dawn...

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING (D5)

Stella slinks out of bed as Wes and Benny sleep. She tiptoes past them and exits.

STELLA (V.O.)

Something dawned on me. Other than the dawn itself. I knew what Elizabeth's book should be about. What happens when you realize the end isn't the end at all, but the beginning of a whole new story. So, I decided to run from my problems with Wes and go solve Elizabeth's.

INT. BOOK PUBLISHING OFFICE - DAY (D5)

A dated office. A CURMUDGEONLY PUBLISHER glares at Stella.

STELLA (V.O.)

Apparently, I should have made an appointment, but I don't let things like rules, or closed doors, or a lady yelling "You can't go in there..." stop me.

STELLA

Just think about it. The book starts when Stella was supposed to die, but doesn't.

CURMUDGEONLY PUBLISHER

And then what happens?

STELLA

A lot of stuff. Like, she finds out her family has been lying to her for the last ten years. Her brother is a drug dealer, her sister resents having children, her mother is a lesbian. And her father lost their life savings. All true by the way.

CURMUDGEONLY PUBLISHER

I like it. But only if you write it. It's your story. Elizabeth's just a supporting character. So... what do you say?

Stella's phone DINGS with a TEXT from Ida. She glances at it.

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - DAY (D5)

Stella finds Ida lurking in the bushes in her own front yard.

STELLA (V.O.)

But I didn't have time to say anything because my mother went to talk to my father but got stuck in the yard. Her text said if I wanted her to talk to him, I needed to bring her three mini-bottles of vodka and a slim-jim because she skipped breakfast and she wanted the vodka to have a friend in her stomach.

Stella pulls out four mini-bottles of vodka and keeps one.

IDA

You sure you want me to talk to him? Because I could spend an entire day in this well manicured bush.

STELLA (V.O.)

Is something you never want to hear your possibly lesbian mother say.

STELLA

I'm sure. Dad loves you, he might be a little hurt, but he'll understand.

As they go in, Stella is STARTLED by a hidden GNOME.

INT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (D5)

Paul paces back and forth as Ida and Stella sit at the island.

PAUL

I don't understand...

STELLA
She's saying she's sorry.

IDA
I'm saying I'm in love with
Poppy.

STELLA
Wait, what? I thought you were here to
give your marriage a chance.

IDA
I thought I was, too. But when I pounded
those mini-bottles and snapped into that
Slim-Jim... something in me snapped. I
realized I've been lying to myself. And I
can't do it anymore. I love Poppy.

STELLA
Mom, what are you doing?

IDA
I guess... I'm coming out. As a bi.
Sexual person. Is that how you say that?
I'm new, so I don't know the lingo yet.

PAUL
You can't be bi. You're almost sixty.

IDA
Sexuality doesn't have a statute of
limitations, Paul. Sexuality is fluid.

PAUL
Really? Where did you hear that?

IDA
Stella said it, when she brought home the
girl she was dating from Nob Hill.

STELLA
Mom, that's unfair. I was dying then and
doing what made me happy in the moment.

IDA
Well, I'm dying too. We all are. Me
sooner than you now. So, shouldn't I do
what makes me happy?

PAUL
I thought I made you happy.

IDA
You did. A long time ago.

PAUL
Well, if that's how you really feel...
we're definitely selling the cheese shop!

IDA
So that's how it's going to
be? I'm honest with you and
you threaten the one thing
that's mine, just because
you're jealous of Poppy?

PAUL (CONT'D)
(then; quickly)
Yes. That's how. And it's not
yours. I'm an investor and I
don't appreciate-- I'm not
jealous, I'm angry!

Paul and Ida continue fighting, as...

STELLA (V.O.)
As I stood there, watching my perfect
parents declare that they couldn't stand
being in the same room together, I
couldn't help but wonder...

STELLA
Guys, what about the gala tonight?

IDA
I'll be there.

PAUL
Me too. We're still a family!

STELLA (V.O.)
I know that sounded selfish. I'd just
promised Dr. Chang we'd all be there for
her and I didn't want to disappoint.
(Stella's phone BUZZES)
Speaking of disappointing... that was my
boss. Apparently, he expected me to be at
my job on time and actually do work there.

INT. BREW-HA-HA COFFEE SHOPPE - DAY (D5)

Stella, miserable, takes an order from a SCRAWNY HIPSTER.

STELLA
Can I get a name for the order?

SCRAWNY HIPSTER
Yeah, it's Timothy.
(Stella writes his name)
Actually, it's Timothi with an I.

STELLA
That's how I spelled it.

SCRAWNY HIPSTER
The I is at the end.

STELLA

No, it isn't. You can't just decide to make a Y an I because you feel like it. Because you want to make yourself happy at everyone else's expense. Words don't end with the letter I.

TIMOTHY

What about fungi? Or cacti? Or magi? Or the first person pronoun, I. It's one letter, but technically it's at the end.

STELLA

Technically you're a scrawny little bitch, Timothy.

Stella's Gruff Manager walks up behind her and chimes in.

GRUFF MANAGER

I apologize. Drink's on the house.
(then; to Stella)
What's wrong with you?

STELLA

I'm dying of cancer!

GRUFF MANAGER

Oh God. I'm so sorry. Is that true?

STELLA

Yes, but not the cancer part.

GRUFF MANAGER

The cancer part was the only part.

STELLA (V.O.)

I believe this is the sort of moment people refer to as "rock bottom."

STELLA

I'm fired, aren't I?

The Gruff Manager nods, then swipes her hat from her head. Off Stella, horrified at herself and humiliated...

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVEINT. PUBLIC REC CENTER - DAY (D5)

Wes enters the support group, already in progress.

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER

Wes, what are you doing here? I thought you understood that--

WES

You run the least supportive support group in Portland? Yeah, I get it. I'm not here for you, I'm here for them. I wanted to let you all know that I'm starting my own support group. It'll be just like this one except everybody's welcome and there will be free beer. As long as you order a domestic draft off the happy hour menu.

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER

Wes, you can't start your own group.

WES

Oh, really? And why not?

AUTOCRATIC GROUP LEADER

Because you have to be a licensed therapist to lead a support group in the state of Oregon.

WES

Huh. That did not come up when I Googled my idea. Not a problem. I won't lead it. And it won't be a support group. It'll be a support... bunch... of people who run the bunch by committee. Who's with me?

(nobody moves)

Not the response I was hoping for. Well, I'll be over at "Two Priests and A Rabbi Walk Into A" Bar if you change your mind.

INT. "TWO PRIESTS AND A RABBI WALK INTO A..." BAR - DAY (D5)

Wes sits alone at the bar. Santiago walks up to him.

WES

Santiago, glad you made it. Two people isn't quite a bunch, but it's a start.

SANTIAGO

Actually, I came to say I can't be a part of your... bunch.

WES

Not showing up would have said that.

SANTIAGO

Yeah, but I wanted to say it in person. You're a good guy. And I'm happy for you. But hearing about how hard it is to have a healthy wife, while I'm on the brink of losing mine is a special kind of torture.

WES

Oh... right. I'm sorry. I'm a dick. And that's probably why no one else is here. Thank you for saying something.

(stands; offers his hand)

And good luck with everything.

SANTIAGO

Hey, I was told there would be free beer.

(Wes is confused)

Just cause I don't want to be in your bunch doesn't mean we can't be friends.

WES

Friends? That sounds great. And beer is on me. Today. Since we're friends, maybe next week you buy? We'll play it by ear.

(Santiago smiles)

Hey, do you think maybe I could ask you one quick, healthy wife-related question? Just for old time's sake?

(Santiago nods; conceding)

Stella's mad at me and I want to say I'm sorry, but I don't know what I did wrong.

SANTIAGO

Yeah, that happens a lot. First rule of a normal marriage... Don't worry about what you did wrong and don't say you're sorry. Just write it on a card and send it with a lot of flowers.

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - AIDEN'S GUEST HOUSE - DAY (D5)

Stella walks up to the door of Aiden's guest house and knocks.

STELLA (V.O.)

After I got fired, I went to see my chronically unemployed brother. Because he couldn't judge me. And because he has the best chronic. Do people still call weed chronic? Or is it just Snoop Dog?

Aiden opens the door and smiles.

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Stella and Aiden lay on the grass, smoking a joint.

STELLA

I can't believe I played the cancer card.

AIDEN

I can't believe mom's "a bi." The cancer card makes total sense. It's a great card. I love that card. That card helped me lose my virginity. Seven times.

STELLA

Well, you can't use it anymore. And neither can I.

AIDEN

Bummer.

STELLA

Tell me about it. I mean, what if I don't have another card to play? What if cancer was all I really had?

AIDEN

(silence; then)

Were you asking me, or yourself?

STELLA

Not sure. I used to have all the answers, but now I don't know anything at all.

AIDEN

That's called growing up.

STELLA

What do you know about growing up? You still mix chocolate milk in your mouth.

AIDEN

Because that's the right way to do it.

(off Stella's look)

Look, I know enough about growing up to know... it's not for me. I also know, it doesn't happen overnight. It takes decades. So, you can't give up. You beat certain death, so I think you can figure out how to handle uncertain life.

STELLA

You're right. Hey, can I steal that line for my speech tonight?

AIDEN

That depends. What'd I just say?

STELLA

You don't remember? We just had an entire conversation.

AIDEN

We did?

STELLA

Yes. You gave me good advice. And as a thank you... I told you that I'm setting you up with Dr. Chang tonight.

AIDEN

You did? Was I okay with that?

STELLA

You were really excited about it. And you said you'd wear a tie.

AIDEN

Weird. That doesn't sound like me.

EXT. PORTLAND STREET - LATER

Stella walks down the street.

STELLA (V.O.)

Now that I knew what I wanted to say in my speech, I had to write it down. So, I ducked into a bar and grabbed some cocktail napkins and started writing.

Stella ducks into a bar.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (D5)

Stella enters...

STELLA (V.O.)

And about thirty napkins later, my speech was finally done and I was ready to--

Stella notices that the room is FILLED with flowers. Wes stands in a tux, ready for the gala.

WES

I'm sorry.

STELLA

For what?

WES

For whatever I did, or didn't do, that upset you this week.

STELLA

You didn't do anything. I was just... having trouble adjusting to so much new information. But, if we're going to spend the next sixty years together, we can't give up when things go sideways. We have to double down and be totally honest with each other so that we don't end up like my parents. You go first. Lay some truth.

WES

Why do I have to go first?

STELLA

Because I won the coin toss.

WES (CONT'D)

(quickly)

When was there a coin toss?

STELLA

Happened earlier. You missed it. Just tell me one thing you haven't told me.

WES

Love Actually isn't my favorite movie.

STELLA

(GASPS; then okay)

Go on...

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER (D5)

Stella puts on her dress for the gala, as Wes stands by.

WES

I'd like you to spank me. Not all the time, but maybe during sex. Or if we're playing a team sport and I do a good job.

INT. BUICK - LATER (D5)

Stella rides in the passenger seat, as Wes drives.

WES

I lost the TV remote. I let you think it was you, but the truth is, it was me.

EXT. SWANKY HOTEL - ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Stella and Wes walk up to the door of the gala.

WES

I don't like sleeping with your head on my chest. It's nice for a minute, but then my arm falls asleep and I think I'm developing permanent nerve damage. And, if I can't lift my hands over my shoulders, how will I ever wash my hair?

Dr. Chang approaches in a fancy dress.

DR. CHANG

Stella! Wes. Your sister and her family are inside. Where's everybody else?

STELLA

Oh... they should all be on their way. Especially, Aiden.

WES

Why especially Aiden?

And that's when Aiden walks up... with Betsy.

STELLA

Aiden. You brought Betsy. Here. Tonight.

AIDEN

Nothing gets by you, Stel. Betsy, you know these two. And this is Dr. Chang. She saved my sister's life.

DR. CHANG

Just doing my job... Which reminds me, I have some... job left to do. In there.

Dr. Chang points inside. Stella shoots Aiden a look.

INT. SWANKY HOTEL - NIGHT (D5)

Stella, Wes, Aiden and Betsy enter. Stella pulls Aiden aside.

STELLA

Did you forget Betsy's married to a very large man who wants to kill you?

AIDEN

No. But he's out of town. So it's fine.

STELLA

It's not fine. It's messed up. I told you I was setting you up with Dr. Chang.

AIDEN

Oh, that's right. I totally forgot.
Probably for the best. I'm not really the
kind of guy that doctors date.

Aiden walks ahead and sits at the table with Betsy, Elizabeth,
Darrius, Fiona & Frank and Wes. Elizabeth turns to Stella.

ELIZABETH

Hey, Stella, I brought you a little thank
you for stealing my book deal...

Elizabeth tosses Stella a ZIPLOCK BAG FULL OF POOP.

STELLA

First, I didn't steal your book deal. I
did not say yes to your creepy publisher.
And second... this is a bag of poop.

ELIZABETH

Happy ring hunting.

Stella winces at the bag, as Ida arrives with Poppy.

IDA

Hello, everyone...

STELLA

Poppy, what are you doing here?

POPPY

You invited me at your living funeral. I
know circumstances have changed since
then, but I'm here to support you.

IDA

And she's my date.

ELIZABETH

Your date? Did I miss something?

DARRIUS

I definitely did.

AIDEN

Mom's decided to be "a bi" with Poppy.

POPPY

We don't have to label it.

Paul walks up, already angry at the sight of Poppy.

PAUL

Then how are we supposed to explain it to our grandchildren?

IDA

Paul, don't make a scene.

AIDEN

Just curious. Is Poppy going to be your date to family dinners now, too?

IDA

No, honey. Because... I'm not hosting family dinners anymore. No one ever really appreciated all the work I put into them by myself. So... I'm done.

PAUL

You can't be done, Ida. That's not how family works.

STELLA

Dad. Mom. Can't we just--

But that's when Dr. Chang steps up to the podium ON STAGE.

DR. CHANG

Who's ready to get this evening started?

(the LIGHTS DIM)

As you know, we recently became the first hospital in Oregon to cure a form of leukemia in one of our long term patients. She's a remarkable young woman who is here tonight with her family and we've asked her to say a few words.

A floodlight lands on Stella, as everyone claps.

STELLA (V.O.)

As I sat in the spotlight, it dawned on me. I could still save this. This could be one of those epic movie moments where it seems like all is lost, but then the heroine gives a sweeping, heroic speech that simultaneously rallies her disparate family and also raises money for cancer.

INT. SWANKY HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Stella is on stage holding a stack of cocktail napkins.

STELLA

So, what I'm saying is... most people think death is the opposite of life.

(MORE)

STELLA (CONT'D)

But it's not. Death is the opposite of birth. Life has no opposite. Which makes sense... because life is a circle which means it has no beginning and no end.

Stella fumbles through her napkins, as...

STELLA (V.O.)

This was not going to be one of those moments. By the time I got to the eighth napkin, I realized just how high I was when I wrote this speech.

Stella flips through a bunch of napkins which say things like "Why is 1 The Loneliest Number? It's also part of 11-19." "Tomato / To Mate, Oh! Discuss amongst yourselves" and "Big-ass napkin is not the same as Big Ass-Napkin. Remember that."

STELLA

So... if life is a circle, why are we obsessed with making progress? Because in a circle, if you move forward, eventually you end up behind where you started. But thank you, Dr Chang. And Portland Memorial for... chubbing up my circle.

A few people clap. Dr. Chang comes out to the podium.

DR. CHANG

Thank you, Stella. That was a speech.

As Dr. Chang keeps talking, Stella returns to her table.

PAUL

Stella, are you on drugs?

STELLA

No, but I may have been when I wrote that. What I was trying to say was--

IDA

Honey, where did you get drugs?

AIDEN

I think we all know the answer to that question. Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH

Can we please not talk about drugs in front of my kids?

AIDEN

Relax, Mom. It was just weed. It's legal.

IDA

Just because weed is legal now doesn't mean it's okay to use it.

AIDEN

Actually, that's exactly what it means.

PAUL

I don't think you're in a position to lecture anyone on acceptable behavior.

POPPY

Paul, I know how hard this must be--

PAUL

Do you, Poppy? Do you have any idea how hard it is to watch your wife of three decades leave you? Or what it feels like to think, "At least if she was with a man, I could beat the crap out of him!"

POPPY

Nope, I guess I don't.

IDA

That's mature, Paul. As usual, you'd rather do anything other than be vulnerable about your feelings--

PAUL

What do you want to hear, Ida? That I've been scared every day for the last ten years, because I thought we were going to lose our little girl? Because I was. Or that I used to cry in the shower, so the kids couldn't hear? Because I did. You didn't have a monopoly on grief. But unlike you, I didn't have the luxury of wearing my heart on my sleeve. Because one of us had to be strong for our kids. One of us had to make them feel like their parents could protect them. And you may not want to admit it, but you needed me to be strong for you too.

IDA

I wanted to hear all of that. I wanted to feel like we were in it together.

STELLA

Guys, please. You both did your best to get through an impossible situation. To me, you were both perfect. That's what I was trying to say up there.

WES

That's what you were going for? Because that did not come across at all.

STELLA

Not helping, Wes. Look, Mom, Dad, I know deep down you still love each other, because you taught us all what love is. And Aiden, if you don't want to date doctors, that's fine, but you do deserve better than Betsy. And Lizzy, I don't want your book deal. I want you to come up with another story. One of your own.

ELIZABETH

Don't you get it? I don't have a story of my own. None of us do. Because we've all spent the last decade living in yours...

INT. HOSPITAL - DR. CHANG'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Stella (15) and her family get the news from Dr. Chang.

PAUL

We're here for you. No matter what.

They all share an emotional group hug. But, we push past that.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER (FLASHBACK)

Stella smiles at her strong family, then enters the bathroom.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

Mom and Dad's marriage has been broken for a very long time...

As soon as she's gone, Ida falls apart. She reaches out to Paul, who can't bare it. He pushes his tears, and Ida, away.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

And Aiden and I weren't equipped to hold them together.

A frightened Aiden hugs Ida, who collapses into his arms, as a worried Elizabeth watches Paul walk down the hall.

INT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - ELIZABETH'S ROOM - LATER (FLASHBACK)

Elizabeth sits in her room, dressed and ready to go out dancing (like she and Stella do in the earlier flashback). She looks at an acceptance letter from Columbia.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

I tried. I even turned down a writing scholarship in New York, so I could stay and help them take care of you.

There's a knock at the door. Elizabeth crumbles it up and throws it in the trash as Stella comes in with BODY PAINT.

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME TIME (FLASHBACK)

Aiden takes a hit from a joint. A tear rolls from his eye..

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

But Aiden... He was terrified when he realized how easily he could lose someone he loved. That's why he won't put himself out there with women. That's why--

AIDEN (V.O.)

I'm sorry, but I'd just like to say...

INT. SWANKY HOTEL - CONTINUING (D5)

Everyone is where we left them.

AIDEN

I feel like you're psychoanalyzing me unnecessarily. My life isn't some effort to guard a deep emotional wound. I'm good. In fact, never been better.

IMPOSING MAN (O.S.)

I knew it! You are so dead!

Aiden turns to see the Imposing Man barreling towards him. Wes and Betsy break up the fight as Paul, Ida and Poppy erupt into AD-LIBBED fighting about how Paul should be beating up Poppy. Darrius and Elizabeth AD-LIB a fight about how she thinks she doesn't have her own story. What about him?

STELLA (V.O.)

As I watched the gala and my life descend into chaos, I did the only thing I could do...

(grabs wine bottle; EXITS)

I got the hell out of there.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX**INT. THE HOSPITAL - EMPTY PATIENT'S ROOM - NIGHT (D5)**

Stella, still in her dress, sits in a hospital bed, drinking wine from the bottle and watching a sappy cancer movie on TV. After a beat, a CANCER GIRL in a hospital gown (15) passes by the open door, notices Stella and hovers.

CANCER GIRL

I don't think patients are allowed to wear Vera Wang or drink wine.

STELLA

Good thing I'm not a patient, then.

Cancer Girl enters the room and hops up on the adjacent bed.

CANCER GIRL

So, why are you here?

STELLA

I just like the views of the city from this window. And the free movies.

STELLA (V.O.)

Also, when I had cancer, this was my room. And at this moment... it was the only place that felt like home.

STELLA

Why are you here?

CANCER GIRL

No reason. I'm good. My pancreas has a spot of cancer though, so we had to check it out. Now... let me guess... bad week?

STELLA

One of the worst.

CANCER GIRL

What happened?

STELLA

Oh, nothing. I just found out I was cured of cancer. And then I found out... Dying was easy. Living is harder.

CANCER GIRL

That's from Hamilton.

STELLA

I know, I saw it on Broadway. Lynn Manuel
Miranda gave me free front row seats
because I had cancer.

CANCER GIRL

Nice. Way to play the cancer card! Sorry,
you were saying...

STELLA

I really thought I had the perfect
family, the perfect husband, and aside
from impending death, the perfect life.
But, turns out, it was all a lie. And the
worst part is, there's nothing I can do
about it. My cancer ruined everyone's
lives, and I can't fix anything.

CANCER GIRL

You know, you sound like one of the manic
pixie dream girls from these terrible
cancer movies, running around trying to
fix everybody else's problems so she can
avoid facing her own fears...

STELLA

That is not what I'm doing.

STELLA (V.O.)

That is exactly what I was doing.

CANCER GIRL

It won't work. Life is a lesson and in
some messed up twist of fate, it's a
lesson we can only teach ourselves.

STELLA (V.O.)

I don't know what was most annoying about
this girl. The fact she was so sure of
herself, the fact she was right, or the
fact she sounded just like I used to.

CANCER GIRL

The people you love aren't two-
dimensional characters in a cancer movie.
You can't control what happens to them.
All you can do is accept them for who
they really are. And accept yourself.
After all... the secret to living is the
same as the secret to dying. You have to
let go. You have to stop resisting what
is and just... go with the flow--

STELLA

Like water under a bridge... I know. I've been giving people that advice since before you were born, kid. But I gotta hand it to you... you're good. Maybe even better than me in my prime.

CANCER GIRL

I'm Sadie by the way.

STELLA

Hi Sadie, I'm Stella. If you ever want to talk... about cancer, or anything I'd be happy to...

(off Sadie's look)

Listen. Just... listen.

SADIE

Thanks. I may take you up on that.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Stella walks down the hall and spots Wes walking towards her.

WES

Hey, I thought I might find you here.

STELLA (V.O.)

And that's when I knew exactly what I needed to do...

STELLA

Shut up and get in the closet.

WES

That was the last thing my dad said to my brother before they stopped speaking.

Stella ignores his comment and shoves him into...

INT. THE HOSPITAL - SUPPLY CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Stella and Wes fall into the closet.

WES

I'm not sure what's happening...

(Stella SPANKS HIM)

Okay.

STELLA

You like that?

WES

I do. Don't love the Q&A afterwards...

She spansks him again... and it escalates into QUICKIE SEX.

WES (CONT'D)

Wow. That was...

STELLA

Hot. I had no idea we could get so much done in such a short window.

WES

Was it too short?

STELLA

It was perfect. Actually, no it wasn't, because there is no such thing as perfect. But, it was... pretty good.

WES

I'll take that.

STELLA

Listen, I'm sorry for... whatever I did, or didn't do. And I'm not saying that because I don't know, I'm saying that because I did too many things to list.

WES

It's okay, you had an epic week.

STELLA

I know, right? But seriously, I'm sorry I never tried to get to know the real you. I really want to. And I want you to know the real me. And the real me is... terrified. I have been ever since I found out I was going to live...

WES

What are you terrified of?

STELLA

The future. That I'll screw it up. Or waste it. Or that civilization as we know it will end and I'll be stuck living in a dystopian Water World where men make riding jetskis look macho and fresh water is currency.

WES

Lucky for you, I can shred on a jetski.

STELLA

Just the fact that you would say that makes me feel like you can't.

(MORE)

STELLA (CONT'D)

(looks Wes in the eye)

The thing I'm really afraid of is finding out you're not okay with all of this.

(off his look)

Our forever just got a whole lot longer than you were expecting. I mean what about Margot Robbie? We agreed you'd marry her after I was gone. I don't want to come between the two of you.

WES

Even if Margot Robbie showed up in this closet, right now, naked and very available to me, she'd be out of luck. I'm already married to the most amazing woman west of the Mississippi.

STELLA

West of the Mississippi?

WES

It's a big country. I can't rule out the entire eastern seaboard.

(then; sincere)

Stella, I know I promised to love you for the rest of your life. But the truth is, I was always going to love you for the rest of mine. You just weren't going to be here to see it. But now you will.

STELLA

You are going to get so old.

WES

So will you. It's going to be gross. And I'm going to love every second of it.

(then)

And I can help you deal with your crazy family. After all, mine's been crazy my entire life, so I'm kind of an expert.

Maps For The Getaway (Canyons Ver.) by Andrew McMahon begins.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Stella and Wes walk down the hall and see Dr. Chang nursing Aiden's black eye. It looks like they might be hitting it off? Stella & Wes sneak past them, allowing them their moment.

STELLA (V.O.)

So, there it was. The end of my cancer movie. But the beginning of my life sentence. Which wasn't as ominous as it sounded. It was the opposite actually...

(MORE)

STELLA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It was... promising. I was finally seeing
 the world as it was...

EXT. POPPY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Poppy and Ida sit on the front porch having a glass of wine.

STELLA (V.O.)
 Seeing my family for who they were...

Ida's phone dings with a TEXT from Paul: "I'm sorry I was immature. Keep the cheese shop." Ida smiles and shows Poppy.

INT. ELIZABETH AND DARRIUS' HOUSE - MORNING (D6)

Elizabeth looks at a blank page on a computer screen. After a beat, she types a new title page: "The Other Sister."

DARRIUS
 That's already a book, dear. But I'm
 proud of you for starting again.

Darrius exits, as Elizabeth erases the title. Fiona & Frank run through the room SCREAMING. Elizabeth calls after them.

ELIZABETH
 Hey, no screaming in the house!

More SCREAMING. Elizabeth types "Ugh, I Hate My Kids" then stops and considers the title. She adds a byline and smiles...

EXT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - DAY (D6)

Paul sits by the pool with a decanter of scotch. Aiden passes.

STELLA (V.O.)
 ...and coming to terms with the fact that
 I had no idea what would come next...

PAUL
 Hey... son... Want a drink?

AIDEN
 Sure... dad.

Paul pours Aiden a drink, he takes it and they sit in silence.

PAUL
 My crypto-currency tanked, so I'm going
 to need you to start paying rent.

AIDEN
 Interesting.

STELLA (V.O.)
But I did know a few things. For one...

INT. BRIE YOURSELF CHEESE SHOP - DAY (D6)

Stella walks in. Poppy and Ida looks at her, curiously. Stella smiles and holds up a "Help Wanted" sign. They smile back.

STELLA (V.O.)
I still needed a job.

POPPY
You're hired.

Just then, Paul enters, takes the "Help Wanted" sign out of Stella's hand, and grabs an apron like he owns the place... 'cause he does. Stella, Ida and Poppy look at him confused.

PAUL
What? Stella can work the counter. I can make baskets. It's time I took a more active role in this investment.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - NIGHT (D7)

STELLA (V.O.)
And it was time I took a more active role too. So, I decided to host family dinner.

Stella and her family sit around Stella's dining room table.

STELLA
I just wanted to say how sorry I am for the food you're about to eat. It's probably horrible because I don't know how to cook. Turns out there's a lot of things I don't know about. Like how a real family works. But I want to learn.

STELLA (V.O.)
Don't get me wrong, one awkward evening where my dad got drunk and called my mom and Poppy "scissor sisters" three times doesn't mean that everything is okay.

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT (D7)

Wes and Stella climb into bed.

STELLA (V.O.)
There's a lot left to figure out. But, I've got Wes to help me do that. And even if we figure nothing out, at least I know he'll look macho on a jet ski one day.

The no-longer unwieldy dog jumps up on the foot of the bed and settles in, calmly. Wes offers Stella his chest to sleep on.

STELLA

We don't have to do that anymore. I don't want you to be uncomfortable.

WES

It's okay. You love it. I'll be uncomfortable for you.

Stella smiles, settles in to Wes' chest and seems settled.

STELLA

Your arm's already falling asleep, isn't it?

(he shrugs; they SPOON)

Better?

WES

Much.

And that's when the dog ATTACKS WES. He screams! It's a mess.

STELLA (V.O.)

So, there I was. A normal, healthy, Buick-driving, real girl...

INT. STELLA AND WES' APARTMENT - DAY

Stella, wears a "Brie Yourself" t-shirt, headed to work.

STELLA (V.O.)

...who works in a cheese shop owned by her parents and her mother's lesbian lover. And you know what, I was super okay with all of it.

She opens the door to a GUY in a "Make-A-Wish" t-shirt.

MAKE-A-WISH GUY

Stella Ambrose, I'm here to make your dying wish come true.

STELLA (V.O.)

Then again, pretending I was dying for one more week wouldn't hurt, would it? I mean, it's such a good wish! You'll see!

END OF PILOT