

CASHMERE MAFIA

by
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Starred for revisions

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ACT ONE

EXT. NEW YORK CITY-EARLY MORNING

Music up, The Pretenders' confident anthem "Brass in Pocket", as you soar in on an approaching aerial shot of the iconic Manhattan skyline, under the following narration, intimate and conversational:

NARRATOR (VO)

I can't remember who first called them the Cashmere Mafia, but it stuck. Never to their faces, of course. They've been friends since their days at the Columbia School of Business together...

EXT. PERRY STREET BROWNSTONE-NEW YORK CITY-EARLY MORNING

CAMERA SKIDS to a stop in front of a beautifully restored brownstone on a block full of them. A driver, Sam, early 50's, gets out of a Mercedes S550 and opens the rear door and checks his watch as the narration and music continue--

NARRATOR (VO)

Zoe Burden's what they call a rainmaker...

INT. PERRY STREET BROWNSTONE-NEW YORK CITY-EARLY MORNING

In the Architectural Digest-featured kitchen of their stunning townhouse, ZOE BURDEN, 38, with wash-and-wear good looks and the harried good cheer of a can-do Mom, is bidding her daily sailing-on-the-Titanic good-byes to children SASHA, 8, and LUKE, 5, as husband ERIC, 40, sardonic and lanky, off-beat good looks, runs interference between syrupy hands and Mommy's Armani suit. Narration continues, overlapping:

NARRATOR (VO)

...the youngest Managing Director for Investment Banking that Gorham, Sutter's ever had.

LUKE

MOMMY DON'T GO! PLEASE DON'T GO!

SASHA

Shut up Luke!
(to Zoe, pleading)
You promise you'll make my recital?
Promise!?

ZOE

Thursday, seven sharp, pinky swear.
And it's shut up Luke, *please*.

Hooks a pinky to Sasha's, licks off syrup, spreads each one's arms and plants a kiss. She's used to leaving them wanting more of her, but it still aches a little.

NARRATOR (VO)

Freelance restoration architect husband Eric, daughter Sasha, son Luke.

ZOE

Ten minutes of TV! Go! I love you!

The kids tear to the couch and start fighting over the remote and Zoe and Eric book in the other direction, towards the entry hall and front door.

ERIC
Do we need a Plan B?

ZOE
(irked)
I said I'll make it, I'll *make* it.

ERIC
Sir, yes sir!

ZOE
Sorry. This associate I brought in has been nothing but attitude and excuses. I've got to pull the trigger and I hate that.

ERIC
(helpful)
Just think of her as a guy.

ZOE
(piqued)
How do you know it's a woman?

ERIC
You tend to get a little soft when it's a *sister* involved.

ZOE
I mentored her. And I'm *always* soft.

ERIC
Then give her one more chance.

ZOE
You think?

ERIC
Be the daisy in the barrel of the gun, today.

ZOE
Sasha has soccer and Luke has a play date with Jason.

ERIC
Elena's picking up Sasha and I've got Luke and Jason.

The kids YELL for her, their running footsteps approach. He opens the front door, kisses her and eases her outside.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Be the daisy.

She makes a clean getaway.

EXT. PERRY STREET BROWNSTONE-NEW YORK CITY-EARLY MORNING

Zoe puts her briefcase on the roof of the car and holds her arms out at her sides as if at airport security--

ZOE

They had oatmeal with syrup--

Her driver, Sam, gives her a thorough spots-scan, wet-wipe in hand, as she turns around--

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*

SAM

All clear. We're late--

She ducks in the car and he shuts the door and runs around front and jumps in.

The car accelerates off; her briefcase goes THUDDING off the trunk; the car SQUEALS to a stop, reverses full speed, SQUEALS to a stop by the briefcase. Zoe opens her door, plucks the briefcase off the street, and they speed off again.

NARRATOR (VO)

Then there's Dylan Mason, Associate Publisher, Barnett-Nash Media Group...

INT. EQUINOX FITNESS CLUB-EARLY MORNING

PUSH IN ON DYLAN MASON, 37, running full-tilt in a boot-camp treadmill class. She has the blonde good looks and lithe athleticism of a golden girl and the competitive drive of an alpha male. She is wearing a Bluetooth headset and browsing the New York Times while pounding out her miles. A ring tone sounds; she checks her phone's display and buttons on the headset.

NARRATOR (VO CONT'D)

...gets an offer a month from rival publishers, so far she's turned them all down. Broke some pretty important hearts, rumor is she's out of circulation.

DYLAN

I had the filthiest dream about you last night...

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE-EAST 75TH STREET-SAME

Her boyfriend RICHARD, 40, heartthrob handsome in an Ivy League sort of way, is standing in the gorgeous living room of a restored carriage house off Madison with elegant you-must-use-Pablo realtor PABLO, mid-thirties.

RICHARD

And I can't wait to hear it, but I need you to drop what you're doing and come up to 98 East 75th Street. It's perfect.

INT. EQUINOX FITNESS CLUB/CARRIAGE HOUSE-SAME

INTERCUT, between the two of them.

DYLAN
It's not perfect if I have to
trek all the way uptown for
sleep-overs.

RICHARD
No, for both of us. I think
we should go in on it
together.

DYLAN
What do you mean?

RICHARD
Dylan, will you move in with me?

In her shock and surprise, she loses her footing and goes sailing off the treadmill. The other RUNNERS barely bat an eye. Dylan pops back up and adjusts her headset.

DYLAN
Did I lose you?

EXT. 868 PARK AVE.-DAY

A classic building and a "desirable" address, limos and private cars jockeying for pick-ups by the awning.

NARRATOR (VO)
Juliet Draper is the Chief
Operating Officer of Sans Souci
Hotels and Resorts...

INT. JULIET'S APARTMENT-MASTER BEDROOM-DAY

High-ceilinged, pre-war, classic. PUSH IN FAST ON JULIET DRAPER, 39, looking like she just stepped off the cover of "Town and Country"; a pro of the old school, mercurial, with a will of iron neatly concealed by an extroverted feminine gentility. She is in a bra and panties, holding a dress up against her and before a full-length mirror. Her husband DAVIS, 45, WASP good looks kept tanned and fit, is packing a suitcase.

NARRATOR (VO)
...grew them into the second
largest luxury chain behind
the Four Seasons; husband
Davis runs a small fund,
daughter Emily's at Chasen.

JULIET
What do you think of this for
the benefit Thursday?

DAVIS
(after the slightest
glance)
Perfect.

JULIET
Really?

DAVIS
Really. And besides, you could go
in mom jeans and a Garfield
sweatshirt and you'd still be the
classiest woman in the room.

She smiles a little and shakes her head. Then, evenly--

JULIET

Davis? Close your eyes and describe the dress?

He shrugs, turns his back to her.

DAVIS

(after a moment,
patiently)

Black, beaded around the cleavage or whatever you call it. Probably cost more than my new Porsche. Can I open them now?

JULIET

No.

She drops the dress and melts up against him, suddenly yearning in her body language and tone. He returns her kiss, succumbing to her arousal. She deftly unbuckles his belt and pulls him by the waistband to their bed, urgent, erotic--

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*
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--and a quick RAP on the door is followed by the entrance of their daughter EMILY, 14, a knockout with a toxic case of attitude. At the same time--

JULIET (CONT'D)

AAAAAAHHHHH!

EMILY

Gross!

Emily quickly turns her back as Juliet shrugs on a robe.

EMILY

If you're gonna rekindle the flames or whatever you could at least lock the door.

DAVIS

(patient)

What is it, Em?

EMILY

She has to meet me in the Headmasters office after school today.

JULIET

Why?

EMILY

If I tell you now I'll just have to listen to your same crap twice. I'm off--

And she goes, trailing resentment like exhaust. Davis hefts his suitcase.

DAVIS

I'd better get moving, call me if you need me to talk to her.

JULIET

Just take me with you.

DAVIS
You hate Hilton Head. And you have
an empire to run.

JULIET
Right. Love you.

Kisses her, gently, and goes.

EXT. CHLOE PARRISH BUILDING-MIDTOWN-MORNING

A ten story Beaux-Arts limestone on Fifth Avenue.

NARRATOR (VO)
And the fourth is Caitlin Dowd,
Senior VP for Marketing and
Development for the cosmetics giant
Chloe Parrish.

INT. CHLOE PARRISH-CAITLIN'S OFFICE-MORNING

Spacious and homey, with art on the walls and a view of
Central Park; mock-ups for singer/actress/diva SHERRY
MADEIRA's fragrance launch strewn on every surface. Asleep on
the sofa in yesterday's clothes is CAITLIN DOWD, 37, a Boston
Irish Working Girl transformed into a saucily attractive Jil
Sander Suit.

NARRATOR (VO)
In three years she expanded their
brands and took market share by the
boatloads; one degree of separation
from anyone who matters in
entertainment, fashion and sports.
Single.

*

Her assistant, PATRICK, African-American, late twenties,
fastidious in dress and manner, knocks-and-enters and rolls
his eyes in surprise.

PATRICK
Wakey, wakey, eggs and bakey!
You've got an interview scheduled
for three minutes ago!

CAITLIN
(stirring)
What the...oh, shoot!
(getting up)
Help me!

PATRICK
(eyeing her, sardonic)
Think we're gonna need the
Army Corps of Engineers.

CAITLIN
Shut up.

And, with military precision and lightning speed:

He selects a plastic-wrapped cashmere sweater from a filing
cabinet full of them as she takes off her blouse, tosses it
to her--

--as she pulls it on, he opens a breakfront drawer and flips her a hairbrush and a tin of Altoids; she crunches a couple and whips her hair with the brush--

--hobbles into her heels and puffs a little cologne from a sample bottle on her desk and gives her appearance a once-over in the mirror as he opens a bottle of mineral water and hands it to her and she takes a long pull.

PATRICK
I'll send her in?

CAITLIN
Coffee, too.

He goes out. She strikes a casually confident pose behind her desk as--

--Patrick returns with ALICIA LAWSON, 37, British, with a striking physical beauty made all the more appealing by a disarmingly scattered, unself-conscious air. Men want to be with her, women want to be like her, and in *this* moment--

PATRICE
Alicia Lawson, Caitlin Dowd.

CAITLIN
Alicia, thanks so much for coming...

ALICIA
Oh, my, no, thank you.

--Caitlin is frozen in place somewhere in between the two, with a look on her face like little valentines were circling her head to the music of a harp and utterly flummoxed by it. She rounds her desk, knocking over the litre of water in the process.

Shoot.	CAITLIN	ALICIA Now that's usually my move. Here...
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Both bend down; Alicia picks up the bottle and replaces it on the desk. Caitlin extends her hand, clearly flustered.

CAITLIN
Please, sit.

They take seats catty-corner from each other by the coffee table. Caitlin's way too aware of her own body language, fidgeting and utterly distracted. Awkward silence, broken by:

ALICIA
(looking around)
I wish my apartment was as inviting as your office. This is gorgeous.

CAITLIN

Thank you. I finally gave up pretending that I actually lived anywhere else and just went for it. So, how do you like New York?

ALICIA

Well, it's only been two months but, to be honest? You never really feel alone here, but it can get awfully lonely. Do you know what I mean?

Caitlin measures her response as if it were the answer to a life-changing question. And takes too long--

ALICIA (CONT'D)

(sheepish)

I'm sorry, that's not what you were asking--

CAITLIN

Yes! Yes it was. I know just what you mean! And what you need is, well, you need a job, for starters.

ALICIA

Yes, well, I guess that's why I'm here.

With a dazzling smile. Caitlin can only grin helplessly in response; you can almost hear the voice in her head going "Get a grip!".

EXT. MAXWELL'S RESTAURANT-MIDTOWN-DAY

A classic Manhattan power lunch venue; deceptively casual in appearance but bubbling daily with an only-in-New-York trifecta of top-drawer media, financial, sports and entertainment players. Zoe's Mercedes pulls up to the curb, she steps out and intersects with Caitlin, cheek-kisses as they head inside.

NARRATOR (VO)

They've been coming here since the week I opened, they've helped my staff with everything from green cards to doctor referrals--

INT. MAXWELL'S RESTAURANT-MIDTOWN-DAY

The eponymous MAXWELL "MAX" BRAUTIGAN, late forties, a gregarious transplanted-Californian foodie, is huddled at the bar over the seating chart for his restaurant with new maitre'd SEAN, 40, a mini-me of Max. As Max speaks, you realize he's been our narrator, educating Sean on the Kremlinology of his clientele.

MAX

--and in my restaurants, they are first among equals. Let's introduce...

DYLAN (CONT'D)

He saw this place he loves on the East Side but I want to look at lofts, too.

ZOE

You're like, going Dutch?

DYLAN

Yeah. We can afford so much more if we go in it together.

JULIET

Any ring in sight?

DYLAN

(defensive)

No. With all due respect to you and Zoe and wedded bliss, Richard and I both know too many people who are miserable *because* of the ring.

JULIET

You might want to work up some kind of real-estate pre-nup, just the same.

Dylan's look drops the subject, Zoe picks up the ball.

ZOE

Help me out here. Kate Baron: top of her class at Wharton, I brought her in, used some sharp elbows to get her a desk as an analyst under my team. Turns out she's like poster girl for Generation ID.

JULIET

ID?

DYLAN

What's that?

ZOE (CONT'D)

I Deserve. If she thinks something's beneath her, forget it. And with a *ton* of attitude.

DYLAN

And if she were a *Ken* Baron, she's already gone.

ZOE

Yes. Do I be the daisy in the barrel of the gun or do I give her up to the pricks upstairs?

JULIET

You dangle her out the 40th floor window, *then* give her one more chance. If I know you you've been too easy on her, which makes you partly responsible.

This lands on Zoe, who nods. CILLA GREY, 34 and tracking on the bombshell side in the style scale of this tribe, stops by their table as the Waiter places Caitlin's martini and she takes a quick slug and like, finally exhales--

CILLA
Hi you all--

A chorus of "Hi Cilla's" in reply--

CILLA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to interrupt but I've got a tiny little favor to ask? Caitlin, you're in 77 Central Park West, aren't you?

CAITLIN
Yes, I am.

CILLA
I've got an accepted bid for the Bennett penthouse and I'm out of my old place and living at the Mercer and I *know* it's a lock but could you *possibly* put in a word with the board for me?

CAITLIN
I'm on the board. I'll see if I can move them along at least?

CILLA
Thank you so much. Great to see you all...

Cilla waltzing off--

ZOE
What do we know about her?

JULIET
Used to be a producer at CNN, Ron Arbogast's third wife, she backed up the truck--

DYLAN
Writes those exotic travel pieces for The Times' Magazine, big dinner-partner get in the Hamptons and D.C.

They turn, as one, to Caitlin, expectantly.

JULIET
Okay, you've barely said a word--

ZOE
What's with the martini at lunch?

Caitlin like, scans the horizon and leans in, drawing them closer.

CAITLIN
(after a moment)
I met someone this morning and I got all dizzy and flushed and no, I did not accidentally double my Wellbutrin. This never happened to me before.
(MORE)

CAITLIN (CONT'D)

It was like someone waved a wand
and the sun came out and my libido
made a surprise guest appearance
and I wanted to book a week in
Paris right then and there.

ZOE

So give us a little smile here.
Who's the guy?

CAITLIN

There's a catch.
(a beat, then, opting for
half the story)
It's someone I'm thinking of hiring
as a VP, under me. Coming back for
a second interview this afternoon.
The company has a pretty strict
policy about office romances.

DYLAN

Oh, don't sweat it. It's not *that*
hard to stay under the radar with
an office thing. Richard and I have
been doing it for over a year.

JULIET

There's no job in the world worth
living alone for. Hire him.

ZOE

What you just described comes along
--well, you know how seldom better
than anybody. Go for it.

Caitlin drains the rest of her martini. Juliet moves on--

JULIET

I know you all bought tables for
the benefit Thursday night but I
would really, really appreciate it
if you were actually there.

CAITLIN

I'm trying.

DYLAN

I'm probable.

ZOE

Sasha's dance recital is Thursday
at seven and I can't miss it but
I'll try to at least peek in.

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*
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JULIET

Listen, enjoy it while you can.
Emily officially hates me.

ZOE

Of course she doesn't.

JULIET

You should *hear* the way she...
(a moment, then--)
How did we treat our mothers when
we were fourteen?

*
*

They look from one to the other, none having a comforting anecdote for Juliet's battles with Emily.

ZOE

Our mothers were there to tuck us in bed every night and if they ever went away without us it was to have one of our siblings. But we never wanted to be our mothers.

All absorb this, for a moment. Juliet tips her glass in a rueful salute.

JULIET

To progress.

Plates are set in front of them. Caitlin checks her watch, signals the waiter--

CAITLIN

I'll take the check, too. I'm crammed today--

WAITER

It's with Ms. Grey. As is dessert.

Another WAITER sets out a a huge, elaborate, deathly-rich confection.

CAITLIN

(under her breath)

Isn't *that* a little passive-aggressive.

All four wave and smile at Cilla, across the room, who smiles and wiggles fingers in reply.

EXT. GORHAM, SUTTER-DAY

An iconic logo over the entrance to a modern Sixth Avenue tower.

INT. GORHAM, SUTTER-ZOE'S OFFICE-DAY

Zoe in her office, with a high-up view of midtown and a couple dozen family photographs offsetting the spartan atmosphere; scores of IPO tombstones form a victory parade on the walls.

She has KATE BARON, 27, a coltish beauty with a thick air of entitlement and a chip on her shoulder the size of a Buick, posed insolently in front of the desk.

ZOE

(patiently)

Help me out here, will you Kate? I feel like when you're *motivated*, you're great, but God forbid you're *not*--

(brandishing a file)

--this is like Xeroxing their annual report!

(MORE)

ZOE (CONT'D)

I mean, come on--is it really so beneath you to come up with an original thought for me?

KATE

(chafing)

Okay, I'm *sorry*--

ZOE

And for the millionth time, *sorry* is not a word we use in this building.

KATE

Why are you so hard on me!?

ZOE

I'm *not* hard on you! If I single you out it's because I *thought* I saw potential in you.

Kate's anger breaks through, loud and clear.

KATE

Yes I have potential! But how am I supposed to reach it when you're breathing down my neck and just, just second-guessing every move I make!?

ZOE

Show some effort and I won't have to!

KATE

Perfectionism isn't a virtue, you know. It's more like a neurosis.

Zoe back on her heels for the briefest moment; no one under her talks to her like this.

ZOE

(a moment, then--)

That's all, Kate.

KATE

(scrambling)

I didn't mean it like--

ZOE

(final)

I said that's all.

Kate goes. Zoe picks up her phone and buttons an extension, resolute--

ZOE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I need to talk to Clayton the moment he's back.

EXT. CHASEN SCHOOL-DAY

A venerable private school on the Upper East Side.

INT. CHASEN SCHOOL-HEADMASTER'S OFFICE-DAY

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER MONITOR, displaying Emily's Facebook page, with a border of photographs of her in provocative, half-undressed poses. PULLING BACK TO REVEAL Emily, Juliet and DR. PETER CLIFTON, 45, the goateed, tweedy Headmaster, seated in a tense tableau.

DR. CLIFTON
Freedom, yes, but within the appropriate boundaries.

EMILY
(sullen)
I *like* the way I look in those pictures.

JULIET
(final)
Thank you so much, Peter. We'll take it from here.

She holds out a hand to Emily, who just walks by her to the door.

INT. CHASEN SCHOOL-CORRIDOR-DAY

Juliet and Emily in the empty hallway, facing off.

JULIET
--then I'll just let your father handle this.

EMILY
He's not gonna "handle" anything, and you know it. 'Cause I say the things to you that he wants to say but's afraid to.

She bolts for the stairs, slips in her haste, bangs her bare shin on a sharp marble step and crumples, cursing. Juliet, instinctively, goes right to her.

JULIET
(empathetic)
Ow.

She sits down on the steps beside Emily, who whimpers in pain. Juliet hugs her and for the briefest moment they are mother and child again.

EMILY
I'm such a klutz--

JULIET
That must *hurt*--

EMILY
I'm okay, Mom--

JULIET
Let me just look at it?

EMILY
--Please? Just leave me alone?

She goes hobbling up the stairs. Juliet gets to her feet, braces herself on the banister, takes a quick look around to make certain that she is alone, and crumples a little as a sob wells up in her throat and tears spring into her eyes. A rare, uncontrolled emotional moment for her.

Dr. Clifton sticks his head out the door, concerned. Juliet waves, covering--

JULIET
(brightly)
Allergies!

INT. GORHAM, SUTTER-CLAYTON PIERCE'S OFFICE-DAY

Zoe takes a seat in the sleek Master-of-the-Universe office of her superior, Managing Partner CLAYTON PIERCE, 47, St. Pauls-to-Harvard-to-Wall Street, a bull in a bespoke suit. A gallery of autographed Fender Stratocasters (Springsteen, The Edge, Keith Richards, etc.,) are hung on the wall; "fun" little trophies of big fuck-you money.

ZOE
How are Jane and the kids?

CLAYTON
Good, thanks. So what's on your mind?

ZOE
Do you remember Kate Baron? I pushed for an associate's desk for her?

CLAYTON
Yeah. I heard you two were grinding gears.

ZOE
(surprised)
You *heard*? Where?

CLAYTON
Well, from Kate, to be honest.

Zoe, off-guard. She flinches, recovers.

ZOE
Wait a minute? Since when does a Kate Baron go to a Managing Partner about a conflict with a...

She breaks off, as the nickel drops.

ZOE (CONT'D)
Ah. When she's sleeping with him.

He's like a brick wall, leaning back in his chair, unfazed.

CLAYTON
No, we're not. Just let that go.

ZOE

Clay--

CLAYTON

The point *is*, Zoe, she's being wasted where she is. She needs a bigger challenge to really flourish here.

ZOE

She couldn't even handle--

CLAYTON

I want you to sprinkle some of that Zoe dust on her. I'm moving her up as your second for the AbleTech road show.

ZOE

You're kidding me.

CLAYTON

(final)

And as a friend? The partners don't just look at your numbers. We also notice who takes one for the team now and again.

A beat, eye to eye. Zoe bites her tongue.

ZOE

Got it.

CLAYTON

(smiles)

Then our work here is done.

Picks up his phone and turns to his monitors.

EXT. BARNET-NASH BUILDING-DAY

A 1930's Art Deco office building in the East Thirties.

INT. BARNET-NASH BUILDING-EXECUTIVE FLOOR-DAY

FOLLOWING DYLAN, walking out of her perimeter office and tossing greetings as she hurries past the warren of cubicles that predominate the floor. She notices Richard, on the other side of the floor, headed in the same direction.

They intersect at the elevator. Both reach for the "up" button.

DYLAN

Where are you going?

RICHARD

Hughes's office.

DYLAN

So am I.

They lob alarmed looks.

RICHARD
I guess we're found out?

DYLAN
If we are, you don't need to worry.
It's always the woman who gets the
boot.

She steels herself as the elevator arrives. He reaches out and squeezes her hand.

INT. BARNET-NASH BUILDING-CLIVE HUGHES' OFFICE-DAY

Richard and Dylan are seated across from CLIVE HUGHES, late forties, a florid, energetic Australian.

HUGHES
Straight up? The home office in
Melbourne's called for one of you
to be raised up to U.S. Group
Publisher.

RICHARD
And the other?

HUGHES
Well, the other would be made
redundant.

Both of them tense, focused on Hughes.

DYLAN
(lightly)
Do we draw straws?

HUGHES
(snorts a laugh)
I've vetted both of you 'til I was
cross-eyed and I still can't
decide. So we're going to play
"Survivor: East 38th Street".
You've got Peter Johnson from
Daimler-Chrysler in town this week.
Whoever closes the biggest block of
his ad buy, stays; the other one's
off the island.

Dylan and Richard glance at one another; sure as hell didn't see *this* coming.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. BARNET-NASH BUILDING-CORRIDOR-DAY**

MOMENTS LATER, FOLLOWING DYLAN AND RICHARD, walking to the elevator; he's dour, she's galvanized, trying to hide it but clearly getting a charge, competitive and sexual, out of the challenge. The Raconteurs' "Steady As She Goes" surges up on the soundtrack--

RICHARD
(angrily)
We shouldn't give him the
satisfaction--

DYLAN
What choice do we have?

RICHARD
You've had offers, *good* ones. You
were this close to going over to
Conde Nast--

DYLAN
There's a reason I'm still here.
None of those other firms is going
to open up the publisher's job for
years...

RICHARD
So you *want* to play his game?

DYLAN
It's not a matter of *want*; it is
what it is. Is this going to be a
problem for *us*?

RICHARD
(defensive)
Not for me.

DYLAN
I mean, you'd be *pissed* if I tanked
a squash game or backed off on a
black diamond with you--

RICHARD
I'm not worried about *me*, Dylan.

The elevator doors open and they get on.

DYLAN
(breathless)
C'mere--

She braces him against the wall with her lips and (whatever network standards allow as urgent elevator sex) as the doors "ding" closed and the chorus to the song kicks in.

INT. GORHAM, SUTTER-CONFERENCE ROOM-DAY

Zoe commanding the head of a table about the size of a football field; 28 MEN IN SUITS and two other WOMEN SUITS with their eyes fixed on her.

ZOE

...and I disagree. If you look three-sixty around this deal, we're still stronger at the lower price per share because of our cash leverage. I think we should stand.

Her BlackBerry vibrates on the table. She flips it open and checks the display--

ZOE (CONT'D)

Excuse me a second?
(into phone, getting up)
Is everything okay?

EXT. FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE SCHOOL-DAY

A Greenwich Village Pre-K through 8. Find Eric, the lone male among the gathering MOMS waiting for their children, as Luke comes running up--

ERIC

(into phone, oblivious)
Luke got a reading star, I'll put him on--

Hands off the phone to Luke--

LUKE

(into phone)
MOM!?

SPLIT SCREEN-CONFERENCE ROOM/FRIENDS SCHOOL-CONTINUOUS

Zoe giving "just a second" and "one more second" semaphores to the assembled, juggling between her two roles, as Luke chatters away--

LUKE

I got a reading star! And guess what else!?

ZOE

Mommy's in a meeting honey, so quickly, what else--

LUKE

No, you have to guess!

ZOE

Luke, Mommy's *real* busy right now--

LUKE

I lost a tooth at lunch.

ZOE

Be sure you give it to Daddy for the Tooth Fairy. And put Daddy on?

VICTORIA KEENER, mid-thirties, cute and sexy in her sprayed-on yoga togs, moves up beside him. Her son Jason, also 5, wraps his arms around her legs.

VICTORIA
Nice day to take them to the park.
Want to?

LUKE
Dad? Mom wants to talk to you...

He hands Eric the phone.

ERIC
We're off to the park, I'll call
you later.

And snaps the phone shut. The four of them move off together--
--as Zoe turns back to her meeting with determined bravado--

ZOE
Okay then! Back on track!

EXT. PARK-DAY

Luke and play-date Jason on the monkey bars; Eric and
Victoria stretched out in the grass nearby.

VICTORIA
Jason! Careful not to kick!

She rolls over closer to Eric, eyes him inquisitively.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
I bet our lives are a lot alike in
some ways.

ERIC
Like how?

VICTORIA
Well, were both married to Type-A's
who end up running on empty by the
time they get home, no?

ERIC
Your husband's a...

VICTORIA
Director of South American Emerging
Markets, Smith Barney. Eighty-hour
weeks and a chronic case of jet-
lag. We get to it twice a month if
we're lucky.

ERIC
You're talking about getting to the
theatre, right?

She kicks him, playful.

VICTORIA
No, I'm not talking about the theatre. I bet you can be absolutely infuriating.

ERIC
Why?

VICTORIA
This whole ironic-distance thing you've got going on. It's very sort of charming but it makes you so hard to read.

ERIC
Yeah, it's a cry for help.

VICTORIA
See?

She shifts a little closer.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Okay, here goes. The only safe affair is between two people who are married with young kids and committed to staying in those marriages. Nobody's going to fall in love; everybody just has a good time and goes home.

ERIC
Like, friends with benefits.

VICTORIA
Like that, yes. And please don't make a joke.

He meets her gaze, unflinching, and smiles, genuine.

ERIC
I won't. And if I'm understanding you correctly, I'm very flattered. But here's the thing? I don't get nearly enough sex at home, either. But where I'm kind of twisted? It means it never gets stale, it means I'm in a kind of perpetual state of wanting her.

She smiles and nods, not so much in concession as in taking up a gauntlet. A JINGLING MELODY sounds, off.

VICTORIA
She's luckier than she knows.

LUKE (OS)
Dad!? The ice cream truck!?

He gets to his feet.

EXT. TENTH AVENUE-MOVING-DAY

A white Jaguar XJ8 weaving in traffic and pulling up in front of a soundstage building. You hear Caitlin, over:

CAITLIN (VO)
 ...it's not unlike what you were doing at Sony Music. Two-thirds of the job is launching new product, one-third's supporting the existing brands.

Caitlin gets out the back, offers a hand to Alicia, who takes it. They head to the entrance--

INT. SOUNDSTAGE-DAY

Pink's "U + UR Hand" BOOMING, CAMERA TRACKING PAST a commercial film CREW lingering on hold around a set; Diva SHERRY MADEIRA, late 20's, a provocative bombshell, is in an enormous tilted fantasy of a bed with two young male MODELS in briefs, a Nordic God and a Latin Heartthrob. She shares her bottle of Crystal, pouring it into their mouths and giggling.

PUSH IN ON a huddle taking place just off the set. Caitlin, Alicia and agency account rep RON, 40, are faced off against three of Sherry's management team, a united front of tough WOMEN headed by ELLEN GOLDMAN-TURNER, late thirties, extra-large.

RON
 Ellen, there isn't a network in the country that's going to air this with two men in the bed.

ELLEN
 We were promised artistic freedom, Ron. And the whole damn point of the damn fragrance is that like Sherry herself, you'll never sleep alone.

RON
 (final)
 One guy, not two. Caitlin, could you--

ALICIA
 Caitlin?

She moves her aside and leans in close.

ALICIA (CONT'D)
 If you shoot it both ways and stick the two-guys one up on YouTube as "too hot for TV", you might see it go viral to a million eyeballs without having to buy a single minute of time.

Eye to eye, for a moment. Caitlin smiles, clearly impressed.

CAITLIN
 (over her shoulder)
 Shoot it both ways.
 (to Alicia, charged)
 When can you start?

ALICIA
 Now?

CAITLIN
 I'll call Human Resources and have
 them put a package together...

Alicia takes Caitlin's hands in hers and kisses her on both cheeks. Caitlin's breath catches--

ALICIA
 This is just...*thank* you!

Her phone ringtone is a jazzy "Greensleeves". She pulls it out, checks the display--

ALICIA (CONT'D)
 Talk about timing--
 (buttons it on)
 Hello my darling! I have the most
fantastic news!

She steps away as Ellen takes Caitlin's elbow and gestures to the male models on the set-- *
 *

ELLEN
 (lascivious)
 What I wouldn't give to be the meat
 in *that* sandwich, huh?

OUT ON CAITLIN, glancing at Alicia, deflated. *

EXT. DINER-11TH AVENUE-DAWN

Escalades and livery limousines idling out front of a hip-this-minute diner at dawn.

INT. DINER-EARLY MORNING

Weaving through the motley nightlife CREW and finding Dylan at a booth with a cup of coffee and her cell phone to her ear.

DYLAN
 (into phone, urgently)
 Zoe it's me I need unbelievable
 seats to the Rangers game tonight
 will you check your company's box
 as soon as you get this?

She buttons it off as PETER JOHNSON, 45, Daimler-Chrysler marketing honcho and listing a bit after this long night, slides into the booth, opposite her, as a WAITRESS delivers waffles and bacon.

PETER

Can't remember the last time I had breakfast *before* I went to bed.

DYLAN

Well, I hope you remember *this* time.

PETER

The look on that guy's face when I laid down the straight flush? *Never* gonna forget that.

DYLAN

One minute of business? Our research shows that women still find shopping for a new car intimidating, yet they drive the market for a huge segment of your product line--

PETER

You're not going to let me sleep until I give you the buy, are you.

DYLAN

I'll messenger over a proposed schedule ladder this afternoon, and if you're up for it Detroit's playing the Rangers tonight and I've got a box right on the glass.

He gives her a look-over with a lopsided smile and heavy lids; appreciative bordering on horny.

PETER

It really *is* a pleasure doing business with you.

She grins and signals for a check.

INT. BARNET-NASH BUILDING-DYLAN'S OFFICE-DAY

PUSHING IN ON DYLAN fast asleep on the couch. Commotion, outside.

ASSISTANT (OS)

She's not to be disturbed--

RICHARD (OS)

This won't take a second--

He steps in and shuts the door behind him, livid. She stirs--

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Low blow!

DYLAN

(groggy)
What?

RICHARD
You *knew* I had Johnson for a round
at Winged Foot this morning. And
now he's postponed. You screwed me.

DYLAN
I didn't do a damn thing to you.

RICHARD
He said you kept him out all night!

DYLAN
More like he kept *me*--

RICHARD
How'd you work him, Dylan? Did you
do that thing you do?

She's on her feet like a shot with a look that could stop a
clock.

DYLAN
(stung)
Richard, what the hell!? You take
that back right now!

RICHARD
Right now you're exactly what I
hate about working with women.

DYLAN
What's that supposed to mean?

RICHARD
You make like you're playing by the
rules but push comes to shove out
come the little looks and the sexy
signals and it's demeaning to
everybody.

<p>DYLAN Why don't you go back in your cave and maybe I'll see you later.</p>	<p>RICHARD You torpedoed your colleague. At least be <i>accountable</i>.</p>
---	--

DYLAN
We're not exactly colleagues right
now! Remember?

A stand-off, for a moment, staring each other down.

RICHARD
Right. I'll see you later.

He goes. She sits back down, wrung out.

EXT. ZOE'S MERCEDES-MOVING-DAY

Lurching in traffic on Canal Street.

ZOE (OS)
 Manuel, let's cut up Mercer to
 Houston?

Pulls a quick illegal turn--

INT. ZOE'S MERCEDES-MOVING-DAY

Zoe in the back seat with Kate, both with notebook computers
 open in their laps.

KATE
 Here's the restated '06 earnings.

She angles her screen to Zoe, who waves it off.

ZOE	KATE
Just fold it into the	Zoe, this wasn't <i>my</i> idea,
overview, please.	either.

ZOE
 No one's blaming you, Kate.

She breaks off, as something out the window catches her eye--

ANOTHER ANGLE-ZOE'S POV

Exiting the Mercer Hotel, Cilla Grey and Juliet's husband
 Davis. He hails a cab, she takes his arm and stands on tiptoe
 to whisper in his ear.

ZOE (OS) (CONT'D)
 (urgently)
 Manuel? Pull over a sec?

The car stops. You get a clear view of them, ten yards away.
 Davis breaks into a sly grin and then pulls her to him and
 kisses her deeply. He opens the cab door for her and she gets
 in as he leans down to the window and says something we can't
 hear and touches his fingers to his lips in farewell and
 heads back inside.

INT. ZOE'S MERCEDES-DAY

CLOSE ON ZOE. You could knock her over with a feather.

KATE
 Are you okay?

She just grimaces and shakes her head, as if already figuring
 her choices and their ramifications and not liking any of
 them.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. ST. REGIS HOTEL-TWILIGHT**

Establishing. Toby Lightman's "Don't Wake Me" on the soundtrack.

INT. ST. REGIS HOTEL-KING COLE BAR-NIGHT

Music continues. CAMERA CIRCLING Zoe, Dylan and Caitlin at a prime table under the iconic mural. They are armed with martinis and huddled in urgent conference.

ZOE

...and then she went off in the cab
and he went back inside.

DYLAN
She said she was living at
the Mercer, right?

CAITLIN
Yeah, while she waits to
close on the apartment.

DYLAN
(to Zoe)
You're positive it was Davis.

ZOE
Positive.

CAITLIN
I saw them, too.

DYLAN
When?

ZOE
Yesterday?

CAITLIN
No. Actually I can't say it was
her, but I saw him at LaGuardia
with a tall blonde, about a month
ago.

ZOE
Why didn't you say something?

DYLAN
Why didn't you tell us?

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
(defensive)
It was from across the concourse
and...I don't know.
(to Zoe)
You and Juliet are both so
reverent about your perfect
marriages, who am I to stick a pin
in it?

ZOE
I am not!

DYLAN
Well, you less so, but...

CAITLIN
And it's not like I took pictures
or something. I didn't have *proof*.

ZOE

(irked)

You know what? Screw you! I've always been completely open about how hard it is. That's just not fair--

DYLAN

Okay, easy, nobody meant--

ZOE

Yes she did!

CAITLIN

(apologetic)

You're right, I shouldn't have lumped you together. Truth be told, I'm probably jealous in some I-want-to-be-in-that-Christmas-card-photo kind of way.

Dylan cracks up. Zoe cracks a smile and flips her olive at Caitlin. A moment, then--

DYLAN

(to Zoe)

But would you want to know?

Glances from one to the other; the elephant in the room.

ZOE

Yes. If it was Eric and you guys knew but didn't tell me and *then* I found out? I'd kill you.

DYLAN

Why?

ZOE

Because you let me hang out there and look pathetic.

CAITLIN

The embarrassing toilet-paper-on-your-heel theory.

ZOE

It's not just that. If we know, what right do we have to withhold the information from the very person to whom it matters *most*?

DYLAN

Unless she was never meant to find out.

ZOE

What do you mean?

DYLAN

There's always a version where the affair's never discovered, no one gets hurt, no one's the wiser. We could be playing God here, and badly.

EXT. ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH-UPPER WEST SIDE-NIGHT

Caitlin's Jaguar is idling at the curb, the driver, JIMMY, late 20's, outside smoking a cigarette.

CAITLIN (VO)
 Forgive me father for I have sinned
 it's been whatever since my last
 confession and these are my sins.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH-CONFESSIONAL-EVENING

Caitlin kneeling by the screen.

CAITLIN
 Pride, schadenfreude, and here's a
 hypothetical. There's a person
 who's come to work for me who I
 have some strong feelings for but
 if it's like, not mutual? Then this
 person becomes a huge distraction
 and I'd have to find an excuse to
 fire them even though they've done
 nothing wrong. What sin am I
 looking at?

FATHER DAN
 I think that's more of an ethical
 question.

CAITLIN
 And I think my hundred thousand
 dollar donation should buy me a
 sin-or-no-sin answer.

A sigh, from behind the screen. The creak of a door opening--

ANOTHER ANGLE-OUTSIDE THE CONFESSIONAL

FATHER DAN, 40, long-haired and Black Irish handsome, opens the door and extends a hand to Caitlin. They hug, he puts an arm around her and walk her towards the church door--

FATHER DAN
 I don't think you're in any danger
 of sinning here. The only danger
 you're in is of ending up like
 Aunt Ruth because you weren't brave
 enough to put yourself out there
 and sure enough of God's love to
 know that you deserve to be loved
 yourself, for *who you are*.

CAITLIN
 Thanks, Dan.

FATHER DAN
 By the way, is she cute?

CAITLIN
 What's with the shot in the dark?

FATHER DAN

(gently)
Caitlin, I'm your brother, I want what's best for you. You've been dating for twenty years, and at some point it's okay to admit that it's not about meeting the right guy anymore; just the right person.

CAITLIN

(a moment, then--)
It's a little scary.

FATHER DAN

Change always is.

He gives her a strong hug and a kiss on the cheek.

EXT. SANS SOUCI CORPORATE HQ-MIDTOWN-DAY

Flags of a dozen nations hanging over the atrium entrance.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM-DAY

Juliet is flanked by Operations Vice-Presidents JEFF LAWTON and TIM IRWIN, both a few years older than her, and across a table from two impressive Panamanian developers, SENOR LOPEZ and SENOR BRICENO. The table is strewn with land surveys and photographs of Caribbean beach front; they are wrapping up.

SENOR LOPEZ

(in perfect English, to
Jeff and Tim)
...and we hope that a visit to our site might be the logical next step?

Senor Briceno edges his coffee cup towards Juliet and gestures towards the carafe down the table. She takes a moment, then fetches the carafe and pours them each a cup, during the following:

*
*
*

JULIET

Gentlemen, with all due respect to our cultural differences, I'll remind you that I am the COO of this company and the ranking executive in this meeting. *If* there's a next step, I'd appreciate it if you'd address your proposals to me as well as to my colleagues, and to get your coffee refills for yourselves.

(then, brightly)
Cream or sugar?

*
*

She heads for the door, leaving them stunned and speechless.

INT. SANS SOUCI HQ-CORRIDOR-DAY

Juliet walking down the hall with a little smile of pride and triumph breaking out. Jeff and Tim catch up to her and fall into stride.

JULIET
 (to Jeff and Tim)
 Plus they were fudging about the beach. I checked with our engineers, and that whole part of the peninsula gets covered in seaweed six months a year...

They peel off as she stops by her assistant, JACOB, late twenties, murmuring into his headset--

JULIET (CONT'D)
 Davis call back?

He shakes his head, no. She heads into her office--

INT. JULIET'S OFFICE-DAY

Done up in a slightly muted version of her apartment, English-country cozy. She picks up her phone and hits a speed dial button. Davis' voice mail message, heard faintly, as she adjusts a framed photograph of the two of them, front and center on her desk.

JULIET
 (into phone)
 Hi, it's me again. Listen, the company jet's dead-heading down to Miami and I though maybe I'd do something totally uncharacteristic and have them drop me in Hilton Head and meet you for dinner and some hotel sex and I'd fly back up with you tomorrow? Emily's already set to sleep over at Amanda's, so...
 (checks her watch)
 This offer good until four o'clock.
 Call me. Big kiss.

*
 *

The whine of a jet engine and Linda Ronstadt's charged cover of "Girls Talk" surge up on the soundtrack.

EXT. TETERBORO AIRPORT-DAY

Music continues as Zoe and Kate exit her car on the tarmac, hand off their suitcases to the waiting STEWARD and board a Gulfstream V.

ZOE
 (into cell phone)
 Sasha, I'll be at your recital I promise double pinky swear now start your homework and put Daddy on...

INT. GULFSTREAM-FLYING-DAY

Music continues. Zoe and Kate are seated as far apart as possible in the intimate cabin, Zoe on the phone and Kate's gaze going from laptop to Zoe and back, as if waiting to be noticed. Zoe ends her phone call and opens her laptop; Kate closes her laptop and summons courage and walks up to Zoe's seat. Music ends.

KATE

I know we don't use the word "sorry", so I won't. I just really, really admire you and I can't tell you how grateful and honored I am to be in your such good hands.

ZOE

Well, thank you, Kate.

KATE

And I'm going to knock your socks off, starting with the meeting tomorrow morning.

ZOE

Where you will use last names only, go easy on the eye contact, and keep your mouth shut after the small talk is over.

Kate nods, takes it like a good soldier, gestures to Zoe's laptop.

KATE

Do you have any pictures of your kids?

Zoe hesitates a moment, clicks a folder open and offers the screen. Kate takes the seat opposite her.

ZOE

That's Sasha, she's eight, and Luke, five.

KATE

God, they're gorgeous.

ZOE

Thank you.

Closes it up.

KATE

What's your secret?

ZOE

I don't have one.

KATE

Come on. You're the youngest Managing Director Gorham's ever had, *and* you're a woman, *and* a Mom?

ZOE

There is no secret, Kate. Profit doesn't care if you have kids or cats, a penis or a vagina, where you went to school or who you're sleeping with. Profit only cares if you've got the hot hand, and through hard work and some luck mine's been hot more often than not.

KATE

Wow.

Zoe picks up the phone again and opens her laptop.

ZOE

You're going to have to excuse me...

KATE

Thank you so much for taking the time.

(getting up--)

ZOE

(casual)

And Kate, a word to the wise? Be careful of office romances, especially with the married ones.

Eyes like lasers, watching her reaction. Which is startled, though she tries to hide it.

KATE

I don't have anything going on...

ZOE

For future reference then? At some point it will end and you will become an inconvenience. And if you try to sue when they trump up a due cause for firing you, they will bury you under lawyers and you'll end up with cab fare and you'll be blacklisted at every firm you'd ever want to work for.

KATE

(evenly)

Thanks, but it's not my style.

She gets up, trips, rights herself, and starts back to her seat, clearly flustered. Zoe smiles a little.

EXT. CAITLIN'S OFFICE-DAY

Caitlin leaning over Patrick's shoulder and going over her schedule on the monitor.

CAITLIN
 ...then see if you can move the
 European sales meeting to four-
 thirty...
 (noticing--)

ANOTHER ANGLE-CAITLIN'S POV

A strikingly handsome MAN with a stunning armful of flowers on the opposite side of the floor, seen over the tops of the cubicles, as an ASSISTANT points out a door to him and he walks a little further and knocks and opens it and Alicia steps into view and takes the flowers and wraps her arms around him.

PATRICK (OS)
 It'd mean starting market research
 no earlier than seven.

BACK TO SCENE

Caitlin, resigned. Story of my life.

CAITLIN
 That's okay, I'm not going
 anywhere.

EXT. CARRIAGE HOUSE-EAST 75TH STREET-EVENING

Richard hurrying up the sidewalk, clearly late.

INT. CARRIAGE HOUSE-BEDROOM-EVENING

Ten foot ceilings, original moldings, a fireplace. Dylan and Richard are standing a little apart at the large picture window overlooking the block of gardens below, soft green in the waning light.

DYLAN
 I've never had a fireplace in the
 bedroom.

RICHARD
 Gardens out the window. Could you
 see us here?

DYLAN
 I'd be happy wherever you'd be
 happy.

She reaches out, a little tentative, takes his hand.

RICHARD
 What if I told you I put in a bid
 for that loft you loved on
 Greenwich?

Her ecstatic reaction leaving no doubt as to her real wish.

DYLAN
 You did!? YOU DID!?

She climbs into his arms. He holds back, just a little.

RICHARD

We really, really need something to look forward to beyond Friday.

DYLAN

I do love you, you know.

She kisses him, hungrily. He succumbs.

INT. JULIET'S APARTMENT-MASTER BEDROOM-NIGHT

Juliet still dressed, laying on the bed with a large drink in her hand watching a video of a long-ago family vacation at the beach, Davis clowning, Emily about five in a Little Mermaid bathing suit and coming in close and squinting into the camera -- "I love you, Mommy."--Davis joining her--"I love you too, Mommy". Juliet freezes the frame, takes a sip of her drink, and picks up her phone as if willing it to ring and then tosses it aside.

INT. HOTEL ROOM-ATLANTA, GA.-NIGHT

A business-chain room like a million others. Zoe is on the bed in a robe, a vodka in hand, her computer open in her lap.

ZOE

Good night, Luke. I love you.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FULL-SCREEN LAPTOP SCREEN

Via wi-fi and web-cam, Luke presses his lips to the lens on his end and gives her a remote kiss good night. He moves off, Eric takes his place.

ERIC

(calling, off)

Ask your sister to help you, I'll be right up.

(into camera)

Hi there...

ANOTHER ANGLE - INCLUDING BOTH

Zoe on the bed and Eric on the screen.

ZOE

Is it just me or is everybody having lots of sex just not with the people they're supposed to be having it with?

ERIC

Is this a trick question?

ZOE

No. Clayton is screwing that analyst and Davis Draper is screwing Cilla Grey who you don't know but I do.

ERIC
Jeez. Does Juliet know?

ZOE
Not yet.

ERIC
Are you going to tell her?

ZOE
Dylan and Caitlin and me.

ERIC
Wow. Will you bring nets and a tranquilizer gun?

ZOE
That's not funny. Can I ask you something? Is it hard for you to be faithful?

ERIC
(a beat, then--)
I'm of the old Paul Newman school:
Why go out for a hamburger when you
can have steak at home?

ZOE
(chiding)
I *choose* to believe you.

ERIC
So listen, I've got some good news
and bad news. I've got a third
interview for the restoration in
Charleston, tomorrow morning.

ZOE
That's great. What's the bad?

ERIC
If I get it, I'd have to be on site
for a couple months at least.

ZOE
I thought you said they'd let you
work mostly from New York?

ERIC
The terms of their matching grant
specifies that the architect be on-
site. They moved the chains.

A beat, looking at each other over the Ethernet, as the
possibilities sink in.

ZOE
Jesus. I mean, I *hope* you get it,
you know that.

ERIC
 Zoe, either you'd have to cut way
 back on travel or I'd have to bow
 out.

A horrible noise, from the kids, off.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 (calling, off--)
 Cut it out!
 (to Zoe)
 I gotta go. Night--

His image disappears. She lays back on the bed, suddenly wide awake.

EXT. REGENCY HOTEL - CURBSIDE - DAY

Richard in golf attire, standing by his Mercedes SL55 as Peter Johnson comes out with a golf bag slung over his shoulder.

PETER
 Hey Ricardo! What a day for it,
 huh?

Hearty handshakes. Richard takes his clubs and loads them into the trunk.

RICHARD
 I asked Eli Manning to join us,
 hope that's okay.

Peter with a chuckling *yeah-it's-okay* high five as a BICYCLE MESSENGER comes skidding up by the entrance and clocks their attire--

MESSENGER
 Peter Johnson?

PETER
 You got him.

The messenger reaches a couple of shrink-wrapped clubs fastened to his backpack and hands them over.

MESSENGER
 Compliments of Dylan Mason.

Richard with a look like, *fucking-a*.

PETER
 Great! Thanks!

Slips him a five as Richard struggles to keep his game face on.

EXT. JULIET'S APARTMENT BUILDING-DAY

Dylan steps out of a town car, cell phone to her ear.

DYLAN
 (into phone)
 He got the clubs? Fantastic! *Thank*
you...

PULLING BACK, revealing Zoe and Caitlin stepping out of their cars as well. Caitlin does a quick scope and winces. *
 *

CAITLIN
 Jesus, Mary and Joseph; we're all
 wearing black.

As indeed, they are.

INT. JULIET'S APARTMENT BUILDING--HALLWAY--DAY

Caitlin, Dylan and Zoe step off the elevator and into the foyer between the opposing doors to the two apartments on the floor. Juliet opens her door, wearing a robe, stuff in her hair. Her initial surprise at seeing all three of them--

JULIET
 Hi!

--turns to alarm before they can reply.

JULIET (CONT'D)
 Jesus Christ. Who died?

They clearly haven't thought about an opening--

ZOE	DYLAN
Nobody. We just thought we'd--	--show of support on the big night!

CAITLIN	JULIET
I love that dress!	Well, come on in!

They all move inside--

INT. JULIET'S APARTMENT--LIVING ROOM--DAY

They walk the thin line between casual drop-in and Bataan Death March.

JULIET
 Coffee, tea, should I open a bottle
 of wine?

CAITLIN
 Wine sounds good!

JULIET
 Wine it is. Just as soon as you
 tell me what the hell is going on.

Looking from one to the other, expectantly. And they glance at each other, in a process that silently chooses Zoe as spokesperson.

ZOE

There's no easy way to say this. I saw Davis coming out of the Mercer Hotel with Cilla Grey. Kissing her. And not just a...nice running into you kiss.

PUSHING IN ON JULIET, unreadable.

JULIET

(evenly)

And when was this?

ZOE

Tuesday afternoon.

JULIET

And you're positive it was Davis.

ZOE

Yes.

JULIET

(a moment, then--)

Well, thank you for that. I know it couldn't have been easy. I'll go get us that wine.

And just like that, she goes; leaving Zoe, Caitlin and Dylan trading dumbfounded "that's it?" looks. They rise as one--

CAITLIN

Juliet?

--and go after her.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. JULIET'S APARTMENT-KITCHEN-DAY**

She is wrestling with a corkscrew and a bottle of Chablis as the other three come in.

JULIET

Dylan would you grab some glasses?

And she does.

ZOE

Juliet? Say something.

JULIET

What's there to say? My husband... steps out on me.

DYLAN

You *knew*?

JULIET

About Cilla Grey? No. That's kind of a nasty wrinkle. It's always been an out-of-town sort of thing. Would you mind?

She hands off the bottle and corkscrew to Dylan, rubs her hands together as if to steady the shaking.

CAITLIN

But you still stay with him?

Juliet suddenly turns on her, ferocious.

JULIET

Do not judge me! When *you've* been with someone, *anyone*, a man, a woman, an effing *pet* for fifteen years, *then* we will talk! YOU DO NOT GET TO JUDGE ME!

Dylan pops the cork, pours a glass and gets it into Juliet's hand with lightning speed. Juliet takes a long swallow.

JULIET (CONT'D)

(adamant, to all)

I'm not excusing him. But look at what...what a man gives up to be with one of us. We make more money, we rise higher, we take up more space; we are as far from the idea of a *wife* he grew up with as it's possible to be and still wear his ring and go by his last name.

Takes another long swallow. Dylan tops her off.

JULIET (CONT'D)

Don't get me wrong, I hate it. But I hate the alternative more.

(MORE)

JULIET (CONT'D)

I don't want to be a single mother,
a blind date, a third wheel. I love
having someone to come home to, go
to parties and do the post-mortems
after with, plan holidays for...

She breaks off, gently places her glass on the counter, takes
a deep, restorative breath.

JULIET (CONT'D)

So there it is, the secret to my
happy marriage. But kids, don't try
this at home.

Giving them all permission to breathe again. Zoe gives her a
squeeze of a hug.

ZOE

We love you.

JULIET

I know you do.

CAITLIN

I'm sorry if I...

JULIET

You didn't. Help me with my
make-up?

Juliet holds out a hand to her, picks up her wine with the
other. Perez Prado's blazing cover of the Duke Ellington
classic "Caravan" surges up on the soundtrack.

EXT. CIPRIANI BALLROOM-EAST 42ND ST.-NIGHT

Music continues, over. A line of limousines, a phalanx of
PHOTOGRAPHERS, a swell CROWD pouring in.

PUSHING IN ON A LIMOUSINE PULLING UP -- the DRIVER opening
the rear door -- getting out one by one, Dylan, Zoe, Caitlin
and finally, in all her dressed-to-kill glory, Juliet.

The other three flank her, steady her, forming an iconic
flying wedge, Reservoir Dogs meets Prada runway--

JULIET

Don't pull me off 'til he starts to
turn blue.

INT. CIPRIANI BALLROOM-EAST 42ND ST.-NIGHT

--as if by intuition or some invisible force shield, the
CROWD PARTS before them as they make their way into the heart
of the cocktail crush, past graphic displays for the New York
University Child Study Center--

CAITLIN

I'll get the table numbers--

ANNOUNCER (OS)

Ladies and Gentlemen, please find
your seats...

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

She's as warm as a June afternoon,
inspiring as a mountain view, and
as anyone who has tried to say "no"
to her can attest, she can be as
fierce and unrelenting as a
hurricane.

Laughter, applause. Juliet leans in to Davis, close to his ear:

JULIET I know about Cilla Grey. GRIFFIN Listen to these numbers...

Davis smile freezes and fades, the color drains from his face.

DAVIS I'm so sorry. GRIFFIN Five point eight million dollars raised in the last twelve months.

JULIET Someone we *know*, where we *live*. GRIFFIN Not including her leadership gift of one point five million dollars...

PUSHING IN CLOSER ON THEM, all other sound dropping out.

DAVIS It's over, as of right now.

JULIET It sure as hell better be.

DAVIS (abject) What can I do? Just tell me what to do.

JULIET You know what you can do, Davis? Take a good look around at all our friends. Go on...

He looks around, uncertain.

DAVIS Okay...

JULIET Now, you won't know who and you won't know when, but I am going to take one of them as my lover, and I am going to do things with him that would curl your toes. And then I am going to end it, and you and I can start over with a clean slate.

The ambient SOUND comes back up--

GRIFFIN Ladies and Gentlemen, *Juliet Draper*.

APPLAUSE, tables STANDING, as she turns on her dazzling smile and starts weaving her way to the stage.

Davis is slumped in his seat, like he's just taken a bullet.

ANOTHER ANGLE-DYLAN TO ZOE TO CAITLIN

At adjoining tables, alerting each other to the sight of Emily prodding her father to his feet. He reaches out with a shaky hand, grabs his drink and downs it in one long gulp.

JULIET

Thank you Griffin, thank you all so very much...

Bathing in the applause as the "O Fortuna" from Orff's "Carmina Burana" comes up on the soundtrack.

Zoe checks her watch, reacts with alarm, and bolts.

EXT. FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE SCHOOL-NIGHT

Music continues, as Zoe runs double-time down the sidewalk and up the steps.

INT. FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE SCHOOL-NIGHT

Music continues, as she takes a staircase three steps at a time--

--and bursts through double doors and goes tearing down a long, empty corridor. A heel snaps, she bends down and takes off her shoes, barely breaking stride--

--she rounds a corner and skids to a stop by the auditorium entrance, where a couple of other LATE MOMS are waiting and a MATRONLY TEACHER is standing guard. Zoe, breathless, reaches for the door as the music builds further--

MATRON

Sorry. No one's allowed back in until intermission.

ZOE

You're *kidding* me.

MATRON

No, I'm not.

ZOE

My *daughter's* in there.

MATRON

It'll just be a few minutes.

Zoe notices--

--further up the corridor, A little GIRL in a tutu is throwing up in a wastebasket, by the backstage door--

Zoe bolts, stops to tuck back the little girl's hair, slips in the backstage door and feels her way along in the dark, in the wings, as--

--on the stage, a dozen GIRLS ranging in age from 7 to 11, including Sasha, are doing their best with an over-the-top "Ode to Spring" choreographed to the Orff cantata--

--Zoe stays out of the lights as best she can, bangs a shin and muffles her curse, edging her way down and into the auditorium. Sasha sees her, reacts with surprise and misses a step; Zoe grins and gives her a thumbs-up--

--and scans the auditorium for Eric or an empty seat as hushed and urgent "down in fronts" come flying from the darkened house. She spots Eric and his sheepish little wave and makes her way to his row--

--as hundreds of eyes shoot daggers and the "O Fortuna" reaches it's crescendo. She sits down next to him, dabs sweat from her brow and grins, giddy with triumph.

ZOE
(whispering)
I made it!

ERIC
(a moment, then--)
They offered me the job.

Music ends, APPLAUSE breaks out. Zoe and Eric look at each other, like, *now what?*

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. GORHAM, SUTTER-CLAYTON'S OFFICE-DAY**

Clayton is standing at the window with his back to the camera watching the rain pour down as Zoe comes in.

ZOE
Good morning.

CLAYTON
Not exactly. What the hell did you say to Kate?

ZOE
(gingerly)
I didn't say anything to Kate.

CLAYTON
She wants me to put two hundred and fifty thousand dollars in an escrow account in case of "wrongful termination". You tell her to do that?

ZOE
Of course not. Look, Clay, why don't you just cut...whatever it is, off.

CLAYTON
I can't. I haven't felt like this in years. You wouldn't understand.

He turns around. He's got quite a shiner crowding his left eye.

ZOE
What happened?

CLAYTON
(evasive)
Racquetball. Now what did you want to see me about?

ZOE
Eric's been offered a job that would take him out of town. I'd have to cut back on traveling.

CLAYTON
(a moment, then--)
I guess Kate can handle the road shows as long as you're on the sidelines calling in plays.

ZOE
Kate?

CLAYTON
We're all spread thin as it is. If she's willing to step up, what's the problem?

ZOE

Well, she's inexperienced for one thing--

CLAYTON

So now she'll *get* the experience, and we'll see what she's made of. You were green once yourself, you know. And then you got your shot.

PUSH IN ON ZOE, pinched between a rock and a hard place.

INT. CHLOE PARRISH-ALICIA'S OFFICE-DAY

Alicia at her desk, the bouquet of flowers arranged in a vase by her computer. She is poring over a marketing report and surrounded by piles of them. Caitlin knocks on Alicia's door, leans in--

CAITLIN

I'm taking a pitch at four that I'd like you to sit in on.

(re: flowers)

What a beautiful arrangement.

ALICIA

My darling little brother. I think he's trying to make up for his hideous behavior when we were children.

Caitlin like, *there is a god*. And makes the leap----

CAITLIN

Listen, are you free for a drink after work? I know it's kind of last minute, but--

ALICIA

I'd like that very much.

Betty Buckley's aching rendition of "I Had A Dream About You" insinuates onto the soundtrack.

INT. ZOE'S BROWNSTONE-ERIC'S STUDIO-EARLY EVENING

Music continues, over. Zoe, hair wet and wrapped in a robe, knocks-once-and-enters Eric's studio on the top floor. Eric is stretched out on a huge old leather Chesterfield couch, on the phone.

ERIC

(into phone)

...I sure will Alan, and thanks again. You too. Bye.

He buttons off the phone as she curls up on the couch.

ZOE

I told the kids they could watch a half-hour of "Cars".

ERIC
Man, when it rains, it pours.

ZOE
What?

ERIC
A couple from school? They just had a bid accepted for a townhouse on Bedford Street. They've seen our place and they want a version of what I did here, and right away.

ZOE
Is it an offer?

ERIC
A really good one, and too great an opportunity to pass up, portfolio-wise. Plus you wouldn't have to cut back.

ZOE
I was happy to do that, you know.

He pulls her close and kisses her.

ZOE (CONT'D)
So when have they been here?

ERIC
Playdates. It's Jason's parents, the Keeners?

ZOE
That Victoria has a thing for you, you know.

There's just the slightest hitch as he considers his response for a split-second.

ERIC
Hamburger.

She opens her robe and climbs on top of him.

ZOE
So how do you like your steak done, Mister?

Silencing his laugh with a hungry kiss and getting down to business. Music continues.

INT. BARNET-NASH-DYLAN'S OFFICE-EARLY EVENING

She's on the phone when her assistant, SARA, early forties, leans in, urgent.

SARA
Hughes wants to see you.

DYLAN
 (into phone)
 I'll e-mail you the rest, gotta go,
 bye.
 (hangs up, gets up)
 How did he sound?

SARA
 (shrugs)
 Australian.

Dylan takes a deep breath, starts out--

SARA (CONT'D)
 Good luck.

Music continues.

INT. BARNET-NASH-HUGHES' OFFICE-EARLY EVENING

Music continues, over and under the following, as Dylan shakes hands with Hughes by his door.

HUGHES
 Tell you the truth, no one's more
 surprised than me. But you've
 earned it, Dylan. Congratulations.

DYLAN
 Thank you, Robert.

He opens the door for her and she goes out--

INT. CORRIDOR-CONTINUOUS-SAME

--and takes a few dignified steps and then breaks into a combination Footloose-End Zone dance down the hallway, oblivious of the looks from COLLEAGUES, exultant. Music continues--

EXT. TOWN BAR AND RESTAURANT-NIGHT

Music continues, over and under. Caitlin and Alicia walk out together, lit up with drinks and laughing. Caitlin's Jaguar is waiting at the curb.

CAITLIN
 Can I drop you?

ALICIA
 I'm meeting my brother for dinner
 in Brooklyn. I'll just take a
 taxi...

A shy, charged shuffle; Caitlin takes her gently by the elbows and brushes a kiss to both cheeks.

CAITLIN
 This was fun. Good night...

But as she steps back, Alicia catches her eye with a challenging, mischievous, unmistakably erotic look and Caitlin's breath catches--

--and Alicia steps up and kisses her full on the mouth. And they melt together in a shyly passionate little shuffle right there on the sidewalk--

--as Cilla Grey passes by on her way in, recognizing Caitlin with a look of surprise, quickly turning away and disappearing inside, unnoticed by Caitlin. The kiss ends.

CAITLIN (CONT'D)
 (after a moment,
 breathless)
 I should tell you. I've had a
 Terrible time with men. And no real
 experience. With women. So I'm kind
 of, you know. Flying without the
 instruments here and--

Alicia silences her with another kiss.

ALICIA
 And I should tell you that you're a
 wonderful kisser. I'm late, see you
 Monday...

And with a last peck she runs off towards the avenue, hailing a cab. Caitlin leans back against the wall, closing her eyes, thrilled and scared all at once.

INT. BARNET-NASH-DYLAN'S OFFICE-NIGHT

Music continues, over and under. Dylan is on the phone with her feet up on the desk, on the phone, expansive.

DYLAN
 ...I don't know how he took it
 'cause I haven't seen him yet.

A knock on the door, followed by Richard with a bottle of Patron and two shot glasses.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 This is him. Talk to you later..
 (hangs up)
 I was wondering where you went...

RICHARD
 I took the liberty of expensing
 this to you. Congratulations...

She's up and around her desk in a flash.

DYLAN
 You mean it?

RICHARD
 Of course I do.

He opens the bottle and pours out shots and clinks her glass with his.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
To the Queen of All Media. Cheers.

He drinks, puts down his glass, slides her a rueful smile.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
My team's taking me out for a Last Supper. I'm gonna have to run...

DYLAN
Then I'll see you later?

RICHARD
Oh, and Pablo called with their counter-offer on the loft. Two-eight, which mean you can probably get it for around two-five. And they do have a permit for the terrace renovation, my lawyer got a copy...

He slips an envelope from his jacket and hands it to her.

DYLAN
(uneasy)
Richard? What's going on?

RICHARD
(a moment, then, measured)
I thought I could do it, Dylan. I tried, I swear. I thought I'd win and I'd buy us the loft and take care of you and...and now that it's reversed I just can't see...us, or my place in it. I'm really sorry.

DYLAN
(stunned)
I can't believe you're doing this.

RICHARD
Dylan, I'm forty next month. I want someone to come home to, I'm going to want kids, and we're just going in opposite directions.

DYLAN
(angrily)
You don't know what I want!

RICHARD
Yes I do. More than anything else, you want to win.

This stings, silencing her. He takes a swig from the bottle and goes. PUSH IN ON DYLAN, as she catches her reflection in the mirror hanging over the couch and it's as if, just for a moment, she's doesn't recognize the woman staring back at her.

She tosses the envelope he gave her aside and downs the shot he poured her like it was liquid courage. Music continues, over--

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX**EXT. MAXWELL'S RESTAURANT-MIDTOWN-DAY**

CAMERA crossing the street and PUSHING INSIDE. Max is our narrator again, instructive--

MAX (VO)
 Another thing about them? They rarely ask for favors, and when they do, we hop to it...

INT. MAXWELL'S RESTAURANT-MIDTOWN-DAY

--and through the boisterous lunchtime circus, past Max and Sean huddled at the end of the bar, to the table by the window. Juliet, Caitlin, Zoe and Dylan, in the huddle.

MAX (VO CONT'D)
 ...without comment or question, grateful for the opportunity.

JULIET
 ...and I told him that after a while I would end the affair and we would start over with a level playing field.

DYLAN
 Wow. Good for you.

ZOE
 Do you think you can really go through with it?

DYLAN
 Hey, we're not talking about oral surgery here.

CAITLIN
 Just oral. Ha ha.

JULIET
 (a moment then,
 thoughtful)
 Most of me hopes I can; part of me hopes I can't. I do love Davis, you know.

Nods, sips, silence for a moment as this lands on all.

JULIET (CONT'D)
 (to Dylan)
 How'd Richard take your promotion?

DYLAN
 (casual)
 He was really sweet about it. He's going to take some time off, travel, figure out his next move.

CAITLIN
 What about the loft?

DYLAN
That's on hold 'til we see where he
lands.

They all get it, and they all hide that they get it, because
sometimes that's what friends do.

ZOE
(looking off--)
Heads up.

ANOTHER ANGLE-BY THE DOOR

Cilla Grey entering with Pablo, clearly distraught.

PABLO
You know how it is, Cilla. The
board doesn't have to give a reason
for turning you down.

CILLA
Well next time could we do our
homework and find something I can
fall in love with and actually *buy*?

PABLO
Of course.

She turns on a high-beam smile for Sean, the maitre'd.

CILLA
How are you, Sean!?

Tight smile, squints at his reservations ledger.

SEAN
(politely)
I'm sorry, Ms. Grey, but I've got
nothing down for you.

CILLA
(gesturing)
Sean, I'm that table right over--

And she breaks off, incredulous, seeing that her table is
taken. The favor, granted.

CILLA (CONT'D)
There's been a terrible mistake.
Where's Max?

SEAN
(nail in the coffin)
As you know, Ms. Grey, Max goes
over the book personally, every
morning.

She gets it. Pablo clears his throat and inspects his shoes.
She takes a step forward, affording her a view of Juliet and
company, who keep their eyes fixed on her for just long
enough to register and then go back to each other.

CAITLIN
That does sound good.

DYLAN
Make it four.

The waiter moves off as Max moves in with a bottle of Dom Perignon and four champagne flutes. He sets the glasses and pours--

MAX
I understand some congratulations
are in order here. Cheers, Dylan.

DYLAN
Thank you, Max.

Juliet, Zoe and Caitlin all raise their glasses to her as the Rolling Stones' celebratory "She's a Rainbow" sneaks up on the soundtrack.

JULIET
To friends in high places. *

And PUSHING IN ON DYLAN, emotional, as the profit and loss of the last days catches up to her. *

DYLAN
I don't know what I'd do without
you all, I really don't. *

They each take a sip of champagne, then-- *

ZOE
Okay, who wants to go next? *

And as they lean in closer, and the music surges, FADE OUT. *

END OF STORY