

THE DONOR PARTY
Episode 2: "The F-bomb"

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NOTE ON EPISODE ONE

In the final moments of the pilot we INTERCUT between our players. Jeff sits in his backyard with Karl. Claire sits in her backyard with Leanne and Sandra. Both camps have decided to end contact with each other for the good of the kids.

SUGGESTED ADDITION: from there we PULL OUT to REVEAL they all live in the same neighborhood in the same little beach town. Their daily locations are shared: same beach, grocery store, bar, park, school, etc. These people are destined to collide.

MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE
(to be played after Cold Open)

A FAMILY ALBUM opens on stick figure graphics of our characters starting 15 years back. Time advances as we turn pages forward (possibly in a stop-motion, flip-book fashion.)

A COLLEGE GUY labeled "JEFF" walks into a "SPERM BANK." He walks out with cash and a smile. A new label hovers over him: "DONOR 7526." On the back side of the Sperm Bank BOXES labeled "DONOR 7526" ride out on a conveyer belt. A FLEET OF STORKS pick up individual boxes and fly off in all directions. We PULL OUT to see the storks delivering boxes all over the country.

We introduce three new figures outside two houses: "CLAIRE" "LEANNE" "SANDRA." Labels designate them all as "BEST FRIENDS." A heart links Leanne and Sandra: "A COUPLE." A stork drops each woman a BOX. The Moms erase "DONOR 7526" and write "LILY" "MAX" and "ZOE." The KIDS climb out of their respective boxes and grow up as our book flips to the present.

We PULL OUT from the Moms to see their location on a TOWN MAP. Arrows radiate out to their regular destinations: school, playground, grocery store, etc. Then we place JEFF on the same map. Arrows radiate out to his regular destinations: work, bar, beach, etc. Everyone's arrows crisscross and merge, creating a web all over town. Then Claire and Jeff open their laptops and gape. A NEW ARROW lassos them together, shrinking the web around them. Jeff is pulled face-to-face with the three Moms and their three Kids. They all stare at each other: a tentative new family.

TITLE UP: "THE DONOR PARTY"

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. JEFF'S NEW HOUSE - TIME OF DAY UNKNOWN

Jeff naps on the couch surrounded by moving boxes. A half-eaten PINKBERRY leaks on his desk, oozing toward an open LAPTOP. Suddenly the screen BUZZES with STATIC. An eerie beat. Then a CUTE TERRIFYING BABY crawls out of the laptop, like Samara in "The Ring." Jeff blinks awake and watches in helpless terror as MULTIPLE BABIES squirm across the floor, scramble onto the couch and start... licking his face?

JEFF (O.S.)
So... scratchy...

Somewhere someone hums the theme to "Born Free." Then--

INT. JEFF'S NEW HOUSE - MORNING

Jeff's eyes jolt open: THREE KITTENS lap his face. KARL hovers over him with a box of cats... wearing a full wetsuit.

KARL
Wife and kids are at the in-laws *all week - I'm a free man!* Get dressed, Sulky Spice, brekkie's on me!

JEFF
Is brekkie... "wetsuit optional?"

KARL
I aborted my surf sesh 'cause of this Red Tide thing. But *waitresses dig surfers*, so I kept the suit. You look terrible by the way.

JEFF
Thank you, Karl, but I feel fine.

KARL
Jeff, you got sucker-punched by a break-up and a baby-mama! Last week your life was planned, now you're alone in a house full of foster cats: it's ok to feel bad about yourself--

JEFF
That's both validating and depressing--

KARL
But you had it coming: you're a SNAG.
(beat, Jeff's not biting)
"SNAG." Coined it. Sensitive New-Age Guy. You voted for Obama, you hold doors for women, you DVR "Marley and Me" each time it airs-- you're an emotional sucker!

(MORE)

KARL (CONT'D)
And it's time you start thinking
with your head and not your heart.

JEFF
 It's probably good you don't write
 greeting cards--

Jeff roots in moving boxes for clothes/Advil; Karl kicks back.

KARL
 Let's examine your recent history:
 you smother the crap out of Daphne -
 she dumps you neck-deep in pussies.
 Then - to *rebound* - you nearly
Nagasaki your personal life by
 meeting some sad-sack internet lady
 who had one of your sperm-babies!

JEFF
 Her name's Claire. And aren't all
 babies technically "sperm-babies?"
 (throws Karl his phone)
 I get it, I'm bad at "boundaries" -
 I'm working on it. Daphne's been
 texting, I haven't responded once.

KARL
 "Hey Jeffrey, I know this is hard."
Bleugh! Impressive restraint, man.

JEFF
 It's actually been *easy*. I think I
 was more into the *idea* of settling
 down than to settling down with
her. Maybe she did me a favor and
 freed me up to meet "the One."

KARL
 (beat, suspicious)
 Wait... if you're not heart-broken,
 why are you moping around like
 Duckie with a case of Ringwald?

JEFF
 I dunno. Claire wants to end
 contact. Her son doesn't know he's
 a... *tube-child* yet. I might wanna
 learn a better word for that--

KARL
 Whoa, stop! *Claire* gave you Ringwald?

Beat. Jeff backpedals, trying to rally.

JEFF
 No, I'm explaining why I'm done
 with her too. 'Cause I'm single and
 loving the "game." Bitches beware,
 New Jeff is stone-cold gang-ster!
 (then)
 It felt racist not saying the "r."

KARL
Fake it till you make it, bro. Now
how 'bout we celebrate with some
bottomless mi-mo-sas?

JEFF
Could do... also gonna throw out
that it's 7:30 and a Tuesday.

Beat. TITLE UP: "7:30 AM. TUESDAY."

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

An open kitchen/living area. Claire shuts her computer as Max comes downstairs. She draws a heart on Max's lunch bag as Max pulls a second lunch bag from the fridge. Beat.

CLAIRE
Normally I don't like to sign other
people's work, but...

She reaches over and draws a heart on the second lunch bag.

MAX
Thanks, Mom.

CLAIRE
So... big week, Birthday Boy. The
big one-one. You sure I can't do
anything for the party? Maybe call
some moms?

MAX
Nope. Just bring yourself. Six
o'clock, Friday at the park. In
lieu of presents please donate to a
charity of your choosing.
(off Claire)
Just kidding, I want presents.

CLAIRE
So this is like a "star-gazing"
party, right? I read the meteor
shower's peaking this weekend.

MAX
More like a party with meteors.
Lily said calling it a "star-gazing
party" would haunt me for the rest
of Middle School. She's pretty
superficial, so I'll trust her gut.
(beat)
Ok, gotta send some e-mails.

CLAIRE
Wanna use my computer?

Max is already out the sliding glass door to the back porch.

MAX
I'll be at Leanne and Sandra's!

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

A WOODEN FENCE divides Claire's backyard from Leanne and Sandra's and opens into a SHARED DRIVEWAY between the houses. Max skirts around the fence and into Leanne and Sandra's yard. Claire steps out, just missing him as ZOE (8) tears up the driveway in full Karate garb, roundhouse-kicking the air. SANDRA (tightly-wound WASP, Kristen Wiig) chases her.

SANDRA
Zoe, you cannot wear that to school!

ZOE
Yes! It's Japanese History Month!

SANDRA
I appreciate you're manipulating me with political correctness, but no: the Japanese don't get a history month--

ZOE
Why?!

SANDRA
Because we're fresh out of months!
Sucks for Japan. Inside now.
(off Zoe, fierce)
Zoe... do not make me count.

Beat. Zoe slinks home; Sandra sees Claire by her back porch.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
You ok? You look stressed.

CLAIRE
It scares me when you count.

SANDRA
What choice do I have when my partner lets our eight-year-old eat half a box of *junk cereal*, then lets me deal with it?! It's not like I *like* being "The Enforcer"--

CLAIRE
We don't call you that.

SANDRA
(beat, off Claire)
You guys *call* me that?
(a little bit)
Ugh, it's not fair: Leanne's always being "cool" cop. Which forces me to be "responsible" cop... what?

CLAIRE
 No, I get it. It's just... those
 aren't types of cops.

CLAIRE'S POV: LEANNE (fat, fun, Melissa McCarthy) peeks
 around the fence, sees Sandra and freezes. Leanne signals
 Claire to keep quiet and slips away. Beat. Sandra stares at
 Claire: something's up. Claire covers with a confession--

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 It's Max's party. I *always* plan
 it. But this year he won't even
 let me see the invites. I think
 he's trying to be the "Man of the
 House." Which is sweet. But
 still, he's kind of...

SANDRA
 Eleven.

CLAIRE
 Yes. That. It'd be so much easier
 if his dad were here.

SANDRA
 Claire, I though we settled this!

CLAIRE
 We did! I meant Big Max. "Dad"
 dad. Not "donor" dad.

SANDRA
 Ok, good, cause--

CLAIRE
 I know, I know: the three of us got
 it covered. We don't need a fourth
 parent throwing off the balance.

Beat. Sandra opens her mouth, but Claire preempts her--

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 Especially a parent we all chose
 off a "*sperm menu*" solely for
 biological traits, with no
 intention of ever having him
 involved in our children's lives.

Beat. Sandra scrutinizes Claire's commitment to the Party Line--

SANDRA
 That's pretty good.

CLAIRE
 Don't worry. Jeff and I ended
 contact. He knows I haven't told
 Max yet. And he has no clue about
 your girls. Or that the kids don't
 know about each other. Or that --
 holy crap, Sandra, so many secrets!

SANDRA
 We're like the Kennedys of
 reproductive biology.
 (beat, relaxing)
 Ok. Let me see what I can do about
 Max's party.

CLAIRE
 You think you can help?

SANDRA
 (WASPy diva-snap)
 Yeah, girl. Organization is my jam!
 (off Claire)
 Don't even say it. Sounds so much
 better when Leanne does sass...
 I'll see what I can find out. Just
 remember - we got your back.

CLAIRE
 And I got yours. Thanks, San.

SANDRA
 You got it, ClaireBear... now excuse
 me while I go water-board my wife.

Sandra goes back to her yard. Claire reenters her kitchen...

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire opens her laptop and JUMPS: Leanne sits in the living
 room, clutching a box of HONEY SMACKS. Like Sandra, Leanne's
 high-energy... but distinctly more hip and impulsive.

LEANNE
 Front was unlocked. Is she mad?

CLAIRE
 Apparently you broke the High
 Fructose Corn Syrup rule - war
 crimes were mentioned.

LEANNE
 I would *never* give Zoe this junk...
this is Mommy's private stash!

Leanne hides her Honey Smacks away in Claire's cabinet.

CLAIRE
 You're still eating that stuff?

LEANNE
 I can't help it... I got a Smacks
 habit! I'm addicted to Smacks!
 The Smacks have got me bad!! I
 just can't kick the Smacks...?
 (off Claire)
 Sorry, been saving those - Sandra
 doesn't have a sense of humor about
 sugar cereal.

(MORE)

LEANNE (CONT'D)
 I mean, fine, lately I've slipped
 a little on her "rules." But our
 kids need some "balance" *if you get
 what I'm saying...*

CLAIRE
 Absolutely!
 (then)
 No, what are you saying?

LEANNE
 (a tense beat, then)
 You think I'm the cool one, right?
 I mean, of course: united front,
 we're-a-team, mom-power, et cetera.
 But level with me: I'm the Beyonce,
 she's the Kelly Rowland.

CLAIRE
 Wait. What does that make me?

LEANNE
 Back up singer Michelle Williams!
 See? Sandra would never know that!
 (off Claire)
 By your silence I take it you agree.
 (then)
 I can't tell you how much that
 means to me.

DING. Claire looks at her laptop and slaps it shut--

LEANNE (CONT'D)
 (sassy, suspicious)
 Busted, girl! If you think I'm
 going without finding out what *that*
 was, you got another thing coming.

CLAIRE
 It does sound better when you say
 that stuff.

LEANNE
 Was Sandra tryin' to do sass again?

CLAIRE
 Does not sit well on her.

LEANNE
 Still not off the hook.

Beat. Leanne's not budging. Then Claire makes a decision to
 reveal what's on the laptop. Leanne stares in shock.

LEANNE (CONT'D)
 Is that...? Oh Claire! You have
 Facebook-stalked the baby-daddy.

CLAIRE
 I know what you're thinking...

LEANNE
 Stop. I find this horrifying. But I need you to look me in the eyes-- and notice how much better I'm taking this than Sandra ever would.

CLAIRE
 I see. Thank you. And I promise, I have no desire to mess up our lives. It was just... for looking.
 (then off the laptop)
 Oh. Nooooo...

INT. JEFF'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Silence, save for Karl's ham-handed CLICKS on Jeff's laptop.

JEFF (O.S.)
 Karl...? I get scared when I can't hear you. I hope you're not playing with those dry-cleaning bags again.

Jeff enters; Karl stares at Claire's Facebook page.

JEFF (CONT'D)
 Were you *snooping* on me?

KARL
 The page was wide open - and you know how I feel about social media!

JEFF
 You don't understand it and lack the imagination to see how it could be helpful to others?

KARL
 You said you were "done" with her! To me, *this* seems like - oh no, Jeff. Do you have a crush on your sperm-baby-mama?!

JEFF
 No! That would be... a terrible idea. I have a son. Fact. I can be curious about who's raising him and still not get involved.

KARL
 Use your head! If you start digging, you may not like what you find. For instance...

Karl awkwardly opens a PHOTO of Claire with Sandra and Leanne.

KARL (CONT'D)
 Why are *these two ladies* in all her pictures? Is Claire a lesbian? A sister-wife? You have no idea!

Suddenly, Jeff points to the screen and trembles.

JEFF
Oh god...

KARL
Exactly.

JEFF
No, Karl - did you click that?

KARL
(squinting to read)
The "*Friend Request Sent*" button?

JEFF
It's *supposed* to be called the
"*Plus-Sign Add Friend*" button.

KARL
Ok, so... we "page back" and "un-
request," right?

JEFF
You can't "page back!" You can't
"un-request!!" A Friend Request is
an irreversible action!!!

The reality sets in. Then--

KARL
See, sentences like that are why I
think Facebook is stupid.

Jeff just stares at Claire's page, stunned... and maybe a
little excited.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Claire and Leanne stare at Jeff's request, stunned... and
horrified. So much for "no contact."

FADE OUT:

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BAYVIEW ANIMAL HOSPITAL, VETS' BULLPEN - DAY

TITLE UP: "WEDNESDAY"

Jeff talks on the PHONE with Karl as he cuts and pastes a SIGN at his SeaWorld-inspired desk.

JEFF
The way I see it, I didn't send that request. You did. It wasn't me being impulsive and stupid--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. KARL'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Karl's stuck watching Home Shopping Channel, trying to operate a fancy TV remote as he talks on the PHONE to Jeff.

JEFF (CONT'D)
It just happened. And if Claire responds, than maybe that's part of a bigger plan. Maybe it's...

KARL
Do not say it--

JEFF
Fate.

KARL
Ugh. SNAG-y f-bomb.

Jeff goes to post his homemade SIGN-UP SHEET outside an exam room: "FREE KITTENS FOR A GOOD HOME." His boss DR. DOMASO (salty, female, 40s) enters and Jeff ends the call.

JEFF
Sorry, Karl, gotta go--

END INTERCUT. Jeff conceals the sign-up from Domaso, but--

DR. DOMASO
I see what you're doing, Shamu. A vet giving out free cats? Like a dentist giving free candy? Or a dealer giving free crack pipes?
(off Jeff)
Locking down future business: I like it.

Jeff re-posts the sign and smiles, finally out of his funk.

EXT. DRIVEWAY / CLAIRE'S BACK YARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Claire pulls her car in the driveway, Max and Lily get out.

LILY
Max, can I borrow your calculator?

MAX
Oh, look who's talking to me now
that we're not at school!

LILY
Whatever... I talk to you.

MAX
In carpool. But once we hit campus
you put up this ten-foot radius,
like I'm cool-girl kryptonite!

LILY
"Ooh, I'm Max. I'm so smart. I
make Periodic Table jokes."

Beat. Max just stares at Lily. Then--

LILY (CONT'D)
I really need that calculator.

MAX
Mario Kart - best two out of three?

LILY
Deal - dibs on Princess Toadstool.
If you tell anyone I will kill you.

They run to Leanne and Sandra's with their school bags.

CLAIRE
Homework first, kids!

Claire continues to her back door; Leanne rushes to meet her.

LEANNE
Sandra's on her way. Quick, what's
the "status update?"
(off Claire)
Facebook statuses? Requests...? Get
with it, girl - what's up with Jeff?

CLAIRE
Oh, nothing. And nothing's going to
happen. I'm ignoring the request.

LEANNE
Great. Remember, it's all about
the "Pocket Veto" - don't *outright*
decline, just never confirm.

CLAIRE
(processing, then)
Isn't that what I just said?

LEANNE
It's cooler to say "Pocket Veto."

A car pulls in. Sandra clicks down the driveway in heels and a suit and puts her laptop down by Claire and Leanne.

SANDRA
Good news: I found a copy of Max's Evite on our computer and I'm going to organize the crap out this party!
(opens her laptop)
Bad news: there's only three RSVPs.

Claire sees Max's EVITE - oh dear. Sandra pulls out a LIST.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I made a list of non-responding parents. So get out your phone--

LEANNE
(full-on sass)
It's time to power-call these *Muthers!*

MAX (O.S.)
Please don't call anyone!

Max pokes her head over the top of the fence, standing on a garbage hutch on the other side. The moms are busted.

CLAIRE
Max, I thought you were playing video games...

Lily stands right next to him with a math textbook.

LILY
You said "homework first." Also, you guys whisper really loud.

CLAIRE
Honey, we're just trying to help--

MAX
It's fine. But I'm *serious* - I wanna handle the invites myself!

LILY
Those kids aren't gonna come, anyway. Tommy Belfast has his beach party Friday. The whole 6th grade is going.

SANDRA
How do you know that?

LILY
I'm popular... I deal in people-currency, I got my fingers on the pulse.

MAX
 Isn't there another name for girls
 who trade in currency and put their
 fingers on things?

LEANNE
 Whoa! Zinger, Max!
 (off Claire, Sandra)
 And inappropriate. We were
 pretending not to hear that, right?

INT. SHOP RITE GROCERY STORE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Jeff gets a TEXT as he and Karl aimlessly shop for junk food.

JEFF
 Incoming from Daphne...

Karl reads a text off Jeff's phone in a high "Daphne" voice.

KARL
 "Heard our kitties need homes, only
 fair I take half, like joint
 custody - LOL, exclamation point."

JEFF
 That sounded like Snow White on
 Quaaludes. But I respond to this
 one, right? It's a good offer!
 Trust me, we are in no danger of
 getting back together.

KARL
 Because you've come to your senses
 and are now pining over a shadowy
 woman who purchased your sperm.

JEFF
 This would be purely tactical. I'd
 have *fifty percent* less kittens--

KARL
 And a *hundred percent* more Daphne.

JEFF
 Technically, zero to one is
 "*infinity percent*" more Daphne--

KARL
 Can't dig yourself out with math,
 bro. You are clearly a danger to
 yourself and others!
 (confiscates Jeff's PHONE)
 I hereby deputize myself and put
 you on communication probation. If
 you do this cat thing, you will
 write back exactly what I say.

Then Jeff stops cold and stares at a WOMAN: she's gorgeous -
she's also CLAIRE. Jeff's stunned. Karl's oblivious.

KARL (CONT'D)
Hottie, party of one. Now *there's*
something worthy of your attention--

JEFF
No, Karl, that's... Claire.
(off Karl's shock)
Do you think it's a sign?

KARL
No! "Two-for-one Triscuits," that's
a sign... this is a Defcon alert!

JEFF
(a decision, breaks away)
I'm just gonna say hi--

KARL
Jeff, don't! You're on probation!!

Jeff approaches Claire from behind - he's nervous but thrilled.
Claire turns and sees him - she's blindsided and *petrified*.

CLAIRE
Oh, hey! It's you. I... didn't
realize... do you live here?

JEFF
Yeah. Since vet school. I shop
here all the time--

CLAIRE
Me too. All the time.

An excruciating beat. Then--

MAX (O.S.)
No way!

They realize MAX is standing right there. Claire covers his eyes instinctively... and instantly regrets the action.

MAX (CONT'D)
Uh... Mom? What are you doing?

Claire winces and takes her hands off Max's eyes--

CLAIRE
Surprise!

MAX
SeaWorld Guy! I thought it was
you! You gave me that sea otter T-
shirt, remember? I won the trivia
at the field trip last week!

JEFF
"Most dangerous predator of all?"

MAX
"Man!"

They high-five. Then Jeff looks to Claire to take the lead.

CLAIRE
Max, this is Jeff.

MAX
Cool. Are you guys friends?

CLAIRE
Uh, yes. A little.

MAX
Can we tell him about the party?
I'm having a birthday Friday. It's
gonna be at the park.

JEFF
Maybe you'll see the meteor shower--

MAX
Yes! That's the whole point! Mom,
Jeff's gotta come, right?

CLAIRE
I don't think so, honey. Jeff
might be really busy that night...

JEFF
I don't have anything yet. But...

Claire looks *pointedly* at Jeff: a clear cue to decline. Karl
shakes his head down the aisle: *Just Say No!* Then--

MAX
It's ok. I'll send you the Evite
and you can tell me later. Are you
guys Facebook friends? I can get
your info off my mom's page--

CLAIRE
(Max opens a Facebook app)
Oh, honey. No! Hold on a sec--

MAX
Oh, look! You forgot to accept his
friend request! Sometimes moms
need help with technology stuff.

Max hits "**Accept.**" Jeff's phone DINGS in Karl's hands and Max
beams at Jeff, who smiles nervously at a *horrified* Claire.

MAX (CONT'D)
Yay, friends!

FADE OUT:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND/EXERCISE AREA, THE PARK - AFTERNOON

TITLE UP: "THURSDAY"

A community park by the Middle School. Jeff does some post-jog pull-ups as Karl cools off on a set of parallel bars.

JEFF
He's only ten. Maybe he'll forget.

KARL
Play-ah, please. You had that kid at "meteor." The Evite's a-coming and you gotta deal with it.

JEFF
He does think I'm pretty awesome.

KARL
Do not get attached: think how many times you donated? You could have *hundreds* of sperm-babies out there.

JEFF
Still just called "babies."

KARL
Face the facts, Max is a *Mogwai*. Sure, he's cute and cuddly now. You just want one. Then - whoops! - you spill a glass of water and before you know it - BAM! - there's ten *Gremlins* eating your face off!

JEFF
That's ridiculous. I would never feed him after midnight--

KARL
Cut bait now. The answer is NO!

Jeff drops down from the pull-up bar, breathing hard.

JEFF
Karl, you didn't see how this kid looked at me! I'm like his hero...

KARL
I saw how Claire looked at you--

JEFF
She *did* look surprised.

KARL
Yeah. Like butcher-knife-through-shower-curtain surprised.

JEFF
 What if I reply MAYBE but then some awesome marine-life emergency pops up and I cancel to save the day?

KARL
 Who are you trying to impress here? Claire or the kid?

JEFF
 I dunno. Maybe both? I know it's insane but... *what if Claire's "the One" - she just also happens to be the mother of my child?*

KARL
 You are in a SNAG-y spiral and only you can pull yourself out.

JEFF
 Ok, relax, you're right. The reply is NO. By way of MAYBE. I at least wanna let the kid down easy.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCKERS - CONTINUOUS

After School Programs let out. Lily parts ways with a COOL 9TH GRADE PACK and realizes Max is right next to her.

LILY
 Were you just eavesdropping on me?

MAX
 It's not eavesdropping when you're standing next to someone and they're pretending you don't exist.

LILY
 Fine. What's the face about?

MAX
 It's about you and your "bestie crew" planning to crash Tommy's "par-tay" the night of my birthday!

LILY
 Ew.

MAX
 Your word choice, not mine.

LILY
 So what, I'd rather be with my *friends* than go to a random 6th grade party with *three RSVPs*. Why do you care so much anyway?

MAX
 I care because I thought we were friends!

Max is totally sincere. This hits home. And Lily's furious.

LILY
Ugh, why can't you fight normal?
Whenever push comes to shove you
get so... weird and *nice*. It's
like you have honesty-Tourettes!

MAX
I'm just saying what I mean.

LILY
This is Middle School, Max. We
don't do that here!

INT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT / MAIN FIELD, THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Claire grades homework, waiting for her carpool. She sees Leanne watching Zoe on the soccer field and walks over.

CLAIRE
Leanne, I have something to tell
you... but you have to promise to
be super "*Beyonce*" about it.

LEANNE
Sure. Lay it on me, Michelle!

CLAIRE
We saw Jeff at Shop Rite and Max
invited him to his party.

LEANNE
Oooh, you set me up good... trying
to be chill but - *are you crazy?!*
Sandra's gonna kill us!!

CLAIRE
I had no idea he lived here. In
town! What do we do?

LEANNE
Besides fire up the Delorian and un-
meet the guy in the first place?

CLAIRE
I know, it's a mess - and Max is so
excited about him coming now. I
don't know long we can avoid him...

Beat. Leanne reasons it out, heartfelt but level-headed.

LEANNE
Look, Jeff give us three gorgeous
kids... but it's *such* a mess. We
at least need Sandra on board
before we open that can of *sperms*.
(off Claire)
Sorry, low-hanging fruit.

CLAIRE
(a decision)
He can't come. I have to call.

Leanne nods, calm but firm. A beat. The moment continues--

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Oh, like right now?

Yup. A beat, then Claire parts with Leanne and dials Jeff. An AUTOMATED VOICE PROMPT plays as Claire returns to her car. Leanne gives a thumbs up from afar; Claire thumbs back - BEEP.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Jeff, listen, it's Claire. This birthday thing - it's not about you or me. It comes down to what's best for Max...

Then Claire sees Max bound toward her, wearing Jeff's SeaWorld otter tee... and so happy. She can't do it: she presses "*".

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
If you're satisfied with your...
(presses "3")
Message deleted. Goodbye.

Claire hangs up. As Max gets in the car, she kisses his head.

MAX
Mom, why'd you do that?

CLAIRE
Because I can.

Claire gets behind the wheel, battling doubt. Lily gets in, not acknowledging Max, and Claire starts the engine. As she pulls out we see Jeff across the park finishing his workout.

INT. SHELLBACKS BAR - THAT NIGHT

An UNMARKED BOX jiggles/meows beside Jeff and Karl at the bar

JEFF
So why exactly couldn't Daphne pick these up at my place?

KARL
It's a classic "booty call bait-and-switch." Neutral turf is key.

JEFF
Plus, you wanted to get a drink and didn't know who else to call?

KARL
Symbiosis, man. You' my remora!

JEFF
I hate and love that you said that.

Jeff's phone vibrates. He lets his mail load: MAX'S EVITE.

JEFF (CONT'D)
*Here we go. I'd love to come, Max.
 But this is the right thing to do --*
 (re: Evite, tortured)
 Oh no, Karl, he's only got three
 YES's! I remember stuff from when I
 was eleven - if I go to this, I
 could give Max one third more YES's!
 (off Karl, toughening)
 Math is for losers: I'm stone cold.
 I'm bulletproof. I am titanium.

Jeff hits MAYBE as Daphne enters in make-up, heels, etc.

KARL
 Okay, let's do the "laugh thing."
 (off Jeff)
 Pretend to say something, I'll
 laugh and make you look carefree-
 slash-awesome. One, two, three...

JEFF
 Please don't make this awkward.

KARL
 That'll do it--

Karl LAUGHS loudly, then drains Jeff's beer as Daphne nears.

DAPHNE
 Sorry I'm late, need another drink?

KARL
 We were just about to leave.

DAPHNE
 (off Karl, no love lost)
 You sure, Karl? I can ask what
 beers they have on sippy-cup?!

Jeff signals Karl to butt out and gently picks up the box.

JEFF
 Thanks for this, Daph. But I'm not
 sure I'm ready for a hang yet.

Daphne's uncomfortable - and clearly dressed "for a hang."

DAPHNE
 Right. Me neither. I'm meeting
 friends out later anyway, so...
 (re: box of kittens)
 Good thing I got a box of *these*!
 Kidding, I'll take them home first.
 But if you're free tomorrow...?

JEFF
 (wavers, then off Karl)
 I have plans tomorrow.

DAPHNE
Did I say tomorrow? I meant
Saturday. Just a friend-date...

JEFF
Daph, right now, I think it's best
if we don't do dates. Of any kind.

All are shocked by Jeff's directness. Daphne takes the hint.

DAPHNE
Right, ok, I'm still on night shifts
but... see you round the hospital, I
guess? Bye for now, Jeffrey. Karl.

Daphne goes for the awkward hug, snubbing Karl on her way out.
Jeff steams, as Karl mimes a "Street Fighter" fireball attack.

KARL
"Hadouken!" Flawless Victory, man!

JEFF
Karl, none of that was cool!

KARL
What do you mean? You were *great*!

JEFF
I just made a girl dress up, come
to a bar, then gave her a box of
cats and showed her the door. In
what Universe is that ok?!

KARL
Welcome to the game, playa. That
girl is all about you now!

JEFF
Daphne and I *didn't* work out
because she finds me smothering *in*
normal doses! So who is this
"game" helping? Sure, I follow my
gut and sometimes I get burned.
But if I keep playing by some
"rules" I don't understand, I could
miss out on something *great*!

Jeff heads for the exit with his phone. Karl's alarmed--

KARL
Jeff wait - why do I feel this
isn't about Daphne anymore?!

JEFF
Karl, you're my best friend. But
as "communication deputy" - you're
fired. From now on the only "game"
I play is the "honesty game."

KARL
Dear God, Jeff... that is the worst
thing I have ever heard you say!!

EXT. CLAIRE'S BACK PORCH OUTSIDE KITCHEN - LATE THAT NIGHT

After Hours: Leanne pours cocktails for Claire and Sandra.

SANDRA

I love our weekly check-ins: three smart women dishing over cocktails. It's like "Sex in the City"--

CLAIRE

With cheaper shoes, less sex, more baby fat...

LEANNE

Speak for yourselves, ladies - I'm officially back to my pre-baby weight!
(pats her hips, off others)
I hate you guys.

CLAIRE

Ok, so what are we doing about Max? I promised not to call anyone. But I'm scared all the kids are going to this Tommy kid's beach party.

LEANNE

Well, I cracked down: Lily will be at Max's by sundown or else!
(aside to Claire)
I'm leaving the *else*-part to Sandra.

SANDRA

Poor Max, he's such a trooper.

CLAIRE

Yeah, Poor Max...

MAX (O.S.)

Guys, I'm right here!

Max is standing at the kitchen door with a glass of water.

SANDRA

Someone enroll that boy in ninja class.

MAX

I'm going to start wearing bells, because I clearly have a problem in the "being noticed" department.

CLAIRE

Max, we just meant we're impressed--

MAX

I knew about Tommy's party - I only expected my core group at mine. Whenever I invite the whole class, it always becomes about sports anyway. I just want to have cake, see stars and call it a night.

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)
It's getting lonely being the only
person not feeling sorry for me.

SANDRA
(awed by Max's poise)
Where did that boy come from?

LEANNE
Like a little white Denzel.

MAX
Still here, guys! Seriously,
you'll be there... plus Zoe, Lily,
my friends from school... and Mom's
friend Jeff is a "Maybe" now!

CLAIRE
Okaaay... bedtime! Big day tomorrow.

MAX
Yup, g'night, guys. Love you, Mom.

Max goes up. Silence. Claire and Leanne stare at the ground.
Sandra's alarmed - then she sees Claire's PHONE blink on the
table - **NEW VOICEMAIL** from "**Jeff.**" She hands it to Claire.

SANDRA
Is there something you'd like to
share with the rest of the class?

LEANNE
Claire, you said you'd handle this--

SANDRA
Leanne knew about this too?!

CLAIRE
No, it's *all me*. I'm coming clean.
But first we should open a *dialogue--*
(thinks, then)
Screw the dialogue, I'll play it.

Claire hits "**PLAY.**" All three hang on Jeff's every word--

JEFF'S VOICEMAIL (V.O.)
It's me, I maybe missed your call.
Anyhow, I guess it makes me a little
nervous but - if it's ok with you...

EXT. SHELLBACKS BAR - CONTINUOUS

JEFF'S VOICEMAIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...I'm in for Max's birthday.

Jeff re-opens Max's Evite to change his reply: MAYBE to YES.

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. MAX'S PICNIC TABLE, THE PARK - BEFORE DARK

TITLE UP: "**FRIDAY**"

Max, his THREE FRIENDS and Zoe play on a field: a ragtag, happy group. The Moms set up a PICNIC AREA, decorated in a distinct "star-gazing" theme. All three are on edge. Leanne looks at the cloud-filled sky and tries to ease the tension--

LEANNE

So, star-gazing without stars--
kinda like sunbathing without sun.

CLAIRE

Or ice-skating without ice--

SANDRA

Both of which are likely, given
what we're doing to this planet!
(catching her outburst)
Sorry, I see now that was just a
word game.

CLAIRE

(comforting side hug)
It's gonna be ok. Plus who doesn't
like a little eco-disaster humor?

SANDRA

Republicans!!
(then)
I did it again, didn't I? God, I
hate being nervous!!

They spot Jeff and Karl in the parking lot. Jeff has a GIFT.

CLAIRE

Please, stay calm, San. Max really
likes this guy. And like we said,
it's a blind date: *meet Jeff* - if
you don't like him, never see him
again and *he'll never know*.

SANDRA

I can't believe I agreed to this...
and what if "Donor Boy" starts
asking about our girls?!

CLAIRE

He only knows about Max. Just
don't call him "Donor Boy" - that
might be a tell.

SANDRA

As long as you stop calling this a
"date." It gives me creepy tingles.

Beat. This hits Claire a little harder than Sandra meant it. MEANWHILE Jeff and Karl cross the field. Karl's too quiet.

JEFF
No last words of advice?

KARL
I am all guru'd out. May the Force
be with you.

Deep breath, Jeff approaches Claire. This is a big moment...

CLAIRE
Hey.

JEFF
Hey.

SANDRA (O.S.)
(then)
Hey.

Jeff turns: Sandra's squared off. It's a Cold War chess match - neither knowing what the other knows.

JEFF
I'm Jeff. I'm... Claire's friend.

SANDRA
Me too. Sandra. Claire's friend.

LEANNE
Hi Jeff, I'm Leanne. Also Claire's
friend. And Sandra's "friend."
(beat)
Was it clear only Sandra got
lesbian-quotes?
(then, pointing)
We belong to Zoe...

Sandra elbows Leanne, as Jeff elbows Karl, who hasn't spoken.

KARL
Oh! Karl. Professional "plus
one." I do mostly kids parties.

Jeff stares at Karl, as Claire stares at Sandra: can everyone please behave? Sandra swallows her pride and picks up a tray.

SANDRA
Anyone care for a gluten-free
cookie?

LEANNE
We don't have colitis, we're just
fancy.

They're all trying. But it's still so tense. Then Max runs over, reminding them all why Jeff is there. He's thrilled.

MAX
Hey Jeff! Thanks for coming!!

JEFF
Happy Birthday, Max! I brought you something. It's uh... open it.

As Max unwraps, Jeff notices a big pile of star-themed presents.

MAX
Whoa, a telescope! Thanks, Jeff!!

JEFF
(aside to Claire)
Was that too on the nose?

CLAIRE
No, you did good. Leanne got him a wizard hat.

Leanne defensively props up a star-patterned "Sorcerer's Apprentice" hat. Max looks at the cloudy sky. It's sundown.

MAX
It's not clearing up. Anyone got a "Plan B" for evening activities?

An uneasy beat: what do they do now? Then as if on cue, a BACKLIT FIGURE appears in the parking lot: LILY flanked by a line of 6TH GRADERS in glow-in-the-dark party swag. They saunter down in SLOW MO, like pre-teen Reservoir Dogs at a candy rave, leaving two HOST PARENTS to unload a Mini-Van in the lot. Max approaches Lily as the two parties intermingle.

MAX (CONT'D)
Lily, you came.

LILY
Of course. Happy Birthday, kid.

MAX
Thanks. It's really nice that you used your powers for good...

LILY
We don't have to do this.

MAX
I was gonna say "for a change."

LILY
Fine, better. And you're welcome.

Max comfortably joins the other kids. Claire watches and mouths a "thank you" to Lily as Leanne and Sandra move in--

LEANNE
Ok, Lily. What devil-work did you do here?

LILY
The other party-kid's brother is in my class. He's like, whatever, obsessed with me or whatever.

SANDRA
Lily, what'd we say about using "double whatevers?"

LILY
Anyhow, I told him I had to be here tonight, but if we combined parties maybe I could hang. Plus their mom is crazy uptight, so when I said the Red Tide at the beach was like aquatic Ebola, it was a done deal. I harnessed the power of her OCD!
(off Sandra)
Which I'd never do... to others.

SANDRA
So technically you *lied*...

The HIPSTERY OLDER BROTHER winks at Lily from afar. Ew.

LILY
But for super unselfish reasons! Moms, I just spent the last thirty-six hours flirting with a super gross guy so Max could have a great birthday. That's friendship.

Leanne and Sandra take this in, then react:

LEANNE
(a proud diva-snap)
Gurrrrrl!

SANDRA
I hate that she's using sexuality to manipulate men.

LEANNE
(off Sandra, re-snapping)
Bad Gurrrrl! I hate it too, hon.

EXT. FAR END OF PICNIC AREA, THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Fifty feet away, the OTHER HOST MOM mercilessly nags her HUSBAND who neatly arranges junk food at their table while kids mingle/munch nearby. Leanne takes a break from Sandra and bumps into Karl, who observes the henpecked husband.

KARL
Poor guy...

LEANNE
I'm sure he loves her to death. But the nagging--

KARL
And the rules!

LEANNE
Who called in the fun police?!

KARL
 Not me!!
 (off Leanne, his gay,
 female soulmate)
 Leanne, can you keep a secret?

LEANNE
 I don't know, can looking at Keira
 Knightley make a bitch hungry?

KARL
 Um, probably... yes it can! Now
 did someone say "shots?"

Karl cracks open a Nalgene Bottle. Leanne sniffs it--

LEANNE
 C'mon! You're classier than that!

Beat. Leanne pops open a Capri Sun pouch, empties it in the
 Nalgene, then shakes and serves in Dixie Cups. Karl toasts--

KARL
 Sometimes you gotta go rogue.

EXT. MAX'S PICNIC TABLE, THE PARK - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Sandra and Claire prep the cake. Sandra also sees
 the awful Host Mom nagging her husband and reflects.

SANDRA
 Claire, you don't think I'm a
 monster, do you?

CLAIRE
 What kind of a monster?
 (catching herself)
 Because any kind you said, you
 would not be... that.

Claire sees Zoe salivate over huge RICE KRISPIES TREATS at
 the other Host Mom's table. Zoe scampers to Jeff and
 whispers in his ear. He nods and - keeping an eye on Sandra -
 slips her a sugar treat. As Zoe runs off, Jeff catches
 Claire's eye from across the picnic area and smiles guiltily.
 Then Sandra HUFFS. Claire startles and turns.

SANDRA
 Can't believe it: I forgot candles!

False alarm. Sandra marches off to her car. Claire relaxes
 as Jeff casually sidles up to her. Beat. They watch Zoe run
 amok in the crowd of kids, devouring her contraband treat.

JEFF
 Don't tell Sandra. I already sense
 she's not a fan. Which is possibly
 why I'm attempting to give her kid a
 sugar coma.

CLAIRE
Your secret's safe. And thanks for coming... I wasn't sure you would.

JEFF
I'm usually pretty good on follow-through when I run into genetic offspring in grocery stores, so...
(off Claire, honest)
Joking. This is a first. To be honest I wasn't sure I *should* come.

CLAIRE
I'm glad you did. It's somehow less... terrifying than I imagined. Not that it should be a weekly thing.

JEFF
I guess you're right. We'd all get pretty sick of cake...

CLAIRE
(laughs, off Jeff)
It's funny. I feel like I know you better than I do...

JEFF
Well, you certainly know more about me than I know about you.
(Claire looks wary)
The sperm bank gave you a 40-page dossier on me - unless you went with the "I'm Feeling Lucky" package.
(beat, genuine)
But yeah, it feels like we're supposed to be here...

It almost looks like they're *flirting*. Karl intervenes.

KARL
Yo, Jeff! Gonna hit the little boys room. Wanna come with?

JEFF
I think I'm good, thanks.

KARL
You sure?

Karl's not budging. Claire returns to her host-mom chores.

CLAIRE
You go ahead, this *piñata's* not gonna stuff itself. With candy.

JEFF
(going with Karl)
Dude, I hope you're not policing me. Also... "*Little boys room?*"

KARL
It's 2012: Dudes take tinkle-breaks.

Just then, a LED FRISBEE flies out from the crowd of kids - and an impromptu ULTIMATE GAME materializes. Jeff notices a SMALL FIGURE quietly slip away at the edge of the field...

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND/EXERCISE AREA, THE PARK - MOMENTS LATER
Max sits by the backstop, staring at the sky. Jeff joins him.

JEFF
Hey, bud. Any reason you're not hanging with the other kids?

MAX
I'm good here.

Max offers Jeff a look through his telescope: still no stars.

JEFF
A lot of people up there, huh?

MAX
Yeah. I'm not super into Frisbee... but it's a good party.

JEFF
Meteors-notwithstanding.

MAX
I know, right...? It's nerdy, but - to have an event like that on your birthday? It seemed pretty special. *Still...* it's nice Lily lied about the Red Tide thing. Big parties are important to her, so that feels nice. We used to be so tight... but I embarrass her now. She says I'm too "weird and nice."

Jeff can relate. He considers, quiet but sure--

JEFF
Still, you know... weird is good. Nice is good.

A comfortable silence. Then--

MAX
Any reason you're not hanging out with the adults?

JEFF
I'm good here.

Claire watches the two from a distance - moved by the sight of Max opening up. Jeff sees and waves Claire over.

CLAIRE
Any luck with the stars, boys?

None. Then LIGHTS streak across the field - ZOE, now decked out in glow-in-the-dark swag, steals the frisbee from the game and takes off. Claire gives Jeff a knowing look.

JEFF
Oh. Wow!

CLAIRE
You created a monster.

JEFF
No. The meteors! The Red Tide!

An idea! Jeff leans over Max and whispers in Claire's ear. Max watches the adults quizzically, then--

EXT. BEACH, A FEW BLOCKS AWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Max runs through the sand with his eyes closed. Jeff and Claire hold his hands on either side, guiding him down to the water; they kick off their shoes and walk in.

JEFF
Aaaaannnd... open!

Max gasp: a WAVES CRASH, GLOWING BRIGHT BLUE. As they move the water at their feet LIGHTS UP like millions of tiny stars.

MAX
Whoa... Red Tide!

JEFF
(to Claire)
It's not pollution. It's algae.

MAX
Bioluminescence algae!
(wide-eyed, to Jeff)
This might be cooler than meteors.

[Note: if you've never seen this, please YouTube "Red Tide." It's a spectacular So-Cal visual.]

Claire and Jeff watch Max splash around the glowing tide. He waves back to them with a huge grin. Claire witnesses the *utter joy* on her son's face and shares a smile with Jeff. A beat. Then they go back to watching their son...

And for a moment, they feel like a family.

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. BEACH - TEN MINUTES LATER, THAT NIGHT

Minivans pull in the lot, 6TH GRADERS run to the glowing sea. As the AWFUL HOST MOM nags her husband, Leanne catches Karl's eye and raises a Dixie cup in solidarity. Then Claire spots Sandra in the lot, coming at her and Leanne with a 7-11 BAG.

SANDRA

I have something to say--
 (Claire and Leanne cringe)
 Stop, this is not a scold!! I know
 you guys think I can be *rigid* with
 my rules. I mean, come on, you
 call me the "Taskmaster"--

CLAIRE
 "Enforcer."

SANDRA
 "Enforcer."

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

(gentle)
 "Taskmaster's" good too.

SANDRA

I just get jealous that Leanne's
 always the "fun one" and instead of
 admitting that, I get... rule-ier.

Sandra reveals a HONEY SMACKS mini-box. Leanne coos tipsily.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

See, I can be fun too--
 (Leanne opens the box)
 Not in front of the children!

Leanne goes to stash her Smacks box. Claire turns to Sandra.

CLAIRE

San, I owe you an apology. We made
 a plan and I didn't stick with it.

They watch Zoe ambush Jeff with a headlock in the water. Max and Lily laugh, trying to pull Zoe off Jeff. Sandra's torn.

SANDRA

Damn it, Claire...

CLAIRE

It's ok. You can say it.

SANDRA

I... like him.

They watch Jeff: he's really great with their kids.

CLAIRE
 Yeah, me too.
 (a nice beat, then)
 Where's Leanne...?

Emboldened by her talk with Karl - and a few Capri Sun-tinis - Leanne's gone rogue: she splashes toward Jeff and corners him.

LEANNE
 Listen, Jeff, I know who you are.
 You're a good guy, you're great
 with Max, and Claire likes you. I
approve...

JEFF
 Oh... thanks.

They watch the three kids - a wave of emotion hits Leanne.

LEANNE
 Awww! *You all have the same nose!*

JEFF
 (beat)
 What do you mean, "you all?"

LEANNE
 (tipsy deer in headlights)
 I meant "y'all." You and... all.

Claire and Sandra pounce on Leanne--

SANDRA
 Do not listen to her!

LEANNE
 (as she's dragged away)
 I'm drunk, y'all!

Then Jeff sees Max, Lily and Zoe charge at him, waging a water war. He touches his nose with mounting alarm. Karl notices--

KARL
 Dude, what is going on here?

A beat. Then Jeff answers with utter honesty--

JEFF
 I have no idea...

HOLD ON Jeff as he's mobbed by Max, Lily and Zoe. Amid the chaos, he holds helpless eye-contact with Claire on shore - and somehow they know their lives have already changed.

MUSIC UP: David Bowie "Absolute Beginners."

FADE OUT:

END SHOW