GRANDMA

Written by

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An apartment filled with books and art.

ELLE lives here. She is 70 years old, beautiful, and extremely wilful.

There is nothing of the old lady about her. She is selfish and magnetic and smart.

With her this morning is Olivia, an attractive thirty five year old woman who has been Elle’s lover for the last few months.

Olivia is visibly upset. Elle seems much calmer. She moves around her place, neatening up.

   OLIVIA
   It’s not that I don’t love you.

Elle puts a teapot into a cupboard. Inside is a cap from an academic’s cap and gown.

   ELLE
   What the hell’s this doing in here?

   OLIVIA
   These last four months have been the...

Olivia is trying not to cry.

   OLIVIA (CONT’D)
   The last four months have been some of the best months of my life.

   ELLE
   Well. It’s been a short life. Comparatively.

   OLIVIA
   I’ve learned – I’ve learned so much from you –

   ELLE
   Yes, I’m very wise.

Olivia knuckles her eye.

   ELLE (CONT’D)
   Very wizened.

   OLIVIA
   You’re not wizened.
Elle puts the medieval looking cap into a closet next to a professor’s striped red academic gown.

OLIVIA (CONT’D)
You’re beautiful.

ELLE
Hah. So what have you learned, exactly? Aside from backgammon?
(re gown)
There’s a rip in this Goddam thing.

OLIVIA
I’ve learned...not to buy into the system. I’ve learned persistence. Courage. Dedication to one’s craft. In the face of...

ELLE
All reason?

OLIVIA
You’re still a wonderful poet.

ELLE
(with self-contempt)
I’m not a poet, I’m an academic. An unemployed one –

OLIVIA
You should send the new poems to your editor –

ELLE
She has dementia. So she might actually like ‘em. Look, are you breaking up with me or giving me a pep talk here? Stick with the narrative.

OLIVIA
Please. Elle –

ELLE
We always knew...

OLIVIA
We always knew what?

ELLE
I mean, you’re your age, and I’m... rapidly approaching fifty.

Olivia smiles.
ELLE (CONT’D)
What was gonna happen here? You
don’t need a crystal ball or
anything.

OLIVIA
Do you love me?
(pause)
Are you in love with me?

ELLE
Christ. Here. Blow your nose.

She hands Olivia a tissue. Olivia blows her nose.

OLIVIA
You’ve never said it.

ELLE
“It is a tale full of sound and
fury, signifying nothing.”

OLIVIA
What is, love?

ELLE
...I’m gonna vacuum.

OLIVIA
Doesn’t love conquer everything?

ELLE
No.

Elle involuntarily glances up at a photo on the wall.

The photo is of a striking-looking woman (named Violet),
taken in the late eighties.

The woman looks into the camera, out at Elle.

ELLE (CONT’D)
No. It does not conquer
everything.
(pause)
Four months. We were together for
four months. Try thirty-eight
years. Try being with someone for
thirty-eight years.
(pause)
You’re a footnote.
OLIVIA
“A footnote?” That’s...that’s a horrible thing to say.

ELLE
Well. I’m a horrible person.
(pause)
I’m gonna take a shower before I vacuum. You can let yourself out.

OLIVIA
Okay. I guess that’s it.

ELLE
Yup. That’s it.

They stand there a moment.

Then Olivia comes over and kisses Elle.

OLIVIA
Goodbye.

Elle is statute-like. Doesn’t reciprocate.

ELLE
Leave the key on the coffee table.

Elle goes off.

Olivia stands there a moment, numb.

Then she leaves.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Water goes on.

Water hits Elle’s face.

From behind Elle’s head, we see the top of a large TATTOO on Elle’s back - a COLORFUL DRAGONFLY. Elle’s shoulders begin to SHAKE as she starts to cry.

Her fists clench.

She pounds the wall of the shower.

CUT TO: Elle is at the sink, brushing her teeth vigorously. She bares her teeth at the mirror.
Elle is sitting on the floor, wearing her striped academic gown and cap.

There are photos spread out on the floor in front of her. A photo of her standing at the podium at a graduation ceremony, in her gown. Photos of her with the woman on the wall, at a poetry event in a cafe, at various stages in life. With a little girl - her daughter.

The DOORBELL rings.

She looks up quickly. Her breath catches.

Elle opens the door.

Standing there is a young woman. Age 18.

This is her granddaughter, SAGE.

She is pretty. Her nails are raggedly bitten.

ELLE
(surprised)
Sage.

Sage stands in the hallway, shifting on her toes. Nervous.

SAGE
Hi Grandma.

ELLE
Hi. Come in.

SAGE
Thanks.

Sage comes in. Elle glances out into the hall before she closes the door.

ELLE
What are you doing here?

SAGE
Thought I’d drop by.

ELLE
Did you call?
SAGE
No. I just wanted to see you. Why are you dressed like that?

ELLE
Oh I’m just sitting here being maudlin. You want some tea?

Sage nods.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Elle makes them tea.

SAGE
I need some help, Grandma.

ELLE
Okay.

Elle looks at Sage, who doesn’t say anything.

ELLE (CONT’D)
What’s going on?

Sage doesn’t say anything.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I’m not a mind-reader.

SAGE
I need six-hundred dollars. Six-hundred and thirty.

ELLE
For what?

SAGE
I’m pregnant.

Elle takes a couple of cups from the cupboard behind Sage.

ELLE
Okay.

SAGE
I don’t want to have a baby.
(stares into her tea)
I want to get an abortion. And I’m broke. I have eighteen dollars.
(pause)
You think that’s terrible?
ELLE
Which part of it?

SAGE
All of it.

ELLE
It’s nothing to dance a jig about.
Have you told your mother?

SAGE
Mom? She’d have a stroke. She’d start strangling me, and then she’d have a stroke.

She demonstrates this.
She drops her pantomime.

ELLE
Well, she’d strangle you alright.

The kettle WHISTLES.

5A  EXT. ELLE’S TERRACE – DAY  5A
Sage and Elle have tea.

SAGE
I’m such an idiot. Such an idiot.

ELLE
So was I, when I was your age.

SAGE
What am I gonna do? What am I gonna do?

ELLE
You already said what you’re gonna do. Right? I mean you’ve put some thought into this.
(pause)
Have you?

Sage nods.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Cause this is something you will probably think about at some moment each day for the rest of your life.
SAGE

Uhm...

(pause)

Do you have it? Do you have money?

ELLE

Honey, at the moment, I have forty-three dollars.

SAGE

Forty-three dollars! You’re joking!

ELLE

I’m not. That’s what I have until I get a check end of next week.

SAGE

How do you have so little money?

ELLE

I got sick of being in debt, so I just paid it all off. Every cent I still owed. Wanted to get that weight off my back. I mean I still had hospital bills from Vi. Twenty-seven thousand dollars worth.

SAGE

Why didn’t you ask mom to help?

ELLE

Why don’t you?

Sage doesn’t answer.

ELLE (CONT’D)

I don’t need help. I’m sweeping the decks clean here. Next week I’m supposed to get a check for some guest lectures I gave at Santa Cruz. I had it all planned out.

SAGE

Well do you have a credit card?

ELLE

I cut my credit cards into little pieces.

(points)

Look, I made a wind chime out of them.
SAGE
What?! Why would you do that?

ELLE
I was transmogrifying my life into art.

SAGE
What kind of adult doesn’t have a credit card!

ELLE
Credit cards infantilize you. They turn you into a pod person. Come on, you must have a credit card –

SAGE
Mom confiscated it after I crashed the car in the garage. Shit! Shit!

ELLE
Alright. Alright. Calm down. We’re gonna deal with this.

SAGE
We are?

ELLE
(beat)
Yes. We are. Where’d you get this 630 dollar number?

SAGE

ELLE
Christ.

SAGE
I have an appointment for the procedure.

ELLE
For when?

SAGE
Five-forty-five.

ELLE
Five-forty-five? You mean today?
(Sage nods)
It’s 9 o’clock already!
SAGE
They don’t have another appointment open this week! And I can’t wait. I feel sick. And every day, every day that goes by...

ELLE
Okay well, I know a women’s health clinic where you can get one for free.

SAGE
You do?

ELLE
Yeah, Vi used to volunteer there. Let’s go.

EXT. PARKING AREA – DAY
Elle brushes some leaves off the tarp covering a car. She pulls the tarp off, revealing a 1955 Dodge Royal Lancer.

SAGE
You still have Vi’s car?

ELLE
Course I still have Vi’s car. Give me a hand, would you?

Sage helps her.
Elle puts the tarp in the trunk.
Elle starts the car. Only it doesn’t start.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Shit.

LATER
A young man is giving Elle a jump start with some cables from his truck.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I didn’t wake you up, did I?

YOUNG MAN
(she did)
No.

The young man glances at Sage.
ELLE
She’s already pregnant.

SAGE
Grandma.

ELLE
I’m just saying. Don’t get any ideas.

The engine turns over. Loud RAP MUSIC blasts for a moment. Elle turns it down.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Okay. Thanks!

The car pulls out.

7 EXT. CAR - DAY
They drive into a mini mall.

8 EXT. CAR - DAY
Elle stops the car in the mini mall. She squints out the window.

ELLE
Where the hell is it?

SAGE
I don’t know. When’s the last time you were here?

ELLE
I dunno. 10 years ago? It must have moved.
(points)
I think that was it. It was right in there. Where that coffee place is. Christ. It musta closed down.
(pause)
I could use some coffee.

9 INT. CAFE - DAY
They are drinking coffee in a cafe. Elle is at the condiments station putting sugar in her coffee. Sage sits at a table.
SAGE
(reading)
Women’s Health Action Center. It closed five years ago.

ELLE
How could they close this place down? Why didn’t they let us know? We could have had a rally! Course...five years ago, we weren’t going to any rallies.
(drinks coffee)
This is bilgewater. So where do you get a reasonably priced abortion? All you can get nowadays is this shitty coffee.

SAGE
Yeah, Grandma, uh -

Sage is looking nervously at a conservative looking couple at the next table. Elle puts more sugar into her coffee.

ELLE
How far along are you again? When was your last period?

SAGE
Ten weeks ago.

The manager of the coffee bar is looking at Elle.

ELLE
My last period was twenty five years ago. We did a ceremony for it, Vi and I.
(pause)
600 dollars for an abortion! What the hell! That’s highway robbery!

The manager comes over.

CAFE MANAGER
I’m sorry, but I’m going to have to ask you to leave.

ELLE
Excuse me?

CAFE MANAGER
I’m going have to ask you to leave.
ELLE
You’re “going to have to?” When are you “going to have to” ask us to leave?

CAFE MANAGER
I’m going to have to ask you to leave now.

ELLE
So you mean you are asking us to leave.

CAFE MANAGER
Yes, you’re disturbing the customers.

ELLE
What customers? I’m a customer. Do you know what a customer is?

CAFE MANAGER
I know what a customer is.

ELLE
A customer is someone who pays for your services. So I’m a customer. What other customer are we disturbing? Them? Ozzie and Harriet over here?

CAFE MANAGER
Yes.

ELLE
We’re disturbing you. Isn’t that right?

CAFE MANAGER
Yes. That’s right. You are also disturbing me.

ELLE
Because I’m talking about abortions?

CAFE MANAGER
Yes. That’s right. Now please take your coffee and enjoy it somewhere else.

ELLE
This used to be an abortion clinic, do you know that?

(MORE)
ELLE (CONT'D)
Where you are standing right now, there were countless unintended pregnancies terminated.

The nearby woman GASPS.

CAFE MANAGER
Please leave. Leave now.

ELLE
Wait, I’m going to enjoy this three dollar “drip” coffee first! I’ve got news for you – all coffee drips! So you don’t have to call it “drip” coffee – that’s a redundancy! Hey, look, it’s dripping!

Elle POOURS THE REST OF HER COFFEE ON THE FLOOR.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I enjoyed that! That was some good drip coffee!

SAGE
(to manager)
I’m sorry!

ELLE
Why should you be sorry? He should be sorry!

They go to the door.

EXT. CAFE PARKING LOT - DAY
They walk towards the car.

SAGE
French press.

ELLE
What?

SAGE
French press coffee. It doesn’t drip.

ELLE
Well, I guess not. Touche. Can you believe that guy? These bastards think they can turn the clock back fifty years.

(MORE)
Crap.

She stops walking.

SAGE
What?

ELLE
I really have to use the rest room.

INT. CAFE - DAY

The manager looks up from where he is mopping up coffee.

ELLE
Here, lemme help you with that.

CAFE MANAGER
No, that’s alright -

ELLE
I insist, I feel terrible.

Elle grabs some napkins and gets down to help him mop the spill.

ELLE (CONT’D)
So, do you need a key to use the bathroom or is it unlocked?

He stares at her.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Elle joins Sage outside the cafe.

ELLE
Okay, everyone’s friends now. So who’s the guy?

SAGE
Who?

ELLE
The guy! I assume there was a penis involved. Who is he? One night stand?

SAGE
No. He’s kind of my boyfriend. I don’t know.
ELLE
You don’t know? Well who does
know? If you don’t know.

SAGE
He was supposed to get the money by
this morning.

ELLE
What happened?

SAGE
He didn’t get it. He told me he
would. But he didn’t.

ELLE
Alright, well. This is his problem
too.
(stops)
You understand that, right?

Sage nods.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Do you? Understand that?

SAGE
Yeah. Of course, he’s not the one
who’s pregnant.

ELLE
Well that’s the fucking problem
right? He’s not the one who’s
pregnant. He’d be shitting his
pants if he were. He’d find the
fucking money if he was about to
swell up like he swallowed a
watermelon.

SAGE
I guess.

ELLE
Let’s go talk to him.

SAGE
Who, Cam? I don’t know if that’s a
good idea.

ELLE
“Cam?” His name is “Cam?”
A small house.

CAM opens the door. He looks annoyed.

Cam is eighteen. Working on a scruff-beard. He has a hockey jersey on with a marijuana leaf on it.

CAM
What are you doing here?

SAGE
Are your parents here?

CAM
No.

SAGE
So can we come in?

CAM
Whatever, yeah.

They come in. The house is messy. Cramped.

SAGE
Umm, you were supposed to get the money.

CAM
I couldn’t get it. That fuckin asshole wouldn’t front me the money. I thought he would.

ELLE
Well you’re gonna have to get it, Cam. Half. Give us half the money.

CAM
Who is this?

SAGE
My grandmother.

CAM
Grandma? Yo Grandma, what you doing here?

ELLE
Listen, you have to take responsibility for this.
CAM
How do I know it was me?

SAGE
WHAT?

He picks up a hockey stick, starts messing with a piece of balled up tape.

CAM
You heard me.

SAGE
I didn’t sleep with anyone else.

CAM
You slept with Mike.

SAGE
Last year. He used a condom.

ELLE
Why didn’t you use a condom? What’d it, slip off?

CAM
What? What’d she say?

SAGE
She didn’t say anything -

CAM
Look, she said it wasn’t her time.

ELLE
Her time? What are you, a moron? Are you both morons? Don’t they teach kids sex-ed anymore?

Cam puts down the hockey stick. Points at Elle.

CAM
Listen Grandma, you better watch yourself.

ELLE
Look at this loser. You know, some people shouldn’t grow beards because it makes their face look like an armpit.

SAGE
(laughs involuntarily)

Grandma!
CAM
I’m serious, old lady, don’t fuck with me!

ELLE
Then give us the money!

CAM
I don’t have the money, bitch!

SAGE
Let’s go, Grandma -

ELLE
“Bitch?”  Look, you have the money, you little prick -

CAM
What the fuck?  Are you bitches crazy?

ELLE
Get the God damn money!

CAM
Get out of my home!  I mean it, you old bitch!  Get out!  Or I’ll fuck you up!

ELLE
You’ll fuck me up?

SAGE
Let’s go!

CAM
I will, I’ll fuck you up.

Instead of going to the door, Elle grabs the hockey stick and HITS Cam with it.  HARD in the HEAD.

He goes down, CRUMPLING to the ground.

SAGE SCREAMS.

CAM (CONT’D)
(groans)
Uuh -

Elle HITS him again, in the RIBS this time.

CAM (CONT’D)
Oh God, oh God - you hit me -
ELLE
I’ll hit you again, “bitch!”

SAGE
No!

ELLE
How much money do you have?

CAM
I don’t have -

She HITS HIM in the LEG.

CAM (CONT’D)
AAA! GOD! FIFTY DOLLARS! LIKE FIFTY DOLLARS!

ELLE
Where?!

CAM
In my sock drawer!

INT. ELLE’S CAR - DAY

Elle is sitting in her car, smoothing out and counting crumpled bills.

It’s mostly ones.

Sage is in the passenger seat.

ELLE
I like your boyfriend. He’s special. Really charismatic. I can see how you’d be attracted to him.

Sage doesn’t say anything.

Elle opens a little baggie with some buds of weed in it and a small pack of rolling papers.

ELLE (CONT’D)
This was in his sock drawer too. Smells pretty good. Red hairs.

Sage gets out of the car. Starts walking away.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Hey! Where are you going? Hey!
Elle catches up with Sage.

ELLE
Where the hell are you going?

SAGE
Leave me alone! Mom’s right!
You’re crazy!

ELLE
Why, cause I rapped that little shit across the knuckles?!

SAGE
Everyone’s gonna talk about it!

ELLE
He’s not gonna tell people. What’s he gonna say? “Sage’s grandmother beat me up?”

SAGE
You could have killed him!

ELLE
Nah, I hit him in the hard part of his head. Stop! Stop...

Sage walks a few steps more, then leans over and gags, throwing up a little.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Are you okay?

SAGE
No! I’m not okay! I’m pregnant!
I’m fucking pregnant!

Elle puts her hand on Sage’s back. Sage stands up, wiping her mouth.

SAGE (CONT’D)
You have an anger problem!

ELLE
No, I have an asshole problem. When people are assholes, it makes me angry. Especially if they’re being assholes to my granddaughter.

They stand there a moment.
ELLE (CONT’D)
Look. We gotta get going here. We have to get like 550 dollars still.
(pause)
Come on. There’s someone who owes me four hundred bucks. Maybe she has it. Let’s go.
(pause)
Or you could just call your mom and ask her for the money.

Sage thinks about it.

16 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY
They drive.

17 INT. CAR - DAY
Elle is pensive.

ELLE
So your mom says I’m crazy?

SAGE
You know that. You know mom thinks you’re crazy. She thinks I’m crazy too.

ELLE
You’re not crazy enough.

SAGE
What does that mean?

ELLE
Just an impression.
(pause)
You need to be able to say “screw you” sometimes.

SAGE
I say “screw you.”

ELLE
You didn’t say screw you to that little creep back there.

SAGE
...No, I guess not. I guess I didn’t.
(pause)
(MORE)
SAGE (CONT'D)
Mom says you have problems dealing
with people. Since Aunt Violet
died. She says you’re
philanthropic.

ELLE
“Philanthropic?” What?

SAGE
No, wait - misanthropic.

ELLE
Misanthropic.
(pause)
Well.
(pause)
That’s an understatement.

Elle smiles.

18
EXT. TATTOO PARLOR - DAY
Elle and Sage walk into a tattoo parlor.

19
INT. TATTOO PARLOR - DAY
At the front of the store a man is getting an elaborate
tattoo. The tattoo artist is a young woman with a lot of
piercings.

ELLE
(to tattoo artist)
Is Deathy here?

The tattoo artist calls out over her shoulder.

TATTOO ARTIST
DEATHY!

DEATHY (O.S.)
Hold on!

DEATHY comes out of the back. Deathy is a much-tattooed post-
operative trans-gender woman.

DEATHY (CONT’D)
Oh, shit! Elle! It’s Elle!

ELLE
Hiya Deathy!

Deathy hugs Elle.
DEATHY
Who’s this?

ELLE
My granddaughter.

DEATHY
No! I haven’t seen you since you were a baby!

SAGE
Really?

DEATHY
I changed your diapers! Now I feel old.

ELLE
Hey, could I have that four-hundred dollars?

DEATHY
Oh God, Elle. Really?

ELLE
Yeah, I need it. She’s pregnant.

DEATHY
Oh. She needs a “Bortion,” hunh?

ELLE
Yeah. She needs a “Bortion.”

SAGE
Jesus. Stop it.

DEATHY
We used to have this schtick where this girl needed a “Bortion.” Like she didn’t know it was called “an abortion.” She thinks it’s called “a Bortion.”

SAGE
A “schtick?” That’s horrible.

ELLE
It is, kind of. So do you have that money, honey? Do you?

DEATHY
Christ, I wish I did. Your Grandma really helped me out, a while ago. (MORE)
I had these defective boobs that were leaking, just leaking silicone down into my knees. It was awful. Elle here came through for me. And now you need me and I’m broke. I’m fucking broke.

(pause)
I can give you a tattoo. That I can do. You want a tattoo, darling?

SAGE
What? No. Thank you. We have to get going.

ELLE
How long would it take? For like a little one?

DEATHY
Oh honey, not long. Fifteen minutes? I’m a quick draw.

ELLE
Maybe it’d help me collect my thoughts. We gotta strategize here.

LATER
The needle is BUZZING.

Elle is getting a tattoo, a simple O tattooed on her shoulder.

DEATHY
Don’t you have any rich friends? What about Deanne and Margot?

ELLE
I kind of gave them hell last time I saw them. Cause they just disappeared when Vi got ill. Along with everyone else.

DEATHY
What about all your academic pals?

ELLE
They’re all broke and stingy. And they’re all in Santa Cruz. We need the money now.
SAGE
What’s O for?

ELLE
That’s not an O. It’s a circle. It was the quickest one.

SAGE
Looks like an O.

DEATHY
I thought it was for orgasm.

ELLE
Yeah, sure, it’s for that.

SAGE
It’s not for “Olivia?”

Elle’s face tightens.

SAGE (CONT’D)
Isn’t Olivia the name of your girlfriend? Can’t you ask her for money?

ELLE
I don’t have a girlfriend.

SAGE
Mom said you did. She said you had a girlfriend called Olivia.

ELLE
I knew I shouldn’t tell your mother anything.

SAGE
Why not?

ELLE
Because she’s so judgemental. “Judge Judy.”

SAGE
Yeah. “Judge Judy.”
(pause)
You have a violet tattoo, right? For Aunt Violet?

ELLE
Yes. That I do.
DEATHY
You ever see her dragonfly? I did that!

SAGE
Yeah, it’s badass.

Deathy works.

SAGE (CONT’D)
Do you miss her? Violet?

ELLE
I miss her all the time.

DEATHY
That was a great love story, you and Vi. Course she put up with a lot.

ELLE
What does that mean?

DEATHY
Nothing, darling, just you’re not the easiest toke. But that’s why I love you. So what is the O for?

ELLE

DEATHY
Cheeri-os.

ELLE

SAGE
Olivia.

ELLE
Whatever. Yeah. As it happens.

Elle purses her lips.

DEATHY
Done!

LATER

By the register. Elle is patting her tattoo with some cotton with bacitracin on it.
ELLE
How much do you think first editions are worth?

DEATHY
First editions of what? Of your stuff?

ELLE
My stuff? Those aren’t worth anything.

SAGE
But you’re famous.

ELLE
No, I was marginally well-known. Forty years ago. But I have some valuable first editions. Betty Friedan. I got a couple of signed Simone de Beauvoir books. Carla wanted them.

DEATHY
Who’s Carla?

ELLE
You know, she owns the Bonobo cafe.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I’m gonna sell my God damned first editions. They’re probably worth a few thousand, but I’ll give her a break. What the hell am I hanging onto them for anyway? See Sage, I told you this’d clear my head.

DEATHY
(to Sage)
Hey, darling, here’s thirty-five bucks. It all adds up.
(looks over)
And here’s another thirty I’m just gonna borrow from the register.

INT. ELLE’S APARTMENT - DAY

Back to Elle’s apartment.

Elle and Sage enter. Elle goes to her answering machine. There are two messages.

Elle presses the answering machine button.
You have two messages. First message, sent today at 11:03.

The first message is a hang-up.

Second message, sent today at 11:04.

The second message is a hang-up too.

Elle bites her cheek. Stares at the answering machine.

She looks over. Sage is leaning over the sink, retching a bit, spitting saliva.

ELLE
You alright?

Sage looks at her.

ELLE (CONT’D)
You want some ginger ale?

SAGE
I hate ginger ale.

ELLE
What? You love ginger ale. We used to have these little tea parties, only you didn’t like tea, so we’d put ginger ale in the teapot.

SAGE
(pause)
Okay. It’s almost 12:30.

ELLE
It’s gonna be alright.

SAGE
HOW! HOW WILL IT BE ALRIGHT?

ELLE
It will. We’re gonna sell some damn first editions. Here. Check em out.

Elle has a shelf of old first editions, along with a number of copies of books of poetry that she wrote.
ELLE (CONT'D)
That fuckin' Carla is gonna go apeshit for them. She was over here for dinner once, she wanted to buy them from me, right then.

Elle pulls a few books out.

Sage picks up The Feminine Mystique.

SAGE
What’s this?

ELLE
_{The Feminine Mystique? What’s The Feminine Mystique?}_

SAGE
Mystique’s a character in X-Men.

ELLE
What? What the hell are you talking about?

SAGE
Want me to google how much it’s worth?

ELLE

SAGE
I’ll look it up on Ebay.

ELLE
Ebay, Google, whatever. The Feminine Mystique by Betty Friedan. You know The Wizard of Oz, when the curtain gets pulled aside, and they see the Wizard’s a fake? Cause that dog, Toto pulls the curtain? She was like Toto.

(pause)
Maybe not a great metaphor.

SAGE
53.90.

ELLE
Five thousand three hundred ninety dollars?
SAGE
No, Fifty-three dollars and ninety cents. There’s one on sale here on Ebay for 53.90.

ELLE
Fifty-three dollars?! That’s bullshit!

SAGE
First edition, good condition, fifty-three dollars ninety cents.

She shows Elle her phone. Elle squints at it.

ELLE
How can you read that?

SAGE
There’s a stain on it. Is this wine?

ELLE
Yeah, wine. Probably. Shit. Well I’m just gonna bring all these things. Look at this. The Prime of Life by Simone de Beauvoir. This is her autobiography. Dare I ask if you know who Simone de Beauvoir is?

SAGE
No idea. Guess I’m an idiot.

ELLE
Guess you are.

Sage looks like she’s been slapped.

SAGE
(mutters)
Screw you.

ELLE
What? Couldn’t hear you.

SAGE
SCREW YOU! SCREW YOU, GRANDMA!

ELLE
Not bad.
SAGE
You don’t even know who Mystique is.

Elle laughs.

21 EXT. STREET BY CAFE - DAY

Elle and Sage get out of Elle’s car, both carrying a few books.

They walk towards a cafe with a Bonobo Ape painted on the window.

SAGE
So what’s a bonobo?

ELLE
A very advanced ape. The females run the show, they masturbate all the time, and they don’t have wars, unlike chimps and humans.

SAGE
So you think women are better than men?

ELLE
Men are okay. My father was a man.

SAGE
Mine wasn’t. He was a sperm.

ELLE
Donor. Your mom was busy. You shouldn’t blame her for that. That was a valid decision. At least that sperm wasn’t a drunk. It never blacked your eye cause you talked back.

SAGE
I just wish she could have gotten the sperm’s name. Only thing I know is he must have had curly hair.

She holds open the door for Elle.

22 INT. BONOBO CAFE - DAY

A feminist-themed coffee shop.
A woman with a white buzz-cut is hanging up a flyer.

ELLE
Hey.

CARLA
Hey! Hey stranger!

ELLE
I brought the books.

CARLA
What books?

ELLE
The books you wanted to buy from me.

She puts books on a counter next to soy milk and almond milk thermoses.

CARLA
Oh. Okay, umm...

Carla glances towards the back of the cafe.

ELLE
Look. Feminine Mystique. First edition, signed. This wine stain? Was left by Betty Friedan herself. Simone de Beauvoir. Germaine Greer! The Female Eunuch! Got some Eileen Myles here, for God’s sake!

CARLA
Un-huhn, yeah...

ELLE
My granddaughter here googled them, they’re worth thousands and thousands of dollars.

Sage gives Elle a look.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Right?

SAGE
(lying)
...Yeah right.
ELLE
I’ll let you have em for five-hundred and fifteen dollars, but it’s gotta be right now, cash.

Out from the kitchen comes Olivia, Elle’s (now ex) lover, holding a plate with a quesadilla on it for a customer. She has on an apron with a Bonobo ape on it.

She freezes upon seeing Elle.

OLIVIA
What are you doing here?

ELLE
What – what are you doing here? You’re not supposed to be working today!

OLIVIA
Laurel was sick. She asked me to fill in. Jesus, what are you doing here?

ELLE
I came to sell some stuff. These books.

Olivia recognizes the books.

OLIVIA
You’re gonna sell these? Why?

ELLE
I need some cash.

OLIVIA
I told you not to cut up your credit card!

A woman sitting at a table pipes up.

CUSTOMER
Is that my quesadilla?

OLIVIA
Yes. Sorry.

Olivia brings the customer her quesadilla.

Elle tries to compose herself.
ELLE
Okay.
(to Carla)
Okay, you want to buy these or what? You said you wanted to buy them.

CARLA
Well, I don’t know. I have to think about it.

OLIVIA
(to customer, distracted)
You want - you want hot sauce?

CUSTOMER
You have Tabasco?

OLIVIA
Tapatio. We have Tapatio.

Olivia is glancing over at Elle.
Sage is watching their interaction.

ELLE
Come on, do you want them or not?

CARLA
I’m thinking.

Olivia takes a deep breath and comes back over.

OLIVIA
Hey.

ELLE
Hey.

OLIVIA
Are you going to introduce me to your granddaughter?

ELLE
Sure.
(turns)
Sage. Olivia.

SAGE
Olivia. Hi.

OLIVIA
I’ve seen pictures of you.
SAGE
Oh. Cool.

OLIVIA
Bit of a...surprise meeting you like this.

SAGE
Yeah...

OLIVIA

ELLE
(to Carla)
Well?

CARLA
Look, I’ll give you sixty dollars for them.

ELLE
All of them?

OLIVIA
So you need money? Because -

ELLE
I do not need money from you. Thank you.

OLIVIA
Okay. ‘Cause -

ELLE
Are you fucking kidding me? Are you kidding me Olivia?

Olivia turns to Carla.

OLIVIA
(to Carla)
These books are worth more than sixty dollars.

ELLE
I can do my own haggling. Jesus, stop being so nice.

OLIVIA
Well stop being so mean! Stop being such a mean asshole! How about that?
ELLE
Me? Mean? I’m not mean, I’m just not a hypocrite!

OLIVIA
So I’m a hypocrite now?!

ELLE (to Olivia)
Did you call me earlier? Did you call me and hang up? Twice?

OLIVIA (pause)
...Yes.

ELLE
Why?

OLIVIA
I don’t know. I don’t know why.

ELLE
You just want power. You want to exert your dominance over me! You want to be the Alpha Bonobo!

OLIVIA
No!

CARLA
Guys, take it outside.

Elle turns on Carla.

ELLE
And you! How come you don’t pay a decent wage, you cheap asshole!

CARLA
What?

ELLE
You heard me! You call yourself a feminist?! It should be illegal, what you pay these kids!

OLIVIA
I’m not a kid -

ELLE
It probably is illegal! You’re not a Bonobo, Carla! You’re a gorilla! You’re a Silverback male gorilla!

(MORE)
ELLE (CONT'D)
And she is right! These books are worth way more than sixty dollars!

SAGE
Grandma, let’s go!

ELLE
DON’T call me fucking GRANDMA!

SAGE
(pause)
What should I call you?

ELLE
(to Olivia)
GO BACK TO SCHOOL. Finish your doctorate. Get your head out of your ass! Stop working at this dump!

CUSTOMER
Could I get that hot sauce please?

OLIVIA
What?

CUSTOMER
Sorry – hot sauce?

OLIVIA
Here. You want hot sauce? You want hot sauce?!!

She grabs some Tapatio and DUMPS IT ALL OVER THE WOMAN’S QUESADILLA.

OLIVIA (CONT’D)
HOT ENOUGH FOR YOU?

ELLE
(laughs)
HAH! You’re really off the deep end!

CARLA
That’s it!
(picks up books)
Take these. I don’t want them.

ELLE
Great and take your sixty bucks and shove em up your ass.

Elle leaves.
SAGE
I’ll carry them.

Olivia follows.

23  EXT. STREET BY CAFE – DAY

Olivia comes out after Elle and yells.

OLIVIA
Why are you acting like these last
four months didn’t mean anything?!
Why?!

ELLE
Because they didn’t.

OLIVIA
I HATE you!

ELLE
Great!

OLIVIA
I WISH I’D NEVER MET YOU!

ELLE
You never did!

OLIVIA
Right, cause you never showed me
the real you, right?!

ELLE
That’s exactly right.

OLIVIA
WELL I’VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU, I SAW
THE REAL YOU, I SAW IT, YOU SELFISH
ASSHOLE! AND I STILL STUCK AROUND!

ELLE
Your medal’s in the mail.

OLIVIA
I’m returning it!

ELLE
You – you NEOPHYTE! You INGENUE!

OLIVIA
SOLIPSIST! WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE!!!
Elle walks off.

SAGE
Uh...nice to meet you...

Sage hurries to the car.

INT. CAR - DAY

They drive.

SAGE
You okay to drive?

ELLE
Fine.

(pause)

You can call me Grandma. That was just -

SAGE
I know.

SAGE (CONT'D)
Why’d she call you “writer in residence?”

ELLE
...She’s calling me a sellout. Cause that’s how I used to make bread. You go someplace, a private college, usually, cause they have the money. You do some readings, you teach some seminars, then you leave, cause you don’t have tenure.

SAGE
How is that selling out?

ELLE
Well. It’s not “suffering for your art.” But I had a kid.

(pause)
I used to drag your mother along with me when she was little. Spent a lot of time in cars, your mother and me.

SAGE
Well...I’m learning some new insults. My friends pretty much just call each other “bitch” or “ho.” “Slut.”
ELLE
Well that’s ignorant bullshit.

SAGE
(pause)
So do you think I’m one? A slut?

ELLE
(looks at her)
No. And I don’t want to hear you use that word again.
(pause)
You know in the 14th century, Chaucer used the word “sluttish” to refer to an untidy man –

SAGE
(pause)
What’s that noise?

There’s a noise from the car.

ELLE
That’s the noise the car makes.
Let’s go buy a few dollars worth of gas.

24A EXT. REAR OF GAS STATION – DAY

Elle comes out from a gas station rest room.

SAGE
She’s pretty. Olivia.

ELLE
Yes, she’s pretty. That’s what it means, “Olivia.” It means “most beautiful.” So what was she doing with me? Right?

SAGE
No.

ELLE
That’s what you were thinking.

SAGE
It wasn’t. It wasn’t actually.

ELLE
She mailed me an essay she wrote about my poetry. Asked if I’d have coffee with her someday.
(MORE)
Because I’m so vain, I said okay. We met for coffee...she was cute. And smart. And she just kept after me. I did more writing in the last four months than in the five year before that.

(pause)
Anyway, that’s over.

SAGE
(pause)
Grandma, you got any other ideas?

ELLE
...I’m afraid I do.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY
25
Elle pulls up outside a house with an old motorcycle in front of it. There’s a metal seesaw in the front lawn.

INT. CAR - DAY
26
Elle looks at the house.

SAGE
What?

ELLE
Nothing. Wait in the car
(pause)
On second thought, come with me.

The front door of the house opens. KARL steps onto the porch. He’s about 70, muscular, with a pigtail.

KARL
Elle?

Elle gets out of the car.

ELLE
Hi there. Hi Karl.

KARL
What a surprise to get your call.

ELLE
Well, it’s been too long.
KARL
Thirty years, Elle. Been thirty years since we last saw each other.

ELLE
God, we’re thirty years older.

KARL
That’s how it works. It don’t go backwards. Who’s the young lady?

ELLE
This is my granddaughter. Sage.

KARL
“Sage.” Nice name. Pungent.

SAGE
Hi.

KARL
You want some zucchini?

ELLE
That’s alright.
(to Sage)
Do you?

SAGE
No thank you.

KARL
How about some corn. I just boiled some corn. Come on.

He goes into the house. Elle and Sage follow him.

INT. KARL’S KITCHEN - DAY

Elle is eating some corn, looking at some framed photos on a table. Sage hangs back.

KARL
(to Sage)
Sure you don’t want some corn?

SAGE
No thanks. I have...a bit of an upset stomach.

ELLE
Who are these people?
KARL
My grandkids.

ELLE
You have grandkids now?

KARL
I do. You’re not the only one allowed to have grandkids.

ELLE
Which wife is this?

KARL
That? Wife number four. Kid number five. Grandkids number 9, 10 and 11.

ELLE
Jesus, you’re a patriarch.

KARL
I am. I’m biblical. How’s the corn?

ELLE
Good.

KARL
Those your own teeth you’re eating with?

ELLE
Yup.

KARL
Good for you. You were always worried about your teeth. You took good care of them.

SAGE
She used to tell me – brush your teeth or you’ll lose them.

KARL
Did she, Sage? You know, the teeth are the only thing we see on a person that’ll look the same when they’re dead. When someone smiles at you, they’re showing you their skeleton.

SAGE
That’s creepy.
KARL
It is.

ELLE
Are you married now?

KARL
Right now, no. I am currently a man about town.

Elle nods.

ELLE
Sage, would you let me talk to Karl for a minute? Go look at the flowers out back.

SAGE
I’ll go look at the flowers.

Sage goes out back.

KARL
Are you going to make me a marriage proposal? Now that you know I’m available?

ELLE
I was just wondering if a wife was going to pop out from somewhere all of a sudden. You want to smoke some weed?

Karl laughs.

KARL
Sure. Why not?

Elle starts to roll a joint from the bag she took from Cam’s sock drawer.

KARL (CONT’D)
You mean business, hunh?

EXT. KARL’S HOUSE – DAY

Sage walks outside the house. It’s strangely tranquil.

INT. KARL’S KITCHEN – DAY

Karl opens a beer. Elle lights the joint.
KARL
Didn’t know I’d be having a party today. Care for a beer?

ELLE
No thanks.

KARL
(drinks)
So how’s your partner? Daisy?

ELLE
Come on. Violet.

KARL
How’s Violet?

ELLE
She passed away. Two and a half years ago. She’s dead.

KARL
I’m sorry. I am.

ELLE
Thanks. So listen, you told me if I ever needed anything I should come to you.

KARL
Did I? Yes, I guess I did. About five-hundred years ago.

ELLE
Well I need to borrow 500 dollars. Here.

Karl takes the joint. Hits on it, looking at her.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I can pay you back in a couple weeks.

KARL
So you’re not just here to smoke a joint with an old flame?

ELLE
Well sure I’m here for that. But I also need 500 bucks.

KARL
You must not have a lot of friends. Current friends.
ELLE
Guess not.

He passes her back the joint.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Look, you were always good with money, I thought you might be able to help me out.

KARL
What do you need it for?

ELLE
(exhales)
Rent.

KARL
Rent? Why don’t you ask your daughter?

ELLE
We’re not speaking that often.

KARL
That’s too bad.

She passes him back the joint.

KARL (CONT’D)
(beat)
It’s painful seeing you, Elle.

Elle opens a beer.

ELLE
What the hell kind of a thing is that to say?

KARL
I don’t know. Just popped into my head. Maybe I’m getting soft. Male menopause, maybe.

ELLE
You’re well past menopause. We both are.

KARL
It’s painful to see you, because it makes me feel old.
ELLE
I like being old. Young people are stupid.

KARL
We sure were. We sure were stupid.

ELLE
That’s an understatement. Can you loan me money?

KARL
Sure. I want something in return, though.

ELLE
What? What do you want?

KARL
A kiss.

ELLE
Like a peck?

KARL
No, like a real kiss.

ELLE
And then you’ll loan me the money?

Karl nods.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Alright. Let’s get it over with.

She takes the joint from Karl. She takes a hit off it, then she kisses him. It’s not passionate, but it has some affection in it.

ELLE (CONT’D)
There you go. For old times’ sake.

KARL
Now I want you to make love with me, just once. For old times’ sake.

ELLE
Go fuck yourself, Karl.

KARL
Not really interested in fucking myself, Elle. I wish I was.

(MORE)
KARL (CONT'D)
I coulda kept out of a lot of trouble over the years.
(pause)
Okay, well. I gotta go fix this miniature jeep.

He goes out of the house.

ELLE
HEY. WE HAD A DEAL!

Elle follows Karl out.

Sage watches her go out.

30 EXT. KARL’S HOUSE – DAY 30

Karl opens up a tool box. There is a kid’s-size purple jeep lying on it’s side by the entrance.

ELLE
Come on, are you out of your mind?

He takes out some tools.

KARL
Why are you here?

ELLE
I told you. I’m here because I need money.

Karl gets down by the jeep.

KARL
You wronged me.

ELLE
This again?

KARL
You were wrong, how you acted.

ELLE
Forty-nine years ago?

KARL
(nods)
Forty-nine years ago. You were wrong.
ELLE
Well, I was wrong to be sleeping with you, given that I was a lesbian.

KARL
You didn’t seem like a lesbian at the time. When we were living on the boat.

ELLE
Well I was. Just a confused one.

KARL
And that poem you wrote? “The Ogre’s Seed?”

ELLE
That wasn’t about you.

KARL
You’re sure you’re not here to say you’re sorry? To apologize to me? Finally?

ELLE
No. Afraid not. Man, you have eleven grandkids! You can’t let go of old shit?!

KARL
I find that, as I get older, old shit just bubbles up. It bubbles up from the tar. Don’t you find that to be the case?

(pause)
Look, Elle, I’m not the one who called up from out of nowhere. You’re the one rattling the skeletons here. So what are you here for? WHAT ARE YOU HERE FOR?

ELLE
I’M HERE BECAUSE I NEED SOME GODDAM MONEY, BECAUSE I’M THE ONLY IDIOT I KNOW WHO WOULD CUT UP HER GOD DAMN CREDIT CARD TO PROVE A POINT TO HERSELF.

(Pause)
I knew I was dumb to come here, because I knew you’d be the same selfish bastard you always were.

(calls out)
SAGE?
Sage comes around the side of the house.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Okay, let’s go.

KARL

SAGE
You can?

KARL
I can help you. If you need help I can help you. For old times sake.

Elle stands there.

KARL (CONT’D)
Five-hundred?

ELLE
...Yes.

KARL
I have it. Hold on.

Karl goes inside.

Sage and Elle stand there. Inside the house, Karl goes over to a bookcase and pulls out a thick old volume (where he hides his cash).

SAGE
He’s not...

ELLE
Your grandfather? No. Your grandfather was a fling. One night stand. I have no idea where he is. Karl’s a guy I married.

SAGE
What?!

ELLE
Yeah. We lived on a sailboat together for two months. Then I split. In the middle of the night.

SAGE
This was before Aunt Violet?
ELLE
Of course it was before Aunt Violet.

Karl comes back out. He has some cash in his hand.

KARL
Hey, so what’s it for? What’s the money for, really?

ELLE
I told you, it’s for rent.

KARL
Yeah, you told me that, but you’re a shitty liar.

ELLE
(pause)
It’s true. I am.

KARL
So what’s it for?

He turns to Sage.

SAGE
It’s...

KARL
Yeah?

ELLE
She needs to terminate a pregnancy. She’s gonna have an abortion.

Beat. Karl pockets the money.

KARL
No. No fuckin’ way.

ELLE
Karl -

KARL
Are you out of your mind? Are you out of your God damn mind?

ELLE
Karl, come on -

KARL
WHY ARE YOU HERE?
ELLE
BECAUSE WE NEED THE MONEY!

KARL
GO TO HELL!

ELLE
Alright! Alright, Karl!
(pause)
I’m sorry! Alright? I am sorry.
I am not sorry that I did it. But
I am sorry that I didn’t tell you.
I am sorry I lied to you. That is
all I am sorry for. But I am sorry
for that.

KARL
It was my decision too!

ELLE
It’s my body. It’s always been my
body!

KARL
And then you go - you fucking go
and have a stranger’s baby? You’re
a psycopath!

ELLE
Well I wanted a baby. I just
didn’t want a God damn husband.

KARL
Right, so she grew up with no
father.

ELLE
She grew up fine.

KARL
Which is why you don’t speak to
her.

Elle sags a moment.

KARL (CONT’D)
And you!

He points to Sage.

KARL (CONT’D)
Does he know? The father?
SAGE
Yeah, he knows. He doesn’t want it. He doesn’t care.

KARL
Okay. Well, at least he knows. At least you had the human decency to tell him. But I’m not paying for it.

Karl goes back into his house.

KARL (CONT’D)
I’m not paying for that.

Sage and Elle stand there a moment.

SAGE
...Grandma?
(pause)
Let’s go.

EXT. STREET - DAY

They sit on the trunk of Elle’s car. Elle is finishing flossing her teeth.

SAGE
So you...you had an abortion?

Elle’s face fills with stress.

ELLE
Yes. In someone’s basement.

SAGE
Was it a doctor? Who did it?

ELLE
He claimed to have gone to medical school. I don’t believe he ever did.

SAGE
...Did it hurt?

Elle doesn’t answer.

SAGE (CONT’D)
So were you... you used to like men?
ELLE
I always liked women.
(pause)
I just didn’t like myself.
(pause)
After I had your mom, I knew it was too painful. Life is too painful not to be what you are.

Sage looks down.

SAGE
I don’t know...

ELLE
You don’t know what?
(pause)
You having second thoughts?

SAGE
(pause)
I want to have a family. I want to have a baby someday.
(pause)
But not today. Not now.
(beat)
I want to go to college. I have my GPA up to a B.
(beat)
Some people...some people could maybe do it all. But I can’t.

ELLE
(pause)
You know what we have to do, right?

SAGE
Yes.

Sage tears at a fingernail.

32  EXT. DOWNTOWN – DAY
Downtown. Some office buildings.
Elle drives, looking for parking.

33  EXT. DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING – DAY
Elle and Sage are outside a tall office building. It’s a different environment than we have been in.
SAGE
I’m scared.

ELLE
You and me both.

SAGE
(turns to her)
You’re scared?

ELLE
I’ve been a little scared of your mom since she was five years old.

Sage laughs.

ELLE (CONT’D)
No, I mean it. The straight A’s. The incessant violin practice. She used to take my cigarettes and empty out the tobacco and replace it with potpourri that she stole from Vi’s closet. I’d light up and get a lungful of potpourri.

SAGE
Why’d she do that?

ELLE
Cause she wanted me to quit.
(pause)
And she wanted to torture me.
...Ready?

Sage nods.

They go into the building.

34

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sage and Elle sit in the waiting room of some corporate offices.

They look out of place.

A couple of guys in suits are there, glancing at them occasionally.

Elle smiles at them and CLUCKS like a chicken.

ELLE
BAWK-BAWK-BAWK. BAWK-BAWK-BAWK.
The men look away, embarrassed.

SAGE
Sorry. My grandmother’s a chicken.
(pause)
BAWK.

IAN, a sharply dressed young man, comes down the corridor.

IAN
...You must be Elle. I’m Ian. Hi Sage.

SAGE
Hi.

IAN
You guys can follow me.

ELLE
What happened to what’s her name – Tiffany?

IAN
I don’t know a Tiffany. I replaced Sasha.

ELLE
Boy, she sure goes through secretaries. You must feel like your head’s on the chopping block.

Ian smiles opaquely.

IAN
So nice to finally meet you...

35 INT. JUDY’S CORPORATE OFFICE – DAY

Judy, Elle’s daughter and Sage’s mother, stands up from behind her desk. She’s attractive and formidable. She is typing an email while walking on a treadmill-desk.

JUDY
Come in!

ELLE
What’s that?

JUDY
Treadmill desk. I’ve had it for two years.
ELLE
Bit small, isn’t it?
(beat)
That was a joke.

JUDY
That’s debatable. So what is going on?

SAGE
Umm...

JUDY
Come on. What’s going on? Spit it out.

ELLE
Jesus, why do you have to be so bossy?

JUDY
Because you are making me anxious, extremely anxious showing up like this, the two of you, in the middle of the day.
(to Sage)
What’s going on here? Why aren’t you in school?

SAGE
Because I’m on break.

JUDY
Right.
(pause)
Are you pregnant?
(pause)
Please don’t tell me you’re fucking pregnant.

Sage lowers her head. Starts to cry.

ELLE
She’s pregnant.

JUDY
God damn it. GOD DAMN IT. YOU ASSHOLE. I SHOULD KILL YOU, YOU KNOW THAT? WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT BOX OF CONDOMS I BOUGHT YOU? DID YOU EAT THEM? THERE WERE A HUNDRED CONDOMS IN THERE!

Ian, Judy’s secretary, pops his head in the door.
IAN
Uh, your four-thirty are here.
Should I tell them -

JUDY
WHAT?

IAN
Umm - I’ll just tell your four-
 thirty that -

JUDY
I’ll use the little conference
room.
(to Elle and Sage)
You two wait here. I’ll be back in
fifteen minutes. Do not leave. Do
not leave.

She turns back to Ian.

JUDY (CONT’D)
Well? Bring them into the little
conference room. And then get me
an espresso. Espresso first,
actually. Then the clients.

Judy and Ian leave.

Sage turns to Elle.

SAGE
Let’s go.

ELLE
Yeah.
(pause)
Yeah, we better not.

LATER

Elle and Sage sit on the couch. They straighten up as Judy
comes back in.

JUDY
This is my fault.

SAGE
It’s not.

JUDY
Yes it is, because you’ve been left
unsupervised, with way too much
free time, for far too long.
SAGE
I don’t need to be supervised.

JUDY
Clearly you do. I mean, any idiot would realize you need to be supervised, right?

Judy looks at Elle.

ELLE
Are you saying I’m “any idiot?”

JUDY
What is your involvement?

ELLE
My involvement? I’m her grandmother. And your mother.

JUDY
Yes but what are you doing here?

ELLE
I’m here for support.

JUDY
Did you let them use your apartment? For sex?

ELLE
What? I’m not a pimp.

JUDY
(to Sage)
How far along are you?

SAGE
Ten weeks.

JUDY
Thank God. First trimester. I’m assuming you want to have an abortion.

SAGE
Yes.

JUDY
Who is it? That little creep?

SAGE
Yes.
JUDY
Uch, really?

SAGE
Yeah. We’re not a couple anymore. If we ever really were.

JUDY
I told you that guy was a loser, didn’t I? I told you he was a flat-out loser.

SAGE
You did. You were right.

JUDY
I was right.

SAGE
Yes.

JUDY
So you don’t have any God damn money because you spent all your money on shoes and garbage. So it’s my assumption you went to her —

(points at Elle)
You went to her to get some money but she doesn’t have any money either so you came here. Am I right?

Sage hangs her head.

ELLE
You missed a few steps in between, but you’re right.

JUDY
And what about all those condoms I got you?

SAGE
We used them.

JUDY
You and that rodent?

SAGE
Yes.
JUDY
You can get more, you know. I
didn’t make them by hand. I didn’t
knit them.

SAGE
I know. I know. Stop yelling at
me.

JUDY
This isn’t yelling. I’ll show you
yelling. We’re going to have to
get you an appointment at a clinic.

SAGE
I already have one. I made an
appointment. At 5:45.

JUDY
That’s in an hour! I can’t take
you at 5:45.

ELLE
I can take her. I can take her.
If you pay for it.

JUDY
How much?

SAGE
We need five hundred dollars more.

JUDY
Christ.
(to Elle)
You don’t have five-hundred
dollars?

ELLE
I don’t, at the moment. And I
uh...misplaced my credit card.
Which I guess makes me some kind of
sub-human.

JUDY
You said it, not me.

ELLE
You know kid, you need a spanking.

JUDY
I’d like to see you try it.
Okay. Let’s go to an ATM.
EXT. ATM - DAY

They are at an ATM by the building.

Judy puts her card in. Punches in her code.

JUDY
You weren’t going to tell me, were you?

SAGE
I don’t know.
(pause)
No, I wasn’t.

JUDY
Why?

SAGE
I was scared.

JUDY
Why?

SAGE
Because you’re scary.

Judy takes out a small stack of money from the machine.

JUDY
(laughs)
I’m scary?
(nods to Elle)
And she’s not?

ELLE
I didn’t really come here to take crap from you.

JUDY
No, you came here for money.

ELLE
I haven’t asked you for anything in years.

JUDY
Right. Hooray for you.
(beat)
There were a lot of things I wanted to pay for. Nurses.
ELLE
It wasn’t my decision. It was hers. You know how private she was.

JUDY
Really? I just figured it was because you were too proud to ask me for help.

Elle doesn’t answer.

Judy turns to Sage.

JUDY (CONT’D)
(to Sage)
I am deeply, deeply disappointed in you, you know that?

SAGE
(quietly)
I know.

JUDY
I thought you were doing better. I thought you were becoming more responsible.

Sage is quiet.

ELLE
...People make mistakes.

JUDY
I’m aware that people make mistakes. That’s how I make my living, cleaning up after people’s mistakes.

(to Sage)
Here.

She holds out the money. Sage takes it.

JUDY (CONT’D)
Call me when it’s over.

SAGE
I have to go.

Sage walks off.

JUDY
Would you have told me?
ELLE
That’s up to her. To tell you.

JUDY
You’re awful. You’re an awful mother.

ELLE
I’m an awful mother?
(pause)
Well, luckily I wasn’t your only mother.

JUDY
No. Thank God. Thank God for Vi.

ELLE
Maybe you outta try taking after her more.
(beat)
Anyway I’ll try and be a better grandmother.

She turns and follows Sage. Judy looks after her, thinking.

37
EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY
The car speeds down the highway.

38
INT. CAR - DAY
They drive. Faces tense.

SAGE
That went better than I thought it would.

ELLE
(stewing, angry)
That little brat. God damn little brat. Vi spoiled her. She did. She wanted to make all the parenting decisions, Vi did. People thought I was the controlling one. HAH.

The car is making a high pitched whine.

SAGE
We’re not gonna make it on time.
ELLE
We’ll make it.

Elle presses the gas pedal to the floor.

ELLE (CONT’D)
We’ll make it if this asshole gets the hell out of the way!

She yells at the car in front of them.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Come on asshole! Move over! Get out of the way!

SAGE
Calm down -

ELLE
You wanna get there or not?

SAGE
Be careful -

ELLE
I am!

Sage starts to cry. The CAR NOISE gets louder.

SAGE
Am I going to hell?

ELLE
What?

SAGE
What if it’s true? What if I’m going to hell?

ELLE
Along with all the other millions of women and girls who have gotten abortions?

SAGE
Yeah. Along with them.

ELLE
I don’t believe in that vengeful God crap. When you’re dead, you’re dead, end of story. It’s blackness. The void. Might as well face it.

(glances over)

(MORE)
STOP CRYING. STOP CRYING YOU LITTLE TWIT! I’M TRYING TO DRIVE HERE!

SAGE
Don’t yell at me -

ELLE
I’M NOT YELLING!

SAGE
YOU’RE JUST LIKE MY MOM! YOU’RE BOTH JERKS!

ELLE
What? You out of your mind?!
(yells at car ahead of them)
GET OUT OF THE WAY, MORON!

Elle SWERVES THE CAR ONTO THE RIGHT SHOULDER, BOUNCING ALONG, TRYING TO GET PAST THE TRAFFIC!

SAGE
WATCH OUT! STOP!

The car BOUNCES on the uneven shoulder. There is a LOUD POP and the car STOPS ACCELERATING.

ELLE
DAMN IT! DAMN IT!!!!!

Elle manages to steer the car safely off to the side of the road until it comes to a stop.

Elle is trying to start the car. She can’t.

ELLE (CONT’D)
SHIT! SHIT!

She opens the door. Pops the hood. A little smoke comes out.

She kicks the car.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Piece of shit!!!

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY BY BROKEN DOWN CAR - DAY

Elle’s car is in the background, covered by its tarp.
Elle and Sage hold out their thumbs, trying to hitch a ride.

ELLE
...sorry.

SAGE
(looks over)
Excuse me?

ELLE
...I’m sorry.

Sage looks at Elle. Then goes back to trying to thumb a ride.

A grey minivan pulls over.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Elle and Sage, looking rough, sit in the back section of a three-row minivan.

There are a suburban dad and mom in the front seats (dad driving).

In the middle section are three little kids, strapped into car seats.

The kids are zombied out, watching a TV in the ceiling of the minivan, which is playing a kids’ movie.

DAD
Where are you headed again?

ELLE
A medical clinic. My granddaughter needs to get a procedure

Sage starts crying again. The mom looks back.

MOM
It’s gonna be okay, honey.

Sage wipes her eyes.

DAD
What kind of procedure?

Pause.

ELLE
It’s a female thing.
DAD  
(squeamish)  
Oh. Well, don’t worry, we’ll get you there!

KID (AGE 8)  
Quiet! I can’t hear the show!

DAD  
YOU BE QUIET!

KID  
NO YOU BE QUIET!

The dad clenches his teeth and drives.

Elle leans over to Sage.

ELLE  
(whispers)  
Sure you don’t want a kid?

Sage looks at Elle.

41  
EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The minivan pulls into a small commercial complex.

42  
EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The van stops and the back hatch opens automatically.

Elle and Sage climb out.

SAGE  
Thank you!

The hatchback closes automatically.

The clinic entrance is on the second floor, up a flight of stairs.

There is a woman by the stairs to the clinic. She has a card table with right to life pamphlets on it.

Sitting on a folding chair behind the woman is a six or seven year old girl in a pony tail.

The van drives off. Sage looks over at the woman nervously.

ELLE  
Don’t worry, just ignore her.
The woman picks up a large wooden sign with a horrific image of a decapitated baby on it.

PROTESTOR
Don’t kill your baby!

SAGE
Oh God –

ELLE
Just ignore her.

The little girl sitting near the woman looks over and then goes back to stringing some colored wooden beads.

PROTESTOR
Your baby has fingernails!

ELLE
Not until 22 weeks, genius!

PROTESTOR
Baby killing slut!

ELLE
Jesus - you talk like that in front of that sweet little girl?

PROTESTOR
You go in there, God’s going to send you to hell! You’re going to hell!

ELLE
You go on ahead, Sage –

SAGE
Grandma –

ELLE
Go on in, I’ll be right there.

Sage starts up the stairs as Elle peels off to talk to the protestor.

ELLE (CONT’D)
What the hell’s wrong with you? Why are you out here terrorizing these young women? You need help, you know that? And this is a really unhealthy image for this little girl to be seeing.
PROTESTOR
Back off, Grandma slut!

ELLE
You should expand your vocabulary a little - Look, why don’t we talk like two human beings -

PROTESTOR
MURDERING WITCH! BABY KILLER! I HOPE YOU GET CANCER AND ROT IN HELL!

Elle swallows her anger.

ELLE
You hope I get cancer? Listen, bitch. If you weren’t with this little girl, I’d take that sign and ram it where the sun doesn’t shine.

Elle leans over to talk to the little girl.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Listen, sweetheart, there’s a larger world out there, and it doesn’t have to be filled with hatred and narrow-mindedness -

The little girl rears back and PUNCHES ELLE IN THE EYE. The wooden beads that were wound around her fist go flying everywhere.

ELLE (CONT’D)
OWW!

INT. CLINIC, FRONT WAITING ROOM - DAY

Elle and Sage approach the front desk. They look at the clock. It reads 6:01.

ELLE
She has an appointment at 5:45. Sage Warren. We got delayed.

Elle’s eye is bruised and red.

SAGE
My grandmother needs to be looked at.

RECEPTIONIST
What happened to you?
ELLE
I was slugged by The Bad Seed.
I’m fine. It’s nothing.

MOMENTS LATER

They are sitting in the waiting room.

Elle is holding an ice pack to her eye.

A doctor comes out.

DOCTOR
Sage?

SAGE
Yes?

DOCTOR
I’m Dr. Ng. I heard there was some drama outside. Is your grandmother doing alright?

ELLE
Her grandmother is doing fine. Her grandmother isn’t unconscious or anything.

DOCTOR
(to Elle)
Got it. So, I’d like to take a look at you.

ELLE
The nurse already did.

DOCTOR
I know, I’d like to look at you as well.

SAGE
Can I come?

DOCTOR
Sage, we’re going to have you talk to our counselor for a little bit, just to go over everything.

SAGE
Well can my Grandmother come with me?
DOCTOR
It’s supposed to be private, to make sure you’re fully comfortable and it’s your decision.

ELLE
Whose decision would it be?

DOCTOR
It’s just to make sure she’s not feeling any outside pressure or any fear about the procedure. Our counselor is very well-trained and sensitive.

ELLE
Glad to hear it, but I’m gonna be there. This is my granddaughter.

SAGE
Okay. It’s okay, Grandma.

ELLE
Sage. I’m here.

SAGE
I know. But it’s okay. I’ll be okay.

Sage takes her grandmother’s hand and squeezes it.

SAGE (CONT’D)
Thanks.

ELLE
Umm...

For a moment, Elle’s eyes tear up.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Okay. Alright. I’ll be right out here. If you need anything. And if anyone’s giving you any shit. They have to deal with me.

Sage nods.

NURSE
Sage?

Sage lets go of Elle’s hand.

NURSE (CONT’D)
You want to follow me please?
Sage nods and follows her out of the waiting room.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Elle sits on an examining table. The Doctor is shining a light in first one, then the other, of Elle’s eyes.

DOCTOR
You feeling any dizziness?

ELLE
I see a bright light in one eye, then the other eye.

DOCTOR
Ha-ha. No dizziness? Nausea?

ELLE
I told you I was fine. It wasn’t Mike Tyson. It was a little girl. With a nasty right hook. Take care of my granddaughter. You take care of her.

DOCTOR
I will.

ELLE
You better. If you hurt her, I’m going to come after you. I’m not kidding.

DOCTOR
I’m not going to hurt her.

ELLE
You’re going to do a D and C?

DOCTOR
We don’t do curettage at this stage of pregnancy. Not at this clinic.

ELLE
What do you do?

DOCTOR
We do vacuum aspiration.

ELLE
Okay.
DOCTOR
It causes less trauma to the uterus.

ELLE
Okay.
(pause)
Guess it’s not the dark ages anymore.

DOCTOR
No.

ELLE
How much is it going to hurt her?

DOCTOR
It’ll be a bit uncomfortable. She may cramp a fair amount afterwards. But the procedure shouldn’t hurt.

ELLE
...Mine hurt.
(beat)
Mine hurt. It was a nightmare.

DOCTOR
Well...like you said. This isn’t the dark ages. Not here at least. Okay, I’m going to take you to the Well Woman waiting room.

ELLE
Catchy name.

45  INT. WELL WOMAN WAITING ROOM - DAY  45

Elle is staring at a bland watercolor print. She looks up as Judy comes into the waiting room.

ELLE
What are you doing here?

JUDY
I cancelled some things.

Judy’s iphone buzzes. She looks at it, puts it back in her purse.

JUDY (CONT’D)
She okay?
ELLE
She went in about twenty minutes ago.

JUDY
What happened to your eye?

ELLE
The usual.

Judy stands there, radiating discomfort.

JUDY
God.
(pause)
You want a coffee? I can get us a coffee.

ELLE
I’m alright.

JUDY
Right. Don’t really need any more caffeine myself.

Judy looks at her watch. Sits.

JUDY (CONT’D)
How is she?
(pause)
Scared?

ELLE
Sure.

They wait.

JUDY
Talk about a feeling of powerlessness.
(pause)
Kids.

Elle nods.

JUDY (CONT’D)
I miss her. I miss Mama Vi.

Elle looks at her.

JUDY (CONT’D)
...Wish I could talk with her about this.
ELLE
She'd have a thing or two to say.

JUDY
I’d like to ask her...what I did wrong.

ELLE
Who says you did something wrong?

JUDY
Well, we’re here, aren’t we?

ELLE
(pause)
Better than if we weren’t here.

Judy nods.

They look up as Sage is escorted into the waiting room by the
nurse.

Sage is walking a little unsteadily.

She halts when she sees her mother.

JUDY
Hi, sweetheart.

SAGE
...Hi. I thought -

JUDY
I cancelled some stuff.

SAGE
Sorry.

JUDY
No...no. I wanted to be here. You just...caught me by surprise.

Elle gets up.

ELLE
Are you okay?

Sage nods.

NURSE
She did great.
(to Sage)
Okay, we’ll see you in two weeks.
(MORE)
NURSE (CONT'D)
Remember to take your temperature every day, and call us if it goes above 100.4.

SAGE
Okay.

NURSE
We have a nurse available 24 hours a day, in case there’s anything out of the ordinary.

JUDY
Excellent.

NURSE
So one of you is driving Sage home?

JUDY
I am. I’m her mother.

NURSE
Good. You can pull the car around. Jill and Wendy are gone.

EXT. MINI-MALL - BACK STAIRWAY - EVENING

Elle helps Sage down the stairs. The Protestor and her daughter are gone.

ELLE
I wonder if it was Jill or Wendy who slugged me. It felt like a Wendy.

Sage winces.

SAGE
I’m cramping.

ELLE
Bad?

SAGE
They said it’s normal.

Elle nods. She puts the back of her hand up to Sage’s forehead.

ELLE
You doing okay?
SAGE
...I’m...a bit overwhelmed. But... glad it’s over. Glad it’s done.

Some tears come to Sage’s eyes.

SAGE (CONT’D)
Shit - I’m crying again.

ELLE
Go ahead. Go ahead.
(pause)
If you don’t cry about this...what the hell are you gonna cry about?

Elle strokes Sage’s hair for a moment.

Sage takes a deep breath. Stops crying.

SAGE
Here she comes.

Judy pulls up towards them in her BMW.

Judy gets out of the car.

JUDY
Okay, let’s get you home.

Sage looks at her mother.

SAGE
You were mean to me earlier.

JUDY
...I know.

SAGE
I didn’t do this - I didn’t do anything to try and ruin your life.

JUDY
I know.

SAGE
I’m not perfect, okay? We’re not all perfect! And you’re not either! You’re not perfect!

JUDY
I’m aware of that. I am very aware of it.
SAGE
So don’t be such an asshole to me!

JUDY
(pause)
I’ll try. I will.
(beat)
And you stop seeing that little creep.

SAGE
Cam? He makes me puke. I’ll never talk to him again.

JUDY
That’s a relief.

SAGE
Grandma beat the shit out of him.

Judy laughs.

ELLE
I did. She’s not kidding.

JUDY
Oh.
(pause)
Wish I’d seen that.
(to Elle)
You need a ride?

ELLE
No, you should get her home. I’ll call a cab.

Sage turns and HUGS Elle.

SAGE
Thanks Grandma.

Then Sage gets in the car.

JUDY
I guess I should thank you.
(pause)
She’s right. I’m just...I get so angry. I have so much anger. I don’t know where it comes from.

ELLE
You don’t?
JUDY
Well...you gave me good teeth too.

ELLE
Take care of them, or you’ll lose them.
(pause)
Listen, I’m gonna need to borrow some money to fix my car. I can pay you back in a couple months.

JUDY
Okay. Guess I’m the bank of Judy.

ELLE
Guess so.

Judy goes to the car.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I’d like to come check on her. Tomorrow.

JUDY
Come by.
(pause)
Stay for dinner, if you want. I’ll order pizza.

Judy gets in her car.

EXT. HIGHWAY BY BROKEN DOWN CAR – NIGHT

The side of the highway.
A tow-truck driver hooks up Elle’s car.
Elle watches as he hoists the car’s front end.

INT. GARAGE – NIGHT

A mechanic talks to Elle.

MECHANIC
To replace the camshaft will be expensive.

ELLE
Hunh.
MECHANIC
You been putting oil in it regularly?

Elle doesn’t bother answering.

MECHANIC (CONT’D)
(re her face)
You had that black eye checked out?
You bang your head on the steering wheel?

ELLE
Sure.

Elle goes to the window and looks out.

MECHANIC
Got anyone?

ELLE
What?

She looks at him.

MECHANIC
You got anyone? To pick you up?

ELLE
No.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Elle sits in the back of a cab, her arms crossed. By her feet is the bag of first editions she brought to the Bonobo cafe.

She looks down at her arm, not the one where she got the O tattoo.

She rolls up her sleeve.

There is a flower tattooed there. A Violet.

Her eyes water up.

She kisses the Violet tattoo.

ELLE
(murmurs)
Always. You know that. You know that, Vi. Darling. Always. Always and always...

(MORE)
Yes. You’re right. I’m crazy. I am. You never seemed to mind.

She exhales, breathing out emotion.

Okay. Alright. I know... I know...

She knocks on the cab partition.

I want to go to a different address.

Excuse me. I want to go to a different address.

The cab pulls up on a residential street.

Elle looks out the window.

Wait here for me, please.

You have to pay me now.

Alright. But wait, okay?

How long?

I don’t know. Five minutes.

Okay.

Elle goes up some stairs, approaches an apartment door. There are lights on inside, although Elle can’t see in through the curtains.
She rings the doorbell.

Now she can hear a few voices.

She steps back as the door opens, and Olivia is standing there.

    OLIVIA
    (surprised)
    Elle -

    ELLE
    Hi.

    OLIVIA
    What happened to you?

    ELLE
    Nothing. Some little girl punched me.

    OLIVIA
    What?

    ELLE
    It was a karma boomerang. Anyway, I’m fine.

    OLIVIA
    Well come in.

    ELLE
    No, you have company.

    OLIVIA
    Come in, let’s get some ice.

    ELLE
    It’s okay. I don’t need ice.

    OLIVIA
    Come in. Please.

Olivia goes into her apartment.

After a beat, Elle follows her in.

INT. OLIVIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Olivia goes towards the kitchen.

There is a couple in their fifties inside.
They are hippy-ish looking.

OLIVIA
Elle, these are my parents, Mike and Francesca. Mom, Dad, this is Elle.

ELLE
(under her breath)
Jesus.

FRANCESCA
Hello.

ELLE
(beat)
Hi, I’m...I’m a friend of your daughter.

MIKE
(strained)
We’ve heard a lot about you.

FRANCESCA
I enjoy your poetry.

ELLE
You do. Thank you.

FRANCESCA
I read it when I was in college.

ELLE
Of course.

FRANCESCA
I was a Women’s Studies major.

ELLE
(beat)
Congratulations.

FRANCESCA
“Dragonfly” was one of my favorite poems. “You bite my wings, attack me, mid-flight...evolution’s knife... held to my throat...”

ELLE
...Yes, that’s the one that gets anthologized. Not my favorite, honestly. On a technical level.
FRANCESCA
How come you stopped writing?

ELLE
Well...cause people stopped reading.

Olivia comes back with a bag of ice.

OLIVIA
Here.

Olivia puts some ice on Elle’s eye. Elle takes it from her.

ELLE
Thank you. It’s really...I already put ice on it. But thank you.

Elle steps back.

ELLE (CONT’D)
I’m going to - I’m going to give you all your privacy. I have a cab waiting for me. Sorry to intrude, I just - I came by to give you these.

She gives Olivia the bag she brought.

Olivia looks. The first edition books are inside it.

ELLE (CONT’D)
They’re first editions.

OLIVIA
I know what they are.

ELLE
Of course. Well, goodbye. Pleasure to meet you.

Elle turns and leaves.

54

EXT. LANDING BY OLIVIA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Olivia comes out onto the landing by the door.

OLIVIA
Elle -

ELLE
Yeah.
OLIVIA
Where are you going?

ELLE
Home.

OLIVIA
So, you just came here for that - just to give me some books.

ELLE
No, no, that’s not all I came for...

Elle looks at Olivia.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Course it meant something to me. I loved being in love with you. ...I never thought I’d feel that way again.
(pause)
You have a wonderful life ahead of you. And that’s what I want for you...I want you to have what I had.
(beat)
It’s been a long day. I’d kind of like to get home and do some writing. You’d better go back in and see if your parents need some smelling salts or something.

Olivia laughs. Elle smiles at her.

Elle steps forward and kisses her. They kiss.

ELLE (CONT’D)
Okay, bye.

OLIVIA
Okay.

Elle turns and goes.

55
EXT. STREET BY OLIVIA’S BUILDING - NIGHT

Elle comes out onto the street. She looks for the cab. It is gone.

ELLE
Son of a bitch.
She laughs.

She turns and starts walking off down the street.

She walks into the distance, in and out of the streetlights...

FADE TO BLACK. *