

Sparkle and Shine
by

Rhonda Buckley

Rhonda Buckley
Media Connections Film Inc
rhondabuckley@nl.rogers.com
709-770-5424
September 15th, 2023

1 **INT. DECKER RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON, 2010**

AVERY (10) watches her sisters pour out of their bedrooms. They are all born within one year of each other LORI (17), JILL(16), and SUE (15). It was like they were planned, and 5 years later Avery was born, an afterthought.

Avery's sisters are picture perfect, size 4, 5 and 6, honours students, who win science fair and scholastic awards. Jill and Sue even have 'athletic potential', says the gym teacher.

Although no one can say where her career path will end up, Avery, has chosen the arts. She keeps to her room, draws voraciously, reads incessantly, and makes hideaways for bugs and bees in the woods, she is an explorer.

Always on the outside of the 'group', Avery, is not sure how to connect with her sisters, parents, and 'friends', as she avoids peer pressure.

2 **INT. DECKER HOME - AFTERNOON**

Avery saunters into the kitchen. Lori, Jill, and Sue rush around the kitchen, aggressive teenagers, grab cereal boxes and Chef Boyardee. The oldest is adventurous enough to open a can of tuna. Avery is on the plump side, and the sisters insist it's not her 'baby fat'. She is the source of ridicule for her sisters, who are tall, thin and can shovel down any amount of food they like without gaining an ounce.

Jill takes down a box of Lucky Charms from the cupboard for Avery and behind it Shreddies for herself.

JILL
(to Avery)
Here you go, Pudge.
(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)

Mom got the sugary cereal for you. No point in you dressing up for the boys just yet.

Avery walks slowly behind her sister with a bowl and spoon in hand, grabs the cereal, and tries to ignore her sister's comment.

SUE

Yeah, what difference is a few more pounds. You pretty much live and sleep in those Adidas track pants.

Lori, the oldest, tries to even the score and make everyone laugh.

LORI

It's not like you two have the boys lined up at the door. How much vaseline did you put on to slide into those jeans, Sue.

Lori grabs Avery's bowl of cereal and pours a little milk on it. Avery takes the chance to reveal a slight smile and smirk. She crawls into the window seat behind their table, built in like a bookcase, it can usually seat 3 of the kids.

JILL

Push over Avery.

SUE

Yeah. Push over. This bench can seat 3, when it's just us.

JILL

And then you had to come along and ruin everything.

Avery mutters.

EVERY

It's not my fault.

JILL

Well, it kind of is.

SUE

You know you were a mistake,
right?

LORI

Shhhhhh. Mom's shift at the
hospital is almost done. If she
hears you two, none of us will
go to the dance this Friday.

Avery smiles a tiny smile, as if she has a protector
in Lori. Sue digs in again.

SUE

What are you all smiles about?
You'll never go to a dance.

JILL

Can you imagine who'd invite
Avery.

SUE

Someone from Mars or Plutoooo.

SISTERS all laugh, even Lori, just to make Avery know
she is never truly safe. They hear a car pull up,
and all 3 sisters leap from the table in sync, and
run to their rooms and pretend to study.

RUTH (42), their mom, rushes through the door with a
brown bag of groceries that bursts through the bottom.
Ruth is in her NURSES UNIFORM and a raglan. Avery is
still on the inside of the table and eats her cereal.

RUTH
Where are your sisters?

AVERY
Studying.

RUTH
I know your sisters are bigger.

AVERY
Older.

RUTH
But *you* don't need to cover for
them ...

Ruth sings out to the back bedrooms.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Girls, get out here. There's
groceries in the car and they
can't walk into this house on
their own.

SISTERS yell out from their rooms.

SISTERS
We're STUDYING.

RUTH
NOW, young ladies.

They drag their heels from their room, where there is
a shared bunk bed and an extra single bed. They're
all in one room and Avery has a separate room.

Sue is barely in the hall and starts to razz Avery
again.

SUE

Why can't Avery do it? She needs the exercise.

RUTH

Watch your tongue, young lady. There's plenty of chores to go around.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(to Avery)

Put that bag of groceries away will you love?

Ruth follows the girls to the car, looks back to Avery along the way.

3 **EXT. DECKER HOME, CAR - AFTERNOON**

Three sisters and Ruth head to the trunk of the car.

JILL

Do you hear that? You called her love. Cause' she's the baby of the family.

SUE

She could get away with murder and you'd say, "That's okay, love."

RUTH

It's not true. I love you all equally. You're just different, that's all. Each one of you has your own thing.

GIRLS lug in all the brown bags of groceries. Bags fall a part as they walk and they just barely make it to the kitchen floor, as cans roll around and a half dozen Kraft dinner boxes spill over.

4

INT. DECKER HOME - AFTERNOON

Avery picks up the cans on the floor, as she can't reach the shelves, she leaves the groceries on the counter. SISTERS pile in and natter on again.

SUE

See she didn't even do what she was told.

JILL

The food is still on the counter.

Avery mumbles again.

AVERY

I couldn't reach.

Ruth finally has had enough. And slaps her coat across the chair, with her hands on her hips.

RUTH

If this nattering doesn't stop, no one will be go to the dance this Friday. Do you HEAR me?

Lori flares up, also fed up.

LORI

I'm going. Cause I put up with all their bullshit everyday. On my OWN.

Ruth turns on Lori with her own private lesson in adult behavior.

RUTH

Oh you do, do you? You think you run this household now, do you?

LORI

You're never here.

RUTH

And where exactly do you think I am? Out to the movies? Eating takeout?

LORI

Maybe...

RUTH

Your father works away. He works hard.

(smiles)

He's a *turn around man* ...

LORI

(says in sync with her Mom)

... He's a *turn around man*. Whatever that means. He's never here.

RUTH

He's here half the year. That's not fair.

LORI

He's not here now. And you're always working.

RUTH

I work to pay for your clothes. That's what.

LORI

What clothes? I never get anything new. Never!

Ruth forgets Lori is the eldest, and loses her strategy.

RUTH
GET TO YOUR ROOM.

LORI
My ROOM! I don't have a ROOM.

RUTH
You don't have a room. You don't have clothes and you don't have food, I suppose. Then what's the point of living here.

LORI
Exactly.

RUTH
If you saw half of the patients I see everyday, you would be more than grateful. Some not even half your age.

LORI
Grateful. Oh, yeah.

Lori starts to walk away.

RUTH
And don't you say bullshit in this house again.

LORI
I'm going to the mall.

RUTH
To the mall. For a twack, are you?

LORI

To get a job. So I can get out of here.

RUTH

If you leave here, my dear, don't come back. Pregnant or not. You hear me.

LORI

You always say that. I'm going to the mall. How am I going to get pregnant. I'm barely allowed to go to the dance and look what I have to wear.

Lori storms out of the kitchen. Jill and Sue run to their room, gossip loudly behind closed doors. Avery puts the last of the groceries in the cupboard and then storms to her room, as she tries to behave like a teenager, she is super aware she has her own room. Her Mom confesses, "That's for your own protection, Avery".

5 **INT. MALL - DAY**

Lori runs up to the print shop with her resume, filled out in very neat handwriting. The clerk makes photocopies and passes the stack back to Lori, that she carries under her arm.

She heads to the first retail store that sells jeans, past the food court. Lori walks up to the counter and switches her posture, in a business like fashion she looks the CLERK directly in the eye, as if she has done this 1,000 times.

LORI

Hi. I'm Lori. Are there any positions available?

CLERK

Manager is gone to a meeting.
She should be back in 20 minutes.

LORI

Thanks. I'll leave this for
her. I'm interested in part-
time hours.

Lori leaves a resume on the counter and starts to look at jeans for sale in the bin. She rummages through a pile and takes several pairs out to bring to the change room, slung over her arm.

LORI (CONT'D)

Okay if I try these on, while I
wait?

CLERK

Sure. Knock yourself out.

Lori goes in to the change room and hangs up the jeans. Clearly with a plan to get up to 'no good she hurriedly puts on a pair of really tight jeans. She looks under the door and then puts her own jeans on over the new ones. She grabs the remaining stack of jeans and slings them over her arm, and acts casual, like a pro, she makes her way from the dressing room.

Lori lays the jeans on the counter near the bin, in plain view of the Clerk.

LORI

Nothing there. Too bad. Is she
back yet?

CLERK

No. She sometimes gets delayed.

LORI

Can you give her my resume and
say I'll be back.

CLERK

Sure. Can do.

Lori walks out in to the Mall with a smile on her face. When she's in the clear, she picks up the pace.

6 **INT. DANCE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

The inside of the gym is dimly lit. There are wooden chairs around the edge, and a small group huddle in the center. The girls try to get the guys to dance with them and avoid the teachers. Lori wears her new jeans, that she lifted from the store. Sue and Jill sit along the side lines, more of the athletic type, they are not as popular with the boys as they pretend to Avery.

Lori leans in to a group of boys, her confidence boosted by her new outfit, she takes on the guys.

LORI

So which one of you losers gets
to sweep me onto the dance floor.

PRESENT DAY:

7 **INT. GOLF COURSE DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT**

Lori(30) dances in the center of the banquet room with her dashing husband. Jill(29), Sue (28) and Avery (23) are lined up and sit at the banquet table hidden by a towering cake. They watch on as Lori and her husband sweep the dance floor, as if on Dancing With the Stars.

CLOSE UP across the wedding banquet table reveal frivolous and exorbitant details of flowers, napkins,

wrapped chocolate wedding favours, with insignia of the bride and groom. Further CLOSE UP of Jill and Sue's ladylike bridesmaid dresses and then detail of AVERY'S tuxedo, perfectly tailored, muscular and handsome, with slight facial hair on his sharp jawline. He is a man. He is no longer Pudge, the little girl they terrorized.

JILL

Mr. And Mrs. Cole. Lori is a Decker no more.

SUE

She couldn't wait to blow the dust off the name Decker and Blanche Rd.

JILL

Yup. It's all golf courses and yachts from here on in. Two doctors. Whose surprised? No one.

SUE

What about you Avery, would you keep your own name if you got married? I mean I know you kept Avery. But what about Decker.

JILL

Why did you keep Avery?

AVERY

Cause it's my name. I like Avery. It's a man's name, too. 'Sides I didn't get to hear it much growing up.

(upset)

Pudge.

Jill and Sue look somewhat sheepish but still can't control their bulldog, now pro-athlete, instincts.

JILL

You sure turned that around,
you're ripped now.

SUE

I can't believe it's finally
happened.

JILL

Mom knew back then. She just
wouldn't admit it.

AVERY

Some never get it. At least she
talks to me. I'll give her
that. Dad never came back.

JILL

Mom says Dad was a turn around
man, like it was romantic, but
if you ask me he was 'a one way
out of this town', kind of man.

SUE

Yeah, he just didn't turn around.
At all. It wasn't because of
you.

AVERY

Are you sure?

JILL

I'm sure.

AVERY

You both were gone all the time
to train at soccer camp. Lori
was on her way to med school.

SUE

Nah. He was never coming back.

AVERY

It was just me there. Maybe he didn't come back to *me*.

JILL

He was never home when he had 4 daughters.

Avery is in awe of their camaraderie, his sisters come to his defense, now.

SUE

Although I'd pay to see Dad show up and see you now.

JILL

The man of the house walks his eldest daughter down the aisle.

AVERY

Don't call me that.

SUE

What?

AVERY

The man of the house. I'm still the youngest, no matter what.

Avery smiles.

JILL

That's true, Pudge.

His smile turns to 'cut you with a knife' expression, saved only by their Mom, RUTH (55), who comes over as if she has raised the Brady Bunch in a 'happily ever after' marriage.

RUTH

See, isn't this nice. You're all here. A mother's dream come true. Her first daughter's wedding.

Ruth has her arms sprawled across the back of the chairs and hovers over Jill, Sue and Avery. She leans over to press on Avery's bowtie, to say how dapper he looks.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You all look so fancy. See I knew you would turn out just fine.

Lori comes up from behind Ruth.

LORI

Really Mom, cause all I heard you scream was "If you go out that door I won't take you back in pregnant."

They all laugh and Ruth somewhat pretends to roll her eyes, once again the butt of her children's jokes.

Ruth looks across to all of them and beams with pride.

RUTH

You all proved me wrong. Especially, Avery. A top interior designer in New York from Blanch Ave.

SUE

Blanch Ave. Would scare 'bad taste' out of any of us. It's not exactly easy to repeat that aesthetic, beige on beige. It's a good thing he got accepted to

(MORE)

SUE (CONT'D)

(in a haughty voice)

Parson's School of Design, on scholarship.

LORI

Says the two athletes with not a stain of art on their walls, and 4 colours of white in every room. Avery you have to save these two.

JILL

It's designed to breath. We need to have space in between soccer games - to strategize.

SUE

We're minimalists.

AVERY

Sparse, works. Unless, it's just an excuse not to make a decision. Or commit.

JILL

We commit. We're going to the World Cup for fuck sake.

SUE

Yeah. What more should we do
...

AVERY

I just mean your own relationships, no pressure. I mean it takes a while.

JILL

Well, where is David, anyhow?

EVERY

He's pitching to a client in NY today. They're a big client. He'll fly in later and make the afterparty.

LORI

Work took preference over my wedding.

SUE

Some things do take preference over you, Lori.

JILL

It's not like your work is that important.

They ALL laugh.

EVERY

Okay, saving lives is important. Perfect interior design also matters.

They continue to laugh as Ruth pushes them from their seats towards the DANCE FLOOR.

RUTH

Hurry, Hurry. I think it's time for the wedding train.

The FAMILY rush to the floor. Light bulbs stream from the ceiling and patio lanterns sway. They go around in a big circle hands on each others waist and blare the noise a train makes ... CHOO CHOO ... CHOO.

8

EXT. CAMPING DECKER FAMILY - DAY, 2010

The FAMILY, Ruth (42), Lori (17), Jill (16) Sue (15) and Avery(10) have a small camper trailer and a side

tent for all their supplies, food, pots and pans. Ruth makes the camp site home-like, sweeps off the step of the trailer.

LORI

I can't believe you towed that thing while driving.

Ruth sweeps the step and even the mat, although it is on a ground of crushed rock. Lori hangs a clothes line from two of the trees.

RUTH

You're impressed with me, Lori?

Lori breaks a smile.

LORI

It's pretty good.

Ruth's surprise quickly transpires to a beam of pride at her daughter's approval.

LORI (CONT'D)

For a Mom.

They both laugh.

RUTH

I hope I can get the bloody thing back home, too.

LORI

(makes fun)

Mom, such language, 'bloody thing'. Careful, or we'll all become degenerates, not just me.

They laugh harder.

RUTH

Where are your sisters ... are
they too good for chores.

9

INT. TENT - DAY

Laughter rises from the tent where Jill and Sue hide away and play with their makeup kits, as they shove marshmallows in their mouths. They sit cross legged on their sleeping bag and have a little vial of rush by their side, and a bag of magic mushrooms that falls out of their backpack.

They vigorously devour the marshmallows and then move on to the snowball cookies. One by one they pop the cookies into their mouth as if popping pills, in hysterics of laughter.

Jill pulls a half bitten one from her mouth.

JILL

AHHHH. This one has raisins.

Sue also pulls one from her mouth.

SUE

And NUTS!!!

JILL

MOM. She sucks!

SUE

YUCK. She knows chocolate can't
have healthy foods. Like nuts
and raisins.

JILL

That's just evil.

They are now beside themselves with laughter,
completely stoned.

The heat and glow of the orange tent radiates around them as if they are in a space vessel.

Ruth blares out from inside the trailer as she sets the camper table with sandwiches and drinks.

RUTH

See, I told you girls you would have fun. No snacks before lunch.

JILL

Okay Mom, we're putting on our swim clothes.

SUE

And tidying up. Sewing on our Girl Guide badges, that kind of thing.

Lori catches on that the girls are up to something. She makes her way over to the tent, quietly creeps up to them, and then with one abrupt move opens the tent doorway. Girls are caught off guard, they have junk food wrappers everywhere, underwear on their heads, and makeup tossed everywhere. The vial of rush and mushrooms are still on the sleeping bag.

LORI

(shocked but amused)
Are you crazy?

JILL

Kind of ...

SUE

Maybe ...

Laughter continues.

LORI

It's broad daylight out here.

They still continue their crazy laugh.

JILL

It's like a galaxy in here.
Bright. Orange.

SUE

And soooo hot. I'm dying to go
swimming.

LORI

I have to get you two out of
here. Mom will kill you. She's
a nurse, you know.

JILL

Yeah, I saw that white uniform.

SUE

Are you sure that's what it is --
not a baker. I was sure she was
a baker.

They start laughing again.

LORI

Nurses know drugs. Do you think
she won't know. Get your suits.
Go to the beach. I will cover.

Lori starts to walk away, back to the camper where
their Mom putters.

LORI (CONT'D)

Shitheads. Absolute shitheads.

Lori leans in to the camper to her Mom.

LORI (CONT'D)

We're going to the beach. It's really hot. Jill and Sue have left already.

RUTH

Where's Avery? Someone has to make sure Avery is included. And not tortured by those two.

10 **EXT. WOODS - DAY, 2010**

Avery explores the woods, walking over large rocks, and behind trees that look like hideaways.

11 **EXT. CAMPING DECKER FAMILY - DAY, 2010**

LORI.

In the woods, exploring. I'll get Avery.

RUTH

Lori ...

Answers in an abrupt voice, defensive.

LORI

What?

RUTH

You're really stepping up lately. Let's go shopping when we get back. Your Dad's pay cheque just arrived.

Lori leans in with her usual asshole response, but resists and genuinely enjoys the praise.

LORI.

It's fine. I'll get Avery.

RUTH

I'll pack up lunch and make it a picnic. See you at the beach.

12 **EXT. THICK WOODED PARK - DAY**

Lori crawls in under the branches. Branches creak, leaves rustle, wind whistles around them, birds sing, insects hum, rustle of animals underbrush.

Up ahead, Avery has climbed over scraggly rocks to the only piece of hidden grass on the path. She lays there flat on her back and stares through the red blaze of sunshine, her mind adrift, far from her family.

Avery sees herself float aimlessly in the sky. She is swimming, and pushes her muscular body through the water with no top on just shorts. She is free from the wrath of sibling chaos and the world.

Lori rounds the corner, dust and dirt flies off of her, she removes branches from her hair and swats flies.

LORI

Avery. Avery is that you?

LORI (CONT'D)

Christ what the hell are you doing in the real forest? It's bad enough we're camping with no running water.

Lori catches Avery out of the corner of her eye in a dream like state for a few seconds, before Avery jumps out of her skin in a desperate attempt not to be seen.

EVERY

Yeah, just looking for berries.
Where's the others?

Avery runs out and Lori breaths heavy. She can't tell the story fast enough.

LORI

You won't believe it. Jill and Sue are stoned. Oh my god. They are off their heads. And Mom has no idea. She's going to freak.

EVERY

Stoned on what? Where are they?
Are you sure?

Avery can't believe she's included in first hand teenager drama, she feels like she just grew two feet taller. And is relieved to not be called a weirdo as she lies in the field.

LORI

Oh yeah, I'm sure. There's chip bags flying, underwear on their heads, a vial of rush on the sleeping bag.

EVERY

Rush. What's rush?

Lori pauses.

LORI

Nothing. Never mind. Let's go. They're at the beach. We have to get there before Mom catches them.

Lori and Avery run out of the woods.

13 **EXT. BEACH - DAY**

Lori and Avery run towards the beach. Lori frantically scans all the families and young gals to find her sisters. She sees them lean against the wooden frame of the lifeguard chair. The lifeguard looks amused. They wear their baseball hats backwards, always the same outfit.

LORI

There they are. Let's go.

Lori scans the beach to make sure their Mom hasn't arrived yet. Avery struggles to keep up.

Jill and Sue see Avery's awkward run and dig their claws into Avery like a piranhas.

They, laugh, point, and mimic Avery. On mushrooms and sugar, they up the ante, and are ruthless siblings.

JILL

Look at Avery run.

Jill mimics Avery in a grotesque way to show how pudgy she is and uncoordinated. Sue joins in delighted they have a new show to keep them entertained.

SUE

Where did you come from? The Wilds. Escape from the forest. You left your 'friends' behind.

Sue continues to make gestures and mimic animals, chimpanzee, tigers and elephants, as if it's Avery.

The lifeguard looks down to the gals, still entertained because of how attractive and athletic they are, but he misses the joke and looks confused.

LORI

Don't mind them ...
The sun has fried their brain.

Lori starts her own flirtation with the lifeguard. By this time Sue and Jill have lost their fixation on the lifeguard and get swooped up in a game of volleyball. Avery feels relieved that they have established some distance, which gives her hope they won't scream insults across the beach.

Lori also abandons Avery, peels off her sweatshirt, already in her swimsuit, she looks like she's ready for Miami Beach instead of Butterpot. Lori tosses Avery her sweatshirt and heads closer to the lifeguard, standing with two guys who hang around and chat.

LORI (CONT'D)

Here, you can sit on my
sweatshirt. Make sure to find
Mom.

Lori flirts with the lifeguard.

LORI (CONT'D)

My sisters are crazy.
(looks to the guys)
Hey, want to go for a swim.

The guys readily run into the water with Lori.

14 **EXT. OCEAN SWIMMING - DAY**

Jill and Sue abandon volleyball, their killer sports instinct wanes with the side effects from mushrooms. They get in the ocean jump on each other piggyback style. Lori sees them out of the corner of her eye, tries to brush them off as kids, and show the guys she is the 'real deal'. The girls cut throat spirit is alive and they dare each other to hold their breath

under water. The winner gets to hold the other one under water as long as they can, as a prize.

15 **EXT. BEACHSIDE - DAY**

Ruth starts to walk towards Avery with a beach umbrella, blanket, basket and thermos. Avery notices her mother's hands are overloaded and runs to help her.

RUTH

I might as well have brought the full trailer, hey.
(laughs)

Avery laughs too, takes the blanket from her Mom and spreads it out. Carefully they unpack the picnic basket, sandwiches, cookies, chips, and cups. She struggles to set up the umbrella.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh let me. That one is tricky.
It needs a lot of sand to support it.

Avery pushes the sand, and then more sand, until she is sure it's in place.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Your father gave me that.
(smiles)
He was great at setting it up.
I wish he was still here, I miss him so.

Ruth's eyes fill up, she tries to cover them under her sunhat. Avery doesn't know what to do, she can see she is upset. Avery passes her mom a sandwich on a paper plate and a cup of Kool Aid. Ruth smiles as if it's a gift, even though she made the lunch.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Why don't you go swimming. I brought your suit. There's a change room over there.

Ruth holds up the swimsuit as if it is on display for a springtime catalogue collection. Avery abruptly shakes her head.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Come on Avery, it's so hot. All the kids are having such fun.

Avery gives a defiant response, which is out of character.

AVERY

I said, No.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I just want to cover myself in sand.

Ruth suddenly catches Sue and Jill out of the corner of her eye, as they hold each other under water and she panics.

RUTH

What the HELL are they doing?

Ruth runs toward the ocean and the girls.

Lori sees them at the same time and is close by. She breaks from her bathing beauty pose and turns with a splash and goes aboard of her sisters.

LORI

Can you two ever stop. How am I supposed to get a date out here with both of you.

Lori glances back to the guys with a smile, but she can see they have moved on to some other young gals on the beach.

Avery just digs herself under her own sand pile and buries herself in a mountain of dirt. She can hear the sound of her Mom panic, sisters scream, and she puts more and more sand over herself to calm down.

The sisters run back to the beach as they see their Mom in a fit headed for the ocean. Sue and Jill don't hesitate and stand on top of Avery under the packed down sand castle she has become, as if medalists on a podium, they stand on top of Avery.

Ruth races behind them, her panic subsides. Lori pulls up on the other side of Avery and makes the sign of rabbit ears over her head covered in sand. CLICK, Ruth takes a photo.

Ruth takes her eye away from the camera and sees her 2 sports daughters stand right on top of Avery.

RUTH

Avery has a HEART murmur.

JILL

Avery. Avery, Avery. She always has something to make her special. It's not fair.

SUE

She's the youngest. She has a heart murmur. I was the youngest until she came along.

LORI

You can take my place. Being the oldest sucks.

They smile and sit down and have a picnic. Tears and laughter have past, they just eat. Jill and Sue tease Avery with a chip held to her mouth, not letting her have it as she is covered under sand.

16 **EXT./INT. CAMPING TRAILER - NIGHT**

Avery lies inside the camper and she can hear voices on both sides of her.

Close beside the trailer she hears her mother's voice talk to their father. Ruth whispers on the flip phone.

Across the dirt road on another campsite Avery can hear all of her sisters who have snuck over to be with a bunch of boys who are camping.

RUTH

What do you mean you're going to be longer. You're going to stay? It's been over 6 months...

Pause.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I know the pay is good but you never see the girls. I raise them, all the time.

Pause.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I know it's my job, but I expected a little help from you.

Pause.

RUTH (CONT'D)

You have to go ... where?

Pause.

RUTH (CONT'D)

This is our family were talking
about, you know ...

Pause. Silence.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Well, go. If whatever it is, is
that important. Just go...

Ruth closes the phone and sits on the campsite picnic table with her face held in her hands in despair. Avery can see her Mom from the camper trailer mesh window.

Avery can hear the girls laugh, she can see them lined up against three guys hanging around a campfire. The sisters are giddy, it looks like they have a bottle of beer each. One guy sings out lets play 'strip poker', we'll use caps.

They each take turns, knock caps off the top of the beer bottle. All of Avery's sisters have to remove several pieces of clothing. The guys easily remove their shirts and one guy who is particularly bad at the game, perhaps on purpose, fully drops his shorts. He stands closest to Jill and they are a few years older, University types.

Jill tries to maintain her 'too cool for school' attitude but immediately blushes and turns away.

Avery is left to see this handsome young man's physique on display. His chiseled chest, abs, detailed muscular legs, and silhouette of his body in the dim lit shadow of the fire.

Avery looks ahead awestruck. She turns onto her back, under her sleeping bag and thinks of her body

as a boy. With the buzz of the mosquitos, she falls asleep.

PRESENT DAY:

17 **EXT. DAVID AND AVERY DRIVING - AFTERNOON**

Avery (23) and DAVID (30) drive back from the wedding at the golf course to the Decker family residence.

AVERY

Have you ever gone camping?

DAVID

No. You?

AVERY

Once.

DAVID

Fun?

AVERY

Kind of.

DAVID

I'm glad I could get away, even if it's for the afterparty.

Avery smiles.

18 **INT. DECKER FAMILY HOME KITCHEN - AFTERNOON**

Avery and David come through the door into their kitchen and greet a sea of family members, who still line the room knee deep.

Ruth immediately reaches out to David.

RUTH

Get over here, David, and give me a hug. You missed the train dance.

David leans in to Ruth, gives her a warm hug and looks over his shoulder to Avery, confused on the term 'train dance'.

AVERY

CHOO CHOO, you know .. CHOO.

They laugh.

The family eat and drink and flit about. There is a big catered reception. Avery points out some of the basic foods laid out, potato salads, rolled ham, deviled eggs. Avery looks to David in jest.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Have a rolled ham. Bet you haven't had that at Madison Park lately.

They catch each others eyes and share a look of love across the room. Avery breaks away from the kitchen where the family gathers and goes down the hall, glances in to his sister's bedroom, and then to his own.

19

INT. AVERY'S BEDROOM DECKER RESIDENCE - AFTERNOON

Avery's bedroom is like a shrine to a child from the past. Pink from ceiling to floor, there are lace curtains and pillow shams, stuffed pink elephants on the bed, and a throw his mother knit across the foot of the bed. Not a piece of fabric has been removed from when Avery was growing up.

Avery walks around the room, still wears his jet black tuxedo suit from the wedding, a man who has

just walked out of NY, a fashion figure. He walks around his room, runs his fingers across the synthetic fabric, and then sits on the edge of the bed and just puts his head in his hands.

Avery looks up as David has made his way down to the room. He sits alongside of him on the bed.

DAVID

So this is it. Where you grew up.

There's silence.

Avery gasps for breath, strives for his emotions, which are hard to pin down.

AVERY

Yeah. It wasn't real fun. This room.

DAVID

I can imagine. It takes a lot to leave this behind.

(eyes all the pink)

And end up in a big city.

AVERY

They tortured me. The sisters were insane. I hated myself, and they hated me, and then I hated myself, and then I hated myself.

DAVID

Why do you come back?

AVERY

They're family.

DAVID

I don't see my family.

AVERY

We have to stay family. It's a small place.

DAVID

And how does a small place, see this Avery ...

(points to the pink decor)

Become this Avery.

(points to his face tenderly)

David runs his hand intimately over Avery's face, with care and compassion.

AVERY

I'm not sure. The sisters were mainly gone when I got to be myself. In some ways they were less cruel.

DAVID

Now I remember why I don't see my family. If the goal is to be less cruel.

AVERY

I didn't know if they would stay around - with me.

DAVID

Your Mom did.

AVERY

She did.

DAVID

She loves me.

AVERY

I know.

They laugh.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I still wish she would pack up
this fucking room, though.

They both laugh and Avery starts to pause as they pass his small closet in his room. On the inside is a chart of Avery's different ages and where there usually is the height of a child, Avery has his weight recorded.

Age 9, 120 pounds; Age 10, 140 pounds; Age 11, 150 pounds. Alongside the chart are Jill and Sue's scathing comments, FATSO, PUDGEY, PUDGE OF THE GALAXY, UGLY SISTER, FATTY.

Avery still looks at the words with deep despair. The pain and words entrenched in his brain, on every move he makes, even now.

David sees the distress on Avery's face, he wants to help, but knows he can only distract him and hope to get Avery back to their condo in the city. David makes an effort to lighten the moment.

DAVID

See, they accept you now, because
you're hot.

Avery smiles. They hold each other and walk back to the kitchen.

20 **INT. DECKER FAMILY HOME KITCHEN - AFTERNOON**

Avery and David exude their professional confidence.
It's their armour.

 AVERY

Well, we're off. Great day,
Lori.

 SUE

Don't forget were back in NY for
pre-game championship.

 JILL

Yeah, don't forget Mom wants to
see that Broadway show, the
musical about Gander.

 AVERY

Right, okay lets chat next week.

Avery reaches over hugs Lori and shakes her husband's
hand. They both give their Mom a big love.

Avery and David walk to their car.

WEEK LATER:

21 **INT. PENTHOUSE CONDO, NY - DAY**

David and Avery meet in a Penthouse, David has a
client on the phone.

 DAVID

Terrace, fireplace, more floor
area, oversized windows, multiple
master suites, office space, hot-
tubs, and whatever else we can
think of.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Got it. Stanistic Vladimir-
fotolia.

David ends his call. Avery under his breath.

AVERY
It's not called Kdrama for
nothing.

DAVID
Based in Korean design.

AVERY
Kdrama, an elegant, wealthy
woman with a tragic past.

DAVID
With a husband who has a secret
from his past. Might as well be
Days of Our Lives.

DAVID/AVERY
(in unison)
He's gay.
(they laugh)

Phone rings.

AVERY
Speaking of Kdrama, it's Jill.
(on the phone)
Hey Jill, what's up?

Pause.

AVERY (CONT'D)
That's not today.
(looks at his watch)
Okay, it is today. See you
after practice.

Avery looks sheepish over to David.

EVERY (CONT'D)

Jill and Sue have arrived.
They're gone to the stadium
first and then our place. Mom
arrives later tonight.

DAVID

So, this is a thing? You all
stay with each other. Such a
weird custom.

EVERY

It's an island thing.

DAVID

I would take 3 of your Mom, but
those two going pro in soccer is
insufferable.

EVERY

Imagine if they weren't the
best, how bad they would be.

They laugh.

DAVID

So there's a lot of work here.
I will have to draft the project
proposal and work late.

EVERY

Yes, you can skip tonight. I'll
still have time to contact the
Gladstone and set up a meeting
for the final art.

Avery and David kiss good-bye before they leave the
penthouse.

DAVID

Thick skin, Avery. You've got
thick skin with those two.

Avery smiles.

22 **EXT. SOCCER STADIUM - AFTERNOON**

Avery surprises Jill and Sue and watches their
practice from up in the stands.

They are accomplished, despite their arrogance they
work hard and listen to their coach.

Soccer is such a lyrical sport, Avery thinks to
himself. They dance through the field with seamless
conviction, maneuver the ball around each other, and
she scores.

He thinks what it would be like if he didn't become
handsome. What if he stayed inside Pudge, a trapped
little girl engulfed in fear.

CLOSE UP of Jill's legs going over her head to catch
the ball and bring it to the ground.

23 **INT. AVERY GRADE SCHOOL - DAY, 2010**

Avery takes ballet class at the school gymnasium, a
school elective.

24 **INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM BALLET CLASS - DAY, 2010**

The Ballet Teacher, MISS JANINE, takes pride in her
set up for BALLET CLASS in the gym. There are proper
mats on the floor, the school janitor has attached
bars to the side walls, with 3 different levels.
There are portable full length mirrors at the front
of the class. Miss Janine has posted large signs
around the room 'NO basketballs or floor hockey
permitted'.

MISS JANINE

Students, I just want you to know, you are a special group, hand picked to do this class. Not everyone can go to a dance studio in town, it's expensive. This is a privilege for you sponsored by families in the community, so everyone can know what it's like to take ballet.

MISS JANINE (CONT'D)

Ballet is one of the oldest forms of classical art, dates back to the Italian Renaissance.

There is a room full of school children in cheaper versions of tights and leotards that do not fit properly, and some just wear shorts unlike that of a real ballet student.

CHILDREN

What's classical art? Where is Italian? Renaissance?

Avery watches from the sidelines. In a tight t-shirt and shorts, that she fought Ruth not to wear, but at least she is not in a leotard with her hair in a bun.

MISS JANINE

The older group have been practicing for weeks, and will perform first. Jill and Sue will also add some gymnastic moves to compliment our performance.

In the center of the room a group dance to a POP tune. The group follow each other, and at the end they form a pyramid.

Jill and Sue do backflips, and in unison land back on to each other in perfect symmetry. The school children are awestruck.

The group disassemble and file out of the gymnasium in single file. Jill and Sue walk past Avery and give her a slight brush on the head.

JILL

Top that pudge. Don't forget to do a pirouette.

SUE

Yeah, you're already a dizzy spin-head.

Avery draws a blank, whatever that is, she thinks.

AVERY

A pirouette.

Miss Janine gathers the group from the sidelines, ready to start the lesson with the younger group.

MISS JANINE

I'll have the younger group come to the front now. No point to hang by the sidelines. Avery to the front, please.

MISS JANINE (CONT'D)

Weren't Avery's sisters great, class? Let's see if it runs in the family.

Miss Janine leads the group with applause and the whole group joins in to clap until it is deafening, at least in Avery's mind.

AVERY
 (under her breath)
 It doesn't.

Avery fixates on the large mirrors set up for the dance class. She can see herself head to toe under the florescent lights, vivid and large.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
 (under her breath)
 Pudge, pudge, pudge.

Avery looks to her right-hand side just in front of her. There's a boy, RAOUL, who wears a tank top and shorts. He stands with perfect posture and doesn't seem phased at all to be doing ballet, like the other boys who resist. He looks comfortable like he belongs.

Avery takes a slow detailed look toward Raoul, and in her mind's eye she moves the boys image onto her own image. Raoul's body in Avery's daydream now has transformed perfectly to become one with Avery's head and face. She sees herself with his beautiful body in the mirror. She is he, and feels beautiful. For a moment Avery believes it has happened, and smiles from ear to ear.

Miss Janine glances to Avery just as the smile comes across her face.

 MISS JANINE
 (to Avery)
 Now, there's the smile I have
 been waiting for. Okay two
 groups. This side first.

As soon as Miss Janine's eyes make contact with Avery, she is taken from the daydream, back to her real image in the mirror and is stricken with a look of horror across her face.

Avery's groups takes to the floor and Raoul's group sits on the side to watch. Raoul reaches into his backpack tears off a piece of paper and writes the word 'sparkle'.

The groups change over after Avery dances and as Raoul passes by Avery he puts the small piece of paper in her hand.

Avery sits to the side on the gym floor to watch Raoul perform, and secretly pulls the paper out to read 'sparkle'. Avery with a smile from ear to ear tries to contain her pleasure.

Avery sees a pen left by Raoul's backpack and she picks it up and writes on the same piece of paper ... and shine.

The little piece of paper now reads sparkle and shine. Avery slyly sneaks the piece of paper back into Raoul's backpack without being seen.

Avery sits cross legged and can't wipe the smile off her face. Miss Janine seems pleased to see her smile.

25 **INT. DECKER HOME - AFTERNOON, 2010**

Lori, Jill, Sue and Avery are gathered around the table for supper as their mother, Ruth, looks on with great attention.

JILL

And then the whole gymnasium starts to clap. It was wicked.

SUE

They sprang to their feet, and all eyes were on us.

JILL

Our backflips were the best. We landed back to back. It was perfect.

SUE

Yeah, so perfect. The crowd went wild.

JILL

So wild ... Avery was there. Well, on the sidelines but there ...

PRESENT DAY:

26 **EXT. SOCCER STADIUM - AFTERNOON**

Avery still in the stands, sees Jill and Sue wave to him in hysterics to meet them. They are excited he is there. Avery wonders whether it would be the same if Pudge was there to greet them. As usual, he just looks straight ahead. Sue and Jill make their way to the stands to greet him.

AVERY

Great practice. Let's get Mom. She took the Airport bus to the Hyatt.

27 **INT. AVERY AND DAVID'S CONDO - EVENING**

Avery shows each of them to their room, puts towels out for them. Their condo is immaculate, luxurious, all 5 r 6 bedrooms have an ensuite. Ruth is the first to return to the dining area.

RUTH

I can't believe this whole space is yours. There is a bathroom in every room, do you know?

EVERY

I do know. And it's mine and David's.

RUTH

Of course, it is. Where is he? He's my favourite.

EVERY

I'm your favourite, Mom. I'm your son.

They both laugh.

RUTH

You kind of always were -- my favourite. I didn't see this big city life coming, I must say.

Avery preps dinner, cooks away.

EVERY

But everything else you knew would happen with me.

They laugh again.

RUTH

Do you need a hand? It smells great. I'm sure it's complicated.

EVERY

Gourmet Mac and Cheese. I'm good.

Sue and Jill come out from their rooms, showered with wet hair and in new sports clothes. Not exactly dressed for dinner.

They hover over Avery in the kitchen, like bulls in a china shop, grab beers from the fridge without asking. Avery, slightly territorial about his cooking space, redirects them to the table with Ruth.

JILL

What exactly do you and David do again, who has this many rooms?

SUE

Yeah, seriously, are you sure you weren't on the wrong side of the Wall Street property heist.

JILL

Or maybe it was the right side for them.

Jill and Sue clink their designer beers in cheers. On point, David comes through the door. Avery looks up surprised and pleased. Ruth gets to her feet.

DAVID

I got away early. Our assistant took over the proposal.

AVERY

Great. It's gourmet Mac and Cheese.

David catches Avery's eye, gives Ruth a hug, and then comes over to give Avery a kiss. They gather around the table. It looks decadent. The best dishes, wine glasses, expensive wine, salad and the Mac and Cheese.

Jill and Sue settle in to eat, but then return to their banter and interrogate Avery about his posh lifestyle. They underestimate that David is his fierce protector.

Family digs in to devour the dinner. David uncorks the wine and pours it for Ruth, as if in a 5 star restaurant, he gives her a little at first to taste for approval. She raises her hand to say plenty.

RUTH

Oh that's plenty David. Thank you. I only have a drink at weddings or to celebrate.

DAVID

This is a celebration. If you like it, then I'll fill your glass. Try it.

David realizes she doesn't know this ritual. Ruth delicately puts the wine to her lips and gives a smile.

RUTH

It's beautiful. So smooth.

DAVID

See you know more about wines then you think.

Jill and Sue still slug back their beer bottles at the table, as if they are in a pub and Jill picks up the bottle of wine, looks at the label, she quickly scans it on her phone.

JILL

Who has a \$60 bottle of wine with Mac and Cheese? What are you made of?

SUE

Our little Avery, became a Wall Street gangster, who knew?

Jill and Sue eye each other to spur on their worst behaviour.

JILL

Remember when Avery didn't even know how to count money.

SUE

Numbers were foreign to him.

They laugh.

JILL

Unless *she* was going to the candy store. Then all the money was spent.

They laugh in hysterics.

JILL (CONT'D)

I mean him. Sorry him.

JILL (CONT'D)

(pushes even harder)

From Pudge to a ripped millionaire in NY. Who saw that coming?

David looks straight ahead at first with a blank calm, almost deathly stare, and then sees RED with ANGER. He flips his own plate of food across the table with the back of his hand and then knocks the two beer bottles out of Jill and Sue's hand to crash on the floor.

Leans on the table with both arms stiff and directly looks into both Jill and Sue's face, David screams.

DAVID

Get the FUCK OUT OF OUR HOUSE.

Avery has never confronted his sisters, and remains still.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The charade ENDS HERE. You
crucified Avery his whole life.
Today it ENDS.

Jill and Sue look shaken, and confused. They've never been called out on anything in their lives. They re-adjust their place settings as if they are going to stay.

Avery then with even conviction, uses the moment to settle the score.

EVERY

(in an even and
calm voice)

He's right. Leave.

Ruth remains still.

Jill and Sue leave the table and return with suitcases packed, they go to the door.

Jill looks to her Mother, like a child.

JILL

Aren't you going to say anything.

RUTH

No. No, I'm not.

Jill and Sue leave the condo. Avery and David go to their room. Ruth starts to pick up the broken glass.

28

INT. AVERY AND DAVID'S CONDO - MORNING, NEXT DAY

Ruth, David and Avery come from their rooms.

Ruth has managed to pour herself a cup of tea. There is a peaceful silence in the air.

RUTH
It's my fault.

AVERY
Not this time.

Pause.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Maybe when we were young. But
not now.

DAVID
To be clear. I'm not
apologizing. It's enough.

RUTH
I know.

Avery comforted by ritual and aesthetic, sets the table with all their finest napkins, dishes and pastries, and pours their coffee from a Concordia Integra designer espresso maker.

AVERY
Cream, Mom?

RUTH
Yes, please.

DAVID
Let's take your Mom to the
gallery today.

RUTH
I'd love that.

29 **INT. DECKER HOME - AFTERNOON, 2010**

The sisters get ready for Halloween, generally Avery's favourite time of year, as she can be whoever she wants. The sisters do not disappoint, Lori is a naughty nurse, and Jill and Sue are cheerleaders. Ruth scorns them all for too much makeup.

Avery is dressed as half man and half woman. Lori is so impressed by the idea she helps with the white makeup under each side of Avery's face. Then she adds a mustache to one side, and a full ladies face with lipstick on the other. Avery feels the 'slurs' will have to be more creative for this costume, than if she is a pirate or a princess.

They all pour from their rooms and Ruth takes the obligatory photo in the porch. CLICK.

30 **EXT. STREET HALLOWEEN - AFTERNOON, 2010**

Ruth (42) sends them out the door with pillow cases in hand for the big haul of candy.

Lori (17), Jill (16) and Sue (15) are much further up ahead and Avery (10) has been warned she is allowed to tag along, as long as she stays 12 feet back.

Avery can see up ahead they are mingling with other teenagers, as they are all quite popular at school.

Avery gets a few nods from other small kids and feels like she fits in, highlighted by one kid going by and saying 'cool costume'. There is nothing more glorious on Halloween night.

LORI

(shouts back to
Avery)

Don't get lost back there, Avery.

JILL

But don't come too close either.

SUE

Unless you get the good treats,
cause your the *baby*.

They all laugh. The sisters have been stalled by a string of popular boys and Avery is left with no other choice but to catch up with them.

The guys huddle around the girls, one mischievous boy, BEN, sees Avery off to the side, and is able to confront her behind the on-street mailbox.

BEN

(to Avery in her
face)

So, what is it, Avery? Are you
a girl or a boy? Can't decide.

(he jeers)

Let me see.

Ben leans in to touch (feel up) Avery under her costume aggressively. Avery tries to push Ben away.

AVERY

Don't.

Ben bullies his way and pushes Avery up against the mailboxes. The sisters remain oblivious, vying for the popular teen boy's attention. With a look of fear and terror Avery eyes the next person who comes down the street and it is RAOUL, the boy from ballet class. Avery still remains paralyzed, and thinks he'll never help.

Raoul immediately stops and confronts Ben.

RAOUL

What are you doing, Ben?

BEN

What's it to you? Foolin'
around. Goblins and all. You
know. It's Hallows Eve.

RAOUL

You seem scary, Ben. I think
you're hurting Avery.

BEN

(repeats himself)
What's it to you? I said.

RAOUL

I'm here. I can see you. I'd
have to report you.
(Takes a quick
photo with his
flip phone)

Ben pulls back. Avery can't believe it. Someone has
taken her side.

BEN

You're just a puff ball. The
two of you. Fruity, Fruity
that's you.

Ben starts to back away and go down the street.
Avery, is reduced to full on tears, from the fear and
kindness from Raoul. Makeup streams down her face,
and blurs the half man and half woman face.

Raoul makes an effort to see that Avery is okay,
kindly pats her shoulder, but continues down the
street not to cause further discomfort.

Avery, forced to come out from behind the mailbox, is
more than disheveled with ruffled cloths, a pool of
mascara and lipstick that pours from her face onto

the white collar of the man's shirt side of her costume.

Avery is instantly in full view on the street, and the 3 sisters in their sexy outfits look directly her way. The teen boys have all moved on.

The SISTERS laugh a vicious and hysterical laugh, until it's a cackle, and look directly at Avery.

SISTERS (O.S.)

What a MESS.

CLOSE UP Avery in the half man and half woman costume, as makeup streams down both sides of her face.

PRESENT DAY:

31 **INT. BROADWAY THEATRE NY FOYER - EVENING**

Avery, David and Ruth enter the Broadway Theatre. CLOSE UP of a half man and half woman sculpture in the foyer, symbol for theater diversity.

Avery eyes it up and down and then assumes his role as cultural city goer.

AVERY

Coat check, Mom?

RUTH

Thank you, darling. You're such a gentlemen.

DAVID

I'll grab us drinks before we go in.

RUTH

Nothing for me, David.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)

I have to keep my wits about me,
it's my first Broadway show.

David chuckles and heads to the bar.

DAVID

(in a put on British
accent)

You should be able to keep up
Mum, it's about your home, *Come
From Away*.

RUTH

I know, but I am sure audiences
laugh in a different way in a
big city than back home. I just
want to be on my best.

Avery laughs.

AVERY

You'll be fine.

David comes back with their drinks, scotch.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Mudder is worried she may not
fit in with the Broadway show.

DAVID

It's about your home. There's
more kindness there than in this
country. At least enough to
make a hit musical about it.

RUTH

We're certainly proud. Although
I've never been to Gander, maybe
once.

EVERY

The town is kind but they sure could use a makeover. Remember the photos I showed you?

DAVID

(grimaces with a subtle look)

Right, we went through those photos. Didn't Elvis have to land there.

RUTH

He did. Only place flights could refuel.

(laughs)

Ruth catches the eye of a mother she recognizes from home, JULIE and her son RAOUL, who went to school with Avery. Raoul doesn't recognize Avery right away, but Ruth is subtle in the introduction. While Julie the mother is quite obviously jarred to see Avery as a man.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Julie, Julie.

(holds her hand out)

Ruth. How are you? It's been ages.

Ruth goes to introduce Avery.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(gestures between Avery, Julie and Raoul)

Avery. The boys went to school together. Raoul is it?

Raoul, looks dashing, nods to Avery and Julie's jaw drops but Ruth continues the formalities without skipping a beat.

RUTH (CONT'D)

And Avery's partner, David.
David, this is Raoul, and his
Mother, Julie.

Avery smiles to Raoul, enthralled to see him.

INTERCOM comes on: LADIES and GENTLEMEN if you can take your seats the show is about ready to begin.

They disperse amongst the crowd, Avery looks back to Raoul, and Ruth catches the horror on Julie's face. David makes a gesture to put his arm around Avery as they walk through the theatre doors. APPLAUSE from the theatre is amplified.

32 INT. AVERY AND DAVID'S CONDO - EVENING

Avery, David and Ruth are in front of the TV watching the sister's soccer game. APPLAUSE resounds underneath, as Jill scores. Ruth and Avery share a sense of pride as they watch their sisters play.

David abruptly gets up to leave the room.

DAVID

I can't watch those two, they
make me sick.

Avery and Ruth stay in front of the TV not disputing David, but they need to watch. Canada WINS. Avery says a warm good night to his mom.

RUTH

What a great night.

AVERY

Great game, the girls played
great.

Ruth goes off to bed with a smile, looks at her phone.

33

INT. AVERY AND DAVID'S BEDROOM WITH ENSUITE - NIGHT

David is in their ensuite with matching marble sinks and shaving at his sink with his shirt off. Avery peeks around the corner, tries to guess the level of tension.

AVERY

Are we going out?

DAVID

Yeah, I am. There's an
afterparty. Remember? Broadway
show's Afterparty.

AVERY

Sorry, I forgot.

Avery starts to join David at the sink, both men now shirtless. Avery shaves, as well.

DAVID

Your Mother seems to have the
drill down. She handled the
intro to your High School pal
pretty good, I thought.

AVERY

She's done it before.

DAVID

You, not so much. I didn't
really see you step up.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Reach out, a handshake to a mother who thinks you're a little girl, and say hey, I'm a man Avery, who you've known forever.

AVERY

There's no need.

DAVID

No need. No need to say this is my guy David. And what if your Mom is not there to handle it. Do you just not to get to say hi, to Raoul, is it? Cause you seem pretty interested to see him.

AVERY

He ... It meant something to have him around. He was good to me, when I was growing up.

DAVID

Good to you. And you've never mentioned him or seen him since. He's here in NY. Did you know?

AVERY

No.

DAVID

And now that you do? Now what?

AVERY

I'll get dressed. Let's go.

Silence between the two. They dress in Armani suit jackets without ties. They walk out to the living area to catch RUTH, as she puts her bags by the front door.

34

INT. AVERY AND DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ruth putters around the living room with her suitcase ready to go. Avery and David eye her with concern, as they are dressed to go out on the town.

AVERY

Where are you going? It's late.

RUTH

The girls are driving back over after the game in Boston in the morning, and I'll go with them.

AVERY

Really?

RUTH

We'll have a shop and take a morning flight.

AVERY

They're going back with you?

RUTH

They have a break before their finals.

DAVID

Ruth, don't go because of what I said. I can be a hot head.

RUTH

Not at all. And you had every right.

David smiles.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I'll sneak out in the morning.
You two won't even be home yet.

(MORE)

RUTH (CONT'D)
 (laughs)

Avery enjoys his Mom's casualness.

RUTH (CONT'D)
 (pause)
 The show was wonderful. Thank
 you, David.

RUTH (CONT'D)
 Thanksgiving? I expect to see
 you both at Thanksgiving.

AVERY
 Thanksgiving. How can I forget.

RUTH
 You haven't been back, Avery,
 except for the wedding. It's
 important. Come home.

AVERY
 I will... we will.

RUTH
 I'm sure Julie, Raoul's Mom,
 will be my first call when I get
 back to the house.

They all laugh. Ruth tiptoes back to bed and Avery
 and David leave.

35 **INT. BROADWAY AFTERPARTY - NIGHT**

The afterparty is wall to wall with NY's elite
 business clientele, theater, LGBTIQ, art dealers,
 artists, musicians, actors and Broadway performers.
 A celebration of New York's best.

David and Avery circulate the room with ease, known to all who are there as one of the finest looking and talented couples in the room.

Dancers move in groups not on a stage, singers strike up harmony in the stairwell, and actors recite from their barstools. The burlesque party is all David and Avery need to reaffirm their love.

After working the room, Avery heads to the bar and leans in to the bartender for a Martini. David is otherwise enthralled, and talks to a client.

Alongside Avery, several people stand at the bar, and a guy passes a bar napkin from one person to the other until it reaches him. He looks at the napkin. It says sparkle. By the time the napkin has reached Avery, Raoul has moved down by his side. Raoul is dressed in Drag, with perfect detail. Avery knows it's him without skipping a beat. Avery leans in to hear him above the noise.

EVERY

How long have you been here? In NY?

RAOUL

About 3 years. I'm on Jersey Boys. Odd since there's a Broadway show about home.

EVERY

Even odder that we're both here.

RAOUL

At this party?

EVERY

This party. In New York.

RAOUL

You mean that we got out.
Without being killed.

AVERY

Small town. Lucky I got out of
my family, without at least one
murder happening.

RAOUL

All still alive?

AVERY

They've been here. There's a
couple of MIA's.

They both laugh.

RAOUL

You look good.

Avery smiles.

RAOUL (CONT'D)

I wasn't surprised. Impressed.
But not surprised.

AVERY

It helps to be here. To be
successful.

RAOUL

I can see that. Even for my
folks, it's like that.

AVERY

It's pretty beige that life.
When you're 10, it's hard to
know if you'll ever make it.
Survive.

RAOUL

But you did. You should be proud.

AVERY

Proud to be alive. Really alive.

RAOUL

True.

AVERY

I'll have to see your show.

David comes over, he beams after a successful chat.

Avery turns to David, and repeats what he has said. David doesn't recognize Raoul, at first.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Raoul's in Jersey Boys, we should go.

DAVID

What's your hometown taking over Broadway.

Avery and Raoul laugh, and share the same sentiment.

RAOUL

It must've been those ballet classes.

AVERY

MISS JANINE.

David sees Avery as more open than he usually is, and feels he has missed something.

DAVID

Hey. Let's get out of here.

Avery looks at Raoul, not wanting to go. Avery pushes the napkin discreetly back in Raoul's hand.

EVERY

We'll see you again, I'm sure.

DAVID

Night.

Raoul opens the napkin to read the word and shine just like when they were in ballet class.

36 **EXT. CITY STREET NY - LATER**

David and Avery walk out, David is a little off but plays the good guy in a party mood. They walk past a karaoke bar.

DAVID

Remember when we went there.

EVERY

We first met each other there.

David starts to sing.

DAVID

Got a man, call him my boyfriend.
Think I'm fallin' in love. The
only man that gives me the things
that I am worthy of. Hugs me
and holds me, kisses me softly.
Calls me back right away.
Communicates his feelings to me.
And cares what I have to say.
He says, "Baby, I love you,
baby, I need you. Never gonna
let you go" Writes me love notes,
takes me shopping. And to
Broadway shows.

Avery is alarmed with David singing the whole thing, he laughs intimately.

DAVID (CONT'D)

See I can be your Jersey Boy.

Avery laughs and they make out. Avery turns away still holding David's hand.

TWO YEARS EARLIER:

37 **EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY FIELD - DAY**

Avery (21) stands back on, with the audience focused on the graduates as they cross the stage. A sash is being put over his head for the graduation ceremony, as he kneels in front of the Chancellor.

38 **EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY FIELD - DAY**

EVERY walks off the stage throws his hat in the air and catches it. He walks towards David at the back of the audience and they give each other a love.

DAVID

Hey Postgrad ...

Avery and David walk across the field with their arms around each other.

A bunch of gals and young men, Avery's classmates, start to summons him. Cheers, as if in Junior High.

GALS

Avery, Avery. There's cake.

(giggles from the crowd)

Avery readies himself to brush them off, as if they are kids, while he focuses on his serious career. Then he does an about-face and hollers back.

EVERY

Sure, why not.

David in complete dismay, defaults to laughter.

DAVID

What happened to our business.

Forbes man of the year.

(laughs)

EVERY

(smiles)

It's cake. I'll meet you back

at the office. It won't be

long.

They walk away from each other, and slowly release their hands as Avery joins his classmates.

The classmates walk up to a large cake, and a bunch of progressive and flamboyant students gather around. Their party, set up on the field, borders on the edge of a park with thickly overgrown trees.

CLOSE BY are other faculty graduates, and there are sneers from the guys, who seem quite intolerant. One guy goes over towards Avery and brushes his grad hat off his head into the woods.

39 **INT. WOODS BY UNIVERSITY FIELD - DAY**

Avery tries to pay no mind to the act, pretends it is just shenanigans, and as he goes toward the woods to retrieve his grad hat, several guys push him into the woods farther and farther.

GARY

What are you doing hanging off

all the arts babes? They're

ours for the taking.

MURPH

Homo.

GARY

You're a disgrace to *my*
university's name.

DOUG

You're not even a guy, are ya?
You're make believe.

GARY

Like, you don't even exist.
Invisible. You're not even
real.

Gary throws branches and dirt at Avery.

DOUG

Just like you arts types. Can't
make up your mind. Had to become
a man, to get a man.

Still pushes Avery around.

GARY

That's right, you're a woman,
aren't ya?

MURPH

Stop blocking our girls. What
the fuck they want with you-now.
You're Not a friend, Not a fuck.
You're nothing. You hear me.
Nothing.

Avery is convinced he will die here next to the soccer
field, at the hands of these bastards.

They push harder, harder. And as he falls to the
ground, they topple and push trees and trees and

branches over him. A tonne weight buries him to the ground.

40 **EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY FIELD - DAY**

Back on to the field the gals turn around and try to see if Avery is in the crowd, unaware he is in trouble.

MINDY

Hey, where did Avery go?

BLAKE

Probably back to the office with David.

(snide voice)

MINDY

At least he has a business to run.

BLAKE

With David that may be all they'll ever do. He's a tyrant for success.

Young guy speaks up.

RANDON

Oh, I imagine they'll get up to more than work.

Avery is heavily covered in branches and the GUYS have left him for buried. He still wears his graduation gown and suit. The GUYS return to the field and make crass and rude gestures to the young women, and make moves on them with their arms around them. The gals shone the guys vile moves.

41 **INT. WOODS BY UNIVERSITY FIELD - DAY**

Avery can barely breath under the trees and he feels the pressure of each limb crush into his legs and arms.

The limbs of the trees seep into his veins and he lies still until he is transposed to the moments he lay in the forest as a young girl PUDGE. He looses his breath and has no shell of a body once more. He is vacant. He feels himself slip away. The word 'nothing' echoes over and over in his mind, until he submerges underground. Blacked out.

Avery shivers and becomes conscious. With conviction he resurrects in his safe space, memory, he transforms his own image with Raoul's laid over him, they merge. Pudge can see a young boys body emerge from her image. He regains and embraces strength, and resists pain.

He maneuvers the weight of the tree trunks and dirt. Avery pushes through, agile, and crawls out from under the wood. Still riddled with panicked breath, he holds still.

Visibly hurt, his shoulders are strained, but no markings are on his face. He stumbles out from the woods and sees the GUYS in the distance following behind the gals.

Avery hobbles across the field not wanting anyone to know he is in pain. He takes the disheveled graduation robe off and balls it up under his arm. He tosses the hat across the field, in contempt.

42 **INT. RAOUL'S FAMILY HOME - DAY, 2010**

Raoul(10) and Avery (10) are in Raoul's bedroom Raoul takes a tiny graduation robe from his closet that he wore when he was in Kindergarten. It's way too small but he can just fit his arms through and he wears it like a shawl. They twirl, dance and laugh.

RAOUL

Remember, graduation day.

AVERY

Yeah, we graduated from
colouring. So stupid.

RAOUL

It was fun! All the cakes. Our
parents were so proud.

AVERY

The cake was good. That was the
only time my Dad showed up, at
school.

RAOUL

Where is he?

AVERY

Mom says he works away, 'a turn
around man'. The sisters say
he's never coming back.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I heard Mom on the phone when we
were camping.

RAOUL

Wish my Dad would go away for
good.

Raoul continues to go to the closet, pushes the
hangers back behind all his 'guy' clothes and pulls
down women's shawls, slips and fancy lingerie. He
rushes over to the door and puts the back of a chair
underneath it to hold it shut.

RAOUL (CONT'D)

Want to see?

Avery looks on not so excited by the clothes, but very into Raoul's secret adventure.

EVERY

What's all this?

RAOUL

It's what I wear, when I know no one's around.

Raoul wizzes through the closet and puts on several lace slips and a ball gown. Rushes to open his top drawer and puckers his lips perfect while he applies lipstick. He takes out a wig from the drawer hidden under his clothes and tosses it in the air, in one fell swoop he places it on his head. He twirls around shows Avery he is in full garb, dances with exuberance and glee. Avery is in awe and so excited to watch Raoul, he is happy and free.

EVERY

Wow. You look beautiful.

Avery takes a sheer scarf and puts it around Raoul's neck, lovingly. Avery then sees Raoul's very 'guy' like clothes left on the floor, boy jeans and a ragged t-shirt. She slips out of her leggings and long 'girls' t-shirt and quickly changes.

She does up the jeans with the button on the opposite side and pulls in on the man's belt buckle. Avery stands extra tall looks in the full length mirror.

EVERY (CONT'D)

There that looks better.

They both laugh. And laugh. And waltz cheek to cheek and twirl in their room, in complete bliss.

PRESENT DAY:

43 **INT. PENTHOUSE CONDO, NY - DAY**

Avery walks through the door, as David preps for their meeting, and looks over drawings. The client look over the renovation to give final approval. David and Avery try not to crowd them, the client finally moves toward David.

 DAVID

 More floor area, multiple master suites, Stanistic eco designer interior.

Client continue to walk around really impressed.

 DAVID (CONT'D)

 It's important- eco. People will know your priorities.

Avery's phone rings. He is distracted and walks to the side away from the client.

 AVERY

 What? What kind of accident?

 RUTH

 She's gone, Avery. Jill is gone, she didn't make it.

David overhears from across the room, and walks over to Avery.

 AVERY

 Jill's dead.

44 **INT. DECKER HOME - DAY**

Ruth is standing by the stove, she trembles and clenches her arms tight, to hold herself up. Lori is alongside her, and puts a sweater over her. Avery comes through the door, guarded, and Lori turns to give him a hug.

EVERY

Is Sue stable?

LORI

She is. We're going back to the hospital now.

EVERY

What happened?

RUTH

Driver ran a red light, hit the driver's side and our Jill was behind the wheel.

LORI

Car was driven over 100 ft. It's no wonder Sue made it out alive.

Ruth trembles, her tears continue.

45 **INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

Ruth, Lori and Avery come in by Sue's side. Sue is groggy. Ruth kisses Sue on the forehead.

RUTH

You're going to be fine, Sue, just fine.

LORI

There was intracranial pressure, swelling inside your head, it could've caused injury to your brain. But the swelling is going down. They will monitor it, but it's going in the right direction. The doctors know what they're doing.

RUTH

She doesn't need to hear all
that. Doctor in the family.
You'll be fine, my love.

SUE

(grief stricken)
Jill.

RUTH

I know. I know.

SUE

It wasn't her fault.

RUTH

I know.

Lori looks on with tears in her eyes, her mother
still sits on the bed.

SUE

Mom, can I speak to Avery alone
for a minute.

Ruth and Lori leave the room, Ruth with a worried
look on her face.

SUE (CONT'D)

She loved you, you know.

AVERY

Don't worry. It's fine.

SUE

I mean, I know she wants you to
know that.

AVERY

I know.

Avery tries to help.

SUE

I want you to know that.

Sue starts to cry.

SUE (CONT'D)

I thought I was going to die. I thought of you. I didn't call back. What was I thinking?

AVERY

It's okay. Stop.

SUE

She's gone, Avery. She's gone. You can't change it once you're gone.

AVERY

I know. I know.

Avery almost feels sadness for them, Jill and Sue, not knowing this before now.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Rest. You need to rest.

PRESENT DAY:

46 **EXT. GRAVESITE - DAY**

Family gathers around the gravesite Ruth, Lori, Sue, Avery, friends and family. The full soccer team is there in uniform. Minister gives the sermon.

MINISTER

Death always seems to catch us unprepared.

(MORE)

MINISTER (CONT'D)

Today is such an occasion. When someone dies at such a young age, so unexpectedly, we are faced with with some troublesome questions and feelings. Grief tends to make us turn inward with questions. We view death as a curse, even as an enemy. Faith in God is how we can make sure that our death is a triumph not a tragedy.

Avery, uncomfortable with the Ministers talk on death, turns around aimless and sees an elegant dressed woman, with an immaculate designer outfit and poise. She hangs back and stands by the trees. Avery gives a warm smile.

Avery thinks back to when Raoul finds him in the woods by the school.

47 **EXT. WOODED SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY, 2010**

Avery (10) is deep in the woods behind the school. She can hear the river go through the bushes past the school grounds.

She has cleared the bushes and put more trees up so she is not visible.

Avery lays a bottle of pills in front of herself, oxycontin...

She makes it seem like a ritual, takes a pause, and gets ready to start to take one oxycontin, then another.

Moments go by and then the next pill.

EVERY hears a runner in the woods, she is not sure who. It is Raoul (10). He works his way in to find Avery and sees her doped up. Raoul shakes Avery and is there when she wakes up in hospital.

PRESENT DAY:

48 **EXT. MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBAN STREET - DAY**

All the houses are exactly the same as Avery walks through their neighbourhood. They have been this way since Avery was 10.

Avery walks along alone takes in every breath. He feels a person behind him and then hears someone and turns to see the elegant woman in the designer outfit. It's Raoul.

RAOUL

Hey, sorry about Jill.

EVERY

Were you coming home?

RAOUL

I came early, but yes.

Raoul and Avery say in unison.

RAOUL/EVERY

Thanksgiving.

RAOUL

David? He...

EVERY

He didn't want to upset Mom.
Family is not really his thing.

49 **EXT. STORE FRONT WINDOW - DAY**

They walk and hit a small shop with a rack of clothes out front.

There's a full rack of small purses covered in sequence, glitter and sparkle, that shine radiantly underneath the sun.

Avery looks to the shopkeeper, who has already given a few shrewd looks, despite that Avery and Raoul are the best dressed.

Avery speaks to the shopkeeper and holds up a small purse that is beige.

 AVERY

 This woman's favourite colour is
 sparkle. Does it come in
 sparkle?

Shopkeeper reluctantly brings out a bright sparkly gold coloured sequence purse.

They laugh and pay the clerk. Avery and Raoul walk down the street, Avery in a black funeral man's suit and Raoul dressed as a woman, wearing the bright gold sparkly and sequence purse, with their heads held high in the air. They take each other's hand, like a couple.

Avery and Raoul arrive at their homes two doors down from each other.

 AVERY (CONT'D)

 (to Raoul)
 I guess I'm home.

Avery walks up to the front step and opens the door. Raoul watches him the whole way up as he walks towards the door.

From the front entrance way, he sees his family.
Avery sings out in a confident and calm voice.

 AVERY (CONT'D)

 I'm home.

Song Sparkle and Shine plays as Avery walks through
the door.

Ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh
Okay, everybody, clap your hands
I'm a superstar, and I'm coming
out tonight I've had a little
makeover And I'm all dressed up
tonight A cheeky drink, a naughty
wink We'll loosen up alright
Stand back and put your shades
on 'Cause I'm about to shine My
blinding light will throw you
'Cause there's no starlight like
mine. Ooh-oh, ooh-oh ...

THE END.