

CAPPUCCINO LOVE

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A cluttered but cozy bedroom. Posters of sci-fi movies line the walls. Trophies from Special Olympics events gather dust on a shelf.

WILFORD HENDERSON (16) lies in bed, headphones on, staring at a glossy magazine. His wide eyes linger on a model in a bikini. He's awkward, sweet-faced, and deeply curious about the world.

The BOOM of a fist pounds on the door.

ISADORA (O.S.)

Wilford! Turn that music down! I've got a headache!

Wilford doesn't move. He's mesmerized. The door FLIES OPEN. **ISADORA (50s)**, tough but tired, enters with a broom in hand.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

(turning off the music)

I said down! What are you doing in here?

She freezes. Her eyes lock on the adult magazines scattered on his bed.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

Where did you get those?

WILFORD

Some guys at school.

ISADORA

That's trash, Wilford. Throw it away. Now.

Wilford reluctantly gathers the magazines and dumps them in the bin. He looks embarrassed, maybe even ashamed.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

You're too young for that nonsense. Focus on school. On real things.

She leaves in a huff. Wilford watches the door, then slowly pulls one magazine back out of the bin and hides it under his mattress.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY (FOUR YEARS LATER)

Wilford, now **20**, more grown but still socially awkward, stands at the entrance of a bustling, trendy café. Couples laugh. A barista flirts with a customer. It's a place for connection – the kind Wilford craves. He walks up to a **WOMAN (30s)** reading *Pride and Prejudice*.

WILFORD

Hi. My name's Wilford. Um... could I maybe have your number?

The woman looks up, startled. She takes in his shaggy hair, oversized glasses, and hopeful smile.

WOMAN

I'm flattered, but... I have a boyfriend.

Wilford nods, deflated, and walks away. He sees another **WOMAN (20s)** with a laptop and latte. He steels himself and walks over.

WILFORD

Hi. Are you seeing anyone?

She glances up – cold.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Could I buy you a coffee?

WOMAN #2

No.

WILFORD

Just your number then?

WOMAN #2

(getting up)
If you don't leave me alone, I'm calling the manager.

A nearby **MANAGER** notices the tension and approaches.

MANAGER

Is there a problem?

WOMAN #2

He's bothering me.

WILFORD

I just asked for her number.

MANAGER

Sir, I need you to leave.

Wilford steps back, embarrassed. Eyes from all corners of the café are on him. He exits quietly, shoulders slumped.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Wilford enters. Isadora is in the living room, dusting furniture.

ISADORA

You look miserable. Bad day?

WILFORD

No one wants to go out with me.

ISADORA

(sighs)

You're chasing girls who are out of your league again, aren't you?

WILFORD

Why does it matter if I'm different?

ISADORA

Because life isn't fair. That's why.

Wilford frowns. She softens a little.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

Look for someone who gets you. Who sees the good in you. Don't chase pretty faces who don't care.

WILFORD

But I want love. Real love.

ISADORA

Then stop aiming at people who'll never aim back. Be smart.

She leaves the room. Wilford sits in silence. He pulls out a cappuccino flyer from his back pocket – an ad for the café he just got kicked out of.

He stares at it... hopeful.

INT. COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DISABILITIES WORKSHOP - DAY

An open, cheerful space filled with young adults doing light crafts, assembling boxes, and chatting. A sense of belonging.

Wilford stands at a table, fiddling with parts, clearly distracted. **CYRUS (21)**, upbeat with a big laugh, nudges him.

CYRUS

You still thinking about that girl
from the coffee shop?

WILFORD

(sighs)
She was really pretty.

CYRUS

You gotta stop chasing models, man.
There's people here who like you
for you.

WILFORD

Like who?

CYRUS

(turns his eyes)
Amber.

Across the room, **AMBER (19)**, soft-spoken with big hopeful eyes, works quietly. She gives Wilford a small wave. Wilford waves back – politely, not romantically.

WILFORD

She's nice, but... she's not like
the girls in the magazines.

CYRUS

That's the point, dummy. Girls in
magazines don't care if you like
comics or Special Games trophies.
Amber does.

Wilford shrugs, unconvinced.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford sits at the kitchen table eating dinner. Isadora watches him closely.

ISADORA

You ever talk to Amber? She's
sweet. You two would make sense.

WILFORD

She's just a friend.

ISADORA

More than the girls who won't give
you the time of day.

WILFORD

I don't want someone like me.

Isadora stiffens.

ISADORA

What's wrong with someone like you?

WILFORD

I want someone beautiful. Someone exciting.

ISADORA

Be careful. Wanting the wrong thing can break your heart.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATE NIGHT

Wilford takes out the trash. A sleek, black car pulls into the complex.

Out steps **SOPHIA (28)** – sultry, stylish, confident. She wears red heels and a short leather jacket. She grabs a bag from the back seat and heads toward her unit.

Wilford stares, stunned. She's the most beautiful woman he's ever seen. She catches him looking – and **smiles**.

SOPHIA

Hey there.

Wilford freezes.

WILFORD

Hi...

SOPHIA

You live here?

WILFORD

Yeah. That's... my window.

He points, nervous.

SOPHIA

Nice. I'm Sophia. Just moved in next door.

WILFORD

I'm Wilford.

SOPHIA

Cool name.

She unlocks her door. Turns back with a wink.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

See you around, Wilford.

She disappears inside. Wilford doesn't move. He's floating.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford sketches in a notebook. It's Sophia – angelic, exaggerated. He's in deep. Amber approaches, holding two juice boxes.

AMBER

Want one?

WILFORD

Thanks.

She sits next to him.

AMBER

Who's that?

WILFORD

My new neighbor.

AMBER

She's pretty.

WILFORD

She *talked* to me.

Amber lowers her eyes. Hurt.

AMBER

You don't have to be someone else, Wilford. Some people already like you.

Wilford doesn't reply.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia hosts **two FRIENDS**, glamorous and loud. They drink wine and laugh.

FRIEND #1

So how's the new place?

SOPHIA

Chill. But get this – my neighbor? Super awkward but kinda sweet. Total nerd. And get this... he's rich.

FRIEND #2

What?

SOPHIA

Inherited money. I asked casually,
and boom – his dad died and left
him a stack.

FRIEND #1

Girl, you better work your magic.

Sophia raises her glass with a smirk.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford holds a cappuccino flyer. He's scribbled "*Ask her for coffee?*" in the margin. He stands in front of the mirror, practicing:

WILFORD

Would you like to get coffee...
with me?

He shakes his head.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Do you drink cappuccino?

Nope.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I think you're really pretty and I
want to take you for-

He groans.

ISADORA (O.S.)

Who are you talking to in there?

WILFORD

Nobody!

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Wilford rushes out the door just as Sophia comes out of hers.
Perfect timing.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Hi Sophia!

SOPHIA

Morning, Wilford.

WILFORD

Um... do you like coffee?

SOPHIA

Love it.

WILFORD

There's a place I like... we could maybe go sometime?

She looks him over – measuring. Smiles.

SOPHIA

Sure. Why not?

Wilford's whole face lights up.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sophia and Wilford sit across from each other. She stirs her cappuccino with elegance. Wilford nervously clutches his cup.

WILFORD

This place has good muffins.

SOPHIA

I'll take your word for it.

Awkward silence.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

So, what do you do?

WILFORD

I work at the County Workshop. We put things together for companies.

SOPHIA

Like a factory?

WILFORD

Sort of. But we get breaks, and the people are nice.

Sophia sips, half-listening.

SOPHIA

Sounds... cozy.

WILFORD

I like it. I like feeling useful.

Sophia softens for a moment.

SOPHIA

That's good, Wilford. That really is.

He beams, hanging onto her approval.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Isadora watches the clock. It ticks louder in the silence. The front door opens. Wilford steps in, grinning.

ISADORA

Where have you been?

WILFORD

I had coffee with Sophia.

Isadora stiffens.

ISADORA

That woman next door?

WILFORD

She said yes! We talked. It was nice.

ISADORA

Wilford, you barely know her. And she's—

WILFORD

Beautiful? I know.

ISADORA

That's not what I was going to say.

Wilford heads toward his room.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

Just be careful, okay?

He doesn't answer.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia scrolls her phone. On screen: **Bank Account: \$6.42** She sighs, looks at the coffee shop selfie she took with Wilford.

A message pops up from **FRIEND #1:**

"That him? Cute. Hope he's loaded."

Sophia stares at the screen, conflicted. Deletes the message.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford paints a wooden heart. Cyrus sits beside him.

CYRUS

So... you and Sophia?

WILFORD

She said yes to coffee. We talked for an hour.

CYRUS

That's cool, man. But you sure she's into you?

WILFORD

She said I'm sweet.

CYRUS

Be careful. Some people are sweet until they get what they want.

Wilford frowns.

WILFORD

Why do people keep saying that?

CYRUS

Because not everyone's like us. Some people see someone trusting... and take advantage.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isadora knocks on Wilford's bedroom door.

ISADORA

Can we talk?

No answer.

She opens the door. Wilford is sketching again – this time it's **Sophia as a fairy**, glowing, powerful, perfect.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

I know you're excited. But don't move too fast, Wilford.

WILFORD

Why not?

ISADORA

Because the world isn't always kind. Some people use kindness to get things.

Wilford turns.

WILFORD

She likes me, Mom. She's not like that.

ISADORA

I hope you're right.

She closes the door gently.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NEXT DAY

Sophia steps out with sunglasses and a gym bag. Wilford rushes over.

WILFORD

Hi! Where you going?

SOPHIA

Yoga. Want to walk with me?

He nods eagerly.

As they walk down the street, Isadora watches from the window — frown deepening.

ISADORA (V.O.)

(soft, bitter)

You're not going to take him. Not without a fight.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Romantic lighting. A candle flickers on the table. Wilford sits nervously in a dress shirt. Sophia places two plates of takeout on the table.

SOPHIA

I can't cook, but I can order from the best Thai place in town.

WILFORD

I like noodles.

She laughs. They dig in.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

So, what do you dream about? What's your big wish?

WILFORD

Love. Someone to wake up with. Someone who stays.

She stops chewing – just for a second.

SOPHIA

That's sweet.

WILFORD

What about you?

SOPHIA

Freedom. A life where I don't have to stress over rent or bills. A soft bed. A hot bath. Safety.

Wilford nods, entranced.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber watches Wilford hum as he paints. She approaches with a shy smile.

AMBER

You've been happy lately.

WILFORD

Sophia and I had dinner. She said I'm sweet.

AMBER

She's... really pretty.

Wilford glances at Amber, sensing something deeper.

WILFORD

Are you mad?

AMBER

No. I just hope she sees how kind you are.

Amber walks away before the emotion spills over.

Cyrus steps beside him.

CYRUS

Dude, you're breaking her heart.

WILFORD

I didn't mean to.

CYRUS

You sure Sophia's not just being nice?

WILFORD

She made me dinner.

CYRUS

So does my grandma.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isadora stares at a photo of Wilford's father. Her eyes water.

ISADORA

He's falling for her. I can feel it.

She grabs her phone and dials.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

Hi, this is Isadora Henderson... I heard you're renting the unit upstairs? Yes. Blair, right?

She smiles thinly.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia lounges in pajamas, scrolling through luxury handbags online. She opens a new tab – **Wilford's Facebook profile**. Family photos, workshop updates, innocent selfies.

Her mouse hovers over his dad's obituary. In it:

"Wilford inherits the full estate, per Mr. Henderson's will."

Her face tightens – not cold, just... calculating.

INT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Wilford and Sophia sit on a bench with takeout. A squirrel darts by. Wilford laughs.

WILFORD

You make me feel normal.

Sophia looks at him – touched, almost guilty.

SOPHIA

You are normal, Wilford. Don't let anyone say different.

He leans toward her, eyes fluttering shut.

She lets him kiss her.

It's awkward, brief... but meaningful.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber isn't at her usual seat. Wilford looks around.

CYRUS

She took the day off.

WILFORD

Why?

CYRUS

Maybe because the guy she likes is too busy chasing someone who barely sees him.

Wilford looks down, guilt creeping in.

INT. BLAIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BLAIR (30s), smooth, athletic, opens the door. Isadora stands there, holding a pie.

ISADORA

Welcome to the building. I thought I'd introduce myself.

BLAIR

Thanks...?

ISADORA

There's something we should talk about. Something important. It's about my son... and the woman living downstairs.

Blair raises an eyebrow.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Music plays softly. Wilford and Sophia dance clumsily in her living room.

SOPHIA

You're stiff!

WILFORD

I'm trying!

He spins her. She laughs – a real one. They collapse onto the couch, breathless.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I never thought I'd be this happy.

SOPHIA

Why?

WILFORD

Because I never thought anyone like you would want someone like me.

She grows quiet. His words hit harder than he knows.

INT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Blair spots Sophia walking to her car. He casually leans on a nearby wall.

BLAIR

Hey, neighbor. You new?

SOPHIA

(smiles)

Kinda. Been here a few weeks.

BLAIR

I'm Blair. Upstairs. If you ever need help with groceries... or life.

Sophia smirks.

SOPHIA

I'll keep that in mind.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford talks to himself in the mirror, dressed in a shirt and tie.

WILFORD

Tonight's the night. I'll tell her I love her.

He opens a drawer –z inside is a velvet ring box.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Sophia and Wilford sit at a candlelit table. Wilford is buzzing with nerves.

WILFORD (CONT'D)
I'm glad we're together.

SOPHIA
Me too.

He reaches into his pocket, about to pull out the box—

BLAIR (O.S.)
Sophia?

Wilford freezes. Blair walks over, charming.

SOPHIA
Hey... Blair.

WILFORD
You two know each other?

BLAIR
We've bumped into each other a few times. Small world.

Sophia forces a laugh. Wilford's face drops.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Cyrus notices Wilford sketching a ring design.

CYRUS
What's that?

WILFORD
An engagement ring.

CYRUS
You serious?

Wilford nods. Cyrus goes quiet.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia checks her phone. No messages from Wilford.

She looks at her account:

Balance: \$72.

She sighs.

A knock at the door — it's **Blair**, holding a bottle of wine.

BLAIR

You looked like you needed company.

She hesitates... then lets him in.

INT. STAIRWELL - LATER THAT NIGHT

Wilford walks up the stairs with a single rose and the ring box in hand.

He hears **laughter** from Sophia's apartment. He peeks through a small crack in the blinds... **Sophia and Blair** are on the couch. She touches Blair's hand. Wilford's breath catches. He drops the rose.

WILFORD (V.O.)

She said I was different. That I mattered.

He turns and walks away, stunned.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford enters, pale.

Isadora's on the couch. She looks up.

ISADORA

You okay?

Wilford doesn't respond. He goes straight to his room and slams the door.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sophia texts Wilford.

"Haven't heard from you. Everything okay?"

No response.

She sighs and opens Instagram. Blair has posted a selfie:

"Good night with a new friend."

Sophia is visible in the background, blurred but unmistakable.

SOPHIA

Damn it, Blair.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sophia sits across from **PAUL (40s)** - handsome, well-dressed, composed. A motivational speaker. His daughter's at the next table, drawing.

PAUL

So what brings a woman like you out alone?

SOPHIA

A need for something real.

Paul smiles. He's intrigued.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford shows up late. His face is tired. Amber is back — watching him from a distance.

He passes her without a word.

CYRUS (O.S.)

She cried when you stopped coming around.

Wilford doesn't stop walking.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia lounges with Paul. It's a new vibe — mature, clean, safe.

PAUL

I don't judge people's pasts. But I do care about honesty.

SOPHIA

I'm not proud of all my choices.

PAUL

You don't have to be perfect. Just honest.

Sophia forces a smile. For a moment, she wants to be honest.

From another room, **TANNER (10)** peeks in, holding a picture she drew of Sophia.

TANNER

Are you gonna marry my daddy?

Sophia freezes.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia lies awake, unable to sleep. On her nightstand: the rose Wilford dropped. She picked it up after all.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Isadora folds laundry on the couch. The door opens – Wilford steps in, smiling.

ISADORA

Hey. You're home early.

WILFORD

Can we talk?

She senses something serious and puts the laundry down.

ISADORA

Sure, baby. What is it?

He stands still for a moment, then blurts it out:

WILFORD

I'm moving in with Sophia.

Silence.

ISADORA

What?

WILFORD

She said it's okay. Just for a little while. We like spending time together.

Isadora rises, trembling with worry.

ISADORA

You barely know her.

WILFORD

I know enough. She listens to me. She likes me.

ISADORA

She likes what you *have*, Wilford. Not who you are.

WILFORD

You don't know that.

ISADORA

And you don't know her. What happens when she gets bored? When she wants more than you can give?

WILFORD

Then I'll find out. But I have to try.

She stares at him – hurt, afraid, but unable to stop him.

ISADORA

Please... don't go.

WILFORD

I'm not going forever. I just need
to see what it's like... to have a
life that's mine.

He walks into his room, leaving her speechless.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT TWO**INT. WORKSHOP - DAY**

Wilford works silently. Cyrus watches him.

CYRUS

You haven't smiled in days.

WILFORD

There's nothing to smile about.

CYRUS

You ever think maybe you were wrong?

Wilford doesn't answer. Cyrus shakes his head.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amber writes in her journal. On her nightstand is a small carved wooden heart – the one Wilford painted.

She stares at it... then slowly puts it away in a drawer.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Paul cooks dinner. Sophia paces the living room, restless.

PAUL

You okay?

SOPHIA

Just thinking.

PAUL

About the kid?

SOPHIA

What? No... I mean – yes. I don't know.

Paul studies her.

PAUL

You're not here, Sophia. You're somewhere else.

SOPHIA

I thought I wanted something stable. Safe. But maybe I don't belong in that kind of life.

Paul lowers the flame.

PAUL

You can't figure yourself out by running from everything.

INT. PARK - DAY

Sophia sits on a bench, alone. The wind blows gently. She scrolls through old texts from Wilford. One catches her eye:

"You make me feel like I matter."

Tears well up.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford opens the drawer. The ring box is still there. He picks it up... stares at it... then makes a decision.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Wilford walks in, nervous but determined.

CLERK

Can I help you?

WILFORD

I want to buy a real ring.

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Wilford crosses the street outside the jewelry store, ring box in his pocket.

His phone rings - **Sophia**.

He smiles and answers it mid-crosswalk.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Hi. I was just thinking of you.

A BLARING HORN - A CAR SCREECHES -

CRASH.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

ISADORA storms in, frantic. She rushes to the counter.

ISADORA

Wilford Henderson! He was hit by a car!

A NURSE escorts her to a seat. Moments later, **Sophia** rushes in. They spot each other. Both freeze.

SOPHIA

You called him, didn't you? You pushed him away.

ISADORA

You used him. Played him like a toy.

SOPHIA

I made mistakes, but I *cared*. Maybe more than you ever did.

Isadora steps closer.

ISADORA

You don't know what I've done to protect him. I've watched him cry himself to sleep, thinking he was broken. I was trying to keep him from pain like you.

SOPHIA

And all he ever wanted was to feel normal. To be loved. You suffocated him.

ISADORA

He was mine to protect!

SOPHIA

He's not your possession — he's your son!

A DOCTOR appears.

DOCTOR

Are you family?

ISADORA

I'm his mother.

DOCTOR

He's stable. A concussion and fractured ribs, but he'll recover.

Both women collapse into the nearest seats, shaking.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Wilford lies in bed, bruised, eyes half open. Isadora sits beside him, gently stroking his hand. He slowly turns to her.

WILFORD

Go away.

Her hand freezes.

ISADORA

Wilford...

WILFORD

You tried to control me. You never let me live.

ISADORA

I only wanted to—

WILFORD

You lied. You used Blair.

Isadora's eyes drop. Guilty.

ISADORA

I was scared.

WILFORD

So was I. But I *still* went after something. That's what you never did.

Silence. She stands, crushed, and walks out.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Sophia enters, holding flowers. Wilford watches her quietly.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

You came.

SOPHIA

Of course I did.

She sits.

WILFORD

I loved you.

Sophia's lip trembles.

SOPHIA

I know. And I ruined it.

WILFORD

Why?

SOPHIA

Because I thought you were easy to use...

(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
and then I realized you were the
first real person who ever saw me.

WILFORD
But you didn't see me.

Beat.

She stands and places the flowers beside him.

SOPHIA
I'm sorry.

She walks to the door, stops.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I hope one day you'll forgive me.

She leaves.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Wilford enters with two suitcases. Sophia stands with a cup of coffee, watching him.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
You sure about this?

WILFORD
I've never been more sure.

She smiles and steps aside. He looks around nervously.

WILFORD (CONT'D)
Where should I put my underwear?

SOPHIA
Wherever it fits. We'll figure it
out.

MONTAGE:

- Wilford hanging up superhero t-shirts in her closet
- Sophia shifting shoes to make space, clearly annoyed but hiding it
- Wilford watching Sophia cook noodles and asking dumb questions
- Late-night cuddles on the couch as he tries to kiss her ear awkwardly
- Sophia smiling with a mix of charm and hesitation

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford climbs into bed wearing full pajamas. Sophia wears a tank top and shorts. He hesitates, unsure if he should touch her.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You okay?

WILFORD

Yeah. I just... never shared a bed before.

She scoots closer.

SOPHIA

Then let's figure it out together.

They cuddle. His arm is stiff. Her smile is soft, but her eyes are distant.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wilford vacuums the floor. Sophia scrolls through Instagram on the couch.

WILFORD

Do you think we'll have kids someday?

SOPHIA

(chokes on her coffee)
Whoa, slow down.

WILFORD

Sorry. Just wondering.

She forces a smile.

INT. DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

Wilford lights a small candle.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

A date night!

Sophia giggles. They eat spaghetti. Wilford accidentally slurps too loud and splashes sauce on his shirt.

SOPHIA

You're a mess.

WILFORD

But I'm *your* mess, right?

She doesn't answer right away.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford skips work. Cyrus texts him:

"You ghosted again. Amber's worried."

He ignores it.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia does her makeup. Wilford lies on the bed watching her.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

SOPHIA

Girls' night. You'll be fine,
right?

WILFORD

Can I come?

SOPHIA

(smiling, but firm)
Not tonight, sweetie.

She leaves. Wilford looks at the clock.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Wilford eats cereal alone, staring at his phone.

No messages.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Wilford practices saying "I love you" to the mirror.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Sophia returns drunk. He helps her out of her heels. She kisses his forehead and passes out. Wilford stares at her — not understanding what he's feeling.

INT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Sophia and Blair cross paths again.

BLAIR

Still stuck with the kid?

SOPHIA

He's sweet.

BLAIR

You're too hot to waste on sweet.

She laughs – but it's hollow.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sophia and Wilford watch a movie. He tries to hold her hand. She allows it but looks uncomfortable.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Cyrus confronts Wilford.

CYRUS

You're changing, man.

WILFORD

I'm happy.

CYRUS

No... you're obsessed.

INT. BLAIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isadora and Blair talk. She slides him an envelope.

ISADORA

Make her leave him.

BLAIR

This won't end well.

ISADORA

It never does.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford surprises Sophia with a drawing – her as a queen with a crown.

WILFORD

You're royalty to me.

SOPHIA

Wilford... you don't have to keep giving me things.

WILFORD

I want to.

She hugs him – more out of guilt than passion.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Wilford overhears Blair and Sophia talking:

BLAIR (O.S.)

You've got the poor guy wrapped around your finger.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

I didn't mean to. It just... happened.

BLAIR (O.S.)

You said he had money.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

I said *he's good to me*.

Wilford steps back – devastated.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford sits on the bed, ring box in hand.

WILFORD (V.O.)

She was everything. And nothing.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia sets down two wine glasses on the coffee table. Her two best friends, **KENDRA** and **TINA**, strut in with bottles and gossip energy.

KENDRA

Girl, this place is *cute*! Is this your new sugar daddy's pad?

SOPHIA

Nope. Mine. But I got a *sweet little tenant* living with me.

TINA

Ooh... mysterious. Do tell.

Sophia pours wine and plops onto the couch.

SOPHIA

His name's Wilford. He's... kind of special.

KENDRA

Special how?

Sophia raises her eyebrows knowingly.

SOPHIA

Sweet. Innocent. Definitely on the slower side. But rich.

TINA

Girl...

SOPHIA

No, I'm serious. He inherited a bunch of money from his dad. Doesn't even realize how valuable he is.

KENDRA

And he lives here?

SOPHIA

Moved in last week. Treats me like a queen. Bought me a bracelet yesterday - gold.

They all "ooh."

TINA

What's the plan?

SOPHIA

I don't know. Ride the wave? Maybe milk it until it gets old. Maybe... I'll catch feelings?

They all cackle.

KENDRA

Girl, you always do. Just don't let him catch on.

Sophia pauses, swirling her glass. Her smile flickers.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME NIGHT

Wilford listens from the hallway, out of sight. His face is blank... then slowly crumples.

INT. WORKSHOP - NEXT DAY

Cyrus and Amber sit in silence. Wilford hasn't come in for three days.

AMBER

I tried texting. He didn't answer.

CYRUS

He's gone, Amber. She's got him now.

Amber wipes her eyes. Cyrus rests a hand on her shoulder.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isadora waters her plants. Her phone rings. She answers, annoyed.

ISADORA

Hello?

VOICE (O.S.) - BLAIR

We need to talk. She's playing him.

Isadora stiffens.

ISADORA

What happened?

BLAIR (O.S.)

He's giving her everything — money, gifts. She's got him hooked.

ISADORA

Then we take her out of the picture.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia watches Wilford sleeping on the couch. She scrolls through her texts — a bank alert:

You received \$1,200 from Wilford H.

Her face is unreadable. She walks over and gently pulls a blanket over him.

SOPHIA (SOFTLY)

What am I doing?

INT. CAFE - DAY

Sophia sits alone. Paul enters. She smiles at him. He sits down across from her.

PAUL

Back again?

SOPHIA

Coffee's good. Company's better.

Paul chuckles.

PAUL
Still seeing your guy?

SOPHIA
He's... around.

Paul studies her.

PAUL
You don't look happy.

She doesn't respond.

INT. PARK - DAY

Wilford sits on a bench with a sketchpad. He's drawn Sophia with angel wings. Amber walks past him, hesitates, then sits beside him.

AMBER
Hi.

Wilford doesn't look up.

AMBER (CONT'D)
You disappeared.

WILFORD
I'm busy.

AMBER
Are you okay?

WILFORD
I'm fine.

She slowly stands.

AMBER
You used to smile when I talked to you.

She walks off.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia lies awake, staring at the ceiling.

SOPHIA (V.O.)
They all think I'm playing him.
Maybe I am. But...

She turns her head and looks at Wilford, snoring beside her.

SOPHIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...maybe he's the only one who ever really looked at me.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Wilford walks in holding a small notepad with "Sophia's Favorites" scribbled across the top.

WILFORD

I want something sparkly... but not too sparkly. Romantic. Like her.

The clerk raises an eyebrow.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia opens a small box to reveal a **bracelet with her initials**.

SOPHIA

Wilford... this is beautiful.

WILFORD

You said you liked silver. And letters.

She gives him a quick peck on the cheek.

MONTAGE - GIFT-GIVING MADNESS:

- Wilford surprises Sophia with flowers wrapped in comic book pages
- He hands her a plush bunny: "It's for when I'm not home"
- Buys her takeout lunch and delivers it with a bow
- Gives her a hand-drawn coupon: "1 Free Hug Anytime"
- Shows her a scrapbook labeled "Our Story So Far" - filled with doodles, ticket stubs, and pressed petals

SOPHIA (V.O.)

It was like being loved by a puppy. Sweet. Unconditional. Unstoppable.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford sketches Sophia in a crown. Cyrus walks over.

CYRUS

That the queen again?

WILFORD

She's everything.

CYRUS

You bought her perfume last week.
Now a ring?

WILFORD

She smells like roses. I like
roses.

CYRUS

Yeah, but... you sure she likes
you, or just the gifts?

Wilford frowns, annoyed.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia opens a box — inside is a custom-made necklace that
says "My Star".

SOPHIA

Wilford...

WILFORD

Because you shine. Like the moon.
And the stars.

She can't help but smile — then feels her phone buzz.

TEXT FROM KENDRA:

"How much did the necklace cost him this time? 😊"

Sophia locks the phone, her smile fading.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amber watches old photos of her, Wilford, and Cyrus at the
workshop holiday party. She zooms in on Wilford — his goofy,
joyful grin.

She sighs and shuts her phone.

INT. DINNER DATE - NIGHT

Wilford and Sophia sit at a candlelit table in a fancy
restaurant.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Your eyes look like the chocolate
mousse.

SOPHIA

(trying not to laugh)
(MORE)

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
That might be the weirdest
compliment I've ever gotten.

WILFORD
I mean it in a good way.

She toasts with her wine glass.

SOPHIA
To chocolate eyes, then.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Wilford insists on buying everything Sophia puts in the cart.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
Babe, you don't have to buy my
almond milk.

WILFORD
But you like it. I want to take
care of you.

She sighs, softly.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Blair visits with updates.

BLAIR
He's all in. She's not even hiding
it anymore. He's her bank now.

Isadora clenches her jaw.

ISADORA
Then we get creative.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Wilford gifts Sophia a pair of glittery heels.

WILFORD
They're not glass, but Cinderella
would've worn them.

Sophia stares at the shoes... then at him.

SOPHIA
Why are you doing all this?

WILFORD
Because you make me feel special.
And I want you to feel that too.

Sophia is quiet.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Cyrus and Amber sit alone.

CYRUS

He's gone.

AMBER

He's still Wilford.

CYRUS

He's someone else now. Someone chasing a dream.

INT. SOPHIA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sophia stares at herself in the mirror. Around the sink:

- A designer perfume
- A necklace
- Makeup he bought her
- A toothbrush with "Wilford" scribbled on the handle

She presses her hands to the counter, emotional.

SOPHIA (V.O.)

He thinks love is giving. But I keep taking. And I don't know how to stop.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Isadora flips through Wilford's bank statements. Her hands tremble. Charges from clothing stores, restaurants, jewelry.

She picks up her phone.

ISADORA

Hi... Blair? This is Isadora Henderson. We met briefly upstairs... Can we talk?

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Isadora meets **BLAIR (30s)** – smooth, charismatic, former neighbor, now back in town and in need of cash.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

I need someone to find out what this woman is doing to my son.

BLAIR

You think she's scamming him?

ISADORA

I know she is. I just can't prove it.

She slides him an envelope.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

Get close. Seduce her if you have to. Make her slip.

INT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Blair casually "bumps" into Sophia. Offers to help with her groceries.

BLAIR

Sophia, right? I live upstairs. Just moved back in.

SOPHIA

Oh yeah, I've seen you around.

Flirty banter begins.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia and Wilford sit watching cartoons. Wilford laughs too hard. Sophia fake-laughs.

Text pops up on her phone:

BLAIR: "You free tomorrow?"

She stares at the screen.

INT. HAIR SALON - DAY

Sophia tells Kendra and Tina about Blair.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

He's bold. Confident. Totally opposite of Wilford.

TINA

Sounds like temptation.

KENDRA

Don't cheat. Just... play the game.

Sophia looks guilty.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Cyrus approaches Wilford.

CYRUS

She's spending more time texting.
And not with you.

WILFORD

You don't know that.

CYRUS

Open your eyes, man.

INT. PARK - DAY

Blair and Sophia talk on a bench. She laughs. He flirts hard.

BLAIR

You really dating that kid?

SOPHIA

It's not what you think.

BLAIR

You deserve better.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Blair reports to Isadora.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

She's biting. You were right. He's
just a toy to her.

ISADORA

Good. Push her further.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford surprises Sophia with concert tickets.

WILFORD

I know you like live music.

She forces a smile. Her phone buzzes — **Blair again.**

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Who's that?

SOPHIA

Just a friend.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Sophia meets up with **PAUL** again. He gives her calm, grounded advice.

PAUL

Why are you here?

SOPHIA

I thought I could be better with him. I thought it would fix me.

PAUL

But?

SOPHIA

I'm still broken.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Blair visits. They drink wine.

BLAIR

You need someone who gets your world.

She looks away.

Wilford watches from the hallway – unseen.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Wilford hides by the stairwell. He overhears Blair and Sophia:

BLAIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He's head over heels. If you wanted, you could have his wallet and heart.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

I didn't mean for it to go this far.

BLAIR (O.S.)

Then end it. Or use it. But stop pretending it's love.

Wilford gasps.

INT. PARK - NEXT DAY

Wilford sits on a bench, staring at nothing. Amber approaches, kneels beside him.

AMBER

Are you okay?

He can't speak. Just looks at her, heartbroken.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isadora receives a text from Blair:

"He knows."

She stares at the screen, unsure if she's won or lost.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - DAY

Sophia locks her car, juggling a bag of groceries. **BLAIR (30s)** leans casually against the stairwell railing.

BLAIR

Need a hand?

SOPHIA

(turns)

Depends – are you selling me something?

BLAIR

Just charm. Name's Blair. I'm upstairs.

He grabs her grocery bag effortlessly. She smiles – amused, intrigued.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

WILFORD watches from the window as Blair walks her to her door.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Thanks, neighbor. I owe you one.

Blair grins.

BLAIR

I'll collect later.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford cooks dinner. Sophia's laughing while texting.

WILFORD

Who's that?

SOPHIA

Just Blair. From upstairs.

WILFORD

You're talking to him a lot.

SOPHIA

He's just funny.

Wilford nods – but he's shaken.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford vents to **Cyrus** while painting.

WILFORD

She's texting him in front of me.

CYRUS

You sure she's not playing you?

WILFORD

No... She wouldn't do that.

Amber listens quietly from behind them.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Blair and Sophia laugh over cappuccinos.

BLAIR

He draws pictures of you?

SOPHIA

Yeah... like fairytale versions.
Queens, angels, cartoons.

BLAIR

That's cute. And a little creepy.

Sophia lowers her gaze – ashamed to laugh, but she does.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

You're too sharp for him.

Sophia grows quiet.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford presents Sophia with another gift: a framed sketch of her smiling with hearts around it. She accepts it, but sets it aside quickly.

WILFORD

Do you like it?

SOPHIA

Of course.

Her phone buzzes. Blair again.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Wilford stands outside the door. He hears her laughing on the phone.

SOPHIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Stop! You're too much...

Wilford's grip tightens on the gift bag in his hands.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford blows up on **Cyrus** when asked about Sophia.

CYRUS

You think maybe you're the only one in love here?

WILFORD

You don't know what we have!

He storms out. **Amber** looks crushed.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Blair reports in.

BLAIR

She's pulling back. Something's getting to her.

ISADORA

Then push harder. We need her to show her hand.

INT. PAUL'S SPEAKING EVENT - NIGHT

Sophia attends, seated in the back. Paul's speech is about self-worth. She listens, quietly breaking.

PAUL (O.S.)

When you let someone love you – truly love you – you owe them honesty.

She fidgets in her chair.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia and Blair drink wine on the couch. He leans in – she doesn't stop him.

BLAIR

You're not into that kid. You know it.

Sophia doesn't respond. But the door creaks slightly.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Wilford stands outside the cracked door.

He hears laughter. The sound of a flirtatious touch. His breath shudders.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Wilford tosses his drawings in the trash. He opens a drawer and stares at the ring box.

WILFORD (V.O.)

She said I was sweet. She said I made her feel safe...

He slams the drawer shut.

INT. WORKSHOP - NEXT DAY

Wilford shows up for the first time in days. Amber watches him sit in silence.

She walks over slowly.

AMBER

You okay?

WILFORD

I don't know anymore.

She sits beside him. Their silence says everything.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia stares at the ceiling. Blair's contact is on her phone screen. She hovers over it.

Deletes it.

Then retypes his number.

Undecided.

INT. WORKSHOP - MORNING

Cyrus and Amber sit at the worktable. Wilford's spot is empty. Again.

AMBER

He hasn't texted back.

CYRUS

He's wrapped up in her. Can't even see how far he's drifted.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Wilford delivers flowers to Sophia.

SOPHIA

You really didn't have to—

WILFORD

I wanted to. You make me happy.

Sophia gives a soft smile... but guilt creeps behind it.

INT. WORKSHOP - NEXT DAY

Wilford finally returns.

CYRUS

Look who decided to show.

WILFORD

I was busy.

CYRUS

With her?

WILFORD

Yeah. With her.

CYRUS

You act like we don't matter anymore.

WILFORD

You just don't get it.

INT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Wilford and Cyrus sit on a bench. An attempt at honesty.

CYRUS

You know what worries me?

WILFORD

Let me guess — that she's fake?

CYRUS

That you're giving everything to someone who hasn't given *anything* back.

WILFORD

She gave me her time. Her smile. That's more than I ever had.

CYRUS

And what happens when that smile fades?

Wilford walks off, defensive.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amber doodles in a notebook. A heart-shaped sketch with her and Wilford holding hands. She rips it out. Crumples it. Tears streak down her face.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford brings Sophia a coffee during his break. Amber watches from across the room.

AMBER

(to Cyrus)

She's not even here and she's still taking him from us.

INT. CYRUS'S ROOM - EVENING

Cyrus talks on the phone with Wilford.

CYRUS (into phone)

You're changing, man. I don't recognize you anymore.

WILFORD (V.O.)

Maybe you never knew me.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia looks through the scrapbook Wilford made her. Full of doodles, concert tickets, and love notes.

She flips to the last page:

"You make life make sense."

She exhales, overwhelmed.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford finally shows up. Cyrus approaches.

CYRUS

We're going out tonight. You in?

WILFORD

I can't. I promised Sophia I'd stay in.

CYRUS

You're choosing her *again*?

WILFORD

She needs me.

CYRUS

No, you need her. And that's the problem.

WILFORD

You sound just like my mom.

CYRUS

Maybe she's right this time.

Wilford storms off.

INT. DINER - LATER

Cyrus and Amber eat fries in silence.

AMBER

We lost him, didn't we?

Cyrus sighs.

CYRUS

We didn't lose him. He just walked away.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford lies awake. Sophia's asleep. He stares at the ceiling, frowning.

His phone buzzes:

CYRUS: "Still here if you ever wanna talk."

He doesn't respond.

INT. PARK - DAY

Wilford sees Cyrus and Amber from afar. They wave.

He pretends not to see them.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford overhears Sophia talking to Blair on speakerphone.

BLAIR (O.S.)

You don't owe him anything. Take what you can and leave.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

I didn't mean to hurt him.

Wilford backs away, crushed.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He looks at a group photo from the workshop: Him, Cyrus, Amber — all smiles. He drops it face down.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber watches Wilford walk in, humming and smiling to himself.

CYRUS

Guess who had another sleepover?

Amber says nothing. Her eyes follow Wilford.

INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Amber sits beside Wilford during break.

AMBER

You've been happy lately.

WILFORD

I'm with Sophia now. It feels real.

Amber nods quietly. She opens a juice box — her hand trembles slightly.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amber journals alone.

"He's slipping away. She's taking everything I hoped for."

She erases the words, writes instead:

"Wilford seems happy. That's what matters."

Her eyes glisten.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber gives Wilford a bracelet she made from beads and string.

AMBER

Thought you might like something handmade.

Wilford smiles.

WILFORD

It's cool. Sophia would love this kind of stuff.

Amber's smile fades.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTER WORK

Cyrus, Amber, and Wilford sip drinks.

Amber leans close.

AMBER

Do you want to come to my place Friday? Just movies. No pressure.

Wilford is caught off guard.

WILFORD

I... already promised Sophia a date night.

Cyrus watches Amber shrink in her seat.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber is quiet. Distant. She moves away when Wilford tries to sit beside her.

INT. PARK - SUNSET

Amber meets Wilford by the duck pond.

AMBER

Can I ask you something?

WILFORD

Yeah.

AMBER

Did you ever like me? Like, maybe the way I liked you?

Wilford hesitates.

WILFORD

I think... I never saw it that way.

AMBER

That's okay.

She turns away before he can see the tears.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amber rips a drawing from her sketchbook – one she made of Wilford smiling – and throws it away.

INT. WORKSHOP - NEXT DAY

Amber skips work.

CYRUS

You happy now?

Wilford looks up, confused.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

She liked you. A lot. And you stomped on it chasing someone who won't even hold your hand in public.

Wilford says nothing.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford sits with Sophia, trying to show her a video of a cat he found funny.

She scrolls her phone – not laughing.

WILFORD

Amber used to laugh at these...

Sophia doesn't hear him.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

Wilford sees Amber across the room. He walks toward her. She gets up and moves away before he can say a word.

INT. PARK - DAY

Amber sits on a bench alone. Cyrus brings her a milkshake.

CYRUS

Forget him. People don't know what they need until it's gone.

Amber forces a smile – but we see her heartbreak clearly.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford flips through his sketchbook. He pauses on a drawing of Amber, laughing. He closes it and exhales.

WILFORD (V.O.)

She was there. I just didn't see it.

INT. GYM - EVENING

Sophia finishes a workout. Blair walks over, towel over shoulder.

BLAIR

You're dedicated.

SOPHIA

I work hard. Some people just look like they have it together.

BLAIR

I make it look easy.

She smirks.

SOPHIA

That's what worries me.

INT. JUICE BAR - LATER

Blair buys her a smoothie. She takes a sip.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Thanks. No guy's bought me anything since... well, since Wilford.

BLAIR

Big shoes to fill.

She laughs. She enjoys this.

INT. SOPHIA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sophia stares at herself in the mirror. Lipstick half-done.

She picks up her phone.
A message from Blair:

"Dinner tomorrow?"

She types:

"Maybe."

Deletes it.

Rewrites:

"Sure."

Sends.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber tells Cyrus:

AMBER

She's pulling him in too deep. I can feel it.

CYRUS

He won't listen until he breaks.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia and Blair eat takeout. Wine flows.

BLAIR

You're too sharp for that kid.

SOPHIA

Don't say that.

BLAIR

Why? You know it's true.

He leans closer. She doesn't pull away — but she doesn't lean in either.

SOPHIA (softly)

I don't know anything anymore.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Wilford surprises her with breakfast in bed. Heart-shaped pancakes.

WILFORD

I made your favorite!

She fakes a smile.

SOPHIA

You're too good to me.

INT. PARK - DAY

Sophia walks with Blair.

BLAIR

When are you going to stop pretending?

SOPHIA

Pretending what?

BLAIR

That you're happy.

She stops walking.

SOPHIA

I didn't mean for this to happen.

BLAIR

But here you are.

He touches her hand. She lets him.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia opens a gift from Wilford – a heart-shaped necklace with her initials.

She holds it. It's thoughtful. It hurts.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Blair reports back.

BLAIR (CONT'D)

She's slipping. She's starting to feel something.

ISADORA

Then break it off before it sticks.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia texts Wilford:

"You make me feel like I belong."

Then she texts Blair:

"I can't do this."

Deletes both. Sets phone face-down.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NEXT DAY

PAUL spots Sophia and walks over.

PAUL

Still hiding in coffee cups?

SOPHIA

It's safer than hiding in people.

He sits down.

PAUL

You're not a bad person. You're just running from yourself.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford gives Sophia a hand-drawn anniversary card.

WILFORD

It's been one month since you made my life real.

Sophia tears up. Hugs him – tightly.

Not romantic. Desperate.

INT. ROOFTOP BAR - NIGHT

Sophia drinks with Blair. City lights glow behind them.

BLAIR

You don't belong in that kid's cartoon world.

She sips her wine.

SOPHIA

And what do I belong to?

BLAIR

Me.

He kisses her. She lets him – then pulls away, tears in her eyes.

SOPHIA

I can't do this.

BLAIR

Why not?

SOPHIA

Because *he loves me*. And I don't even know what that means.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Wilford stands outside the apartment. He hears muffled laughter inside.

SOPHIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I don't know what I'm doing...

BLAIR (O.S.)

You're doing just fine.

Wilford clenches his jaw.

INT. BEDROOM - NEXT DAY

Wilford opens a drawer. The ring box sits inside.

WILFORD (V.O.)

She smiled at me. She said I was safe. But I was never *hers*.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia pours a second glass of wine. Blair lounges on her couch, legs up, relaxed.

BLAIR

You know you could end this right now.

SOPHIA

End what?

BLAIR

The whole fantasy. The kid, the pretending, the act.

She avoids eye contact.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Wilford stands silently just beyond the door — holding a gift bag.

Inside: A ring box and a hand-written love note.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

He means well. But he's not built for real life. You know?

BLAIR (O.S.)

You're not in love with him.

SOPHIA (O.S.)

I *tried* to be.

Wilford slowly lowers the gift bag to the floor. His breathing quickens.

INT. WORKSHOP - NEXT DAY

Wilford stares blankly at the work table. No painting. No drawing.

Cyrus watches.

CYRUS

You good?

Wilford doesn't answer.

INT. AMBER'S ROOM - EVENING

Amber receives a text from Wilford:

"I'm sorry I didn't listen."

She clutches the phone, surprised.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford rips down drawings of Sophia. One by one. They flutter to the floor. He opens the closet — every gift box, perfume bottle, shoe, letter — thrown into a trash bag. He breaks down sobbing, holding the *scrapbook titled "Our Story So Far."*

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - SAME NIGHT

Sophia scrolls through old photos: her and Wilford at the park, at the café, him smiling while holding her coffee. Tears well up. She deletes the album.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Blair enters. Drops a small envelope on the table.

BLAIR

It's done. But he found out.

Isadora looks up, pale.

ISADORA

He what?

INT. STREET - NIGHT

Wilford walks through town aimlessly. Rain pours. No coat. No umbrella. He passes the café where they first talked. He stares at the window, soaking wet.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford doesn't show. Cyrus calls him. Amber shows up at his apartment - no answer.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sophia sits with Paul.

SOPHIA

I lied to him. Used him. And somewhere along the way, I started caring.

PAUL

Then make it right. Or walk away and let him heal.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Wilford buys a real engagement ring - upgraded from the toy one.

WILFORD

I need something that says, "I'm sorry, but I still love you."

INT. CROSSWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Wilford pulls out his phone. Texts Sophia:

"I have something for you. Meet me. Please."

He smiles faintly... hopeful.

He steps off the curb.

SCREECH. CRASH.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Isadora rushes in. She's shaking. So is Sophia, who shows up moments later. They spot each other.

ISADORA

This is your fault.

SOPHIA

He still loved me. Even after everything.

They collapse into silence.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - HOURS LATER

Wilford lies unconscious. Machines beep. A nurse adjusts his IV. Sophia stands outside, watching.

INT. ISADORA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Isadora stares at a framed photo of Wilford as a child. She crumbles into sobs.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Wilford wakes up slowly. Blinks. Sees Sophia sitting beside him. She smiles, teary-eyed.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You scared me.

Wilford turns his head away.

WILFORD

I'm done being stupid.

She quietly nods. Guilt consumes her.

INT. LIBRARY COMPUTER STATION - NIGHT

Wilford types: *"Sophia Rose (Centerville, Ohio)"*

Search results appear:

- Local escort agency site (archived)
- A blog post: *"My sister vanished into the club life"*
- Mugshot photo.
- A headline: *"Local Woman Charged in Massage Parlor Sting (2019)"*

Wilford's jaw drops.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford prints the article. He clutches it like it's on fire.

CYRUS

You good, man?

WILFORD

No. No, I'm not.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia lights candles. Wilford walks in slowly.
She smiles. He doesn't.

SOPHIA

What's wrong?

He lays the printouts on the table.

WILFORD

Why didn't you tell me?

Sophia's face drops. Frozen.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I believed in you.

SOPHIA

I didn't think you'd understand.

WILFORD

You made me believe we were something special. But I was just another lie.

SOPHIA

It wasn't a lie.

WILFORD

Yes, it was.

She steps toward him. He steps back.

SOPHIA

Wilford, please. I was scared. I wanted a new life.

WILFORD

And you thought I was dumb enough to give it to you.

Silence.

SOPHIA

I didn't start this for love. But I ended up—

WILFORD

Stop. Don't finish that.

He walks out. She stands there, shaking.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sophia knocks. Paul answers.

PAUL

Rough night?

She breaks down crying.

INT. DINER - DAY

Sophia sits with **KENDRA** and **TINA**.

TINA

You had him eating out of your hand.

SOPHIA

I didn't want his money anymore.

KENDRA

Then what did you want?

Sophia looks blank.

INT. FLASHBACK - SOPHIA'S TEEN YEARS

A 17-year-old Sophia is evicted with her mother. Bags on the curb. Sophia dancing in a smoky club. Police raid. Screaming. Her in handcuffs.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sophia sips tea.

PAUL

You tried to be different.

SOPHIA

But I'm still that girl.

PAUL

That girl survived. But this one... she gets to choose who she becomes next.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia picks up Wilford's scrapbook, left behind. She flips through it slowly - smiling, crying.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford stares into space. Amber and Cyrus hover nearby.

AMBER

You look like someone unplugged
your heart.

WILFORD

It's gone. I gave it to the wrong
person.

INT. ISADORA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Isadora holds a letter Blair dropped off:

"He knows. He left."

She leans against the wall, shaken.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia takes off her heels and makeup. Stands in the mirror –
just her.

No lies. No filters.

She whispers:

SOPHIA

I'm sorry, Wilford.

INT. PAUL'S COFFEE SEMINAR - DAY

Sophia sits in the back, half-listening as Paul speaks.

PAUL

The past is a shadow. It follows
you only if you turn away from the
sun.

People applaud. Sophia doesn't. Paul sees her. Their eyes
meet. Something passes between them.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sophia sits on Paul's leather couch. Modern, clean. Sterile.
Unlike Wilford's homey chaos.

PAUL

So what brings you back to my
orbit?

SOPHIA

I thought I needed... someone real.

PAUL

And you think I'm real?

She shrugs.

SOPHIA

More than most.

He smiles, intrigued.

MONTAGE: DATING PAUL

- Dinner at a rooftop restaurant
- A shared laugh over wine
- Paul giving a TED-style talk while Sophia watches from the wings
- A selfie of them, smiling
- Sophia scrolling her phone later, staring at an old photo of Wilford

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They lie side by side. Paul kisses her neck.

PAUL

You still seem far away.

SOPHIA

I'm just tired.

She turns over, pretending to sleep.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Amber walks in and spots Sophia with Paul.

She pauses.

Sophia sees her — the moment hangs.

Amber walks out without a word.

INT. PARK - DAY

Sophia and Paul walk hand-in-hand.

PAUL

Do you want something real, Sophia?
Or are you just hiding?

SOPHIA

I don't know anymore.

PAUL

I like you. But I won't compete
with ghosts.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Paul pours wine.

PAUL

You're beautiful, successful,
complicated. But I need a partner,
not a puzzle.

Sophia's eyes drop.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia deletes Paul's contact from her phone. Stares at a
crumpled photo of Wilford she never threw away.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - MORNING

TANNER (8), Paul's daughter, sits at the counter coloring.

Sophia walks in, half-asleep. Tanner lights up.

TANNER

I drew you!

She shows Sophia a crayon drawing – stick figures, hearts, a
sun.

SOPHIA

I love it. You're talented.

TANNER

Can I sleep at your house sometime?

Sophia freezes. Paul chuckles in the background.

INT. PARK - DAY

Sophia pushes Tanner on a swing. They laugh.

Paul watches from a distance, pleased.

PAUL (V.O.)

Maybe Sophia's finally ready to be
part of something real.

INT. ICE CREAM SHOP - DAY

Tanner holds Sophia's hand.

TANNER

Do you have kids?

SOPHIA

No... not yet.

TANNER

You'd be a good mom.

Sophia chokes on her spoonful.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tanner is asleep on the couch, wrapped in a blanket. Sophia stares at her.

PAUL

She likes you.

SOPHIA

That scares me.

PAUL

Why?

SOPHIA

Because I don't trust myself not to break her heart.

INT. ZOO - DAY

Tanner holds both Paul and Sophia's hands. Strangers smile at them — a picture-perfect trio. Sophia notices. Her smile falters.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia lies awake next to Paul. Her face is pale. She's not sleeping. A crayon drawing of her and Tanner is pinned to the mirror.

INT. SCHOOL PICKUP LINE - DAY

Sophia waits with Paul. Tanner runs out.

TANNER

Miss Sophia! Look!

She shows her a ribbon she won in art class. Sophia hugs her — but something shifts in her eyes.

INT. PAUL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sophia washes dishes. Tanner clings to her waist.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Are you gonna live with us forever?

Sophia's eyes well up. She kneels down.

SOPHIA

I love spending time with you,
sweetie. But...

Paul enters. Silence.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sophia stares at a packed overnight bag. Inside: Tanner's pajamas. She closes the bag, zips it shut.

INT. PAUL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sophia hands the bag to Paul.

PAUL

You're leaving?

SOPHIA

You're building a family. I'm not
ready to be in one.

Paul looks crushed. Tanner runs up.

TANNER

Where are you going?

Sophia kneels.

SOPHIA

I have to go find out who I really
am.

Tanner hugs her tight.

TANNER

You can still be my friend, right?

Sophia nods, choking back tears.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She lies in bed, alone again. The crayon drawing of her and Tanner still taped to the mirror.

She doesn't take it down.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sunlight spills in. Sophia wakes alone. No texts. No buzz. Just silence. She walks through the apartment. Everything is clean. Still.

On the fridge: **Tanner's drawing.**
Pinned beside it: **Wilford's hand-drawn "1 Free Hug" coupon.**
She closes the fridge quietly. It echoes.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Sophia shops alone. She lingers by the almond milk – Wilford's favorite. She reaches for it... then stops.

INT. GYM - NIGHT

She boxes with a trainer. Each punch is harder. More desperate.

TRAINER

Breathe, Sophia. You're not fighting ghosts.

But she is.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sophia stares at her reflection.

We flash to:

- Teenage Sophia at a club, being offered money
- Sophia crying in a police holding cell
- Sophia leaving her mom's apartment in the rain

Back to present:

She wipes away a tear, whispers:

SOPHIA

You're not that girl anymore. Are you?

INT. GROUP THERAPY ROOM - DAY

Sophia sits in a circle. First time. Listening.

A woman says:

WOMAN (O.S.)

I used to lie to myself more than I lied to others.

Sophia flinches. Her name is called.

THERAPIST

Sophia, would you like to share?

She shakes her head – not yet.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

She sees Paul through the window. He's smiling, talking to someone new. She steps back. Turns away before he sees her.

INT. PHONE SCREEN - NIGHT

Sophia types:

"Hi Wilford. I miss you. Can we talk?"

Deletes it.

Tries again:

"I'm sorry. You were the best thing in my life."

Deletes again.

She throws her phone on the couch.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber stares at her phone. Message from Sophia:

"Thank you for caring about him when I didn't know how."

Amber replies:

"He still talks about you sometimes."

Sophia cries. It's the first honest thing she's allowed herself to feel.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Sophia lights a candle. Alone. She kneels in a pew. Breath trembling.

SOPHIA (V.O.)

If anyone's listening... I want to be better. But I don't know how. I'm so tired of pretending.

She looks at the cross – blank, unsure if she's talking to God, herself, or no one at all.

INT. THERAPY GROUP - LATER

She finally speaks.

SOPHIA

My name's Sophia. And I used to think being wanted was the same thing as being loved.

People nod quietly.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I broke the heart of the only man who ever saw the real me. And I'm not sure I deserve to be seen again.

Silence.

Then — someone claps. Then another.

INT. PAUL'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sophia clears dishes. Tanner dances around the table.

PAUL

You're good with her.

SOPHIA

She's good with me.

He pauses, then sets a small box in front of her. She opens it: a **house key**.

PAUL

Move in with us.

Sophia freezes.

SOPHIA

That's... big.

PAUL

It's real.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Sophia lies in bed beside Paul, awake. She slowly turns the key in her hand. It *clicks*. And locks. Her expression darkens. She suddenly looks... trapped.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Tanner spills orange juice. Sophia snaps without meaning to.

SOPHIA

Can you just stop for one second?

Tanner's eyes fill with tears.

Paul enters.

PAUL

Whoa, hey...

SOPHIA

Sorry. I didn't sleep.

INT. GYM - DAY

Sophia hits the punching bag too hard. She crumbles mid-set. Her trainer approaches.

TRAINER

You okay?

SOPHIA

No. I'm... living someone else's dream.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sophia sees a couple drawing together in sketchbooks. She flashes back to Wilford, giving her his doodles. Her eyes well up. She leaves before she cries.

INT. PATIO - EVENING

Sophia and Paul sip wine.

PAUL

You've been distant.

SOPHIA

Because I feel like a liar.

PAUL

You're not.

SOPHIA

Then why do I keep wanting to run?

PAUL

Maybe you're not ready to stand still.

Silence.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Are you still in love with him?

She doesn't answer. She can't.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia stares at the key. She sets it on Paul's pillow. She quietly packs a bag.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Tanner finds Sophia at the door.

TANNER

Are you leaving?

SOPHIA

I have to.

TANNER

Is it because of me?

Sophia kneels.

SOPHIA

No. You're perfect. But I'm not ready to be part of something perfect.

They hug tightly.

EXT. PAUL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Paul watches her walk down the driveway. She doesn't look back.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sophia sits alone. Small space. Dim lighting. She opens a blank notebook. Begins to write.

The page says:

"Who am I without lies?"

She stares at the sentence, pen trembling.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford works silently. Amber enters, hesitant.

AMBER

I heard something weird today.
About Blair.

WILFORD

What?

AMBER

He used to live in your building.
Then suddenly moves back. Gets
close to Sophia. And... someone
said they saw him talking to your
mom – *before* he ever met Sophia.

Wilford freezes.

INT. ISADORA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford scrolls through old text logs on her computer.

Finds:

Isadora → Blair

"Don't push her too far. Just enough for him to see who she
really is."

His eyes widen.

INT. ISADORA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Wilford slams the laptop shut.

ISADORA

What's wrong?

WILFORD

You used Blair. To ruin Sophia.

Isadora stares.

ISADORA

I was protecting you.

WILFORD

No, you were controlling me.

ISADORA

She was a danger. You couldn't see
it.

WILFORD

Because I'm "slow," right?

Silence.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

You made me think Sophia lied alone. But you lied too.

ISADORA (soft)

Everything I did... I did because I love you.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - LATER

He sits on his bed, staring at an old photo of his parents. Then at the trash bag of Sophia's gifts he never threw away. He sighs, deeply hurt.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford vents to Amber.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I feel like I don't know what's real anymore.

AMBER

You trusted her. That's not weakness.

WILFORD

I trusted *both* of them. One lied to survive. The other lied to protect.

AMBER

Maybe now it's time to trust yourself.

INT. PARK - DAY

Wilford sits with **Cyrus**, tossing breadcrumbs to birds.

CYRUS

It's weird, man. Finding out people you love can be right and wrong at the same time.

WILFORD

So what do I do?

CYRUS

You choose who you want to be. That's the only thing that's real.

INT. BLAIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford knocks. Blair answers.

WILFORD

Did she pay you?

Blair hesitates. Then nods.

BLAIR

At first. Then it got messy.

WILFORD

You used us.

BLAIR

And she used me.

INT. ISADORA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford packs his things. Isadora watches, trembling.

ISADORA

Where will you go?

WILFORD

I don't know. Somewhere I can make my own choices.

ISADORA

Will you forgive me?

He looks at her.

WILFORD

Someday. But not today.

INT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Wilford opens his sketchpad. Draws a simple image: A boy, a woman, and a broken bridge — being rebuilt from both sides.

INT. WILFORD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford sits alone, sketching in silence. A knock at the door. He opens it. **Isadora** stands there, holding a casserole.

ISADORA

I made your favorite.

WILFORD

I'm not hungry.

He moves aside. She enters slowly.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She sets the dish down, watching him closely.

ISADORA

You're pale. Have you been sleeping?

WILFORD

Don't do that.

ISADORA

Do what?

WILFORD

Treat me like I'm ten. Like I need you to protect me from the world.

ISADORA

I *do* need to protect you. That's what mothers do.

WILFORD

No. That's what *you* do. Because you're afraid. Not because I asked for it.

ISADORA

I only ever wanted to keep you safe.

WILFORD

Then why did you send Blair? Why did you lie about Sophia?

Isadora is stunned.

ISADORA

I was trying to stop you from being used.

WILFORD

By using *me* first?

Silence.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Do you know how many nights I've wondered if I was broken? Because of the way you looked at me? Because you were always one step behind me... like a leash?

ISADORA

That's not fair—

WILFORD

No, what's not fair is pretending
it's love when it's just control.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE -

- Wilford as a boy, watching Isadora argue with a teacher:
"He doesn't need field trips. He needs supervision."

- Teenage Wilford in tears:
"Why can't I go to prom?"
"Because I said no!"

- Isadora opening a college rejection letter on his behalf.
- Isadora deleting a voicemail from a girl.

BACK TO PRESENT:**ISADORA**

I gave up everything to raise you.
I was alone.

WILFORD

Then you should've raised me to be
alone too.

She breaks.

ISADORA

You're all I have.

WILFORD

And I'm not yours anymore.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wilford hands her the casserole dish.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Take it. Take it and go.

ISADORA

Please don't do this.

WILFORD

I have to. I need to find out who I
am without your fear holding my
hand.

He opens the door.

Isadora stands frozen.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

If you ever want to know me again –
the *real* me – come back when you're
ready to stop trying to fix me.

She walks out in silence.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - NIGHT

He sits on his bed. Shaking. But breathing. He looks at an
old picture of the two of them – taped to the mirror.

He peels it off. Gently. Then places it in a drawer. He turns
off the light. Darkness. Peaceful. Heavy.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford sits alone, sketching.

The page shows **Sophia standing in the rain**, hand
outstretched. Cyrus sits beside him.

CYRUS

You drawing her again?

Wilford doesn't look up.

WILFORD

I think I still love her.

CYRUS

Even after all that?

WILFORD

People make mistakes. Doesn't mean
they don't deserve to be loved.

INT. AMBER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Amber sees Wilford's message:

"If someone broke your heart, but said they were sorry... would
you try again?"

She replies:

"Only if you're sure it's love. Not just loneliness."

He reads it... thinks... and smiles faintly.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Wilford enters wearing a neatly pressed shirt and his lucky
socks.

He gazes at a glass case full of rings.

JEWELRY CLERK

Looking for something special?

WILFORD

Something simple... and strong.

The clerk shows him a delicate gold ring with a small sapphire.

CLERK

It's not flashy. But it lasts.

Wilford holds it, emotional.

WILFORD

That's her.

INT. PARK - DAY

Wilford sits alone on the bench where he and Sophia once ate noodles.

He clutches the ring box. A squirrel hops nearby. He chuckles.

WILFORD (V.O.)

She made me feel like I wasn't broken. Even if she was, too.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He writes a letter by hand:

"Dear Sophia,
I don't know what the future holds. I don't even know if you'll say yes. But I know this: when I'm with you, I feel like the world makes more sense. I'm not proposing to fix you. I'm asking you to walk beside me - broken and beautiful, just like me."

He folds the letter. Slips it into an envelope.

INT. FLORIST SHOP - DAY

Wilford buys a single sunflower.

INT. DINER - DAY

He asks the waitress:

WILFORD

Do you know if Sophia still comes here?

WAITRESS

She was in last week. Sat alone. Looked sad.

He nods.

INT. BUS - DAY

Wilford clutches the ring box and letter, sunflower in his lap. He listens to music on old headphones. Smiles.

MONTAGE:

- He rehearses what to say aloud
- Gets off the bus, stops to brush his hair in a window
- Drops the letter. A stranger helps him pick it up
- He takes a deep breath outside Sophia's apartment

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

He climbs slowly.

He knocks.

The door opens.

Sophia is standing there, surprised. She hasn't seen him since the hospital.

SOPHIA

Wilford?

He offers her the sunflower. Then the letter.

She takes them - trembling.

WILFORD

Can I talk to you?

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford stares at a blank canvas. He starts to paint - slowly, with care. His strokes form a familiar face: **Sophia.**

WILFORD (V.O.)

She broke my heart. But I let her in... maybe that's the real story.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

THERAPIST

You're grieving a version of love
that wasn't what you thought. But
that doesn't make it fake.

Wilford doesn't reply. He just nods slowly.

INT. PHONE SCREEN - NIGHT

Wilford scrolls to Sophia's name. Starts typing a message.

"I don't blame you."

Deletes it.

"Can we talk?"

Deletes again.

He stares at the screen, overwhelmed.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Amber walks up to him.

AMBER

We've missed you.

WILFORD

I've missed me too.

They smile. Small, but real.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford writes a **handwritten card**.

WILFORD (V.O.)

I don't know what we were. But it
mattered to me. That's all I can
say.

He puts the card in an envelope and leaves it outside
Sophia's apartment.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sophia finds the envelope and opens it.

It reads:

"I'll be at Fifth & Cherry at 2PM. No pressure. I just want
to end this the right way."

Her hands shake.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - SAME MORNING

He dresses neatly. Fixes his hair. Checks the ring box one last time.

WILFORD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

If I see her and it still hurts, at least I'll know it was real.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Wilford walks alone. He stops at crosswalks. Glances up at traffic lights.

Flashes of memories:

- Their first coffee shop laugh
- Sophia falling asleep on his shoulder
- Her kissing him on the cheek

INT. SOPHIA'S LIVING ROOM - 1:52 PM

Sophia stares at the clock.

TINA (V.O.)

Are you going to him?

SOPHIA (V.O.)

I don't know if he wants me... or just closure.

She grabs her coat anyway.

EXT. FIFTH & CHERRY - 1:59 PM

Wilford arrives. He looks around. Breath visible in the air.

He pulls out his phone, types:

"I'm here."

Hits send.

A message pops up:

Sophia: "Almost there. Wait."

Wilford smiles.

Wilford steps off the curb, smiling, gripping the ring box in his pocket.

A car horn.

SCREEEEEECH.

In slow motion: - His body twists midair.
- The ring box slips from his hand.
- It bounces into the gutter.
- His glasses shatter.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

Doctors rush. Blood-stained clothes. A phone rings:
Sophia - Incoming Call.

A nurse puts it in a plastic bag.

INT. SOPHIA'S CAR - SAME TIME

Traffic is stopped. She's just blocks away.

She answers her phone.

NURSE (O.S.)

Is this Sophia Rose?

She freezes.

NURSE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Wilford Henderson is at Mercy
General. He's been in an accident.

Tears rush to her eyes.

SOPHIA

No... no, no, no-

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT THREE**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING**

Wilford lies still, wrapped in gauze and IV lines. A soft beeping monitors his heartbeat.

ISADORA sits at his side. No makeup. Puffy eyes. Just a mother again.

She whispers:

ISADORA

You were always more than I ever gave you credit for.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

Sophia hasn't slept. Tanner's drawing still taped to the mirror.

Her phone rings. It's **Amber**.

AMBER (O.S.)

He's awake.

Sophia exhales for the first time in days.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Wilford opens his eyes. Isadora gasps.

ISADORA

You're back.

He looks away.

WILFORD

You always wanted me to need you. I just wanted to live.

Isadora nods. Teary.

ISADORA

I see that now. And I'm sorry.

She takes his hand. For the first time, he doesn't pull away.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER

Sophia walks slowly toward his door, holding the ring box — unopened. Her hands tremble.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She enters. He looks up, says nothing.

SOPHIA

I hurt you. And I don't expect you to forgive me.

WILFORD

Then why are you here?

SOPHIA

Because I need to say what I didn't before.

She pulls out a folded letter.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I wrote this months ago. I didn't send it because I was scared of being seen.

She lays it on the tray. Turns to leave.

WILFORD

You were always seen. You just never looked back.

She freezes.

SOPHIA (soft)

Can I try now?

He doesn't answer. But doesn't say no.

INT. WORKSHOP - WEEKS LATER

Wilford is back, painting again. Amber watches from a distance, relieved. Cyrus gives him a nod.

CYRUS

Glad to have you back, man.

WILFORD

Feels good.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Sophia sips a latte. Alone. No makeup. Simple clothes. Paul walks by. Nods politely. She smiles, but doesn't follow. She's learning to be okay by herself.

INT. THERAPY GROUP - EVENING

Sophia speaks with clarity now.

SOPHIA

I don't want someone to fix me anymore. I want to live in the truth — even when it's ugly.

Applause. A few tears. Growth.

INT. SMALL ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Wilford's sketches are on display. Sophia walks in quietly.

On one wall: a drawing of her and Tanner.

He walks over.

WILFORD

You came.

SOPHIA

Of course I did.

Beat.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I'm not here to ask for anything.

WILFORD

Then why?

SOPHIA

To say goodbye — or hello — if you're ready.

EXT. BENCH OUTSIDE GALLERY - LATER

They sit side by side, not touching.

WILFORD

Do you think we ever really knew each other?

SOPHIA

I don't know. But maybe now, we could start with honesty.

He nods.

EXT. SAME BENCH - NIGHT

They sip coffee together — no big promises, no sweeping kisses.

Just two people learning how to begin again, or let go, with truth.

TITLE CARD:

*Sometimes love doesn't fix you. But
it shows you where the cracks are.*

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

Isadora storms in, breath ragged. She rushes the front desk.

ISADORA

Wilford Henderson. He was brought
in - car accident. I'm his mother.

NURSE types quickly.

NURSE

He's in surgery. Please wait-

ISADORA

No. I need to see him!

INT. WAITING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Isadora paces. Her hands tremble.

The doors slide open.

Sophia enters.

Isadora turns - sees her. Their eyes lock. The room freezes.

ISADORA (LOW) (CONT'D)

You.

SOPHIA (SHAKY)

I didn't know. I was on my way to
meet him.

ISADORA

You think that makes it better?

They move outside the waiting room - into a quiet corridor.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

You used him. Played with his heart
like a toy.

SOPHIA

I know.

ISADORA

He trusted you! He loved you like
no one ever had.

SOPHIA

And I didn't know how to love him back.

ISADORA

Then you should have walked away.

SOPHIA

I tried! But he made me feel like I was worth something.

Isadora shakes her head, furious.

ISADORA

He almost died because of you.

SOPHIA

He almost died because he believed in people — in me. And I let him.

ISADORA

You broke him.

SOPHIA

You built him to break.

That stops Isadora.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You never let him grow. You kept him small. Until he found me.

ISADORA

I protected him.

SOPHIA

You *controlled* him. And I destroyed him. So tell me, which one of us really failed him?

They stare at each other — trembling, tear-streaked, breathless.

INT. PRAYER ROOM - LATER

They sit together in silence. Exhausted.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I thought I knew pain. But I never knew guilt like this.

ISADORA

I used to beg God to make Wilford normal. Then I begged Him not to take away the version I got.

SOPHIA

Do you hate me?

Isadora doesn't answer. Then:

ISADORA

I hate what you reminded me of. That he could choose something I didn't approve of... and love it anyway.

INT. VENDING MACHINE AREA - NIGHT

Sophia buys two coffees. Hands one to Isadora.

ISADORA (SOFT) (CONT'D)

You still love him?

SOPHIA

Yes. But I don't know if that means I deserve him.

ISADORA

None of us ever deserve him. He just gives love away.

They share a fragile, broken silence.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Wilford lies unconscious, tubes in his arm, heart monitor steady but slow. Sophia and Isadora enter together. The nurse nods.

They approach him.

SOPHIA

He looks so small.

ISADORA

He's always looked too small for this world.

SOPHIA steps closer. She gently places the **scrapbook** at his bedside.

ISADORA places Wilford's childhood plush toy in his hand.

They sit. Watch him breathe.

SOPHIA (soft)

If you wake up, I promise I'll be brave enough to tell you everything. Isadora takes Wilford's other hand.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

And I'll be brave enough to finally let go.

They sit, hand in hand with him – enemies turned guardians. The monitor beeps. A slow shift in pace. Isadora's eyes widen.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sophia sits at the kitchen table with a shoebox. She opens it: inside are gift receipts, cash in envelopes, cards Wilford gave her, and a checkbook.

She lays everything out in front of her. Her hands shake.

SOPHIA (V.O.)

You can't undo a wound. But maybe you can stop it from getting worse.

She begins writing a letter.

INT. BANK - DAY

Sophia withdraws funds from her personal account. It nearly empties the balance. The teller gives her a large cashier's check. She clutches it tight.

INT. AMBER'S WORKSHOP OFFICE - DAY

Amber opens the door, surprised to see Sophia.

SOPHIA

Can you make sure Wilford gets this?

She hands Amber a sealed envelope.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Tell him it's not about forgiveness. It's about truth.

Amber hesitates. Takes it.

Sophia turns and walks away – no drama, no plea for sympathy.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

He's conscious now. Weak, but aware.

Amber enters quietly. Hands him the envelope.

AMBER

It's from her.

She leaves.

Wilford opens it. Inside: a letter and a check for \$9,400. Every dollar she ever accepted. Plus a note.

LETTER (V.O.) - SOPHIA

"Wilford,

You gave me love. I gave you lies. You gave me trust. I gave you confusion. And yet, you made me feel like I was worthy of being seen. I don't expect a second chance. I don't even expect a reply. I just needed you to know: this was never about your money. It was about my brokenness. Thank you for showing me what real love looked like, even when I wasn't ready to receive it.

Sophia."

Wilford reads it twice. Maybe three times. Then he closes his eyes. Tears slip down.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - LATER

Isadora sits beside him.

ISADORA

She returned everything?

Wilford nods.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

That's something.

WILFORD

It's more than I expected.

INT. SOPHIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophia sits alone. Her apartment is emptier now.

On her mirror: the crayon drawing from Tanner. Taped beside it: a photo of her, Wilford, and Cyrus from the workshop picnic — the only one she kept.

INT. GROUP THERAPY - DAY

Sophia stands to speak.

SOPHIA

My name is Sophia. I returned the money today. But it didn't feel like enough.

She pauses.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I guess that's how you know it's real remorse.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford is painting again. Cyrus walks by. Nods at him. Wilford smiles faintly. Amber enters. Hands him a coffee. He sees the label: "1 Free Hug." She copied the coupon.

He laughs softly.

INT. SOPHIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A knock on the door.

Sophia opens it - expecting no one.

It's **Wilford**.

Silence.

He doesn't say a word. Just pulls something from his pocket. It's her old ring box - but inside is the **scrapbook**, sealed and returned.

WILFORD

Thank you.

He walks away. Sophia clutches the box to her chest - sobbing - not from pain, but release.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Wilford's fingers twitch. Sophia notices first.

SOPHIA

Wilford?

His eyes flutter open. Blink. Groggy.

ISADORA rushes to his side.

ISADORA

Baby. Oh my God. You're awake.

He winces. Tries to sit up.

WILFORD (RASPY)

Where...?

SOPHIA

You were in an accident. But you're okay. You're okay now.

He looks from Sophia to Isadora. Something shifts in his face.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Wilford slowly drinks water. Isadora fluffs his pillow. Overbearing.

ISADORA

I'll talk to the nurse about adjusting your meds. You need rest.

WILFORD

Stop.

She freezes.

ISADORA

What?

WILFORD

(firm)

Stop treating me like a baby. I'm not your little boy anymore.

ISADORA

(quietly)

I was just trying to help.

WILFORD

You always say that. Even when you lie. Even when you interfere.

Sophia steps back, sensing this is not her moment.

ISADORA

Wilford, I did everything for you—

WILFORD

(snapping)

No, Mom. You did everything for *yourself*.

Isadora recoils. Gutted.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

You were scared I'd get hurt. So you made me small. You made sure I needed you.

ISADORA

That's not true.

WILFORD

You paid Blair to mess with her. You made her think she wasn't good enough. You made *me* believe I'd never be enough unless I obeyed.

Tears stream down Isadora's face.

ISADORA

I didn't want to lose you.

WILFORD

You already did.

Silence.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I don't want you here right now.

ISADORA

Wilford, please—

WILFORD

(shaking)

Leave.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Isadora stumbles out of the room. Hands over her mouth. Sophia watches her from a distance — doesn't follow. She turns and walks back toward Wilford.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - QUIET

Sophia sits beside Wilford. Neither speak for a while.

SOPHIA

You okay?

WILFORD

(flatly)

No.

She nods.

SOPHIA

I'm sorry.

WILFORD

Why are you here?

She swallows.

SOPHIA

Because you mattered. And I ruined it.

WILFORD

You didn't just ruin *us*. You ruined *me*.

SOPHIA

Then I'll go.

She stands.

WILFORD

I didn't say that.

Beat.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I just don't know what's left of me to give.

INT. HOSPITAL CHAPEL - NIGHT

Isadora lights a candle. Alone.

She whispers:

ISADORA

God, help me let go. Help me love him without keeping him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford stares at the ceiling. Sophia sleeps in a chair beside him.

He looks over at her. Picks up the scrapbook from his bedside. Opens to a page labeled: "**If I ever get lost...**" It's a cartoon of Wilford hugging a version of himself.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - LATER

Sophia walks out. Isadora is waiting with coffee. She offers her one.

ISADORA (CONT'D)

I don't hate you.

Sophia nods.

SOPHIA

I don't blame you.

They sit. Quiet. Not friends. Not enemies. Just two women broken by the same boy.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Wilford is awake now. Recovering. IV still in place, bruises fading.

Isadora reads a book beside him.

WILFORD

You don't have to stay all day,
Mom.

ISADORA

You almost died. I'll stay as long
as I want.

They share a soft smile.

WILFORD

Is she coming?

Isadora doesn't answer. She looks toward the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - LATER

Sophia walks in. Simple clothes. No makeup. Holding a small paper bag. She signs in. Hands trembling slightly.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Sophia enters. Wilford looks up slowly. Silence.

SOPHIA

Hi.

WILFORD

Hi.

She walks in. Sets the paper bag on the table.

SOPHIA

Cappuccino. Vanilla. Like that
first day.

He nods, emotional.

Sophia sits.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You don't have to talk. I just wanted to see you.

WILFORD

I've been thinking about what to say.

Beat.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

But I'm not ready to say it all.

Sophia nods. She understands.

SOPHIA

Can I say mine?

He nods.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I was wrong. About everything. About you. About me.

She reaches into her pocket. Pulls out the **"1 Free Hug" coupon**, slightly torn, but whole.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I almost threw this away a hundred times. But I couldn't.

She places it gently on the tray table.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You were the first person who ever loved me without wanting anything in return. And that scared me more than all the men who used me.

Wilford's eyes well up.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I don't expect a second chance. I just want you to know I'm trying to be someone who deserves what you gave me.

Beat.

WILFORD

I forgive you.

Sophia breaks.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

But I'm not ready to go back. I don't know who I am without you yet.

SOPHIA

I understand.

She nods. Sophia stands.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Take care of your heart, Wilford.

He smiles faintly.

WILFORD

You helped it grow.

She walks to the door. Pauses. Looks back.

SOPHIA

Maybe one day... when we're both better people.

He nods. Quiet. Honest.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sophia walks away, eyes filled with tears – not of grief, but of clarity.

INT. WILFORD'S ROOM - LATER

Wilford sketches again – slowly. On the page:
A figure in the distance walking toward the sun. Alone, but peaceful.

EXT. PARK - DAYS LATER

Sophia walks past the swing where she and Wilford once sat. She stops, smiles gently. Then walks on.

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford returns. Cyrus and Amber greet him.

CYRUS

You look older.

WILFORD

I feel... different.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - EPILOGUE SCENE

Wilford sits alone, sipping a cappuccino.
He pulls out a sketchpad. Draws a small coffee cup. Smiling.

Across the room, a woman reads a book and smiles at him.

He smiles back.

Not a love story.

Just a beginning.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Sunlight spills through the blinds. Wilford opens his eyes.

A heart monitor beeps steadily.

He turns his head — **Isadora is asleep at his bedside.**

Sophia is gone.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Isadora wakes to find a note on the chair beside her:

"He deserves peace. And I need to find mine. -S"

INT. FLASHBACK - NIGHT BEFORE

Sophia stands at the hospital door. She watches Wilford sleep.

She whispers:

SOPHIA (V.O.)

I wanted to be good for you. But
maybe I needed to be good *for me*
first.

She turns... and walks away.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - WEEKS LATER

Wilford returns home, healing. Still quiet, unsure.

On his bed — a **package**.

Inside:

- A coffee mug with a painted heart
- Their scrapbook, with new pages added

- A letter.

WILFORD (V.O.)

"I lied to you. About who I was.
About why I stayed. About what I
wanted."

Flash of Sophia crying at her desk as she writes.

WILFORD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"But I didn't lie when I said you
were the best thing I'd ever
known."

INT. AMBER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford visits Amber.

WILFORD

I still love her. But that's not
the same as needing her.

Amber nods. Quietly proud.

INT. THERAPY GROUP - LATER

Sophia speaks again.

SOPHIA

I walked away from love. Not
because it wasn't real - but
because I wasn't ready to carry it.

Applause. No spotlight. Just quiet understanding.

INT. BUS TERMINAL - DAY

Sophia buys a one-way ticket.
Destination: **Not shown**. We only see her hand drop the cash.

INT. BUS WINDOW - LATER

She watches the city blur past.

In her lap - a small journal.

On the first page:

"Today, I chose to be alone. Not because I deserve
punishment... but because I deserve a beginning."

She closes the journal.

Smiles... a little.

MONTAGE - SOPHIA'S NEW LIFE

- Working at a bookstore
- Laughing with strangers
- Sitting alone on a park bench
- Watching a young couple flirt, bittersweet

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DIFFERENT CITY - DAY

Sophia orders:

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

Medium cappuccino. Extra foam.

The barista smiles. She sits by the window, sipping slowly. We pan behind her – through the window – as people pass in both directions. She's still. Present. But uncertain.

SOPHIA (V.O.)

I don't know what's next.
But this time...
I'll be honest when I get there.

INT. COUNSELING CENTER - DAY

Wilford sits in a cozy therapy room. Nervous.

THERAPIST (40s) smiles gently.

THERAPIST

No need to impress me. Just be here.

Wilford nods. Clutches a worry stone in his hand.

INT. GROUP THERAPY - DAY

Wilford speaks to a small circle.

WILFORD

I thought love would fix me.
I didn't know I was already
whole... just hurt.

People nod. A man across from him tears up.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

Wilford walks in. Everyone freezes – then smiles.

CYRUS

Look what the cat dragged back.

They hug – awkward and tight.

WILFORD

I missed this place.

Amber walks over, quietly.

AMBER

I'm proud of you.

Wilford blinks back emotion.

WILFORD

I should've listened to you. I just wasn't ready.

AMBER

None of us were. Now we are.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford paints again. His canvas is calmer now – cool colors, gentle shapes. Amber watches him, then picks up her own brush.

CYRUS (O.S.)

You two flirting through art now?

They all laugh. For the first time in a long time, it sounds real.

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

Cyrus, Amber, and Wilford share a bench. Eating chips.

CYRUS (CONT'D)

So what's next? You gonna be a monk?

WILFORD

I was thinking... cartoonist.

AMBER

That fits. You always saw the world in color.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Wilford holds a sketchbook.

THERAPIST

Want to share today?

Wilford opens to a page:
A self-portrait – Wilford standing tall, with broken wings... stitched back together.

WILFORD

I think I'm finally learning to
carry my own weight.

INT. LOCAL BOOKSTORE - DAY

Wilford walks by a table labeled "*Local Artists.*"
He stops. Stares at a blank sketchpad display.

He walks to the counter.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

How does someone get their drawings
in here?

The clerk grins.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Wilford gives a free art class to kids with disabilities.
Amber assists. A little boy shows him a messy crayon drawing.

BOY

It's you. You're a superhero.

Wilford blinks, overcome. Smiles.

WILFORD

You got that right.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Wilford, Amber, and Cyrus sip coffee together.

AMBER

Think you'll see her again?

Wilford pauses.

WILFORD

Maybe. Maybe not.
But I think... I'd survive either
way.

Amber smiles.

INT. WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Wilford alone, painting.

This time: no Sophia. No sadness.
Just **himself**, looking toward a bright window.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - LATER

Wilford finishes drawing.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I always thought I needed someone
to make me feel safe.
Turns out... I needed to make
myself feel safe first.

INT. PARK - DAY

Wilford walks alone. Smiling. Free.

He passes a woman who looks vaguely like Sophia. He pauses...
then smiles... and keeps walking. No music swells. Just birds
chirping. Life, continuing.

INT. ISADORA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A cup of tea. A single lamp. Isadora sits at the table with a
blank sheet of paper. She holds the pen, frozen. Then slowly...
begins to write.

ISADORA (V.O.)

My dearest Wilford,

If you're reading this, it means I finally found the courage
to say everything I couldn't when you were near.

INT. FLASHBACK - WILFORD'S CHILDHOOD (INTERCUT)

- Isadora teaching young Wilford how to tie his shoes
- Him painting on the walls, giggling
- Her watching from the doorway, unsure whether to scold or
cry

ISADORA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I spent years trying to protect you
from the world. But what I didn't
realize was - sometimes, I was
protecting the world from you.

And that wasn't fair.

INT. ISADORA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She pauses, wipes away a tear. She picks up the pen again.

ISADORA (V.O.)

You are not fragile. You are not
broken. You are *different*. And in
all the right ways.

I wanted to shape your life to fit my fears. But you had
dreams I couldn't understand. Sophia helped me see that.

INT. SOPHIA'S OLD APARTMENT - FLASHBACK

Isadora and Sophia's argument at the hospital plays in silent reflection.

ISADORA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

She showed me how strong you really are. And how much I still had to learn as your mother.

INT. THERAPY GROUP - NIGHT

Isadora speaks for the first time.

ISADORA

My son was almost lost before I realized I needed to let him go.

INT. WILFORD'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Wilford, still recovering, checks the mail.

A small white envelope.

His name in neat cursive: *Wilford H.* He takes it inside, sits at the table.

INT. ISADORA'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

She watches the sun rise. Lighter somehow. She breathes deep — her chest rising like forgiveness itself.

INT. WILFORD'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He opens the letter. Reads silently. We hear:

ISADORA (V.O.)

You are not my child to protect anymore. You are your own man. I trust the world with you now — because you showed me you could handle it. If nothing else, I hope I gave you enough love to carry through it. I will always be your mother. But I will no longer be your guardrail.

INT. PARK - DAY

Wilford sits under a tree, the letter folded in his pocket. Amber approaches. No words. Just sits beside him.

WILFORD

I think my mom just let me go.

AMBER

About time.

They smile.

INT. ISADORA'S GARDEN - DAY

She trims roses. Fresh soil.
The letter's rough draft tucked under a garden stone.

Symbolic. She's planted her peace.

INT. FLASH MONTAGE - FULL CIRCLE

- Wilford painting at the workshop again
- Sophia walking a beach alone, holding a blank journal
- Isadora lighting a candle and whispering a prayer

A new page:

A drawing of Wilford standing tall. No cape. No crown. Just himself.

Below it, in simple writing:

"I forgive you. I forgive me."

EXT. WORKSHOP PARKING LOT - MORNING

Wilford steps out of a modest car, lunchbox in hand. He's stronger now – more grounded. Dressed simply but with purpose.

A young man, **JASON (20s, nervous, introverted)**, stands outside.

WILFORD

First day?

JASON

Yeah.

WILFORD

Come on. I'll walk you in.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Wilford leads Jason through the building – smiling staff, colorful murals.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

This place saved me. Now I help others find their own way.

INT. BREAK ROOM - LUNCHTIME

Amber and Cyrus sit with Wilford.

AMBER

Two years, and you still bring peanut butter and jelly?

WILFORD

Classic never gets old.

They laugh. Easy chemistry, real friendship.

INT. ART ROOM - AFTERNOON

Wilford helps Jason mix paints.

JASON

What if I mess up?

WILFORD

That's what art's for. You get to mess up in color.

Jason laughs. Relaxed.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Wilford updates a whiteboard titled:

"WILFORD'S WISDOM WALL"

Messages include:

- "Feelings are visitors, not squatters."
- "You can't heal what you won't name."
- "You are not broken. Just building."

INT. THERAPY ROOM - NIGHT

Wilford speaks to a small support group.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I loved someone once. She didn't stay. But I did. And that was enough.

Nods around the room.

INT. LIBRARY - EVENING

Wilford reads alone. A barista approaches.

BARISTA

Excuse me, someone left this with your name on it.

A **sealed envelope**. No return address.

He opens it.

Inside: A simple postcard.

Front: A painting of a cappuccino, foam shaped like a heart.

Back:

"I still think about you.

I hope you're happy.

-S."

Wilford smiles softly.

INT. WILFORD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He places the card beside a photo of him, Amber, and Cyrus at a workshop celebration.

Next to it: The old "1 Free Hug" coupon – now framed.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Wilford walks alone through the garden. Birds chirp. Light breeze. He sees a child struggling to climb the jungle gym. Walks over.

WILFORD

Want a boost?

CHILD

Okay!

He lifts the boy. Watches him climb.

INT. WORKSHOP - LATER

Jason finishes his painting.

JASON

It's not perfect.

WILFORD

Neither am I. But here we are.

He hangs the painting on the wall with others. Smiles.

INT. WILFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wilford journals before bed.

WILFORD (V.O.)

Two years ago, I thought love was
the finish line.

(MORE)

WILFORD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Turns out...
it was just a spark.

EXT. WORKSHOP - SUNSET

Wilford locks up the building. Takes one last look at the mural on the wall:

"Everyone Belongs Somewhere."

He walks into the golden light – steady, hopeful, whole.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - MORNING

Wilford strolls through town. It's a crisp autumn morning. Golden leaves swirl across the sidewalk. He's calm. Solid. Fully himself.

INT. LOCAL CAFÉ - SAME TIME

Sophia sits near the window. She writes in a small leather-bound journal. She's older. Softer. Not broken – not fully whole either. She sips a cappuccino. Extra foam.

INT. CAFÉ DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The bell rings. Wilford enters, humming quietly. Orders:

WILFORD

Medium cappuccino. Extra foam.

The barista smirks – familiar order. Sophia looks up, alert. She knows that voice. Their eyes meet across the room. Silence.

Wilford freezes for a breath. Then smiles gently. Sophia stands. Nervous. Unsure.

SOPHIA

Hi.

WILFORD

Hey.

SOPHIA

You... still drink that?

WILFORD

Some things stick.

A pause.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Can I sit?

She nods. He joins her. Two cappuccinos between them. Steam rises.

INT. CAFÉ - LATER

They talk. Slowly. Carefully.

SOPHIA

I thought I might see you again.
Someday.

WILFORD

I didn't think I'd know what to say
if I did.

They both smile, bittersweet.

SOPHIA

You look... steady.

WILFORD

I mentor now. At the workshop.

SOPHIA

That's perfect.

She means it.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I've said sorry a hundred times in
my head. But never out loud.

WILFORD

You just did.

She tears up — just a little. He doesn't flinch.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

I learned a lot from what we were.

SOPHIA

Even if we weren't forever?

WILFORD

Especially because we weren't.

SOPHIA

I'm still figuring things out.

WILFORD

Me too. Every day.

They both laugh. Small. Real.

SOPHIA

Would it be weird if I said... I'm glad you're okay?

WILFORD

No. It would be honest.

They sit quietly. Sipping. Watching people pass by. Sophia stands first.

SOPHIA

Well... I should go.

WILFORD

Where to?

She shrugs.

SOPHIA

Nowhere bad.

She smiles. Glows in the sunlight through the café glass. She takes her cup, hesitates.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

You ever walk through the park this time of year?

WILFORD

Almost every day.

She walks to the door. Looks back.

SOPHIA

Maybe I'll see you there sometime.

He nods.

WILFORD

Maybe you will.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Wilford watches her go. Cappuccino in hand. He doesn't chase. Just sits back down. Window light hits his journal. He opens it.

Writes:

"Some things don't end. They just change shape."

INT. WILFORD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wilford sits at his desk. He scrolls past old photos on his phone – Sophia, Tanner, Cyrus, Amber, artwork from the workshop.

He opens a blank message.

WILFORD (typing)

"Hi. No pressure. But if you're ever in town again... there's a coffee shop I still like."

He pauses.

Deletes it.

Types again.

"I'm doing well. I hope you are too."

Sends.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

Sophia steps off a bus with a small bag.

She takes a deep breath. Her posture is calm. Not nervous – just curious.

INT. WORKSHOP - LOBBY

She quietly peeks inside. Sees Wilford mentoring a group of new students.

He doesn't see her.

She leaves without saying a word.

EXT. PARK BENCH - EVENING

Sophia sits alone, sketching.

She hears footsteps.

Looks up.

Wilford stands, holding two cappuccino cups.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

One for you. Unless you switched to tea.

SOPHIA

Still foam. Still strong.

They smile.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP PATIO - NIGHT

They sit outside. Lights twinkle overhead. Rain clouds gone.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
You look... okay.

WILFORD
I am. So are you.

They sip in silence for a beat.

WILFORD (CONT'D)
Do you ever wish things had gone differently?

SOPHIA
Sometimes. But if they had... we might not have grown the way we needed to.

WILFORD
I still think about you.

SOPHIA
I still carry you.

Another pause. Calm. No tension.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)
I'm working with at-risk teens now. In art. Turns out you were right - it does help.

Wilford smiles - genuinely proud.

WILFORD
That's good. That's really good.

SOPHIA
I'm not here to start over.

WILFORD
I didn't ask you to.

They sip again.

WILFORD (CONT'D)
But I'm glad you're here.

MONTAGE - FINAL MOMENTS:

- Sophia and Wilford walking side by side past the workshop
- Wilford showing her new artwork from Jason and other students
- Sophia sketching the coffee shop from across the street
- They sit side-by-side again, this time in comfortable silence

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER THAT NIGHT

They sit quietly. Two empty cups between them.

No hand-holding. No romance. Just presence.

SOPHIA (V.O.)

Not all love stories end with
forever.
Some just end with forgiveness.
And foam.

INT. COUNTY DISABILITIES WORKSHOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Wilford finishes a day mentoring. He walks through the hallway slowly, checking in on one student painting alone.

WILFORD

Remember – there's no wrong color.
Just colors that need more courage.

The student smiles.

EXT. STREETS OF CENTERVILLE - EVENING

Wilford carries his sketchbook under one arm. He walks calmly – older, more present. He crosses the street toward his regular café.

INT. LOCAL CAFÉ - MOMENTS LATER

The café buzzes softly – indie music playing, espresso machines hissing. Wilford enters, nods to the barista. He stands in line. Behind him, a soft voice:

SOPHIA (O.S.)

Still foam. Still strong?

Wilford turns – freezes.

Sophia stands just behind him. She's older. Softer. Dressed simply. Holding a journal.

WILFORD

Sophia.

A long silence. They both smile.

SOPHIA

I didn't think I'd run into anyone
I used to be.

INT. CAFÉ - TABLE BY THE WINDOW - MINUTES LATER

They sit with cappuccinos between them.

WILFORD

You look good.

SOPHIA

So do you. You sound good, too.

WILFORD

I've been working on stillness.

Sophia smiles faintly.

SOPHIA

I live outside the city now. Teach
art. Nothing big.

WILFORD

You always wanted quiet.

SOPHIA

Back then, I thought quiet meant
empty.

WILFORD

And now?

SOPHIA

Now it means peace.

The conversation is light – but in between the lines, there's
history:

- Sophia mentions **Tanner sends postcards**
- Wilford says **Amber is getting married**
- They both pause when Sophia asks,

"Do you still paint?"

WILFORD

Only when I miss people.

SOPHIA

So... often, then?

WILFORD

Sometimes less than I used to.

They look at each other. Nothing dramatic. Just mutual understanding. They finish their drinks. Wilford stands.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Same time tomorrow?

Sophia chuckles.

SOPHIA

Only if the foam's just right.

He nods and walks to the door She watches him leave. Not sad. Not longing. Just... present.

INT. SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD CAFÉ - LATE AFTERNOON

Wilford walks in, wearing a simple jacket and workshop ID badge. He heads to the counter.

He freezes.

SOPHIA sits near the window, sketchbook open. She looks up. Their eyes meet. Time slows. She half-smiles. Not surprised — not uncomfortable. Just human. He nods.

INT. CAFÉ - COUNTER

Wilford orders two cappuccinos. Extra foam — just like old times.

INT. CAFÉ - WINDOW SEAT

He brings the cup over. She closes her sketchbook.

WILFORD

I thought you left town.

SOPHIA

I thought you stopped liking coffee.

WILFORD

Nah. Just stopped needing it to fill the quiet.

They sit. Sip. Silence — but not awkward.

SOPHIA

How's the workshop?

WILFORD

Good. I help the new ones now.

SOPHIA

That fits you.

He smiles, soft and real.

MONTAGE (SOFT FLASHBACKS)

- Wilford staring at her old text
- Sophia walking away from the hospital
- His first art class as a mentor
- Her drawing alone in a park

Back to present. They sit. Cups half empty.

SOPHIA

There were a lot of days I wanted to come back. But I didn't know if I was allowed to.

WILFORD

You are. Just maybe not in the same way.

SOPHIA

You were the first person who ever looked at me like I wasn't broken.

WILFORD

You weren't. You just weren't ready.

They clink cups lightly. No toast. Just recognition.

EXT. CAFÉ - NIGHT FALLING

The lights inside glow gold. The outside world keeps moving, but in here... it's still.

Sophia folds her sketchbook.

SOPHIA

So... where do we go from here?

WILFORD

We don't have to go anywhere. We're here now.

She nods. A small tear. But not from pain — from gratitude.

SOPHIA

You're really okay?

WILFORD

Yeah. I think I finally became the person you saw in me.

She smiles again. They both look out the window.

INT. CAFÉ - LATER

The cups are empty. The shop is quieter. A barista dims the lights.

Neither moves to leave.

WILFORD (CONT'D)

Would you like to meet the kids I teach sometime?

SOPHIA

I'd like that. But I won't promise. I've learned to keep my maybes sacred.

WILFORD

Fair.

They both laugh softly.

EXT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

They step outside. No embrace. No lingering touches.

Just eye contact. Honesty.

SOPHIA

Goodnight, Wilford.

WILFORD

Goodnight, Sophia.

She turns. Walks into the city.

He stays, watching until she disappears into the crowd.

EXT. LOCAL CAFE - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun spills across a quiet café window. Wind chimes clink faintly.

Wilford steps inside, still in his workshop hoodie. He looks older, wiser. A quiet glow follows him.

He orders. Simple.

WILFORD (CONT'D)
Cappuccino. Extra foam, please.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

As Wilford picks up his drink and turns -

He freezes.

SOPHIA is at the corner table, scribbling in a sketchbook.

She looks up. Recognition flutters across her face. A pause. Then - a small smile. Wilford walks over. They stand in quiet awkwardness for a beat.

SOPHIA
Hey.

WILFORD
Hey.

Beat.

WILFORD (CONT'D)
(softly)
Mind if I sit?

She gestures to the empty seat.

SOPHIA
It's still warm.

They talk gently - about art, life, nothing heavy.

- Sophia is doing art therapy with teens now
- Wilford runs the mentoring program full-time
- Neither mentions the past directly
- But it's in every look, pause, and sip

MONTAGE - THEIR MOMENTS

- They sip cappuccinos slowly
- Wilford laughs softly at something Sophia says
- Sophia watches people pass by the window
- Their knees almost touch - but don't
- Outside, cars pass, life continues

Silence. But it's the good kind.

INT. CAFE - LATER

The cups are mostly empty now. Wilford leans back.

WILFORD

You ever think about... all of it?

SOPHIA

I used to. But now I just... feel grateful.

He nods. He understands.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

We were messy. But we mattered.

WILFORD

Yeah. We did.

They both smile.

EXT. CAFE - SUNSET

They step outside together. Not holding hands. Not making promises. Just walking. A long, lingering shot of them sitting again outside on a bench – cappuccino cups in hand. They smile gently. At the world. At each other. At peace.

FADE OUT.

THE END.