

SLOW-MOTION CAR CRASH

written by

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TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "Chapter 1: The Scottish Play"

FADE IN:

INT. COMMUNITY THEATER - NIGHT

Somewhere off-off Broadway. A small crowd. Show lights.

On stage, CHARLIE (26), charismatic and confident, hams it up as Macbeth. He directs a soliloquy to the AUDIENCE:

CHARLIE

"...That tears shall drown the
wind; I have no spur. To prick the
sides of my intent, but only
vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps
itself...and falls on the other."

IN THE AUDIENCE

ISHMAEL (25), handsome but gawky, watches Charlie, full of pride, and hanging on his every word. Ishmael smiles.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

In a shared dressing room, Charlie takes off his costume vest. A CREW MEMBER slaps him lightly on the shoulder.

CREW MEMBER

Great job, Charlie.

Charlie smiles.

Ishmael approaches and Charlie looks up. They hug warmly. Ishmael kisses him on the cheek.

ISHMAEL

You were so good.

CHARLIE

Thanks. You ready to go?

ISHMAEL

Ordering an Uber right now. Oh my god, do you know how hard it was to get back here? There's a *bouncer*. I had to show him Instagram photos of us together before he'd let me backstage.

CHARLIE
That's Guillermo.

ISHMAEL
Guillermo needs to chill.

CHARLIE
What did you think of the play?

ISHMAEL
Are you asking me what I think of
Shakespeare?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

ISHMAEL
I have absolutely no original
thoughts on Shakespeare.

INT. UBER - NIGHT

Ishmael and Charlie ride in the back.

CHARLIE
(to the driver)
Has it been a busy night?

The UBER DRIVER removes his headphones.

UBER DRIVER
What?

CHARLIE
I asked if you were busy tonight?

UBER DRIVER
Sorry, say again?

CHARLIE
Has it been busy tonight? Many
fares?

UBER DRIVER
I can't hear --- what?

CHARLIE
(frustrated)
Have you had a busy night?

There is a long silence --

The Uber Driver puts his headphones back in.

Ishmael looks to Charlie.

ISHMAEL

Hey, I don't think I'm going to drink much tonight.

CHARLIE

No?

ISHMAEL

I just feel...ugh. I don't want to end up vomiting around your theater friends.

CHARLIE

You know there's a middle ground between being sober and being black-out drunk?

ISHMAEL

I have yet to find it.

CHARLIE

You don't have to come if you don't want? I mean, it's a wrap party at someone's apartment --

ISHMAEL

No, I wanna come. Danica from work's coming.

A pause.

CHARLIE

Okay.

INT. SHITTY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Something by *The Weeknd* plays, probably. A one-bed in the city turned into a party by a single set of string lights over the living room. About TWENTY PARTY GOERS. It's really cramped; humid.

Ishmael hangs near the drinks, finishing one. Charlie touches him on the square of his back lightly --

CHARLIE

Hey, I have to go talk to Patience.

ISHMAEL

"Patience"?

CHARLIE
Lady Macbeth.

Ishmael nods. Charlie walks off to the corner of the room, greeting PATIENCE (21), beautiful and young, inaudibly.

Ishmael watches them, sipping his drink. He spies Patience, laughing, lightly touching Charlie on the arm. Ishmael GRIMACES.

DANICA (O.S)
Oh my god, Ishmael, why are you
such a creepy loser?

Ishmael turns around. DANICA (28), a chubby woman with a charming energy, approaches him with a soft shove.

ISHMAEL
You nearly made me spill my drink.

DANICA
Why are you just staring at him?

Danica and Ishmael look across at the room. A few other CASTMATES have joined in congratulating Charlie, all smiles, all proud.

ISHMAEL
(spitefully)
He is loving this. This *attention*.

DANICA
Why shouldn't he? He's Macbeth.

ISHMAEL
He's enjoying it *too much*. He's not
gonna sleep.

Danica grabs a drink. Off this:

ISHMAEL
Not pregnant yet?

DANICA
Donor reneged. I'm having second
thoughts, I think. I read an
article about a woman who totally
thought she was pregnant for six
months but she was just like,
filled with spider eggs. *Filled*
with them.

ISHMAEL
That sounds untrue.

DANICA
I'll link you it.

ISHMAEL
Why can't Bridgett just be the pregnant one?

DANICA
You don't get it.

ISHMAEL
No, I don't.

DANICA
I have the first baby. Then, in three years, she has the next one. She has a more forgiving body so she can deal with a pregnancy in her thirties.

ISHMAEL
Most people have pregnancies in their thirties?

DANICA
That's actually not true. The median age of first pregnancy is twenty-three.

ISHMAEL
That median is thrown off by every fourteen year old in the Midwest getting pregnant to their drunk uncle.

(beat)
Where is Bridgett?

DANICA
She's got diarrhea.

ISHMAEL
Eugh. Why wouldn't you just say she's sick?

DANICA
Fine. She's sick.
(points)
Your boyfriend wants you.

Charlie, speaking to Patience across the room, gestures for Ishmael to join them. Ishmael walks over, leaving Danica.

ISHMAEL

Hey.

CHARLIE

Ishmael, this is Patience.

PATIENCE

(shaking hands)

Wow. What a name.

ISHMAEL

It's Jewish.

(beat)

I'm not Jewish.

PATIENCE

Reminds me of Moby Dick.

ISHMAEL

How?

PATIENCE

The opening line? The protagonist?

CHARLIE

Patience was just asking about your writing.

ISHMAEL

I'm a copywriter. In-house marketing for a pharmaceutical firm.

CHARLIE

No, I mean your one-act play.

ISHMAEL

Oh? You were talking about that?

PATIENCE

Yeah. It sounds -- I mean, Charlie described it -- it sounds great. If your ever looking for a lead. *Ha-ha*. But I'm also serious.

ISHMAEL

Well, I mean, I think, in the unlikely event it's produced I doubt I'd be in charge of casting. Like. At all.

PATIENCE

Oh, I thought it was more of an indie thing and you were -- I was mostly joking.

ISHMAEL

Indie thing?

CHARLIE

I just thought Patience could --

ISHMAEL

I'm going to get a drink.

(to Patience)

Nice to meet you.

Ishmael walks back to Danica.

Danica is now mid-conversation with an older MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR.

DANICA

(to the man)

So was this from an accident, or like a genetic thing?

MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR

Do I know you?

ISHMAEL

(to Danica)

You wanna get trashed with me?

DANICA

Fine, but I'm not doing Sambuca shots again. My puke was a color that I don't think happens organically in nature.

MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR

Do you know where my wife is?

Danica and Ishmael turn away from him silently.

ACROSS THE ROOM - LATER

Danica and Ishmael do shots of Sambuca.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

They drunkenly share a cigarette.

DANICA

Whenever I go to parties with Bridgett, she won't like *tell* me not to smoke, but she'll be mad at me for it for days afterwards. Days.

ISHMAEL

Yeah. Bridgett sucks.

DANICA

That wasn't my point.

ISHMAEL

The first time I met her she told me she liked you because your apartment has good light in the evening.

DANICA

Jokes on her, I got evicted.

Ishmael laughs.

ISHMAEL

Oh my god I forgot about that! It's so hard to get evicted in this city! But you did it!

DANICA

Ruined my credit score --

ISHMAEL

I think Charlie is fucking Patience.

DANICA

"Patience"? Eugh. But you're probably right.

ISHMAEL

Lady Macbeth.

DANICA

They say that happens on productions. It's so intense. A shared experience like that bonds people.

ISHMAEL

It was community theater, not
Streetcar.

DANICA

Doesn't matter. If I were you, I'd
be really panicking. Like, *super*
worked up about it.

(then)

I gotta go. You should drink more,
I think.

She passes the cigarette to Ishmael and hugs him goodbye.

INT. UBER - NIGHT

Ishmael and Charlie sit in the back seat. Ishmael closes his
eyes for a moment, dizzy.

CHARLIE

How much did you have to drink?

ISHMAEL

Not a lot.

CHARLIE

You're plastered.

Charlie looks out the window.

ISHMAEL

I'm not. I've just had a bad day.

CHARLIE

What exactly did you do today? You
woke up, you got high, you came to
the show?

ISHMAEL

Why are you attacking me?

CHARLIE

You were so rude tonight.

ISHMAEL

Well, why did you make me come?

CHARLIE

What? I didn't! I told you you
didn't have to come!

ISHMAEL

Well, I couldn't not come to your wrap party.

CHARLIE

Yes, you very explicitly had the option not to.

ISHMAEL

I was only rude because...

CHARLIE

Why?!

ISHMAEL

Don't yell at me!

Charlie crosses his arms.

He looks to the Uber Driver.

CHARLIE

Had a busy night?

INT. CHARLIE AND ISHMAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cramped but tidy. Ishmael is splayed on the sofa as Charlie, behind him, SLAMS the door to the bedroom pointedly.

Ishmael smokes from a bong, taking a huge hit. He opens the Facebook app on his phone. Searches "*Patience*". He clicks on the top profile; *Patience's* profile.

Scrolls through her public feed (they aren't friends, but have one mutual - Charlie).

Scrolls through her "likes"; in particular: "*Moby Dick*".

He opens Safari; Googles "*Moby Dick*".

He reads the wiki for a moment before googling "*sperm whale*".

INT. CHARLIE AND ISHMAEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ishmael enters. Charlie sits up in bed, reading by lamplight.

Ishmael tries to look doleful. It comes across almost childish.

ISHMAEL

Hey...

Charlie doesn't look up.

CHARLIE

What?

ISHMAEL

I'm sorry.

Charlie puts the book down.

CHARLIE

How did you manage to ruin my opening night?

ISHMAEL

I'm sorry.

Ishmael approaches the bed.

CHARLIE

Whatever.

Ishmael climbs onto the bed. He inches towards Charlie, touching his waistband. Charlie doesn't stop him, but frowns.

CHARLIE

No.

ISHMAEL

Let me...

Ishmael pulls Charlie's pants down. He performs fellatio. Charlie stares at the top of Ishmael's head.

CHARLIE

Ishmael...

He doesn't respond. Ishmael keeps going.

CHARLIE

I'm going to come.

ISHMAEL

Okay.

Charlie grimaces as Ishmael sits up, wiping his mouth.

ISHMAEL
Do you forgive me now?

Charlie BURSTS INTO TEARS.

CHARLIE
I'm in love with someone. Someone
not you.

ISHMAEL
Who?

Charlie looks Ishmael in the eyes.

EXT. BALCONY - NIGHT

Ishmael, smoking, angrily paces the tiny balcony back and forth.

Charlie follows him out.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry.

ISHMAEL
Did you sleep with her?

CHARLIE
I --

ISHMAEL
How could you? She's a *child*.
You're a criminal.

CHARLIE
She's twenty-one.

Ishmael is gesticulating wildly. Hysterical. Lobbing insults pathetically.

ISHMAEL
Disgusting. You should be in
prison.

CHARLIE
She's so --

ISHMAEL
Do not fucking describe her to me!
Do not tell my why you love her!

CHARLIE

I was going to say, she wanted to tell you tonight. She and I. Both of us. But then you --

ISHMAEL

What?

CHARLIE

I didn't want to, but that's how she is. She just wanted to be transparent.

ISHMAEL

Transparent?

CHARLIE

I can't talk to you like this.

ISHMAEL

Who's going to take the apartment?

CHARLIE

We don't have to discuss that yet.

ISHMAEL

And the subscriptions?
We share so many
subscriptions! Oh, you
didn't think that through?
I have three Amazon Prime
deliveries...

CHARLIE

Well I guess because I'm on
the lease --

Ishmael puts his cigarette out.

ISHMAEL

So you're straight now?

CHARLIE

I had relationships with women
before.

ISHMAEL

So? I thought that was like, until
you met *me*.

CHARLIE

That's not how that works. You're
the exception, if anything.

Ishmael nods, deeply hurt. Charlie sighs and sits down on a bench. He gestures for Ishmael to join him. He does.

CHARLIE
I really am sorry.

ISHMAEL
What did I do?

CHARLIE
Are you kidding...? Nothing. You
didn't do anything.

ISHMAEL
We were going to move to LA
together.

CHARLIE
That was just...you didn't actually
feel like this was working?

ISHMAEL
I don't know. How's it supposed to
feel?

CHARLIE
Not like this. This felt
like...when you go on a first date,
and in the first five minutes it's
like, oh, this going to be bad. For
whatever reason. But you can't just
leave. Because that would be way
weirder than just staying. So you
sit out the date. And you say
you'll call at the end. And then
you wipe it from your memory.
(beat)
Except this date lasted three
years.

Ishmael cries.

ISHMAEL
You're wiping me from your memory?

CHARLIE
No, I --

Ishmael promptly VOMITS in Charlie's lap.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN

TEXT ON SCREEN: "*Chapter 2: Private Discomfort*"

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DAY

Ishmael guides two brawny MOVERS up the stairs as they carry his bed frame.

ISHMAEL

You'll have to turn to the left.

They turn the bed frame. It hits the wall.

ISHAMEL

No, my left.

(beat)

Actually, your left. My right.

It hits other side of the wall.

MOVER 1

Man, why the fuck wouldn't you disassemble the bed before you moved?

ISHMAEL

Wow. Okay, first of all. I don't know how. Second of all, you're making me feel unsafe.

INT. ISHMAEL'S STUDIO - DAY

The Movers approach Ishmael he survey the new apartment. Tiny. Cramped. One window, which faces a billboard advertizing a "*Ketamine Rehab: The Rehab Just For Ketamine*".

MOVER 1

Okay, dude, that'll be a hundred and fifty. Plus a tip.

ISHAMEL

What's your Venmo?

MOVER 1

Cash.

There is a long silence.

ISHMAEL

You know no one carries cash anymore, right? I lose my wallet like once a week.

MOVER 1
I don't know what to tell you.

ISHMAEL
I have to go to an ATM.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Ishmael walks through the green space, among JOGGERS and HIPSTER WITH DOGS. It's fall, and the park is beautiful.

He counts cash in his wallet, putting it in his pocket.

He approaches the park exit. At a gazebo, a THEATER TROUPE is performing Shakespeare In The Park.

Ishmael stops. It's *Macbeth*. The troupe's own MACBETH delivers a soliloquy to the CROWD:

"MACBETH"
"...That tears shall drown the
wind; I have no spur. To prick the
sides of my intent --

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Ishmael, dressed business super-casual, stands and **cries** on the train. No one notices.

A SUBWAY PERFORMER plays a horrific song on a theremin.

EVE (PRE-LAP)
We need a different word for yeast
infection. The problem isn't
"yeast", it's "infection".

INT. MEETING ROOM - MARKETING DEPARTMENT - DAY

Ishmael sits at a conference table with a a group of COPYWRITERS, including Danica next Ishmael. It's a hip start-up in a pre-war building.

EVE (40s), a severe creative type with an Irish accent, leads the meeting.

EVE
Anyone?

DANICA

We could really emphasize the research that three out of four women get them. Like really speak to how banal yeast infections really are.

EVE

No. I don't agree with that research. If you get a yeast infection, you're disgusting. Just take a shower, I mean, come on.

DANICA

Alright. I mean it's a proven fact --

EVE

Anyone else?

Danica is silenced.

ISHMAEL

What about something like "*Lisprita: for your private discomfort*"? Then let the graphics department imply a yeast infection.

A COPYWRITER speaks up.

COPYWRITER 1

How do you imply a yeast infection?

ISHMAEL

(shrugging)

Like, bread, or something?

Eve thinks.

EVE

Hmm. I think I like it. Ishmael, finish the copy and send it to graphics. You can lead the shoot.

ISHMAEL

Me?

EVE

Why not?

ISHMAEL

Which intern?

EVE

The tall one. With the name.

He nods.

COPYWRITER

Eve, can we talk about the gas leak on our floor?

EVE

Meeting closed.

INT. MARKETING WORK SPACE - ISHMAEL'S DESK - DAY

Ishmael reads an article at his computer entitled: "*This Woman Thought She Was Pregnant: Turns Out, She Was Actually Filled With Spider Eggs*".

Danica approaches. She sits next to Ishmael and talks in a conspiratorial tone.

DANICA

I hate her. Eve.

ISHMAEL

She's intense.

Ishmael checks his phone.

DANICA

(begrudgingly)

Have you spoken to him?

ISHMAEL

Only about like, practical things. Furniture. Paying the utilities. I think Patience is moving in with him. In the Village. How can they afford that?

DANICA

How do you know?

Ishmael points to his phone.

ISHMAEL

I, um, made a sock-puppet IG account and followed her and she posted an announcement.

DANICA
That sounds unhealthy.

ISHMAEL
I direct messaged her saying I was a fan of her work on *Law and Order: SVU* as Incest Victim Number One. Thing that bothers me is she was so nice. Like, she wasn't a bitch at all.

DANICA
Do you wanna get lunch? I have news.

INT. TRENDY CAFE - DAY

Danica and Ishmael order to a WAITER.

DANICA
Can I have the children's quinoa?

WAITER
Uh -

ISHMAEL
I'll have the same.

He passes the menu to the Waiter who walks off, confused.

ISHMAEL
It was really hard for me not to ask you what the news was on the walk from the office.

DANICA
Yeah, I figured you'd just ask me to tell you straight away.

ISHMAEL
Well?

DANICA
Bridgett's pregnant.

ISHMAEL
Congratulations. But I thought you were--

DANICA
Nah, I dunno. It wasn't working and every round cost so much money.

DANICA
Bridgett decided to step in and of course it works right away for her. I think I'm barren.

ISHMAEL
Oh. Do you need, like, emotional support?

DANICA
Hmm. I don't think so.

ISHMAEL
Okay. That's good.

There's a long silence.

ISHMAEL
I really wanna talk more about Charlie.

DANICA
Ishmael --

ISHMAEL
What?

DANICA
I thought you'd be over this by now.

ISHMAEL
It's been a month. We were together for years.

DANICA
You and Charlie were not going to work. Watching you two together was like a slow-motion car crash.

ISHMAEL
It was *my* car crash.
(beat)
My agent put me up for a writing staff position.

DANICA
In the city?

He shakes his head.

ISHMAEL

L.A.

DANICA

Oh. When will you hear about it?

ISHMAEL

Probably never.

DANICA

I didn't think you were going to move anymore.

ISHMAEL

I may as well try.

DANICA

It just seems like bad timing. Bridgett and I are having a baby. I thought you wanted to be the godfather.

ISHMAEL

Oh. But I can do that from the West Coast? Like as soon as he or she is old enough to Facetime, I'll be there.

DANICA

Uh huh.

The Waiter returns with the pair's food.

WAITER

Anything else for you guys?

DANICA

No.

He departs. Danica takes a bite of her food without saying anything.

ISHMAEL

What? Are you upset with me?

DANICA

Why would I be?

ISHMAEL

For *potentially* moving to L.A.?

Danica sighs.

DANICA

I'm not upset. Just...sad? It would be sad. If you left.

ISHMAEL

It's so, so, so unlikely I'd get the job. I've done this a hundred times. I'll never get staffed.

(beat)

Sometimes my agent pocket-dials me and I can hear him eating lasagna and breathing heavily. It doesn't inspire confidence.

INT. ISHMAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Ishmael lays in bed scrolling Instagram.

The new studio seems even smaller now, with all his belongings.

As he scrolls, he stops upon seeing a post from Patience. It shows Patience and Charlie clinking wine glasses together in a new apartment. The caption reads *Happy housewarming!* followed by a series of inscrutable emojis.

Ishmael sighs. He switches over to the Grindr app.

LATER

There's a buzz from the intercom by the door. Ishmael stands and walks to it, speaking into the buzzer.

ISHMAEL

Hi. Come up.

A masculine VOICE answers.

VOICE (O.S)

What?

ISHMAEL

I said come up.

VOICE (O.S.)

Okay.

SOON AFTER

Ishmael opens the door. RORY (mid twenties), handsome, with a soft, welcoming face, enters.

RORY
Hi. Ishmael?

ISHMAEL
Yeah. Rory.

They shake hands. It's weirdly formal.

RORY
You have a cool name.

ISHMAEL
Thanks.

RORY
Are you Jewish?

ISHMAEL
No. Have a seat.

Rory looks around. The only seat is the bed. He sits.

ISHMAEL
Do you want a drink? Wine?

RORY
Yeah, sure.

Ishmael deflates.

ISHMAEL
Oh. I don't actually have any wine.
I didn't think you'd say yes.

RORY
(smiling)
I'll just have whatever you're
having, then.

ISHMAEL
I actually had some water earlier
so I'm not having anything.

RORY
Okay. That's fine. Whatever.

Ishmael sits next to Rory.

RORY (CONT.)

So...what are you looking for on Grindr?

ISHMAEL

What do you mean?

RORY

It's like...do you want a hook-up, or a boyfriend, or to buy Crystal Meth?

ISHMAEL

Oh. I don't know. I just got out of a long relationship really recently so I don't think I want to jump into another.

RORY

That's cool. I actually have a boyfriend.

(then)

Don't worry, he's cool with it. Whenever he's out of town I get to play.

Rory smiles. Ishmael nods.

RORY

You're cute.

ISHMAEL

Thanks.

There's a long, five-second silence. Ishmael struggles to find something to say:

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

I like your puka-shell necklace. I haven't seen one in a while.

Rory smiles again and KISSES Ishmael. Ishmael reciprocates tentatively.

RORY

Is this okay?

Ishmael nods.

SOON AFTER

Rory removes Ishmael's shirt, laying on top of him. They kiss again.

RORY
Just one thing.

ISHMAEL
Hmm?

RORY
I'm trans.

ISHMAEL
Huh. Okay. That's okay. So you're transitioning? I didn't know, I've been calling you "Rory" this whole time but you probably hate that name --

RORY
No, I chose "Rory". I'm female-to-male trans.

Ishmael sits up.

RORY (CONT.)
I actually transitioned a few years ago.

ISHMAEL
Okay.

RORY
You don't seem okay with this.

ISHMAEL
No, I -- I completely support your, whole thing, your deal. I do.

RORY
I feel like you're not comfortable.

Ishmael racks his brain, brimming with questions. He slowly asks:

ISHMAEL
Do you have a vagina?

RORY
I like to think I have my own version of a dick. A *boy-clit*.

Ishmael takes a deep breath re: this.

ISHMAEL

Okay. But in actual reality, you have a vagina?

RORY

In a purely technical sense, yes.

ISHMAEL

Okay. Okay.

Ishmael nods. Negotiating with himself.

RORY

Look...

Rory takes his shirt off.

RORY

(pointing to chest)

I've had surgery. And I'm a bottom. There's no reason for this to --

ISHMAEL

How could you possibly be a *top*?

RORY

Excuse me?

ISHMAEL

You just said you're a bottom like there's any other way this could possibly work?

Rory stands.

RORY

I'm no longer comfortable with this conversation.

ISHMAEL

(defensive)

You can't be surprised I have questions. You could have warned me on the app.

RORY

Warned you? I'm trans, I'm not HIV positive.

ISHMAEL

Oh, I would definitely still have sex with you if you had HIV.

Rory, bewildered, shakes his head and turns to leave.

Ishmael stands.

ISHMAEL

Wait.

Rory, rolling his eyes, turns around.

ISHMAEL

I guess you can give me a beej?

Rory leaves.

INT. SOUND STAGE - COMMERCIAL SET - CRAFT SERVICE - DAY

Ishmael picks up a cream-cheese bagel from the craft service table, taking a bite.

He recoils from the taste. Places the bagel back where he got it.

ABNER (O.S)

Hey. Writer.

Ishmael spins around. ABNER, dressed in a jacket much too big for him and appearing to be *maybe* a young twenty.

ISHAMEL

Yeah?

ABNER

You wrote this, right?

Abner gestures to the shoot going on behind them - an ACTRESS standing on the sound-stage wearing a T-shirt emblazoned "vaginal yeast" is primping for the camera.

ISHMAEL

Sort of. Copywriter for Frink Pharmaceuticals.

Abner extends a hand shake.

ABNER

Abner Abromowitz. Producer.

ISHMAEL

Ishmael. Nice to meet you.
 (looking at Abner)
 You're a producer? I thought you
 were an intern.

ABNER

Ha-ha. I have a baby-face.

Abner picks up a Yoohoo from the craft service table,
 sipping it.

ABNER

Anyway, I quite like the copy. I
 like how it's not self-effacing.
 Considering the subject, a lazier
 writer would have been tempted to
 make the whole thing a joke.

In the background, the Actress mimes scratching her crotch
 absurdly.

ISHMAEL

Thank you. I also wrote the copy
 for --

ABNER

Oh. I know. I've been following you
 for years.

ISHMAEL

"Years"? Seriously - how old are
 you?

ABNER

Ha-ha. I'm staffing writers for a
 new show that just got picked up
 for series. You might have seen the
 pilot. *Ainsworth's Practice*. It's a
 medical drama about a sexy doctor
 who works at a small inner-city
 hospital and finds love with a
 young nurse, who is also very sexy.
 Films in Brooklyn.

ISHMAEL

No. What network is it on?

ABNER

It's not on a network. Here's my
 card.

He hands him a business card.

ABNER
You have an agent?

ISHMAEL
Yeah, but --

ABNER
Great. Email me his details and he
and I will have a chat about you.

ISHMAEL
(excited)
Sure. Sure thing. Oh my god. Hey,
just, re: my agent -- he's not good
between 10 AM and 5 PM. Y'know how
it is.

ABNER
That's essentially all of business
hours.

ISHMAEL
(ignoring him)
Thank you so much for the
opportunity, Abner.

Abner does the "finger guns" and walks away.

Ishmael stands, gleefully shocked.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT swings by, grabbing the bagel Ishmael
took a bite of.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

A busy car. The Theremin player is back, and it somehow
sounds worse than before.

Ishmael, standing, still filled with joy, scrolls his
contacts list.

His finger hovers over *Charlie*. Considers dialing.

He rings Danica instead.

DANICA (V.O)
(voicemail message)
You've reached Danica and Bridgett.
I can't get to the phone. Please
don't leave a message.

Ishmael rolls his eyes. Stares at his phone. Dials "Mom". A
sweet, female voice answers.

MOM (V.O)
Ishmael, sweetie. What's wrong?

ISHMAEL
(into phone)
Nothing. I have good news. I think
I got offered a job.

MOM (V.O)
I can't hear you. There's lots of
noise. Is someone playing the
theremin?

ISHMAEL
I'm on the train. Wait a sec...

Ishmael walks to the end of the car, and opens the door and
walks into ...

ANOTHER SUBWAY CAR

Quiet. Less packed.

ISHMAEL
I was saying I think I got a job. A
writing job.

MOM (V.O)
Don't you already do that?

ISHMAEL
No, I mean writing on a TV show.

MOM (V.O)
Oh! That's amazing! Sweetie, I'm so
proud.
(beat)
How much does it pay? Can we stop
paying off your credit card?

ISHMAEL
I don't know. The producer is
calling my agent. It might not be
that much, it's not on a network.

MOM (V.O)
Well, that's still amazing! Hey,
why don't me and your father come
into the city tonight to celebrate?
We can do cocaine together.

ISHMAEL

No, thanks Mom. I might hang out with Danica if she's not busy.

MOM (V.O)

Oh. Well that's fine too. You don't need Charlie to celebrate, right?

ISHMAEL

Uh huh...

Long silence. Mom tries to fill it:

MOM (V.O)

I love you so much. I'm so blessed to have you *and* your father. I love you both so much. Equally.

ISHMAEL

I think you're supposed to love me more than Dad.

MOM (V.O)

I have no favorites.

CUT TO:

TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "Chapter 3: Death By Police-Horse"

INT. BREADTUBE.COM HEADQUARTERS - RECEPTION - DAY

Ishmael approaches the reception desk at the trendy BreadTube headquarters. STAFF MEMBERS play ping-pong and arcade games, etc.

Ishmael watches as an EXECUTIVE enters the reception by sliding down a slippery-slide, briefcase in hand, very seriously.

Ishmael attempts to get the surly RECEPTIONIST'S attention.

ISHMAEL

Hi. Hi.

The Receptionist, on the phone, holds up a finger - one minute.

RECEPTIONIST

(into phone)

You can't just have cheese for every meal. Don't you dare hang up. I'll send the neighbors over. And no more Incel vlogs. Bye. Love you.

She looks to Ishmael, hanging up.

ISHMAEL

Oh, uh, it's my first day. I'm a writer for *Ainsworth's Practice*. I was told to come here by my agent.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh. That.

The Receptionist types on her computer.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT)

Wait a moment.

Ishmael nods and stands patiently.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT)

Not here. *There*.

She points to the corner of the room. Ishmael walks over obediently.

He looks to the front doors. An important-seeming BUSINESS-MAN enter and walks a cat on a leash. He non-verbally greets the receptionist and enters. Ishmael looks on quizzically.

A hurried production assistant MERVYN (20s) approaches Ishmael and immediately grabs him by the arm, leading him towards the office.

MERVYN

(rapidly)

Finally. The E.P.'s about to start a muster meeting with the writing staff. Everybody's going crazy. Our female lead got kicked by police horse and we only just got a replacement.

Ishmael nods, following him as the enter the...

BREADTUBE BULL-PEN

...which is even more chaotic. WRITERS, PRODUCERS, and ASSISTANTS rush around Ishmael and Mervyn as they walk through. The cat that was on a leash now runs free, the leash trailing behind it.

MERVYN

Apparently the E.P had to re-write the second episode because the new female lead is ten years younger and very clearly not Asian. We even considered make-up, like Mickey Rooney in Breakfast at Tiffany's. We got way too close to actually doing that.

ISHMAEL

Right.

MERVYN

This is the writer's room.

He points to a door. They enter.

INT. WRITER'S ROOM - BREADTUBE - DAY

Ishmael enters. Mervyn leaves immediately.

The office has three WRITERS, all white and geeky, sitting around a conference table with their laptops. A whiteboard with a complicated network of post-its and season plotting on it is behind them.

Ishmael sits, awkwardly waving.

ISHMAEL

I'm Ishmael.

Writer 1, BRAIDEN (20s), shakes his hand across the table.

BRAIDEN

Braiden.

Writer 2, BRAYDON (20s), waves quickly.

BRAYDON

Braydon.

Writer 3, BRAEDEN (20s), also waves.

BRAEDEN

Braeden.

None of them comment on this.

BRAIDEN

We're just waiting on Gus, the E.P. Be warned - he's in a foul mood.

BRAYDON
And the diversity hire.

The door opens. JESSICA (20s), a confident black woman with beautiful natural hair, using a wheelchair, enters and joins them.

She introduces herself to Ishmael.

JESSICA
Another Braiden?

ISHMAEL
I'm Ishmael.

JESSICA
"Call me Ishmael".

ISHMAEL
(smiling)
Hey. I actually get that joke now.

Jessica returns a friendly smile.

JESSICA
So where were we? The --

The door opens again. GUS (40s), overweight, sweaty and exhausted, enters with a purposeful gait.

GUS
Okay. Writers.
(to Ishmael)
Hi. I liked your spec. Real funny.

ISHMAEL
It wasn't a comedy --

GUS
(to all)
Alright, so, before you hear it somewhere else, yes, Li-Chin has died as a result of the police horse incident. It's a tragedy. But we've managed to move on, as a production, and re-cast her role. I want you to get to know these faces
--

Gus places two head-shots on the board and writes character names underneath them: the first says "*Harry Ainsworth*", with a photo of a handsome, mid-40s black actor JEREMY, an Idris Elba-type.

GUS (CONT)

Our lead...played by Jeremy, who
you've all met.

Another name is written, "Leanne"...Gus places a HEAD-SHOT
OF PATIENCE under the name. Ishmael recoils.

GUS (CONT)

Leanne is now played by Patience
Polanski, who you haven't met, but
obviously is not Chinese. I've made
some edits...

Everyone opens their laptops and accesses a shared drive.
Gus pushes a laptop to Ishmael.

GUS (CONT)

...to reflect this.

Gus wipes stress-sweat from his brow.

GUS (CONT)

So I think I can still confidently
say that Breadtube.com's first
original programming show is
something we can all be proud of.

Everyone claps, as if this is profound. **Ishmael stresses.**

EXT. BROOKLYN - BREADTUBE.COM OFFICES - NIGHT

Ishmael exits the building after his first day, into the
Brooklyn street. He looks back at the building.

Two WORKERS on ladders remove a banner poster for
"Ainsworth's Practice", featuring Jeremy, the lead, in
medical scrubs, kissing LI-CHIN a Chinese actress.

Next to the removed poster is the replacement: the same
poster featuring Jeremy kissing Patience.

INT. DANICA AND BRIDGETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ishmael paces the modern but small space. Danica sits at the
sofa, watching him and reading her texts.

DANICA

You need to sit down. You're
starting to sweat.

ISHMAEL

I can't. I have to *work with her*.

DANICA

You just got a dream job. You can't let Charlie and Patience ruin that, too.

ISHMAEL

Why can't anything ever be good?

DANICA

(nodding)

Okay.

Ishmael stops.

ISHMAEL

Well?

DANICA

I just don't get it. How likely are you actually going to be on set and see her, like with your eyes?

ISHMAEL

All the time! Gus directs every episode and wants us on set once a week. Once a week! I have to see her *once a week*. And what if Charlie comes to set? I need a cigarette.

Danica looks around. No sign of Bridgette.

DANICA

Fine.

Ishmael lights a cigarette and continues pacing.

DANICA (CONT)

Is it a dealbreaker? You can probably come back. I think Eve actually liked you.

He shakes his head.

ISHMAEL

Maybe something will happen. They got rid of the last female lead.

DANICA

You said she got kicked by a police horse and died. The quota for police horse deaths has already been met for the year.

ISHMAEL

Ugh.

Ishmael frustratedly sits down.

DANICA

At least you're not moving anymore.

ISHMAEL

That's true. I was never going to get that job, anyway.

BRIDGETT (late 20s, severe; a fortress of a woman), enters through the front door carrying groceries.

BRIDGETT

(sarcastic)

Nope...don't help the pregnant woman...

DANICA

Hey, babe.

She puts the bags on the counter, then spots Ishmael.

Ishmael hides the lit cigarette, placing his hand down beside the sofa.

BRIDGETT

(coldly)

Oh. You're here. Hi, Ishmael.

ISHAMEL

Hey, Bridgette. Congratulations. How are you feeling?

BRIDGETT

Danica, can I talk to you?

Danica sighs quietly, standing and walking off the kitchen with Bridgett.

Ishmael puts the cigarette butt in a pot plant.

Danica returns. Bridgette stands pointedly in the kitchen, just barely visible.

DANICA
 (quietly, to Ishmael)
 Yeah, you have to leave
 immediately.

CUT TO:

TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "*Chapter 4: One of the Tragicomedies*"

INT. BREADTUBE - TELEVISION SET - CRAFT SERVICES - DAY

Ishmael meanders near the craft-services table (again).
 He touches a bagel, considering it, before putting it back.

CRAFT SERVICES GUY (O.S)
 Please don't do that.

A CRAFT SERVICES GUY glares at Ishmael. Ishmael turns to
 look at the set across the room.

Gus, directing, stands from his chair.

GUS
 Cut, please.

Patience, in character in a shoddy nurses's costume, happily
 hugs her co-star Jeremy, also in costume.

The crew re-animates happily.

GUS
 That's a wrap on episode two,
 everyone!

Some CLAPS and WOOHS, disparate.

Jessica approaches Ishmael.

JESSICA
 You coming to drinks with everyone?
 In the city?

ISHMAEL
 Eh....

Ishmael looks across at Patience. For a moment, they lock
 eyes awkwardly. He returns to Jessica.

ISHMAEL (CONT)
 Maybe. Are you coming?

JESSICA
 May as well. Come on. The Braidens
 won't be there, thank god.

ISHMAEL
 Fine.

INT. SHITTY BAR - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Jessica and Ishmael are the noisy bar, sipping their drinks.
 Ishmael looks **despondent**.

The CAST and CREW mostly sit at booths behind them, a
 jubilant Gus holding court telling an animated anecdote.

JESSICA
 This your first show?

ISHMAEL
 Yeah. I feel like I'm being too
 quiet in the room sometimes.

JESSICA
 It doesn't matter.

ISHMAEL
 Maybe not for you.

JESSICA
 Why is that?

ISHMAEL
 Because you're...

JESSICA
 (smiling)
 Say it.

Ishmael rolls his eyes.

ISHMAEL
 Come on.

JESSICA
 I know they all think I'm a
 diversity hire or whatever. But I'm
 not. My specs don't say "*written by
 Jessica Woodhouse, who is in a
 wheelchair and also black*". And I
 didn't have an agent back then to
 say that on my behalf. Hell, I
 didn't even use my real name.

ISHMAEL
Jessica's not your real name?

JESSICA
"Aaliyah Washington".

ISHMAEL
That is a very black name.

Patience timidly approaches, interrupting, drink in hand.

PATIENCE
Is it okay if I sit here?

Ishmael remains quiet.

JESSICA
No, of course. I'm Jessica. One of
the writers.

PATIENCE
Hi.

Patience smiles warmly at her.

There's a long silence as Ishmael sits in an awkward fury.

PATIENCE (CONT)
(politely)
Jessica, would you mind if Ishmael
and I spoke alone?

Jessica looks to Ishmael. He shrugs. She leaves.

PATIENCE (CONT)
Ishmael, I've been wanting to
apologize. I'm so happy to have to
this job and I don't want any
awkwardness or whatever at work. I
just want to do my job and keep
getting along with everyone.

ISHMAEL
That's fine. We don't have to talk.

PATIENCE
But we do! I wanted to tell you
everything when this happened. Did
Charlie ever say that to you?

ISHMAEL
(lying)
No.

PATIENCE

Well, I did. I'm not a bad person. Charlie *might* be. I don't know. I'm still getting to know him. I don't think he is. And I don't think you are, either.

ISHMAEL

You don't think I'm a bad person?

PATIENCE

Why would I?

ISHMAEL

I dunno, like, my behavior and the things I say and do and treat people and just my personality?

PATIENCE

Well, I'd like to get to know you and find out for myself.

Patience smiles, holding out her hand to shake. Ishmael begrudges in returning it.

PATIENCE (CONT)

And I really did like your writing Charlie showed me. I'm not surprised you got staffed.

Ishmael tries to remain sullen, but can't with a compliment.

ISHMAEL

Thanks. I appreciate that.

(beat)

Hey. I have to ask - you said you're still getting to know Charlie. But I know you moved in with him in the Village?

PATIENCE

How did you know that?

Sprung.

ISHMAEL

Uh...just heard.

PATIENCE

Yeah, it's weird. And fast. If it doesn't work it'll be bad. But if it does, we'll have a head start on our relationship. And have skipped all the bullshit.

She shrugs. This hurts Ishmael.

PATIENCE (CONT)

I'm sorry.

(beat)

And I'm sorry we didn't invite you to the housewarming.

ISHMAEL

It would have been weird if I came anyway.

PATIENCE

Doesn't need to be.

Patience looks around. Everyone they work with is still in their own little cliques.

PATIENCE (CONT)

You wanna see it? The apartment.

It's the first nice place I've ever lived.

ISHMAEL

What about...?

PATIENCE

He's upstate. Rehearsing some *Moliere* play they're staging. One of the tragicomedies, I think. I want you to see the place. Where do you live?

ISHMAEL

(ashamed)

Washington Heights...

PATIENCE

Great! It's on the way.

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Ishmael and Patience walk side-by-side.

ISHMAEL

Do you mind if I smoke?

She shakes her head.

PATIENCE

I've been vaping. But I miss it.

He hands her a cigarette, lighting it for her.

ISHMAEL

Here.

PATIENCE

Oh...the real thing is so much better.

Ishmael nods with a smile and Patience takes a drag.

ISHMAEL

I'm always paranoid vapes are going to explode in my face or some shit.

PATIENCE

Hey....you have any weed?

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They enter. Patience switches the lights on. It's a beautiful and modern converted loft.

Patience leads him through the common area.

PATIENCE

My parents have offered to re-do the kitchen but I kind of like it. It's already, like *white-people boho* enough in here, "tbh".

ISHMAEL

This place is like the kind of apartment college kids from Oklahoma think they're going to live in when they get on the bus.

Patience laughs. Ishmael walks into a sunken entertainment area, sitting on a sofa. He reveals a joint.

ISHMAEL

You still wanna get high?

LATER

Sitting together, both stoned, Patience and Ishmael laugh heartily.

ISHMAEL

Oh my god, he still snores?

PATIENCE

It's not even a problem that he snores! It's just he gets so defensive if you bring it up, like he's trying to gaslight you or something?

ISHMAEL

(imitating Charlie)

"Snoring is for obese people, do I look obese to you?"

PATIENCE

Oh god. So true.

Ishmael smiles.

ISHMAEL

I have a confession. I cat-fished you on Instagram a month ago.

PATIENCE

What?

ISHMAEL

Before the show, obviously. I made a fake IG and added you so I could, like, hate-watch yours' and Charlie's posts and stories. I think I messaged you at one point.

Patience stares at Ishmael - deadly serious. Then breaks into LOUD, SNORTING LAUGHTER.

PATIENCE

Oh my god, that is the saddest thing in the world! Wait -- were you the one who DMed me about my five-second speaking role on SVU?

ISHMAEL

Yeah. I told my friend how much it pissed me off that you were so nice to me.

PATIENCE

Soz. Just bein' me.

Patience grabs Ishmael's phone, and opens Instagram. She follows herself.

PATIENCE (CONT)
No more cat-fishing required.

The front door opens. Charlie enters. He doesn't seem Ishmael straight away.

Ishmael's face drops. He's stoned, and feels like he's been "caught".

CHARLIE
I'm back, babe.
(then)
Can I smell weed?

Patience stands, walking to the door, hugging him hello.

PATIENCE
Yeah. Me and Ishmael left the wrap party early.

CHARLIE
Ishmael?

Charlie spins around, spotting him.

Pathetically, with red bloodshot eyes, Ishmael offers a limp wave.

ISHMAEL
Hi, Charlie.

Charlie doesn't know what to do.

PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

Away from the living room, Charlie and Patience engage in a quietly-heated discussion.

CHARLIE
I feel like I shouldn't need to *specify* that you don't bring my awful ex to our house.

PATIENCE
He's not awful, Charlie. You know that. And he's my coworker. I want things civil. And I want him to come to our...

Patience looks around, making sure Ishmael is out of ear shot.

PATIENCE (CONT)
 ...E-N-G-A-G-E-M-E-N-T party. So he
 knows what's happening.

CHARLIE
 He can spell.
 (pause)
 And with adult relationships...you
 just don't do this.

PATIENCE
 What?? - "Adult relationships"?
 Because I'm younger than you,
 you're all of a sudden right? Is
 this really happening again -
 shitting on me because I'm
 twenty-one and you're like, old as
 shit?

Charlie throws his hands up.

CHARLIE
 Whatever. I'm twenty six. You're
 fuckin' stoned. Do whatever. You
 probably shouldn't tell him what
 kind of party it is, though. He'll
 flip out. *I know him.*

PATIENCE
 Duh. That's why it's a surprise
 party..

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ishmael now stands by the wall, looking at photos. One of
 the photos depicts Charlie and Patience holding hands at the
 Guggenheim. Another is an "artsy canvas nude" of the pair,
 genitals everywhere.

PATIENCE (O.S)
 Ishmael?

He turns out. Patience stands in the doorway.

PATIENCE
 Charlie and I would like to invite
 you to a party next Saturday night.
 Here. And then we've reserved some
 booths as Claffita's downstairs for
 drinks later in the night. We'd
 love you there.

ISHMAEL

Just a regular party? No occasion?

PATIENCE

The occasion is we want to see our favorite people.

Ishmael looks past Patience at Charlie, who's still in the kitchen. He offers perhaps the most begrudging nod in the world.

ISHMAEL

Sure. Can I bring my friend Danica?

Charlie cringes to himself.

PATIENCE

Yep. Cool. Dress nice.

Patience waves. Charlie disappears into a bedroom, sulking.

INT. ISHMAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT - A WEEK LATER

Danica, gussied up, watches Ishmael as he preens his hair in the studio's single mirror (which is in the kitchen).

ISHMAEL

She says "dress nice"...ugh.

DANICA

Bridgett had our second sonogram today.

ISHMAEL

Uh huh.

Distracted, he roots through a drawer full of jeans and slacks.

DANICA

Yeah...it was nothing bad *bad*, and I didn't really get it, but the doctor wants to run some like, chromosomal tests on the fetus I guess. Like, again, he didn't say anything definitive but I think Bridgett's spinning out because neither of us really understood and we haven't found a Doula we really click with...

ISHMAEL

What about these jeans? Are they nice enough?

Danica responds curtly.

DANICA

Maybe you could try not wearing jeans.

ISHMAEL

Slacks feels like too much. He knows I don't even wear slacks to work.

DANICA

Black jeans, then. No rips, no holes.

He keeps looking for clothes.

DANICA (CONT.)

And wear a button-up. Obviously.

ISHMAEL

Duh.

DANICA

Is this really all for him? And Patience?

ISHMAEL

No. I'm just sick of the "ironically detached" thing. I want to be taking something seriously. Or...be seen to be taking it seriously.

(he thinks)

But not too seriously. Like not slacks-serious.

DANICA

Okay. I say this in the nicest way possible: you have never been "ironically detached" from this thing, at all. You have ruminated about him obsessively for months.

ISHMAEL

Wow. I can't believe the was the nicest way you could have possibly said that.

(beat)

Wanna pre-game?

INT./EXT. NYC CAB - NIGHT

Ishmael and Danica take turns sipping from a flask in the back seat, heading into a nicer neighborhood.

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

String lights. Cramped with hipsters, actors, and Tumblr kids. Conspicuously obscure music is playing (probably Diane Cluck).

Ishmael and Danica enter gracelessly. Drunk.

Danica spots someone across the room.

DANICA
Hey! Idaho's here.

ISHMAEL
Connecticut Idaho or Idaho from work?

DANICA
No, Idaho from college. I'm gonna go say hello.

ISHMAEL
Oh.

She leaves.

Ishmael wanders through the party.

He spies Patience enter the kitchen, artfully fleeing a conversation with a PARTIGOER.

He follows her.

KITCHEN

Patience walks to a counter island surrounded by Charlie, and the couples' COOLEST FRIENDS.

Ishmael watches as Charlie and Patience are handed two lines of coke off an artiginal wooden board. They both snort the lines and everybody laughs.

Ishmael, now standing awkwardly in the doorway, is seen by a wide-eyed Patience.

PATIENCE

Ishmael!

She rushes over, hugging him. He returns the hug stiffly.

ISHMAEL

Hey...

PATIENCE

You came!

Charlie walks off without saying anything. The Cool Friends disperse.

PATIENCE (CONT)

(conspiratorially)

You want some coke?

ISHMAEL

Liquor?

PATIENCE

Yes! Let's do shots!

Patience, jittery and excited, looks around to realize everyone has left the room.

PATIENCE (CONT)

Oh. Well, I'll get us some shots.

ISHMAEL

Okay. I'm just gonna go to the bathroom.

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Charlie tends to a coke-related blood nose at the mirror. There's a knock. He ignores it, fiddling with a Kleenex.

Ishmael enters.

ISHMAEL

Oh.

He turns to leave.

CHARLIE

It's fine. I'm done. I'm going.

Ishmael nods. Walks over to the toilet.

Charlie heads to the doorway.

CHARLIE (CONT)

Do you actually have to pee or are you doing that thing you used to do? Where you escape to the bathroom when things get weird?

ISHMAEL

I could definitely pee. And things aren't weird.

CHARLIE

This is weird, Ishmael.

Ishmael shrugs.

ISHMAEL

What do you want me to do? She invited me.

(beat)

Patience is really nice. Like, genuinely nice.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

I know.

ISHMAEL

What's that like?

CHARLIE

What's *what* like?

ISHMAEL

To be with...a nice person.

Charlie sigh. He leans against the counter top.

CHARLIE

You were nice, Ishmael. Sometimes.

ISHMAEL

I wasn't fishing for a compliment--

CHARLIE

You just...you just got too wrapped in your head sometimes.

ISHMAEL

Okay.

CHARLIE
How's the job?

Ishmael shrugs again.

ISHMAEL
I don't...I'm not good in a room.

CHARLIE
I'm sure you'll settle in.

ISHMAEL
I think I made a new friend,
though. On the writing staff. She's
fully in a wheelchair, like, zero
walking ability. But she's cool.
(beat)
I've never had a black friend.

Charlie smiles, stepping towards Ishmael.

CHARLIE
That's cool.

Charlie kisses Ishmael slowly.

Ishmael excitedly kisses Charlie back. Charlie's crotch
brushes against Ishmael's leg.

ISHMAEL
You're really hard...

CHARLIE
It's the coke.

Charlie kisses Ishmael again as Ishmael pulls down Charlie's
pants.

Ishmael, half crouched, starts gracelessly jerking Charlie
off.

They stop kissing as Ishmael focuses. Charlie stares off
into space.

The sequence starts to go on **way too long**, as...

Charlie's nose starts bleeding, again. Charlie snaps out of
it, puling away from Ishmael.

CHARLIE
Fuck is wrong with you?

Charlie exits.

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Ishmael rejoins Danica in the back of the room, half-satisfied with himself.

DANICA
What are you smiling about?

ISHMAEL
(grinning)
Gave him a hand-job.

DANICA
What? Who? --

PATIENCE (O.S)
Everyone! Quiet, please!

Patience, across the room, SWITCHES THE LIGHTS on and off for attention.

PATIENCE
(to the room)
Thanks everyone for coming.

Charlie joins her side, putting his arm around her.

PATIENCE (CONT)
Charlie and I have an announcement.
Some of you are gonna be shocked,
but...

A few MURMURS. Patience grins. She shows her ring finger to the whole room.

PATIENCE (CONT)
....we got engaged!

Light APPLAUSE/WOOHs. Female FRIENDS approach her, excitedly hugging and cheek-kissing. High-fives for Charlie etc.

Ishmael is speechless...

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE - STREET - NIGHT

Ishmael drunkenly PUKES into the gutter. Danica sympathetically pats him on the back.

DANICA
Oh, sweetie.

ISHMAEL
How could he?

He vomits again.

TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "*Chapter 5: Death By Lightning Strike*"

INT. WRITER'S ROOM - BREADTUBE - DAY

The writers sit around the conference table, in discussion.
Gus leads the room.

BRAIDEN
I think this is an inappropriate scene for that character to imply they can solve the Israel/Palestine conflict.

He turns his laptop screen to Braydon.

BRAYDON
Oh. That line was meant to go to Judy. My mistake.

BRAIDEN
Oh yeah. That actually works really well.

He types.

Ishmael watches on. His phone RINGS - call from Mom.

He ignores the call, silencing it. Jessica nudges him.

JESSICA
(quietly)
Ishmael. You *have* to talk.

He searches for words.

ISHMAEL
Maybe Ainsworth has a big secret. And like we don't know straight away. We learn a little more about it and in the finale we find out. We still have twenty more episodes to film, we could just add in some shots of him looking at a photo in his wallet brooding-ly.

BRAYDON
That's not a word.

There's a long silence.

GUS
What would the secret be?

ISHMAEL
Maybe he...maybe he isn't a doctor
at all? Or he is, but his name
isn't Ainsworth. Like he's...stolen
someone's identity.

BRAYDON
Yeah, that's *Mad Men*.

BRAIDEN
You just wrote *Mad Men*.

GUS
That is, indeed, *Mad Men*. But I
like the idea of the cliffhanger
being Leanne finding a dark secret.

Gus types something. Ishmael smiles.

His phone vibrates - another call from Mom.

ISHMAEL
I think I have to take this.

They all shrug.

Ishmael steps into an annex office.

ANNEX OFFICE

He answers the phone.

ISHMAEL
What, Mom?

Through the phone, we hear an anguished cry.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)
Oh, god, what is it?
(pause)
What? How?
(pause)
Are you kidding?
(pause)

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

I don't wanna go to New Jersey.

(pause)

No, I understand I have to. I just don't want to.

(pause)

Okay. Okay. I'll go home and pack.

Bye. Oh, wait -- can I bring Danica?

(pause)

Okay.

He hangs up and walks back into the writer's room.

WRITER'S ROOM

ISHMAEL (CONT.)

Gus, I have to go.

GUS

You can't. We're writing the ADR sequences later.

ISHMAEL

No, I....it's an emergency.

BRAIDEN

What's the emergency?

JESSICA

Shut-up, Braydon. It's none of your business.

BRAIDEN

I'm *Braiden* not Braydon. I can tell you're spelling it wrong in your head.

ISHMAEL

My Dad got struck by lightning on a golf course earlier this morning and...died.

There is a long silence.

Jessica grabs Ishmael's hand.

GUS

Um...you can go.

JESSICA
Are you okay?

ISHMAEL
I think I'm in shock?
(pause)
Ha-ha. In shock.
(pause)
Oh.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Danica and Ishmael sit in the train car, weekend luggage by their side, watching the shitty New Jersey sights fly by. Danica grabs Ishmael's hand warmly.

ISHMAEL
Thank you for coming.

DANICA
It's no problem. Your Dad...he was the best.

ISHMAEL
You both loved golf.

Danica nods.

INT. TRUDY'S HOME - FOYER - DAY

Ishmael and Danica enter the foyer of his childhood home. It's not quite a McMansion but is really trying its' best to be.

ISHMAEL
(shouting)
Mom? Aunt Cecilia?

They put their bags down and start walking through the home.

TRUDY (O.S)
I'm in the den.

They walk through the house. They pass a framed photo of a TEENAGED ISHMAEL, braces, holding a congratulatory plaque proudly. It reads "RUNNER UP - JUST IN GENERAL".

THE DEN - DAY

TRUDY (50s), WASP-ey and distraught, sits on the sofa. She stands, seeing Ishmael and Danica.

She embraces Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

Mommy.

DANICA

I'm so sorry, Trudy.

Trudy hugs Danica, too.

TRUDI

Oh, he loved you so much, Danica.

Trudy smiles through her distress.

ISHMAEL

Mom, where's Aunt Cecilia?

TRUDY

She's on her way, she's doing a cleanse so it's slowed her right down.

(beat)

Did you bring it?

ISHMAEL

Yeah.

Ishmael sits with Trudy, revealing a joint and a lighter from his pocket. He gives it to Trudy and lights it after she puts it in her mouth. She takes a drag and passes it to him.

ISHMAEL

Is Aunt Cecilia going to stay with you after the funeral?

TRUDY

Oh...I don't know. She's got a lot going on with Herbalife.

Ishmael nods.

ISHMAEL

I'll stay with you for a while, Mom. I'll deal with work.

TRUDY
 That would be nice.
 (to Danica)
 Oh, sorry.

Trudy passes her the joint.

DANICA
 ...Thanks.

INT. PROTESTANT CHURCH - DAY

A REVEREND, bored and slightly angry, orates to the small funeral congregation. A casket with a framed photo of GEORGE (50s), Ishmael's dad, a chubby guy smiling holding a taxidermied parrot.

In the front row, Ishmael sits with Trudy, Danica, and AUNT CECILA (40s), a ridiculous woman who is crying way too much.

REVEREND
 ...and today we remember George,
 not just as a talented accountant
 and taxidermist, but as a beloved
 husband and father who leaves
 behind his beautiful wife Trudy, a
 loving sister Cecilia, and existing
 son Ishmael.

Ishmael looks at his mother. As he does so, he notes --

Patience and Charlie sheepishly enter the church, a little late, sitting in the back. Patience makes eye contact and gives Ishmael a warm, sympathetic grimace.

REVEREND (CONT.)
 I understand you had some words,
 Trudy?

Trudy nods and stands. Ishmael grabs her hand, steadying her, and mouth "you sure?". She nods and walks to the lectern.

TRUDY
 Some of you know my husband through
 his work only, and that's okay.
 Some of you through his lifelike
 but creative stuffed tropical
 parrots, and that's okay, too. But
 I knew George...

Trudy wipes away a tear.

TRUDY (CONT.)

My whole life is about George and
he was all and none of those
things. If it weren't for him I
wouldn't have my son, and..

(way too long a pause)

I just miss my husband. Thank you.

She sits back down. Danica pats Trudy on the back.

Ishmael, instead, looks back. He looks right at Charlie.

EXT. TRUDY'S HOME - BACK YARD - WAKE - DAY

A handful of the funeral CONGREGANTS now loiter in Trudy's backyard, a luscious green space with canapes and hundreds of **LOOMING STUFFED TROPICAL BIRDS**.

Ishmael walks through the crowd. A few RELATIVES comfortingly smile at him as he passes. Danica approaches, stopping him.

DANICA

Where are you going?

ISHMAEL

I just need a break.

DANICA

Do you need me?

ISHMAEL

No, I'm fine.

DANICA

Okay. Your cousin is telling me
about how Crossfit might have saved
your Dad.

ISHMAEL

(smiling)

From a lightning strike?

DANICA

No, I think she means, like, if he
was doing Crossfit instead of
golfing he might have survived...

Ishmael shakes his head, amused, and walks towards the house.

INT. TRUDY'S HOUSE - ISHMAEL'S OLD ROOM - DAY

Ishmael, forlorn, sits on his childhood bed. He looks at three hangings on the wall: one is a semi-ironic *Cosby Show* poster, a *Usual Suspects* poster featuring Kevin Spacey prominently, and another poster for an early Louis C.K. special.

ISHMAEL

Hmmm...

Ishmael stands, removing each poster dutifully. There's a knock at the door.

Charlie enters tentatively.

PATIENCE

Hey...

ISHMAEL

Oh. Hey .
(beat)

Thank you for coming. You didn't have to.

Charlie sits on the bed with Ishmael.

CHARLIE

Whatcha doin'?

ISHMAEL

Oh, you know. Just bringing my bedroom into 2020. I'm surprised I didn't have an Annie Hall poster up here, too.

CHARLIE

If it helps, Annie Hall is the least creepy of his movies.

ISHMAEL

Where's Patience?

CHARLIE

Being roped into a pyramid scheme by one of your family members.

ISHMAEL

Oh yeah. They all love their multi-level-marketing.

Charlie nods. Then...

CHARLIE

How are you?

ISHMAEL

I'm...I dunno. I just feel like...watching my Mom kills me. It does. But I aspire to that. I wanna be that sad about *anyone* at some point, you know?

CHARLIE

I guess.

ISHMAEL

I'll never miss anyone they way my mom misses my dad.

Charlie tenderly rubs Ishmael's arm.

CHARLIE

First of all, I don't believe you. There's so many people who care about --

ISHMAEL

No, not *that*. I know that. But there's no one I feel so strongly about that it'd like, *ruin* my life if they died. I thought I had that with you but you essentially went and died on me, and my life still...goes.

Charlie sighs.

CHARLIE

You're young.

He kisses Ishmael, a quick peck on the cheek. He tries to cheer him up --

CHARLIE (CONT)

Hey, I don't know if you'll be back in the city by then, by my cast-mate invited me a comedy show he's headlining on Wednesday, and I don't have anyone to go with. Patience hates comedy and says it's "theater for the kids that beat up the theater kids".

Ishmael smiles.

ISHMAEL

I should be back in the city by then.

CHARLIE

Okay. Are you sure you don't have to stay in Jersey? Like, for your family?

Ishmael shakes his head, lying.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

I'll text you.

INT. TRUDY'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Trudy, Danica and Ishmael farewell the last of the MOURNERS as they exit the front door.

DANICA/TRUDY/ISHMAEL

Bye./Thanks./Love, you/You, too/etc.

Trudy turns and exits to the Den. Ishmael checks the time on his phone.

DANICA

Hey, I'm gonna go and try to get a late train. Love you.

ISHMAEL

Wait. Just wait a sec.

Ishmael walks towards the Den. Danica follows him.

THE DEN

Ishmael approaches Trudy, who sits forlorn and exhausted on the sofa in the detritus of the wake. Danica watches from the doorway.

ISHMAEL

Mom...?

TRUDY

Yes, honey?

ISHMAEL
I'm gonna back to the city now.
With Danica.

Trudy seems shocked.

TRUDY
Oh. I thought...?

ISHMAEL
I know. I, um, I just can't afford
to take time off work. I might end
up with a writing credit if I go in
this week.

TRUDY
You can't write from here?

ISHMAEL
Sorry, Mom.

He kneels down and hugs her.

ISHMAEL (CONT)
I love you.

Trudy looks around at the empty house, alone.

TRUDY
Love you, too.

Danica is disgusted. Ishmael waves sadly and exits the room,
grabbing his bags.

Danica looks back at Trudy, who is deeply sad.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

On the last train into the city, Danica and Ishmael sit
across from each other. Danica is distant, texting on her
phone.

Ishmael watches as the city appears in the distance.

ISHMAEL
Danica. Danica.

She looks up.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)
Are you mad at me?

Danica crosses her arms.

DANICA
How could you do that to your Mom?

ISHMAEL
Do what?

DANICA
Just leave her.

ISHMAEL
I have a job. I can't just stay in
Jersey.

DANICA
Shut up. You're a liar. That's not
it.

Ishmael looks away.

ISHMAEL
What do you want from me?

DANICA
You're a dick. I don't like you
right now.

ISHMAEL
Whatever.

DANICA
My parents are dead, Ishmael. I
can't even imagine doing what you
just did.

ISHMAEL
Oh --

DANICA
What I would give for my Mom to be
there when my son is born --

ISHMAEL
"Son"? Bridgett's having a boy?

DANICA
Yes! I told you this, Ishmael. You
don't even listen to me!

ISHMAEL
I do --

DANICA

You don't even treat me like a person. I'm like a fucking sounding board for you or something. Like I just hear all your crazy and absorb it for you.

ISHMAEL

That's not true --

Danica stands up. She grabs her bag.

DANICA

Sorry about your Dad.

Danica walks away pointedly.

Ishmael stares out the window.

CUT TO:

TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "*Chapter 6: It's Me, Your Baby Brother*"

INT. JESSICA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The shades are drawn and it's dark. Jessica and Ishmael sit before Jessica's laptop on the coffee table, both very stoned. Jessica passes a bong to to Ishmael.

ISHMAEL

I can't believe I've known you for nearly two months and you never told me about this medical-grade.

JESSICA

Yeah. Congenital bone illness rules.

Ishmael takes a hit.

JESSICA (CONT.)

Sorry I didn't come to your Dad's funeral. I just wasn't sure whether I'd known you long enough and, y'know, awkward.

ISHMAEL

It's okay. Church had stairs.

Jessica looks at the time.

JESSICA
Refresh the page. It's 8 PM.

Ishmael refreshes the browser. "Breadtube.com"'s homepage. Upon refreshing, it reveals a link: "New Series: Ainsworth's Practice".

ISHMAEL
It's up!

He clicks the link. An intro starts playing.

LATER

They watch the show: on-screen, Jeremy (as Ainsworth) makes a call whilst in bed with Patience (as Leanne).

JEREMY (ON-SCREEN)
"Hey, sis. It's me, your baby brother".

ISHMAEL
(proudly, to Jessica)
I pitched that line.

Jessica nods.

LATER

Jessica and Ishmael are both deeply asleep as the credits roll before them. Ishmael stirs awake, looking at his phone.

ISHMAEL
Shit!

Jessica wakes.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)
I have to go.

JESSICA
Okay. Go see your skinny white boy...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ishmael exits into the hallway. It's a city-modified apartment building for disabled people and has an elevator and ramps everywhere.

Ishmael presses the elevator button.

INT. ELEVATOR

Ishmael stands as the elevator heads down, with another RESIDENT, who uses a wheelchair.

Ishmael looks so unbelievably stoned in the light of the elevator. The Resident stares at Ishmael.

Ishmael shifts on his feet, not making eye contact.

ISHMAEL
(paranoid)
I'm friends with Jessica. That's
why I'm here.

RESIDENT
I don't know her. Why would I know
her?

The doors open.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Shitty club. Charlie sits up near the front. The headliner's started,

Ishmael pushes his way through, sitting next to Charlie.

ISHMAEL
(quietly)
Sorry.

Charlie mouths "are you stoned?" as Ishmael takes his seat. Ishmael shakes his head.

The COMEDIAN, Charlie's friend, is bombing -- hard.

He makes another joke to the crowd (I don't feel like writing a joke). SILENCE. Not even a single laugh. Someone coughs.

ISHMAEL
(whispers)
I cannot deal with how bad this is
going for your friend. And I'm
starving.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Ishmael and Charlie sit across from each other at a booth. Ishmael haphazardly butters some toast.

CHARLIE

You're starving and you ordered toast?

ISHMAEL

(through food)
Love me some toast.

CHARLIE

Are you...are you doing okay?

ISHMAEL

Yeah, I'm fine. Why?

CHARLIE

You don't seem okay.

Ishmael shrugs.

ISHMAEL

How come you're not with Patience watching the show? It just started streaming.

CHARLIE

I saw bits of it. On set. They gave Patience some dailies for her reel.

ISHMAEL

Yeah, but it's a big deal. Her first show?

CHARLIE

She's with her parents. It's all good. I'll see it. You can't tell me it's exactly groundbreaking, can you?

ISHMAEL

Well...I don't know. I like it.

CHARLIE

Okay.

Charlie picks at his food.

CHARLIE (CONT.)
 How's Danica? I didn't get a chance
 to speak to her at the funeral.

Ishmael shrugs.

ISHMAEL
 Who cares. She's not talking to me.

CHARLIE
 Why?

ISHMAEL
 Who knows? She's all weird with the
 baby thing.

Charlie nods.

CHARLIE
 I'm not eating. You wanna go?

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Charlie and Ishmael walk down the quiet street towards the
 subway.

CHARLIE
 I guess I'll see you around?

ISHMAEL
 Yeah.
 (pause)
 This didn't go as I'd hoped.

CHARLIE
 What were you hoping...?

GIRL (O.S)
 Get off me!

Charlie and Ishmael turn. Down the street, a GIRL (20s,
 maybe younger) and an older, brawny GUY (40s) are arguing.

The Guy **SHOVES** the girl hard, into a streetlight pole.

GUY
 Fuck you!

ISHMAEL
 Hey...

CHARLIE

Let's get out of here.

The Girl SLAPS the Guy's face in retaliation.

Ishmael approaches.

ISHMAEL

Is everything okay...?

The Guy turns to him.

THE GUY

Get out of here.

ISHMAEL

You can't push her.

THE GUY

She just slapped me, you see that?

ISHMAEL

Yeah, cause you pushed her.

Charlie grabs Ishmael by the arm.

CHARLIE

Come on.

THE GUY

Yeah. Listen to your boyfriend. Get going.

Ishmael ignores him, turning to the girl.

ISHMAEL

Are you okay? Do you need help?

She nods, a little teary.

THE GIRL

I'm fine.

ISHMAEL

(to the Guy)

You can't hit your daughter like that.

The Guy PUNCHES Ishmael in the chest -- hard. Ishmael falls the ground, groaning.

THE GUY
This is my girlfriend. Faggot.

The Guy takes the Girl's hand and they walk off. Charlie rushes to Ishmael's aide.

THE GUY
(to the girl)
Come on. Let's go, Quilt.

INT. ISHMAEL'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Ishmael, shirtless, is tended to by Charlie, wielding a first-aid kit. He inspects a big red mark on Ishmael's chest.

CHARLIE
It's not too bad. It might not even bruise.

ISHMAEL
I have health insurance through the show. As long as we go to a hospital in Ronkonkoma, it's covered.

CHARLIE
I don't think we need to go to hospital.

Charlie closes the first-aid kit.

CHARLIE
I'll go. Don't sleep on your stomach tonight.

ISHMAEL
Wait.

Ishmael sits up.

ISHMAEL (CONT.)
Can't you stay?

Charlie struggles with this.

CHARLIE
I --

ISHMAEL
You said Patience is at her parents'.

LATER

Ishmael and Charlie lay in bed together, spooning.

Charlie kisses Ishmael on the mark on his chest, then on the neck.

Charlie flips Ishmael over.

ISHMAEL
I thought you told me not to sleep
on my stomach. *Ha ha.*

Charlie takes off his pants, ignoring him. He kisses Ishmael again.

ISHMAEL
Hey, hey...would it be okay if...

CHARLIE
Yeah?

ISHMAEL
...we just went to sleep?

Charlie stops and lays next to him.

CHARLIE
Of course. Yeah.

Ishmael smiles. He cuddles Charlie.

CHARLIE (CONT)
I've missed you.
(then)
I've been thinking about you. Ever
since your Dad...

ISHMAEL
Hmm.

CHARLIE
What?

ISHMAEL
I can't deal with being messed with
right now.

Charlie is taken aback.

CHARLIE
I would never.

ISHMAEL

I don't know what you want from me.
You know...you *must* know...I'm in
love with you, or whatever.

CHARLIE

I know. But Patience.

ISHMAEL

You chose Patience. So why can't
you choose me?

CHARLIE

Maybe. It's not as simple with her.

ISHMAEL

Why?

CHARLIE

Because -- she's a girl.

ISHMAEL

Wow.

CHARLIE

No, I just mean -- y'know, I can
take her home to Mom and Dad and
not feel all weird and edgy the
whole time. Sorry. And if I want to
be an actor, like properly....

ISHMAEL

Shut up! Are you seriously saying
there's no gay actors right now?

CHARLIE

It's still hard to big a big actor
and be out in 2020. Look at Tom
Cruise. I mean, look at him. I've
never seen someone so tortured --

ISHMAEL

Really? I can think of, like, a
million refugees who have it worse
than Tom Cruise.

CHARLIE

-- and it's because he's keeping
this secret. And Patience is --

ISHMAEL

What? Nice?

CHARLIE
Yeah. You said that.

ISHMAEL
And what else is she? Name *one*
another thing she is.

Charlie turns away from Ishmael.

CHARLIE
(pointedly)
Goodnight.

MORNING

Ishmael wakes up. Alone.

He checks his phone. New email.

An e-vite from "Danica and Bridgett" - a baby shower. He checks the invite list -- himself, like ten others, including Patience and Charlie. He accepts the invitation.

He goes back to sleep.

CUT TO:

TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "*Chapter 7: Thinking Of Other People*"

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Patience rises to her phone alarm. Charlie stirs next to her.

CHARLIE
Turn it off. Babe.

PATIENCE
Sorry.

Patience silences the alarm, getting out of bed.

She kisses Charlie as he goes back to sleep.

EN-SUITE

Patience applies a light layer of make-up.

INT. BREADTUBE - TELEVISION SET - MORNING

Early morning. Patience, espresso in hand, walks on to set - a SKELETON crew - and wordlessly greets a P.A with a smile.

Gus approaches her, already in a huff.

GUS

Where have you been?

PATIENCE

What do you mean? I'm early.

GUS

Just go into make-up. We're already behind.

PATIENCE

How can that possibly be, Gus?
Jeremy hasn't even arrived yet.

Gus rolls his eyes, turning to walk off.

GUS

Jeremy can afford to be late...

Patience is ruffled, walking towards a make-up trailer.

MAKE-UP TRAILER

A impish MAKE-UP ARTIST applies stage make-up to Patience.

MAKE-UP ARTIST

Oh, so oily. So, so oily. Whats
going on with your oily, oily,
skin, girl?

PATIENCE

Sorry. When I'm stressed --

MAKE-UP ARTIST

It's like putting paint on a slug.
I have to call a friend for advice.

PATIENCE

I'm already late --

The Make-Up Artist dials into her phone.

MAKE-UP ARTIST

(into phone)

Hey honey, can you do a video call?
I need to show you something I've
never seen before. Yeah, some
actress.

Patience deflates.

SET - A BEDROOM

An imposing camera, CAMERA CREW, Gus, a SOUND CREW just feet away, Patience kneels -- naked but for a merkin -- before an equally nude Jeremy.

BELLA, a hippy-ish intimacy coordinator, briefs the pair right before the shoot.

BELLA

Okay, so, Patience, it's just as we
blocked okay? Nothing you're not
comfortable with.

PATIENCE

Okay, so --

BELLA

Yeah, you're eating his ass. And
it's a very important scene. And
it's equally important you don't
actually eat Jeremy's ass.

PATIENCE

Yeah, that wasn't my plan. So how
close...

GUS

Bella, out of the shot!

Bella walks away.

Patience puts on a game face.

GUS

Action!

Patience dutifully mimes eating Jeremy's ass, inches from
the real thing.

Jeremy MOANS theatrically, which causes Patience to sharply
stop.

GUS
Cut. What the fuck, Patience?
 (sighs)
 Re-set.

Bella walks back on set.

BELLA
 Okay. Let's debrief about what went
 wrong there.

INT. BREADTUBE - TELEVISION SET - LATER

Patience walks through the set, heading towards a trailer.

She passes a group of the crew crowded around a monitor, snickering. She peers over their shoulder.

They're re-watching dailies of her nude scene. One of them guffaws.

Patience, horrified, walks away.

INT. PATIENCE'S TRAILER

Patience slams the door to her trailer. Alone.

She immediately begins SOBBING. Takes a deep breath and catches herself.

Checks her make-up in the mirror.

Exits.

INT. BREADTUBE - TELEVISION SET - CRAFT SERVICES

Patience approaches Ishmael and Jessica, who are grabbing plates of food of the table.

PATIENCE
 Hey.

ISHMAEL
 Hey.

PATIENCE
 I'm so glad to see you.

JESSICA
 I'm also here...

PATIENCE
I've had the worst day. Gus --

ISHMAEL
Oh, that sucks. Hey, I'm actually on the way to set. This is the episode I wrote and I wanna see them shoot this scene.

PATIENCE
Oh. Okay.

ISHMAEL
I'll see you around.

Ishmael and Jessica walk/roll off.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - EVENING

Patience stands on the packed train car, her face in the back of a sweaty OBESE MAN's drenched t-shirt.

INT. DUMPLING RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Patience approaches the counter, speaking to a surly CASHIER.

PATIENCE
Take-out order for Patience.

The Cashier nods, passing her a take-out bag. Patience pays turns to leave. She is stopped by a chubby, trashy woman who is clearly a TOURIST with her awful KIDS.

TOURIST
Hey. Hey. I know you.

PATIENCE
I don't think so.

TOURIST
Yeah, you're on that new show on the streaming! *Ainsworth's Surgery* or something.

PATIENCE
Oh. Yeah. Hi. I'm Patience.

TOURIST
Well, oh my god, they said it'd happen in the Big Apple! Such a great show.

Patience genuinely smiles.

PATIENCE

Thank you. I'm so glad to hear.

TOURIST

Yeah, I didn't think I'd like it,
y'know, a white girl and a
nigger...

PATIENCE

Nope!

Patience quickly makes an escape. The whole restaurant is staring at her and the tourist.

INT. PATIENCE AND CHARLIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Patience and Charlie sit at the table, sharing the take-out.

CHARLIE

How was your day?

She looks up Charlie, considering him. He reads something off his phone, not really listening.

PATIENCE

It was okay.

CHARLIE

Okay.

PATIENCE

I forgot to ask, how was Julian's
comedy show last week? With
Ishmael?

CHARLIE

Oh yeah. He bombed. Not surprised.

Still reading his phone.

PATIENCE

Do you think you wanna start
watching the show with me tonight?

CHARLIE

Uh...

(puts his phone away)

Sure. I'm not busy.

He's not super enthused.

PATIENCE
Somebody recognized me tonight. At
the Dumpling Place.

CHARLIE
(genuine surprised)
Really? From the show?

PATIENCE
Yeah.

CHARLIE
How were they?

BEDROOM- LATER

Patience and Charlie watch the show on a laptop in bed. The credits roll on-screen.

CHARLIE
You were so gret, baby.

He kisses her.

PATIENCE
The second episode's out if you
wanna...?

CHARLIE
No, I'm tired. Goodnight.

PATIENCE
Alright. I'll be back in a second.

Patience gets out of bed.

EN-SUITE

Patience sits on the toilet. She reaches into a plastic bag shoved in the drawer, unwrapping it.

It's a pregnancy test. She sighs as she takes it out of the box.

CUT TO:

TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN: "Chapter 8: "We Have A History"

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Heading up-town, Patience and Charlie are dressed casual-but-nice. Patience stares out the window contemplatively. Patience has a wrapped gift in her lap.

She looks at Charlie. He's drafting a text and smiling.

PATIENCE

Who are you texting?

CHARLIE

No one.

PATIENCE

It can't possibly be no one.

CHARLIE

I don't want to argue with you. This baby shower is already going to suck. I'm barely even friends with Danica.

PATIENCE

I bet Ishmael will be there.

CHARLIE

I wouldn't bet it on it. I think they're fighting.

Patience stares at Charlie. He doesn't see.

INT. DANICA AND BRIDGETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Danica and Bridgett sit in the living room, surrounded by more MATURE LESBIAN FRIENDS and wrapped presents. And Patience and Charlie. Bridgett is now visibly pregnant.

BRIDGETT

Thanks so much everyone for coming. Make sure you have some champagne. It was expensive.

Everyone grabs a flute of champagne, Patience included.

She takes a big sip.

Danica looks uncomfortable; unsure of herself.

DANICA

Uh...do we open a present?

FRIEND #1, high-maintenance, speaks up.

FRIEND #1

Yes!

Danica picks up one present. It's Patience and Charlie's.
Her and Bridgett unwrap it. It's a boxed breast pump.

BRIDGETT

Wow! A Benet-Ramsey! These are not cheap!

PATIENCE

Yeah...

CHARLIE

It is?

DANICA

Yeah, they're all electric and made from lead-free products.

CHARLIE

They make breast-pumps with lead products?

DANICA

Lead-free.

Bridgett grabs another wrapped gift.

BRIDGETT

Thanks Charlie. Patience. Moving on...

A KNOCK at the door.

Bridgett looks around, accounting for everyone. Danica stands and walks to the door, opening it.

Ishmael is in the doorway holding a wrapped gift. Danica deflates.

ISHMAEL

You invited me.

Danica gestures inside.

DANICA

I need to speak with you.

ISHMAEL

Okay?

Ishmael enters and Danica walks him to the bedroom, closing the door. Bridgette eyes this with suspicion. The whole party is silent and indistinct bickering is now audible from the bedroom.

Charlie stands.

CHARLIE
I think I'll...help.

PATIENCE
What? Why?

CHARLIE
I dunno. I know them both.

Bridgette, frustrated, points to the bedroom.

BRIDGETTE
Just help her get rid of him,
Charlie.

CHARLIE
Uh, sure.

BEDROOM

Charlie enters. Danica and Ishmael, mid-fight, turn to him.

CHARLIE
Hi. Everyone can hear you.

ISHMAEL
Oh my god...

CHARLIE
Ishmael, come on...why would you
come here?

ISHMAEL
What do you mean? I was invited.

DANICA
It was a gesture! It meant nothing.
You weren't supposed to actually
come.

CHARLIE
Wait, you invited him?

DANICA

So?

CHARLIE

I mean, how was he supposed to know it was just a gesture? Haven't you guys been friends for like ten years? Maybe you were, like, extending an olive branch.

ISHMAEL

Exactly.

INT. DANICA AND BRIDGETT'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

Everybody's quiet, awkward, while the argument is still audible O.S.

BRIDGETTE

So, uh, Patience how are you finding the show? Danica and I were watching you last night.

PATIENCE

Oh, yeah. It's been really good. Steep learning curve, T.V.

BRIDGETT

I bet...

Another friend, FRIEND #2, starts speaking.

FRIEND #2

I just can't keep up with all the streaming platforms. It almost costs more than cable.

A conversation starts. Patience stares: Charlie has left his cell-phone behind, on the couch next to her.

She picks it up inconspicuously.

BEDROOM

It continues.

DANICA

Ishmael, you have to go.

ISHMAEL

No. I refuse. You have to be friends with me again.

DANICA

Fine. We're friends. But I still want you to go.

Ishmael points to outside the room.

ISHMAEL

You said I was going to be that baby's Godfather!

DANICA

That's not a binding contract.

ISHMAEL

Well...

Patience bursts in, leaving the door open behind her. She looks INSANE, holding an empty champagne flute and Charlie's phone.

DANICA

Oh god.

BRIDGETT (O.S)

Why is this happening? *My baby shower!*

PATIENCE

I knew you guys were fucking!

DANICA

Who?

PATIENCE

Charlie and Ishmael.

CHARLIE

Woah.

ISHMAEL

Uh...

Ishmael looks to Danica, pleading.

DANICA

Ishmael, I'm not helping you.

PATIENCE

Danica, you *knew*? You didn't warn me?

DANICA

What? I don't know you like that.

CHARLIE

Babe, stop.

Charlie reaches out, trying to placate Patience like an unsettled horse. She jerks away from his grip.

PATIENCE

Fuck off!

She turns to Ishmael, livid. He is terrified.

PATIENCE

You! I sought you out to make *friends* and you do this to me?

ISHMAEL

I don't owe you anything.

DANICA

(to Ishmael)

Okay, I know I said I wouldn't help you, but you really shouldn't double down right now.

PATIENCE

You owe me general human courtesy.

ISHMAEL

Where was *my* courtesy when you ended my three year relationship?

PATIENCE

Oh, yeah. You guys were going strong before I became involved, right? Charlie tells me -- you're a narcissist!

ISHMAEL

(looks to Charlie)

What? That can't be true! I hate myself!

Outside the bedroom, guests are heard awkwardly making their exit.

BRIDGETT (O.S)
 Don't go, you guys, this'll be over soon.

Ishmael's phone rings. He looks at it.

ISHMAEL
 Everybody stop, it's my agent.

Everybody stops.

ISHMAEL (CONT)
 (into phone)
 Hello?...Yeah?...Really?...That's awesome!...Definitely...Yes, send it to me. Okay. Bye.

He hangs up.

ISHMAEL (CONT)
 I think I might be getting staffed in L.A.

CHARLIE
Really?

PATIENCE
 Good for you! You're a piece of shit.

ISHMAEL
 Wow, okay. Where were we?

PATIENCE
 Charlie - you have to pick.

CHARLIE
 Pick?

PATIENCE
 It's me or Ishmael.

CHARLIE
 Uh...

PATIENCE
 Oh my god!

CHARLIE
 Ishmael and I have a history, okay?

PATIENCE
Whatever! Fuck you both!

Patience goes to leave. She's crying.

ISHMAEL
She's being so dramatic.

Charlie stops her, grabbing her arm.

CHARLIE
I didn't say I picked him, okay?

PATIENCE
You didn't have to.
(pause)
If you want to come with me right
now, I need you tell me you'll
never speak to him again and we can
work this out.

Charlie slowly drops her arm. He shakes his head.

PATIENCE (CONT.)
Okay. Question answered.

Patience walks away. She stops in the doorway, turning to
Charlie.

PATIENCE (CONT.)
I don't mean this to be like,
getting the last word. But I'm
pregnant. I'm getting an abortion.
Just thought you'd want to know.

Patience exits.

Charlie, Ishmael, and Danica stand silently - stunned.

Ishmael approaches Charlie, grabbing his hand.

ISHMAEL
Well, at least you have me.

Ishmael smiles. Charlie doesn't.

Danica shakes her head.

DANICA
You guys are so hard to watch,
honestly.

ISHMAEL
 Wait, are we still friends? You
 said we were friends again.

DANICA
 What? No. No way. Get out of my
 house.

INT. DANICA AND BRIDGETT'S APARTMENT - SOON AFTER

Ishmael and Charlie walk through the apartment, ashamed.
 Bridgett glares at them - furious.

EXT. UPTOWN - NIGHT

Ishmael and Charlie stand on the street in complete silence.
 Ishmael hails a passing cab wordlessly.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

They both hop in the back. The CABBIE speaks.

CABBIE
 Where?

Ishmael looks at Charlie. Charlie has no capacity to speak.

ISHMAEL
 Uh...Washington Heights I guess.

They continues to sit in silence.

Ishmael grabs Charlie's hand again.

ISHMAEL
 So...my cousin owns an apartment
 building in West Hollywood.

CHARLIE
 Uh huh.

ISHMAEL
 So I could get cheap rent.

CHARLIE
 That's good.

ISHMAEL
Does that...sound like a plan?

CHARLIE
Sorry. I just can't think about
things like that right now. I'm a
bit numb.

Ishmael nods.

He stares out the window.

ISHMAEL
So...what now?

They look at each other.

CUT TO BLACK