“WAYWARD”
(pilot)

by
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FADE IN:
EXT. APARTMENT - CHICAGO

Two police cars pull away to reveal NATALIE (22)--the girl next-door type--sitting in a ball with forehead resting on her knees.

A dapper young man, Tyler (24), bursts from the front door of the apartment behind Natalie.

TYLER
Natalie! Will you please come inside?

Natalie lifts her head to look at Tyler.

NATALIE
Are you fucking kidding? You just called the police to try and get me kicked out!

TYLER
I’m sorry. I don’t know what to do anymore.

NATALIE
Clearly! Not cheating on me would’ve been a good start.

Keeping her gaze down, Natalie gets up and blows past Tyler. She enters the apartment.

INT. APARTMENT

Frantically, Natalie moves through the apartment with Tyler trailing her.

TYLER
Maybe we shouldn’t have moved in together.

Now, in the kitchen, Natalie pauses to turn and face Tyler.

NATALIE
WHAT?! What are you talking about?

TYLER
I was scared of this happening.

NATALIE
Of what happening?

TYLER
Of hurting you.
Natalie rubs her forehead.

NATALIE
Jesus, Tyler. If you’re not ready to commit the last thing you should do is move in with someone.

TYLER
I never agreed to it!

NATALIE
What?

TYLER
You forced me!

NATALIE
Yeah. I just hopped in the fucking u-haul as it was pulling away and now SURPRISE... you’re stuck with me.

Tyler stares blankly at Natalie.

NATALIE
No! You’re just trying to justify your actions. (pause) I can’t believe I gave everything up for this.

TYLER
You didn’t give up shit!

NATALIE
Oh wow. Yeah we moved to Chicago because I was the one with a job... and friends here. (pause) No. I only had you.

Forcefully, Natalie pokes Tyler in the chest. He grabs her hand squeezes it, grits his teeth, and lets go.

TYLER
I fucking hate you!

Natalie stumbles back a couple steps and looks stunned.

TYLER
Can’t you just leave?

NATALIE
Sure, I’ll just drive away in my car that I was able to bring here.
TYLER
I’ll take you.

NATALIE
This is unbelievable.

A cell phone goes off. Natalie goes to the bedroom to check it. Tyler leans in the doorway watching her.

TYLER
Who is it?

NATALIE
No one.

TYLER
You’re lying.

NATALIE
I know.

Tyler grabs Natalie’s phone from her hand.

TYLER
Who the hell is Colin?

NATALIE
What does it matter?

Natalie reaches for her phone but Tyler swings his arm back so she can’t get it.

TYLER
You’ve been talking to other guys this whole time?

NATALIE
He’s a co-worker!

Tyler throws Natalie’s phone on the bed and exits the room.

NATALIE
(shouting)
Not someone I used to fuck!

Tyler returns with a garbage bag.

NATALIE
People from work were getting together and he--

Tyler starts stuffing clothes into the bag.
NATALIE
What are you doing?

TYLER
I’m taking you back to Michigan.

NATALIE
You are seriously acting insane.

He exits with a garbage bag full of clothes.

Natalie phones her MOTHER.

MOTHER
Hello?

NATALIE
Mom! Hi.

Natalie lies back on the bed.

MOTHER
Natalie, are you okay?

NATALIE
Why do you think something is wrong?

MOTHER
You only call when you’re not getting along with Tyler.

NATALIE
Yeah, it’s bad this time. He tried to get me kicked out by calling the police.

MOTHER
You should really think about moving back home.

NATALIE
Well… that’s why I called… he’s packing my stuff up right now.

Tyler enters the room and stands staring at Natalie.

NATALIE
I’ve gotta go, I’ll text you.

MOTHER
Ok, love you.

NATALIE
Love you too.

Natalie hangs up the phone and looks at Tyler.

Natalie: What?

Tyler: Who were you talking to?

Natalie: My mother.

Tyler: Why?

Natalie: mm... well... to let her know I am coming home.

Tyler: I don’t want you to leave.

Natalie: What?

(pause)

You literally just got done putting my shit in your car.

Tyler: I know. I know. I can go get it. Just stay, please.

Natalie: You cheated on me.

(pause)

And I’m not calling my mom back saying that was a joke.

Natalie exits the room and returns with a garbage bag and begins randomly throwing things into it. Tyler stands still.

Natalie: This will be over sooner if you help.

Natalie carries stuff out of the room.

Tyler starts packing.

Upon her return Natalie passes Tyler in the hallway silently.
Tyler exits the apartment carrying bags.

Natalie takes one last walk through the apartment and grabs a few books off a shelf in the kitchen. Once she gets to the front door she pauses, looks back at the furniture-less living room, and closes the door.

EXT. APARTMENT

A parked car with Tyler sitting in the drivers seat is in the road. Natalie joins him and they drive away in silence.

EXT. HIGHWAY
INT. TYLER’S CAR

The silence is broken for the first time by Tyler crying and banging on the steering wheel.

Natalie glances at him then stares forward again.

    NATALIE
    Can you stop? Please.
    (pause)
    I don’t want to die right now.
    Well... I kind of do, just not like...
    just stop, please.

    TYLER
    What are we doing? Why are we doing this?

    NATALIE
    You... are taking me home because you cheated on me.

    TYLER
    No!  I don’t want to, I’m turning around!

    NATALIE
    No you’re not. You’re taking me home.

    TYLER
    If you’re staying there then I’m moving back too.

    NATALIE
    I don’t think that’s a smart choice. You have a good job in Chicago.

    TYLER
    But I won’t have you.
NATALIE
You’re not going to have me regardless.

EXT. MOTHER’S HOUSE

The house is tiny but cute as it is well cared for.

Natalie’s mother is standing in the doorway as Tyler and Natalie pull into the driveway.

Natalie gets out and goes to hug her mother.

MOTHER
You okay?

NATALIE
Yeah... Yeah.

Natalie parts from her mother, walks towards the car, looks back, and waves her mother to join.

Tyler is unloading things from the trunk. Silently, Natalie and her mother help him.

INT. MOTHER’S HOUSE

The house is small and cozy. All the rooms are visible from the front doorway.

They drop everything in the front doorway.

MOTHER
(to Tyler)
Thank you.

TYLER
Yeah, see you guys.

NATALIE
Bye.

Natalie stands in the front door and watches Tyler as he closes the trunk and drives away.

She goes to the kitchen and opens the refrigerator staring into it.

MOTHER (O.S.)
You want something to eat?

NATALIE
No, I’m just admiring your full fridge.

She closes it and heads to the living room and joins her mother on the couch. She puts her face in her and hands and her mother rubs her back.

MOTHER
It’s okay Natalie… It’s going to be okay.

Natalie lifts her head.

NATALIE
No, it’s not! It’s not going to be okay! I hate him! I fucking hate him! I finally felt like I was starting something away… away from this!

Natalie looks at her mother and sees hurt in her eyes.

NATALIE
I’m sorry… I just don’t want to… I’m sick of being a burden to you.

MOTHER
You’re not a burden. You’ll figure something out.

NATALIE
Not in this black hole of a town.

MOTHER
And not with that attitude.

Natalie rolls her eyes and slouches back against the couch.

MOTHER
You made these choices.

NATALIE
What? To have my boyfriend cheat on me?

MOTHER
He cheated on you?

NATALIE
Oh. Yeah. I forgot I never told you.

MOTHER
Oh, Natalie… I’m sorry.
NATALIE
No... no... don’t be—Wait. What choices did I make?

MOTHER
Well, you chose not to go to college. It would probably be easier to get a job.

NATALIE
I’d probably still be sitting here but with a bunch of debt.

MOTHER
You would pay it off eventually.

NATALIE
Alright, my boyfriend just dumped me off. Let me deal with that first.

Natalie gets up and takes a couple steps away.

MOTHER
Just don’t wait too long to look for a job.

NATALIE
Goodnight mom.

MOTHER
Goodnight Natalie.

Natalie enters a bedroom and shuts the door. She turns on a lamp. The room is styled very simply hinting it could have once been Natalie’s.

She admires photos and mementos that line the dresser. She picks up one of the framed pictures that shows her at graduation with her mom and brother. She stares at it for a few moments, sets it down, turns out the light, and climbs into bed.

NATALIE (V.O.)
So. This is my life. 22. No college degree. No job. And I guess no boyfriend. Living with mom. The failure. The black sheep. My brother, he’s the perfect one. He followed the rules, went to college, got a good job, and never causes grief. At least I know the expectations.
INT. BAR - NIGHT

The bar has many people bustling about but Natalie sits alone. She takes a big swig from her pint of beer and sets it down.

NATALIE (V.O.)
And I will never meet them.

She makes eye contact with a creepy old guy and he winks at her. Natalie looks away in disgust.

BARTENDER
Would you like another?

NATALIE
Yes. Please.

People are talking loudly and laughing. Natalie watches them intently and is startled when a hand is placed on her shoulder.

Natalie turns to see EMMA- a short cute but ordinary girl.

NATALIE
Emma! Hi!

EMMA
It’s been so long since I’ve seen you!

They hug.

EMMA
Aren’t you supposed to be in Chicago?

NATALIE
Yeah. Well... No. I’m back here now.

EMMA
And you haven’t told me yet?

NATALIE
It’s only been a couple days. It was pretty sudden.

EMMA
Fighting with Tyler I take it?

NATALIE
You know us...
EMMA
I’m sorry—

NATALIE
No, don’t be. It’s one of those things like it’s for the better!

EMMA
Oh. Okay.

NATALIE
How are things with you? Is your little boy well?

EMMA
Yeah we’re doing alright. I’m just trying to finish up school so I can finally get a decent job.

NATALIE
I hear ya. I’m going to need a job soon, have you heard if anyone is hiring?

EMMA
Remember Marie? We went to high school with?

NATALIE
Yeah… I think so.

EMMA
She coaches gymnastics and they are looking for people.

NATALIE
I don’t know if I have the credentials. I was a flexible child… does that count?

EMMA
Oh Natalie come on… you’ve been babysitting for years.

NATALIE
I know.

EMMA
You’d be great with the kids.

NATALIE
I’ll look into it, thank you.
EMMA
Come join my parents and I for a drink.

NATALIE
I’m going to finish this then go home.

EMMA
Let’s get together soon you know smoke some--

Emma looks around quickly before pretending to smoke a joint.

NATALIE
Girl, you know me. I’ll be in touch!

Emma hugs Natalie.

EMMA
I’m glad you’re back!

After she leaves, Natalie continues to drink her beer alone.

INT. MOTHERS HOUSE

Natalie is hanging out of her bedroom window smoking a joint. The only light is a burning candle.

Footsteps are heard. Natalie stubs out the joint on the windowsill and sits quietly.

The door is locked and the latch jiggles.

MOTHER
Natalie?

There’s a light knock on the door.

NATALIE
Yeah?

MOTHER
Are you smoking weed in there?

NATALIE
What? No! Why would I be doing that?

MOTHER
It smells like weed. Come out here and see.
NATALIE
Mom. No. I’m not coming out there to see if it smells like weed.

MOTHER
Then open your door.

NATALIE
No. I’m going to bed.

MOTHER
Why won’t you open your door?

NATALIE
Because! I don’t want to!
(pause)
Goodnight!

A few moments pass before she hears her mother walk away. Natalie lets out a small sigh of relief.

Moving slowly, Natalie closes the window and blows out the candle.

INT. OFFICE OF GYMNASTICS GYM

A man, MARTY—mid 30’s, is holding a piece of paper and is sitting across a desk from Natalie.

MARTY
I see here you have an extensive background caring for kids.

NATALIE
I do.

MARTY
What about gymnastics?

NATALIE
Well... not really. I took it for a couple years when I was younger.

MARTY
Are there any skills you can still do?

NATALIE
A walk-over.

MARTY
Not bad.

Marty glances over a blank spot on the paper.
NATALIE
Sorry I didn’t fill out the section where you’re supposed to make a class plan. I honestly had no idea.

MARTY
No, it’s okay. That’s something we can teach you in the training.
(pause)
So, where do you see yourself in five years?

Natalie shrugs her shoulders.

NATALIE
Hopefully not living with my mom.

MARTY
(chuckles)
How old are you?

NATALIE
22.

MARTY
I didn’t move out of my mom’s til I was 27.

NATALIE
See. I’ve got five years!

Marty laughs.

MARTY
What about goals? Anything you want to accomplish?

NATALIE
I guess I just want to be working.
(pause)
I don’t know, I’m sorry.

She shifts uncomfortably in her chair.

MARTY
No, No… it’s okay.
(pause)
Do you still have open availability?

NATALIE
I do.
MARTY
Perfect. Is there anything you would like to ask me?

NATALIE
Yeah. When do I start?
(laughs nervously)

MARTY
Actually, I was hoping next week would work for you.

CUT TO: BLACK SCREEN

EXT. GYM PARKING LOT

Natalie walks to her car.

NATALIE (V.O.)
And that is how you land yourself a minimum wage job.

EXT. MOTHER’S HOUSE

Natalie returns home to find flowers on the front porch, she picks them up, and goes inside.

INT. MOTHER’S HOUSE

While putting the flowers in a vase she notices the attached card. It reads – “miss you bug”.

INT. TYLER’S PARENTS HOUSE

Tyler and Natalie are sitting by an open window in a bedroom passing a joint back fourth.

NATALIE
I can’t believe the first time I get flowers from you is after we break up.

TYLER
I didn’t know what I had til it was gone.

Natalie rolls her eyes.

NATALIE
Stop.

TYLER
What?
NATALIE
Being corny.

TYLER
You didn’t like the flowers?

NATALIE
I may have liked them when you were my boyfriend.
(pause)
I tried doing this at home.

TYLER
Do what?

Natalie holds up the joint.

TYLER
Oh.

NATALIE
Yeah, that was a mistake. How do your parents not smell it?

TYLER
They probably do.

NATALIE
And they don’t care?

TYLER
(grinning)
I’m an adult. I do what I want!

Natalie hits Tyler flirtatiously.

NATALIE
Yeah, like chase me around.

TYLER
I told you I would come back here.

NATALIE
Our parents must hate us.

TYLER
Mine don’t.

NATALIE
Oh jesus. Precious little Tyler.
(pause)
That turned his girlfriend into a stoner.
Tyler smiles.

NATALIE (CONT’D)
I’m really high.

TYLER
You can stay. I know you don’t like driving high.

NATALIE
This was your plan all along wasn’t it?

TYLER
(laughs)
No!

Natalie stands up and lightly smacks him in the forehead.

NATALIE
You’re such a shit head!

Natalie climbs into the bed and before she is all the way in Tyler playfully tackles her.

NATALIE
Don’t get too excited.

TYLER
I sure missed you.

They get under the covers and cuddle together.

TYLER
We could be doing this at our own place in Chicago.

NATALIE
At least here I have somewhere to go when you call the police on me.

Tyler reaches over Natalie to turn out the light and they begin kissing.

INT. MOTHERS HOUSE

In the kitchen Natalie is cooking breakfast. Her mother enters.

MOTHER
Where were you last night?

NATALIE
Why does it matter?

MOTHER
I was just asking.

Natalie, ignoring her mother, focuses on flipping the bacon.

MOTHER
I saw the flowers. I hope you weren’t at Tylers.

Natalie still ignores her mother.

MOTHER
You know the cycle. Things will be good for a few months before they explode again.

NATALIE
Mom, we aren’t together.

MOTHER
Just be smart Natalie.

NATALIE
Says the lady dating an angry British man.

MOTHER
He treats me well Natalie.

NATALIE
Mom, he can’t even show up to dinner on time.

MOTHER
That’s because he gets caught up at work.

Natalie rolls her eyes. Her mother exits the kitchen.

NATALIE
(shouting to MOTHER)
I’m going to go have a drink tonight, since you know you’re keeping tabs on me!

INT. BAR – NIGHT

The bar is full but the atmosphere is calm. Natalie and Emma sit side by side.

NATALIE
I don’t know if I’m ready for all this.

EMMA
For what?

NATALIE
To go out and see everyone we’ve ever gone to high school with.

EMMA
(to bartender)
Two whiskey shots please.

NATALIE
Oh, no. We don’t need to do that.

EMMA
Trust me, you’ll need it.

They receive the shots, cheers, and take them.

EMMA
Welcome back.

NATALIE
Ick, that was rough.

EMMA
How was Chicago?

NATALIE
You have to have money to enjoy the city and we didn’t so--

EMMA
(interrupting)
What’s going on with you guys?

NATALIE
Ughh... I don’t know.

EMMA
Are you still sleeping with him?

NATALIE
Maybe...

EMMA
NATALIE!

NATALIE
I know.
(pause)
He moved back too.

EMMA
Oh god.

Emma waves down the bartender.

EMMA
Two more shots please.

NATALIE
Emma, no.

EMMA
Natalie, yes.

They take the shots.

NATALIE
Are these shots of encouragement so you can fuck someone tonight?

EMMA
NATALE!

NATALIE
(chuckles)
Sorry...

EMMA
Some dude I met online...
(pause)
Said he would be out tonight.

NATALIE
I know you!

Emma hides her face in her hands.

NATALIE
Try not to go home with this one.

INT. LATE NIGHT BAR

There is hardly room to stand it is so busy. People are visibly drunk and many are dancing.

Emma points to a guy on the dance floor.

EMMA
That’s him!

NATALIE
Well. Go get him tiger.
Natalie hits Emma on the butt as she leaves to navigate through the crowd.

A very good-looking businessy man, RAMON (30’s), siddles up next to Natalie.

RAMON
Hola.

NATALIE
Como estas?

RAMON
Bien y tu?

NATALIE
Bien.

RAMON
Como te llamas?

NATALIE
Carmen.

RAMON
Really?

NATALIE
Yeah, you?

RAMON
Rrrramon.

NATALIE
Good job rolling your r’s.

RAMON
I’m from Mexico.

NATALIE
I’m not.

RAMON
I notcied.
(pause)
What’s your name?

NATALIE
Natalie.

RAMON
I like Carmen. Want a drink?
Natalie peers around the crowd to see Emma dancing with a
guy and clearly enjoying herself.

    NATALIE
    Yeah, let’s go get one.

Ramon is at the bar waving down a bartender, Natalie stands
behind him.

A group of three jock guys approach Natalie.

    GUY 1
    Natalie! Hey! What’s up?

Natalie gives them all high-fives.

    NATALIE
    What’s up dudes!?

    GUY 2
    I thought you were living in
    Chicago?

    NATALIE
    Yeah um... not anymore.
    (pause)
    What are you guys up to? Just bein
    bros?

They laugh. Ramon turns around and hands Natalie a drink.
He nods his head at the group of guys.

    GUY 1
    Well it was good seeing you!

    NATALIE
    You too!

The guys continue on their way.

    RAMON
    Popular girl!

    NATALIE
    Ugh, no I hate that. I grew up
    here and know everyone.
    (pause)
    What brings you to this small ass
town?

    RAMON
    Work, been here three years.

    NATALIE
Oh, that’s nice.

RAMON
Kinda. There’s not a lot to do, which makes it boring.

NATALIE
It’s real boring, imagine having to grow up here.

RAMON
What do you do for fun then?

NATALIE
You’re looking at it.

RAMON
This is not fun.

NATALIE
I know, it’s the best I’ve got.

RAMON
Do you listen to music?

NATALIE
Are you a human?

Ramon looks at her confused.

NATALIE
Yes I listen to music.

RAMON
I will take you to have fun one night. Have you heard of The XX?

NATALIE
What makes you think I would go out with a stranger? And yes I have, I listen to them a lot.

RAMON
You let a stranger buy you a drink.

Natalie grins.

RAMON
Plus I can tell you like me.

NATALIE
How?

RAMON
Because you can’t stop smiling.

NATALIE
If that’s the case then I guess you’re fond of me too. Wait, how do you know about The XX?

RAMON
What do you mean?

NATALIE
I just thought you like listened to mariachi bands or something.

Ramon grins. He grabs her hand and leads her through the bar.

NATALIE
What are you doing?

RAMON
Just come with me.

They stop in a quiet corner of the bar.

RAMON
I wanted to get you away from everyone.

NATALIE
Why?

RAMON
To try this with you.

They kiss for a few moments a little aggressively.

RAMON
Wow, that was better than--

Emma grabs Natalie by the shoulder, startling her.

EMMA
There you are!

She points at Ramon.

EMMA
Who’s this?

Natalie looks back and fourth between Emma and Ramon.

EMMA
Ok, I don’t care. We have GOT to go.
NATALIE
To where?

EMMA
That guy’s house, he invited us over!

NATALIE
I think he invited YOU over.

EMMA
He has friends! Come on! Let’s go!

NATALIE
I am not going.

EMMA
Well I am so let’s go!

NATALIE
Are you dropping me off at home?

EMMA
Yes! Hurry up!

Emma staggers away.

RAMON
Is she okay to drive?

NATALIE
Yeah she’ll be fine.

Emma comes back to grab Natalie by the wrist and pulls her away.

NATALIE
(silently mouths to Ramon)
I am so sorry!

Ramon half-heartedly waves.

INT. RESTAURANT

Natalie and Tyler sit across from one another in a booth.

NATALIE
Did you shower today? Your hair looks silly.

TYLER
Why, what’s wrong with it?
NATALIE
It’s sticking up all over the place.

Tyler runs his finger through his hair and puts a hat on. Natalie gives him a thumbs-up.

NATALIE
Did you find a job yet?

TYLER
I’m just going to do construction with Tom for now.

NATALIE
Well, that’s good. At least it’s money!

TYLER
Yeah, I guess.

NATALIE
Hey, you wanted to come back here!

The waiter approaches their table.

WAITER
Are you guys ready to order?

NATALIE
(to Tyler)
Are you ready?

TYLER
Are you?

NATALIE
Yeah.

TYLER
Are we sharing something?

Natalie looks back and fourth between the waiter and Tyler.

NATALIE
(to WAITER)
I’m sorry, could we please have a couple more minutes.

WAITER
Sure, no problem.
Thank you.

Waiter leaves.

TYLER
Don’t we usually split something?

NATALIE
WE. Are not together.

TYLER
Then why are we hanging out?

NATALIE
Because you asked! I thought we could be friends.

A group of business-men walk by, one being Ramon. He nods his head at Natalie.

TYLER
Who the hell was that?

NATALIE
I don’t know. He must have confused me with someone else.

CUT TO: BLACK SCREEN.

FADE OUT.