THE BEAUTY OF IT ALL

Written by

K. Juliana

2186 Leeds Ct.
Miamisburg, Oh 45342
937-232-9794

FADE IN:

INT. RILEY HOUSE, SYD’S ROOM - MORNING

A plain room, no posters, no remnants of personality. A suitcase has yet to be unpacked in the corner of the room. SYD, (athletic build, dyke, obviously a basketball player) 22, lies sprawled across the bed. Her face hanging off the mattress inches from the floor.

INT. RILEY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - SAME

MRS. RILEY, 40s , straightens up an already spotless living room as she instructs MR. RILEY, 40s sharply dressed, on where to rearrange furniture.

MRS. RILEY
Move the couch towards the wall, and l et’s get that table from downstairs and set up a spades table over here.

Mr. Riley moves couch, a grueling task to do with no help. Mrs. Riley walks over and examines the placement of the couch, she’s not satisfied.

MRS. RILEY (CONT'D)
You know what,

Mr. Riley throws his hands up in aggravation.

MR. RILEY
Kay, the couch is staying right here. They can play spades in the dining room alright?

Mr. Riley walks into the kitchen. Mrs. Riley takes one more look at the arrangement and gives in.

MRS. RILEY
Alright, fine.

Mr. Riley grabs a bottle of Advil and takes a dose.

MRS. RILEY (CONT'D)
I think it’ll be better the other way.

MR. RILEY
And I think you’re trying to kill me.

Mr. Riley looks at his watch, he’s pressed for time.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)
I’ll see you tonight.

MRS. RILEY
Don’t be late. And don’t forget the cake.

MR. RILEY
I told you I can’t grab the cake.

MRS. RILEY
I can’t either

MR. RILEY
Syd can get it.

Mrs. Riley gives Mr. Riley a look.

MR. RILEY (CONT'D)
Look, she can handle picking up a cake-

Syd emerges lethargically.

SYD
Where’s breakfast. In rehab they make a spread every morning.

MRS. RILEY
Well this ain’t no damn rehab. The only way you get breakfast in this house is if you’re up before noon.

MR. RILEY
Syd, we need you to pick up the cake for your sister’s party tonight.

Syd nods as she yawns.

SYD
Okay.

Mr. Riley kisses Mrs. Riley and prepares to leave.

SYD (CONT'D)
I just need some money.

Mr. and Mrs. Riley share a look of concern.

SYD (CONT'D)
Not like that. I just need gas. I was gonna swing by the gas station and see if I could talk to Vanessa about getting my job back. And I wanted some cigarettes.

MRS. RILEY
I don’t support nicotine habits.

SYD
Ma, please I’m gonna find a job. I promise. I’ve been in the house since I’ve been home. Let me out for once.

Mrs. Riley’s phone RINGS. She looks down at it.

MRS. RILEY
Your dad can follow you to the gas station and fill your car up.

MRS. RILEY (CONT'D)
The party starts at 6:30. I need that cake here by 6.

SYD
Okay.

Mrs. Riley looks Syd directly in the face, serious, no nonsense.

MRS. RILEY
You go fill out job applications and pick up the cake. Do not make me have to come find you. Not today. It’s your sister’s day. I will put my foot so far up your ass it will turn you in the right direction.

SYD
Noted.

Mr. Riley looks at his watch, he waits for Mrs. Riley to head out the door, then pulls out $50 from his wallet.

MR. RILEY
All I can do is trust you. This better not go up your nose or in your arm. Do you understand me?

Syd scout signs and salutes.

SYD
You run a tight ship Darryl, but I'm on board.

Mr. Riley hands Syd the money, fear quickly consumes his face.

SYD (CONT'D)
I'm good dad. I can handle it. I'll get the cake, I'll come right back. It's a new chapter.

Mr. Riley looks away, he kisses Syd's forehead and leaves.

I/. SYD'S CAR, GAS STATION - SAME DAY

Syd pulls up to a pump as she finishes off a cigarette. She puts it out.

INT. GAS STATION - SAME

Syd enters and stands in line.

SYD
Is Vanessa here?

CASHIER 1
Vanessa who?

SYD
The manager Vanessa?

CASHIER 1
What manager Vanessa?

Syd is very annoyed. CASHIER 2 walks over from stocking supplies.

CASHIER 2
She's new here. Vanessa should be in any minute if you want to wait.

Syd nods.

SYD
Can you tell her Syd's waiting for her? Syd Riley.

CASHIER 2
(wary)
Oh I remember you Syd. Vanessa does too.

Syd doesn't know if that's a good or bad thing. She walks over to the candy and looks around, waiting.

NIKKI, early 20s obviously on drugs, enters. Syd notices her and curses under her breath. She gently puts the candy back, as if Nikki would be able to hear any movement she makes. She watches as Nikki grabs a bottle of water and v lines to the bathroom. But the door is locked, Syd decides to make her escape.

CASHIER 2 (CONT'D)
Syd, you're not gonna wait?

Syd glares at Cashier for blowing her cover. Nikki notices Syd and walks over. A smiles crosses Syd's face

SYD
Oh, hey.

Syd goes in for a hug. Nikki shoves Syd.

NIKKI
Are you serious! You weren't gonna tell me you were back?

SYD
(lying)
I was. I got a different phone. It didn't save my contacts.

NIKKI
Bullshit. What are you doing?

SYD
Nothing.

NIKKI
(grins)
I got something for you, a welcome home present.

SYD
I can't.

NIKKI
Just drop me off at my place then.

Syd looks around.

SYD
You didn't walk here.

FROM THE WINDOW OF THE STORE WE SEE: TWO GUYS, bummy and impatient, watch Syd and Nikki as they talk, they are waiting for her to come back. They're not the safest.

SYD (CONT'D)
I'm not getting out the car. I'm dropping you off. Its my sisters graduation party today. I can't be fucking off.

INT. HOTEL, MOMENTS LATER

Syd walks around the hotel room, contemplating a way out of the situation.

SYD
I gotta go. I gotta pick up a cake.

Nikki looks up from her shot and gives Syd a knowing smile.

NIKKI
Where else do you honestly want to be right now besides here with me?

Syd's eyes dart towards the door.

Nikki finishes her shot and gestures Syd the rig.

NIKKI (CONT'D)
Here baby. It's just a little bit. But if you want, we can go get more.

SYD V.O
You want to know about selfishness, Self-centeredness. The physical fucking allergy- Well, here it is. Pay attention.

Syd sits down and grabs the rig.

SYD
I'm just doing a little bit.

INT. RILEY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - 8 P.M

Friends and family are spread around the house. A spades game is in full effect, people mingle around laughing and drinking. SYMONE, 18, socializes with her friends and family enjoying herself.

Mr. Riley enters and greets as many people as he can, making his way to Mrs. Riley who is cleaning the kitchen.

MR. RILEY
I made it.

MRS. RILEY
Just barely, where's your daughter?

MR. RILEY
She's not here yet?

MRS. RILEY
No. Call her, we're supposed to cut the cake soon.

Mr. Riley grabs his phone and dials Syd's number.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, - SAME

Syd, Nikki, and two other JUNKIES sit around getting high. Syd's phone RINGS. Syd does her best to stay alert while she answers the phone

SYD
(strung out)
Yeah?

MR. RILEY O.S
Where are you?

SYD
I'm, I stopped at a meeting.

MR. RILEY O.S
Get here. Now. Don't make me look for you.

Syd hangs up the phone and does her best to sober up.

SYD
Shit!

She stands up and nearly falls over. She searches for her car keys frantically.

NIKKI
(strung out)
Where are you going baby?

SYD
I gotta get the cake.

NIKKI
Why do you need a cake?

SYD
It’s my sister’s graduation party I gotta go get this fucking cake.

NIKKI
They’re closed.

SYD
What?!

NIKKI
It’s almost 9 just sit down you don’t need to drive.

SYD
(frantic)
No. No I gotta go get this fucking cake. They asked me to do one thing.

Syd cannot find her keys, even though they sit right on the bed next to her. Unsettled, Syd punches the wall.

SYD (CONT'D)
Fuck!!

Nikki hands her the keys and she quickly stumbles out the hotel room.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - CONTINOUS

Syd stumbles to her car, clearly too high to function.

SYD
Fuck me dude!!

Syd kicks her car, knowing she’s too fucked up to drive. PHONE RINGS, Syd begins to panic. She answers.

SYD (CONT'D)
I’m on my way.

Syd hangs up before questions can be asked.

I/E. SYD’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Syd pulls up to the house and parks across the street. She sits in the car contemplating.

Syd grabs her syringe out the dashboard, its already loaded, she does another shot.

EXT. RILEY HOUSE, FRONT YARD - SAME

Syd does her best to keep from stumbling as she makes it to the front yard. REGGIE and TY sit on the front porch smoking cigars and LAUGHING, in a conversation of their very own. They notice Syd.

REGGIE
That Sydney?

Syd takes one last step and falls unconscious on the ground. Reggie jumps up and runs to her side. Ty opens the front door.

TY
(panic-stricken)
Auntie!! Uncle Darryl!!

Reggie reaches Syd and checks her pulse and breathing.

REGGIE
She ain't breathing!

Mr. Riley and Mrs. Riley race outside. Family makes their way outside. Symone makes her way past them and gets a front row view as Mr. And Mrs. Riley panic at Syd's side.

MR. RILEY
(frantic)
Call 911!!

Mrs. Riley, hands trembling can barely keep the phone in her hand as she talks to dispatcher.

MRS. RILEY
(hysterical)
My daughters not breathing!! 5121 Camden Drive. Please dear God she's not breathing!! She's not breathing!!

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL, HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Syd lies on a hospital bed. HEART MONITOR BEEPS, IV flows, a hollow expression on her face. She is numb.

Outside the room Mr. And Mrs. Riley can be heard arguing.

MRS. RILEY O.S
(in tears)
I told you not to let her out the got damn house Darryl!! I told you!

MR. RILEY O.S
So this is my fault!!

Syd wipes tears from her eyes.

DOCTOR, 50s, enters, relief on his face that she's alive.

DOCTOR
We didn't think you were going to make it this time.

Syd nods.

SYD
(hoarse, disingenuous)
Lucky me.

Doctor takes a seat at the edge of her bed.

DOCTOR
22. No prior conditions, your health, some of my patients would kill for. I saw a woman this morning who was 56 with pancreatic cancer. Admitted her to oncology. She's probably got about (ponders) three weeks to live.

Syd nods in disinterest.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
But I'm certain, I would put my license on the fact that you're the one that's going to be first to the morgue.

Doctor hands Syd her discharge papers, leaving her to process. Anger consumes her, she throws the papers at the door.

INT. RILEY HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mr. And Mrs. Riley enter. Mrs. Riley slams her purse down and tries to catch her composure. Syd guilt ridden, trails behind them. Symone enters from the living room, eyes red from tears of embarrassment.

SYMONE
What the fuck is she doing here!

MR. RILEY
Symone!

SYMONE
No! She can keep ruining yall's lives but I'm tired of her ruining mine.

Syd glares at Symone.

SYD
I ruin your life-

SYMONE
You ruin everybody's life! You make mama and daddy miserable! Rehab after rehab! Because they can't fucking realize that all you are is a dope fiend that's gonna die before your 25!

SYD
Fuck you-

Symone charges at Syd. Mr. Riley catches her before she can get close enough. She still tries to swing, Syd dodges and throws her phone at her. Mrs. Riley turns away, too distraught to mediate.

SYMONE
Really! Mama you really not gone say nothing! You really not tired of this shit!

MR. RILEY
Symone! Stop!

SYMONE
No, daddy!! She's fucking hopeless. And I'm tired of the world revolving around Syd because Syd can't get over the fact that that girl is dead and it's her fault-

Syd charges at Symone, too fast for Mr. Riley to stop. The two exchange blows. Mrs. Riley falls to the ground in distress and anguish. Mr. Riley does his best to fight back the tears as he tries to pull one daughter off of the other. Symone gets away from his grip.

SYMONE (CONT'D)
Just fucking die already.

Symone storms upstairs. Syd laughs to keep from crying. Mr. Riley helps Mrs. Riley up from the ground.

MR. RILEY
Syd.

Syd rubs her cheek, newly aware of the strike that she endured on it.

SYD
I didn’t start that shit daddy.

Mr. Riley shakes his head.

MR. RILEY
Get your stuff.

SYD
What?

MR. RILEY
(exasperated)
Get your stuff! Get your clothes, your tooth brush. Get it and put it in a bag.

SYD
For what?

MR. RILEY
We can’t do this anymore. Look at your mother! We can’t. We can’t keep living like this. We try. We gave you every opportunity we could. Took you to every therapist and out patient program and rehab, but you won’t stop. And we can’t. I can’t.

Syd looks at Mr. Riley in affliction.

SYD
Daddy, come on. I didn’t mean to do that much. I’ll quit. For real this time!

MR. RILEY
Go Sydney. Pack your stuff.

SYD
Ma,

Sydney gravels at Mrs. Riley's feet.

SYD (CONT'D)
Mommy please. Don't give up on me.

Mrs. Riley looks away.

MRS. RILEY
(hoarse)
Sydney.. Go.

Devastated, Sydney takes off DOOR SLAMS behind her.

INT. DOCTOR PETER'S OFFICE, EXAM ROOM - DAY

Kailey sits on the exam table dressed in a gown. AMBER sits, nervously, her leg shaking trying to calm herself.

KAILEY
Mom, do you think we can still make it to the Vipers meeting?

AMBER
I don't know. Let's, finish one task before we start another one.

KAILEY
I know for sure that Railyn and Brittany will get a spot. Jasymn will because her dad's the coach. Taylor will because she's tall. But none of them are as fast as me and none of them can get as many rebounds as I can. Not even Taylor-

KNOCK ON DOOR. AMBER's eyes shoot up towards the door with fear. DOCTOR PETERS, late 40s, enters with an infectious grin on his face.

DOCTOR PETERS
Where's my favorite patient.

Kailey jumps off the exam room and gives Doctor Peter's a bear hug.

KAILEY
Are you happy to see me?

DOCTOR PETERS
What kind of question is that? Come on, when I saw that you were on my schedule I was so excited I slept in my office all night.

AMBER smiles. Kailey laughs.

KAILEY
All night?

DOCTOR PETERS
All night. Actually I might need you to call my wife and vouch for me. She might've thought I just ducked out on our anniversary because I forgot to buy her a present.

Doctor Peters winks at AMBER and shakes her hand.

DOCTOR PETERS (CONT'D)
How are you AMBER?

AMBER
We're good. She's been doing really well.

DOCTOR PETERS
That's good. But I asked how *you* were doing.

AMBER
Good.

Doctor Peters nods.

DOCTOR PETERS
Good.

He washes his hands and takes a seat on his stool, he looks through Kailey's chart.

KAILEY
Doctor Peters can we make this fast? I have a very important meeting with the Vipers in an hour and I can't miss it.

DOCTOR PETERS
Vipers meeting huh? You going out for the team this year?

AMBER
If everything checks out, we're considering-

KAILEY
I'm fine. I feel fine and I will be trying out.

AMBER
It's a discussion for sure.

KAILEY
It's more than a discussion. You said that if I got back healthy I could and I am!

AMBER
Kailey-

Doctor Peters nods his head and intervenes.

DOCTOR PETERS
Listen, Kailey. I know how much you love basketball. Your mom just wants to make sure that when you do join the Vipers, which you will because I have faith in you, that you can perform to the top level that's required of you. It's like Lebron James. If he's got a sprained ankle, he can't go out there and put up the numbers he could if he had a healthy ankle right?

Kailey, arms crossed, nods while looking at the wall she's discouraged. Doctor Peters smiles and taps her knee. He skims through her chart again and looks at AMBER.

DOCTOR PETERS (CONT'D)
You mind if we take a walk?

AMBER gets up and grabs her purse. Doctor Peters puts the TV on ESPN.

DOCTOR PETERS (CONT'D)
Why don't you check out the high lights of the game last night.

Kailey nods. AMBER kisses Kailey's head and follows Doctor Peters out the door.

INT. DOCTOR PETER’S OFFICE, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

AMBER and Doctor Peters walk the corridor.

AMBER
Is it back?

DOCTOR PETERS
There’s a recurrence.

AMBER dismayed, takes a seat.

DOCTOR PETERS (CONT'D)
It’s actually very common in the type of Lymphoma that Kailey has. We caught it early.

AMBER
What do we do?

DOCTOR PETERS
(clears his throat)
She’ll have to do another round of chemo. We’ll see how she responds and from there we’ll make adjustments as we need to.

He takes off his glasses and looks into her eyes.

DOCTOR PETERS (CONT'D)
I know she’s tired of this. As kid, my biggest problem was my summer trip to Disney World being postponed because my grandmother died. I thought that was the end of the world.

Dr. Peters reflects.

DOCTOR PETERS (CONT'D)
I can’t imagine how this is for her.

AMBER
Basketball Is the only thing that she has right now. (in tears) She has her heart set on the Vipers. You’re telling me that I have to go in there and tell her she can’t do it?

AMBER gets up and runs her hands through her hair.

DOCTOR PETERS
Actually, working out and exercise can help boost her immune system. Which would be a huge plus. Look, if this Vipers deal is giving her motivation, and if the side effects aren't so several that she can't play ball...I don't see a reason why she can't try out. If it's giving her a reason to fight. Then, let's suit up and fight.

AMBER nods.

MONTAGE:

INT. MOTEL, ROOM - NIGHT

Syd sits on the bed as she makes a shot.

I/E. CAR - NIGHT

Nikki drives as Syd, sits in the passenger seat. Her arm out the window, slapping the wind.

INT. MOTEL, ROOM, - DAY

In bed, Nikki rest her back against Syd's chest as Syd nods out with a cigarette in her hand. She burns her thigh.

INT. MOTEL, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Syd and Nikki lie in the bathtub Nikki is asleep, her back resting on Syd. Syd is hollow and numb. She smokes a cigarette not even caring enough to ash it. She looks down at her arm.

CLOSER ON SYD'S ARMS

They are covered with track marks and miss marks.

INT. MOTEL, ROOM - DAY

Syd sits on the edge of the bed falling out. She can't catch herself fast enough and falls on her face.

INT. MOTEL, BATHROOM - NIGHT

Syd sits in the corner of the bathroom floor, her head resting on the wall. As she smokes a cigarette, high and miserable.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. HOTEL, ROOM - MORNING

Syd, high, enters the hotel room and hands Nikki a bag of dope. She looks at the amount in the bag and glares at Syd.

NIKKI
You fucking did some.

SYD
(lying)
No I didn't.

NIKKI
Do you think I'm fucking stupid there's no way thats a 50 piece.

Syd and Nikki continue to argue but it is inaudible. The argument gets intense. Nikki pushes Syd who defensively laughs.

EXT. MOTEL - SAME

SYD AND NIKKI YELLING can be heard outside the hotel room. NEIGHBOR exits his hotel room and BANGS on door.

NEIGHBOR
I'm sick of this shit! Its every night!

Door swings open, as Syd is shoved out the room by Nikki. She throws Syd's book bag which hits her nearly knocking her over. Neighbor pitifully looks at Syd as DOOR SLAMS behind her. Syd kicks the door and walks off.

INT. BUS - SAME

Syd sits on the bus with her head leaning on the window. She people watches.

SYMONE O.S
Just fucking die already.

Tears stream down Syd's face.

Syd searches "best places to kill yourself" on her phone. It gets redirected to a site that lists the prettiest cities. She clicks on Savannah, Ga. She googles the price of a greyhound bus ticket to Savannah. Its $294. Syd reaches in her pocket to reveal around $20 in small bills. More tears fall. She pulls out her phone and calls "Stoner".

SYD
(into phone)
Can you meet me somewhere?

Syd looks out the window. A park sits across the street. She signals a stop on the bus.

SYD (CONT'D)
Meet me at the park on Burnett.

INT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Syd sits on the bench, distraught lost in thought. STONER, 40s drug dealer, walks over and sits next to her.

STONER
You can't answer your fucking phone?

Syd grabs her phone out her back pocket.

SYD
I didn't hear it ring.

Stoner looks around, when the coast is clear he pulls out a bag of dope and a clean syringe and hands it to Syd.

STONER
How long you been out?

SYD
Where's the water?

Stoner hands Syd a bottle of water. She makes her shot as they talk.

STONER
I thought this time was gone be the last time.

Syd laughs.

SYD
Yeah. I thought I was gonna be something other than an heroin addict. Sometimes you get what you get and you don’t throw a fit.

STONER
You better than this Syd.

SYD
Is this how you talk to all your junkies or am I just special?

Stoner shakes his head and leaves.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

The school day is finished. Parents wait in a carpool as kids congregate outside and wait for their ride.

Kailey stands off to herself, a basketball in her hand and headphones in as she prepares to walk home from school. Amber’s car pulls up and stops, Kailey notices her mother and walks over to the car.

AMBER
Hey stranger.

I/E. AMBER’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kailey, earbuds in, arms crossed pierced with hurt and anger stares out the window. Amber’s eyes dart between Kailey and the road. She wants to say something to make it better, but knows she can’t. It’s more painful for her not to try.

AMBER
(softly)
Kailey.

Kailey, clearly hearing her name, turns even more towards the window.

AMBER (CONT'D)
(defeated)
Kailey, I don’t like it either. But it’s what we have to do.

KAILEY
I don’t have to!!

AMBER
Yes you do!!

KAILEY
No!! I’m tired of surgery and I’m tired of chemo and I don’t want to do it anymore!

AMBER
(frightened and frustrated)
Well you have to!! And you’re doing it!

Amber stops at a stop sign and Kailey full of rage and resentment unlocks her car door opens it. Despite Amber’s attempt to stop her she escapes with basketball in hand and runs off.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Kailey!! God damn it!!

CAR HONKS that is waiting to go. Amber opens her car door confrontational.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Go around!!

She slams the door closed and runs her hands through her hair. She tries to wipes her eyes with shaking hands but she can’t catch all the tears they fall too fast.

I/E. AMBER’S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Amber drives around, looking out the window for Kailey. She abruptly stops when she sees GIRL that resembles her. A look of relief hits her face until GIRL turns around and she realizes it is not her.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Kailey reaches the basketball court out of breath. She falls to her knees and begins to cry.

Syd is knocked out on the bench. Kailey pulls herself together and begins to shoot baskets.

She misses a shot and the ball hits Syd in the back. Syd jumps up defensive.

SYD
What the fuck!

She scares Kailey, once Syd notices that a child is responsible, she calms down.

SYD (CONT'D)
Is this yours shorty?

Kailey nods. Syd gets up and hands her the ball. Kailey notices who Syd is and her face lights up.

KAILEY
You’re Syd Riley!

SYD
Yeah.. who are you and how do you know that?

KAILEY
You’re just my favorite basketball player. I mean.. besides Angel Reese and Steph Curry.

SYD
Well yeah, of course besides them.

Kailey grins.

KAILEY
Why don’t you play anymore?

SYD
(beat, tries to think of an excuse)
I uh, I hurt my knee a while back.

KAILEY
I know. I was at the game.

Syd nods.

SYD
Good shit.

KAILEY
You scored 27 points in the first half. My dad says that if you wouldn’t have gotten hurt you would’ve scored at least 60. And you would’ve got drafted by the Lynx.

Syd nods.

SYD
You like ball huh?

KAILEY
I’m trying to play for the vipers. So I gotta practice. It’s a pretty big deal.

SYD
I played AAU too.

KAILEY
You wanna see some of my moves?

SYD
What you got.

Syd tosses Kailey the ball.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - 30 MIN LATER

Syd and Kailey have been practicing for a while. Syd is instructing Kailey.

SYD
See, when you get the ball you gotta protect it. You gotta keep it in your pocket. Always stay in your power stance.

Syd gets in a ready position with the ball.

SYD (CONT'D)
I can go a few different ways with this. I can shoot, I can pass, or I can take off and dribble. And no matter what, nobody can grab the ball or slap it off me because it’s in my pocket. If they do that, 9/10 its gonna be a reaching foul.

Syd tosses Kailey the ball.

SYD (CONT'D)
Alright, remember, keep it in your pocket.

Kailey changes her stance. Syd continues teaching

I/E. PARK, AMBER’S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Amber now frantic, continues to drive looking for Kailey. She gets to the park and turns off the car, on the verge of panicking.

She looks up and sees Kailey at the basketball court. Her face is filled with relief, she takes a deep breathe.

Amber stops herself from getting out the car. She breathes deeply, finally in comfort as she watches Kailey practice with Syd. They are playful yet diligent. Syd really caters to Kailey and Kailey is receptive to Syd.

Amber walks over, too relieved to discipline. Kailey and Syd stop what they’re.

KAILEY
Mom, this is Syd.

Syd shakes Amber’s hand.

SYD
I was just showing her a couple of moves. I hope that’s alright.

AMBER
That’s fine.

Amber looks at Kailey.

AMBER (CONT'D)
What’s not fine is giving your mom a heart attack. I was about to call the police don’t ever do that again!

KAILEY
I’m sorry mom. We were just having some fun.

Amber sighs.

SYD
She’s really good. She was saying she wanted to try out for the Vipers. She’s got a real good shot at it.

Kailey jumps up in excitement.

KAILEY
See mom! Syd thinks I can do it.

AMBER
Kailey, go put your stuff in the car.

Kailey gives Syd a hug that she wasn't expecting.

KAILEY
Bye Syd.

SYD
See you shorty.

Kailey heads towards the car. Amber waits for her to get out of ear shot.

SYD (CONT'D)
Sorry if I got her in trouble.

AMBER
It's fine. I haven't seen her this happy in a while.

Amber takes a seat on the bench.

AMBER (CONT'D)
I know about you.

SYD
What about me?

Amber gives Syd a knowing look.

AMBER
I know that an opiate addiction is what stopped your career and not your bum knee.

Syd's demeanor changes to uneasy. She shifts her weight from one foot to the other.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Personally, I don't give a shit. I've been young and I get it. But,

Amber SIGHS, trying to figure out the best way to express her thoughts.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Kailey's sick. She's got lymphoblastic lymphoma.

Syd’s face becomes troubled.

SYD
Is that cancer?

Amber nods.

AMBER
We’ve been at this for a few years now. We go through chemo, she beats it...

Amber looks away and crosses her arms.

SYD
Its back?

AMBER
She’s just a kid you know. She wants to play ball like you. She pretty much idolizes you. Basketball is the only thing in this world that makes that kid feel normal and like she has a purpose.

SYD
So what are you saying?

AMBER
I’m saying that she needs something to get her out of bed every morning. She needs something to look forward to. This Vipers thing, it’s probably not going to happen.

SYD
But she has to think it is?

Amber nods.

SYD (CONT'D)
So I’m supposed to lie to her?

AMBER
I want you to work with her. Most of these sessions she’s not gonna have the energy. She starts chemo in a couple days. I’ll pay you 50 dollars a session.

SYD
50 dollars a session to “train” her?

AMBER
50 dollars a session to be here. To not miss a session and to take this seriously because it might not mean anything to you, but this is everything to her.

Syd looks towards the car. Kailey sits in the passengers seat trying to spin the ball on her index finger.

Syd nods. She looks at Amber.

SYD
What time?

Amber pulls out 100 dollars from her purse. She hands it to Syd.

AMBER
5.

SYD
I'll see you then.

EXT. DOWNTOWN, RIVERWALK - NIGHT

Syd sits staring at the River. She pulls out an envelope labeled "Savannah" and puts $100 in it. She looks around to make sure no one is around, she does a shot and lies down on the bench. From Syd's POV: WE SEE THE STARS.

SYD
In two weeks, once you get enough money. You can die in Savannah, and this can all be over.

Syd rolls over to her side and goes to sleep.

EXT. PARK, BASETBALL COURT - DAY

Syd and Kailey stand on the court preparing to practice. Amber sits on the bench watching them.

SYD
Did you get a good stretch in, shorty?

Kailey nods.

SYD (CONT'D)
Good. Let's start with some spot drills. You just follow me okay?

KAILEY
Hey Syd,

SYD
Yeah,

KAILEY
You wanna play one on one first?
You know, to warm up?

Syd smiles.

SYD
I don’t know if you can keep up
with me just yet shorty.

KAILEY
Maybe you can’t keep up with me.

Syd laughs and checks the ball with Kailey.

SYD
Confidence, I like that shit. Lets
play to 15.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

SYD SCORES

KAILEY SCORES

THEY’RE NECK IN NECK ENJOYING EACH OTHER AND THE GAME.

KAILEY STEALS THE BALL FROM SYD A COUPLE TIMES.

SYD BLOCKS A FEW OF KAILEY’S SHOTS.

THEY HYDRATE.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - LATER THAT DAY

Kailey changes out of her basketball shoes.

SYD
You did good. You almost beat me.

KAILEY
You cheated.

SYD
I never cheat.

KAILEY
(humored)
You double dribbled twice and you traveled like five times.

SYD
Okay, I'm a little out of practice okay its been a long time since I've played.

KAILEY
Why? Your legs better. Why don't you try and play again?

Amber looks up at Syd, curious to Syd's response.

SYD
Sometimes life has different plans for us. How long do we have for this Vipers thing?

KAILEY
It's in three weeks.

SYD
Okay, I'll see you tomorrow?

Kailey nods. She hugs Syd.

AMBER
Why don't you put your stuff in the car. I'll be there in a minute.

Kailey waves at Syd and heads to the car. Amber pulls out her purse and hands Syd $50.

SYD
Thanks.

AMBER
Yeah. All she could talk about was how excited she was to come here and practice. Its usually a fight to get her to go to school or eat or anything but lately she's had so much energy and hope.

Syd nods.

SYD
I'll see you tomorrow.

Syd leaves.

EXT. RIVER WALK - NIGHT

Syd pulls out her “Savannah” envelope and puts the $50 in it. She pulls out a rig.

EXT. RIVER WALK - MORNING

Syd wakes up and looks around, people walk their dogs and talk. Syd realizes she can’t do a shot of dope here. She looks around and notices a coffee shop across the street.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

A vintage coffee shop. Syd enters. MAKAYLA, 22 beautiful, manages the counter. She watches Syd enter the bathroom.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - 15 MINUTES LATER

Makayla is managing a busy line of customers. CUSTOMER walks over frustrated.

CUSTOMER
Is there another bathroom in this place? I’ve been waiting for almost 20 minutes.

INT. COFFEE SHOP, BATHROOM - SAME

Syd has passed out on the toilet. The needle is still in her arm. SEVERAL KNOCKS AT DOOR don’t wake Syd up. Door finally opens. Makayla pulls Syd off the toilet and yells at Customer to call 911.

INT. COFFEE SHOP, BATHROOM - LATER

Paramedics have finally gotten Syd to wake up. Her shirt is ripped open she looks like she just escaped death. Customers nosily stand outside the bathroom trying to see what’s going on.

PARAMEDIC
You need to come to the hospital.

SYD
I’m fine.

PARAMEDIC 2
We just narcaned you four times. You realize if you use anything else today you're gonna kill yourself.

SYD
(annoyed)
I'm fine. I'm not going to the fucking hospital.

Paramedics shake their head. They can't make her go. They pack up their stuff and leave. Makayla directs all the customers away from the bathroom and assures them that everything is fine. She walks back into the bathroom with Syd.

She closes the door. Syd tries to cover herself with her shirt but its too ripped to cover her chest.

MAKAYLA
Hold on. I have an extra shirt.

Makayla leaves and returns with a uniformed polo shirt. She hands it to Syd who slides it on.

SYD
Thanks.

MAKAYLA
I know it's not my business but, are you okay?

SYD
You're right. It's none of your business.

Makayla nods.

MAKAYLA
I'll give you some privacy.

Makayla walks out the bathroom and closes the door. She returns to the counter but her eyes continue to dart to the bathroom.

Syd glares at her blood shot eyes in the mirror. She's tired emotionally and physically. She splashes water on her face.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Syd walks out the bathroom. Makayla can't help but walk back over to her with a glass of water.

MAKAYLA
Can you at least drink this.

Syd takes the water and chugs it.

MAKAYLA (CONT'D)
Can I get you a bagel or a muffin?

SYD
I’m good.

MAKAYLA
What’s your name?

SYD
Syd.

MAKAYLA
I’m glad you’re not dead, Syd.

SYD
That makes one of us.

Makayla doesn’t find the same humor in the joke. She knows it wasn’t a joke even though Syd tries to make it one.

SYD (CONT'D)
Thanks for the water..

MAKAYLA
Makayla.

SYD
Makayla.

Syd heads towards the door.

MAKAYLA
Wait!

Syd turns around.

SYD
Yeah,

MAKAYLA
I’m off in like 20 minutes. I’ll give you a ride home.

SYD
I’m good.

MAKAYLA
Just wait.

I/E. MAKAYLA'S CAR - SAME

Makayla drives, Syd sits in the passengers seat looking out the window. Makayla's eyes occasionally dart to Syd.

MAKAYLA
Where do you want me to drop you off?

SYD
You can take me to any bus stop you see.

Makayla checks the time on her phone. She needs an excuse to buy more time with Syd.

MAKAYLA
You know what, I forgot that I have class at 2. And it's already 1:40. You want to just, come over to my place and you can chill there until my class is over? I just live right down the street.

Syd nods.

SYD
Sure.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT - SAME

Makayla enters, Syd behind her.

SYD
Do you often bring strangers to your place?

MAKAYLA
Only the ones that almost die at my job.

Syd smiles. Makayla gets out her textbooks and sets up her computer for class.

SYD
You're in college?

MAKAYLA
Yeah.

SYD
What's your major?

MAKAYLA
Chemical dependency.

Syd laughs.

SYD
Wow.

MAKAYLA
How long have you been using?

SYD
Why? Are you gonna try and doctor me? Are you gonna try and save me?

MAKAYLA
You look like you might need saving.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Syd and Makayla lie in Makayla’s bed laughing and talking. Makayla fires up a blunt. She takes a few hits. Syd motions for the blunt.

MAKAYLA
I don’t think this is healthy for your recovery.

Syd takes the blunt and hits it.

SYD
Why do you want to be a chemical dependency counselor?

MAKAYLA
My dad’s an alcoholic, he has been for most of my life.

SYD
So you’re broken.

MAKAYLA
I think we’re all broken. We just need to find the right person to put our broken pieces back together.

SYD
Do you think I’m that person?

Makayla leans on Syd’s chest.

MAKAYLA
You could be.

SYD
I fail everybody in my life. Including myself. It’s inevitable that I’ll fail you too.

MAKAYLA
Are you tired? Like, do you want to get sober.

SYD
I mean, no one likes shooting dope I guess.

MAKAYLA
So what are you gonna do about it?

Syd sits up.

SYD
I don’t know.

Makayla kisses Syd.

MAKAYLA
I’m your drug now.

Syd laughs, Makayla kisses her again, she’s serious.

MAKAYLA (CONT'D)
Say it.

SYD
You’re my drug now.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Syd sits on the bus staring out the window. She changes her hotel reservation on her phone.

INT. CHURCH, A.A MEETING - SAME NIGHT

A dingy church with worn out couches and stale coffee. The crowd is a heavy majority of OLD-TIMERS and MIDDLE AGED ALCOHOLICS. Syd sits in the very back row, arms crossed disengaged as she fiddles with a cup of stale coffee semi listening to SPEAKER tell his story.

SPEAKER
Its amazing how different my life is today. I mean, not living everyday in that misery. That despair. It’s amazing to truly experience life with a clear mind. And to have the strength to deal with life on it’s own terms. I don’t have to hide anymore. From myself or my emotions.

Syd takes a sip of coffee and has enough with it. She gets up and tosses her cup on her way out.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - SAME

Syd sits on a picnic table jonesing. Her leg fidgets despite her attempt to sit still. She is high anxiety, and clenches her phone for dear life. With shaky hands she manages to light up a cigarette. LAWRENCE, 42 year old gay man very well dressed heads towards the church. He notices Syd, and heads her way.

LAWRENCE
Either its a bullshit meeting, or you’re on bullshit.,

Syd looks up and nods, she’s not in the mood for conversation.

SYD
Just over it.

Lawrence nods.

LAWRENCE
Which part?

SYD
The whole thing.

LAWRENCE
Let me guess.. everyone in the meeting is fucking lying. No one can be happy without a drug and if they are they were never as fucked up as you are?

Syd’s expression turns to bewilderment. But she can’t show it, so she looks away.

SYD
Maybe.

Lawrence takes a seat next to Syd and grabs a cigarette of her own. He lights up.

LAWRENCE
Its convenient to believe that you're special. You're not. Your story isn't any more fucked up than anyone elses. And what they have, you can have too.

SYD
Sure.

LAWRENCE
You don't have to believe me. You just have to get to the point where you want something better than what you've got right now. And from the look of it you don't have shit.

Lawrence reaches in his pocket and grabs a grocery receipt. He grabs the pen from his back pocket and jots down his number. He hands it to Syd.

SYD
I never said I wanted a sponsor.

LAWRENCE
I don't have to be your sponsor. This is for when you're on your hands and knees praying the dope man doesn't answer because you can't help but call him, but you really don't want to use anymore. Whenever you get to that point. I'll be here. And I'll show you a new life.

Syd reluctantly takes the number. Syd sticks it in her back pocket, with the intention to forget about it. Lawrence smiles and heads inside.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - LATER

Syd and Kailey practice. Amber sits in the bleachers. Kailey is having a really strong practice and Syd is enthusiastic about her progression.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Kailey is changing out of her basketball shoes, Syd sits next to her dribbling the ball.

KAILEY
If you could be anything what would you be?

Syd ponders

SYD
I don’t know. A millionaire. What about you?

KAILEY
I would want to be a basketball.

Syd ponders again then laughs.

SYD
Why a basketball?

KAILEY
Because, even when the ball gets at its lowest, it always comes up. And it always bounces higher up than it does down.

Syd gets the analogy. And it hits in a different place in her heart. She nods.

SYD
I like that shit!

Syd stands up on the bench.

SYD (CONT'D)
(shouts)
I’m a basketball!!

Kailey joins her.

KAILEY
(shouts)
I’m a basketball!

SYD
We’re basketballs!

BOTH
We’re basketballs!!!

Kailey and Syd laugh.

EXT. PARK, BASEKTBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Syd and Kailey hydrate, Syd inaudibly says something funny, Amber chuckles. Kailey grabs her water bottle and squirts Syd. In retaliation, Syd pours her water over Kailey's head. They chase each other.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Syd and Kailey run suicides together. Trying to out run each other.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd and Makayla lay in bed, Syd's back rests on Makayla's chest as she plays in her hair. They laugh at a TV show. Their conversation is inaudible but it seems to be a vibe.

EXT. STONER'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Syd sits on the front porch waiting, Stoner walks out the door and hands Syd a baggie of dope and a syringe. She daps him up and leaves.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd puts a few hundred dollars into her "Savannah" envelope.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Syd and Kailey play 2k while Amber straightens up the living room.

KAILEY
Syd, you absolutely suck at this.

SYD
You talk a lot of shit for a kid.

KAILEY
You suck for an adult.

Syd smiles. Kailey gets a notification on her phone. She checks her phone.

KAILEY (CONT'D)
Mom! The Jordan Air 5's drop tomorrow!

AMBER
Kailey,

KAILEY
I know mom but, come on! If I wear these to my try outs I'm definitely going to make the team for sure!

AMBER
You don't need $200 shoes to make a basketball team.

KAILEY
Come on mom please!

AMBER
No.

Kailey pouts.

KAILEY
Dad would let me get them.

AMBER
That excuse isn't going to work anymore.

KAILEY
Is the cancer excuse still good.

Syd laughs.

EXT. RIVER WALK - NIGHT

Syd sits at the river with her envelope in hand. She takes the money out and counts it, she has almost $400. PHONE BUZZES, Syd looks at her phone to see Makayla calling, she ignores the call and pulls up pictures of Savannah, GA. She pulls out a rig full of dope.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

Syd rebounds for Kailey as she does a shooting exercise. Her hearts not in it. She keeps bricking shots, she is bothered and frustrated.

Syd rebounds the ball and throws it back to Kailey.

SYD
Remember your form. You're just throwing it up.

Kailey tries another shot and it bricks. Frustrated, she walks off the court. Syd looks at Amber for an explanation.

SYD (CONT'D)
Kailey!!

Kailey keeps walking.

AMBER
Just give her a minute.

SYD
What's wrong?

AMBER
She starts chemo tomorrow.

INT. PARK, BATHROOM - SAME

Kailey sits in the bathroom stall crying. Syd enters and stands against the wall.

SYD
You good shorty?

KAILEY
(fighting tears)
I'm fine.

SYD
You don't sound fine. There's no crying in basketball.

Kailey opens the door and wipes her eyes.

KAILEY
I'm not crying.

SYD
Your eyeballs, they're just sweating?

Kailey walks out the stall.

KAILEY
I don't want to do it anymore Syd. I just want to play ball. I just want to be normal.

Kailey runs into Syd. Holding onto her tight. It takes Syd a minute to embrace her.

SYD
What's so great about being normal? Normal's boring. Normal kids, they don't have a story. It's nothing special about them.

KAILEY
There's nothing special about me.

SYD
Yeah there is, we're basketballs remember?

Kailey shakes her head.

SYD (CONT'D)
We're basketballs. When life puts us at our lowest point, we bounce back right. Even higher.

KAILEY
I'm gonna be too sick to practice.

SYD
How do you eat an elephant?

Kailey looks away, defeated. Syd gently grabs her arm and brings her back to focus.

SYD (CONT'D)
One bite at a time right?

KAILEY
I'm not gonna see you anymore. I mean, I can't practice if I'm sick.

Syd smiles.

SYD
Oh, so you think a little chemo is gonna keep me from coaching you?

Kailey nods.

SYD (CONT'D)
You're wrong shorty. I'm gonna push you that much harder. Because you gotta get that much stronger.

KAILEY
I can't be strong if I'm doing chemo Syd, it doesn't work like that.

Syd nods, thinking.

SYD
Fuck basketball for a minute. I mean, you scored 13 points against the player of the year. And I won it two years in a row my freshman and sophomore year.

Kailey smiles.

KAILEY
I pretty much won.

SYD
To be honest you really did. I cheated.

KAILEY
I knew it!

Syd smiles.

SYD
Let’s focus on tomorrow. Let’s hang out and watch movies and chill. We’ll take a little break from basketball alright?

Kailey nods.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - SAME

Kailey sits at the table. A healthy breakfast sits in front of her. Amber washes dishes. Kailey sits with her arms crossed.

AMBER
Kailey, Linda’s going to be here soon. You need to eat.

KAILEY
I don’t want to eat.

AMBER
Kailey, you need energy.

KAILEY
I don’t want to eat breakfast and I’m not going to!

Kailey, angry, pushes her plate across the table. It falls to the ground.

AMBER
Got damn it Kailey!

Kailey walks out the kitchen. DOOR SLAMS. Amber breaks down in tears. KNOCK AT DOOR snaps her out of it. She wipes her eyes.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amber answers the door to reveal Syd. In her hands are a box of Jordan shoes and a few dvd's.

AMBER
What are you doing here?

SYD
I'm here to hang out.

Syd shows the shoes and the movies

SYD (CONT'D)
I brought some movies.

AMBER
You didn't buy her those shoes?

Syd shrugs.

AMBER (CONT'D)
She can't play basketball today.

SYD
I know. It's not about basketball today.

Amber, cautiously makes room for Syd. She walks in.

AMBER
She's in her room. Her nurse is going to be here soon. She has to eat.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KAILEY'S ROOM - SAME

Kailey lies on her bed staring out the window. KNOCK AT DOOR.

KAILEY
Leave me alone mom!

SYD O.S
What makes you think its your mom?

Kailey opens the door. When she sees Syd, she can’t help but smile.

KAILEY
You came?

SYD
Of course I came. Didn’t I tell you I would?

KAILEY
I guess..

Syd looks at Amber and hands Kailey the pair of shoes. Kailey becomes ecstatic.

KAILEY (CONT'D)
You got the Jordan’s!

SYD
Only on one condition, you have to eat, and you have to practice. Even if you might be weak. You still gotta try.

KAILEY
Deal!

Kailey opens the shoes and tries them on.

KAILEY (CONT'D)
They fit so perfectly!

SYD
They’re meant for you. I’m starving man. Are you hungry?

KAILEY
I could eat.

Amber shakes her head.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Amber grabs a bottle of gin from the freezer and takes a long gulp. Syd enters, and watches her.

SYD
I didn’t really take you for a gin person.

Amber turns around.

AMBER
Can you handle this?

SYD
Handle what?

AMBER
Being here for her? It’s not easy watching her go through this.

Syd ponders.

SYD
I guess I don’t have a choice. I’m here now. She fell asleep.

Amber prepares to head into the living room.

SYD (CONT'D)
I took her to her room.

AMBER
You didn’t have to stay all day.

Amber passes the gin to Syd. She takes a sip.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Look, this is the time for you to leave if you’re going to. Before it gets ugly.

SYD
I’ll see you tomorrow.

Amber nods.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Syd and Kailey play a game of UNO while Nurse Linda administers medicine. Syd wins the game. Kailey slams her cards down.

KAILEY
You’re cheating!

SYD
I never cheat. You just can’t play your hand.

Kailey rolls her eyes and collects the cards.

SYD (CONT'D)
Ohh.. So you want another ass whooping huh?

Syd and Nurse Linda share a smile. Blood begins to drip on the cards, Kailey's nose is bleeding. Nurse Linda attempts to intervene but Syd instinctively grabs a napkin and nurses her nose.

SYD (CONT'D)
Lean your head forward.

Kailey does as Syd says.

Kailey begins to gage. Nurse Linda quickly searches for a trash can but its too late. Kailey vomits all over Syd. Kailey looks up horrified. After a beat, Syd can do nothing but laugh. Nurse Linda can't stop herself from the giggles either. This causes Kailey to laugh.

SYD (CONT'D)
Is this payback for beating you in UNO.

Kailey laughs again until a second wave of vomit hits her. Nurse Linda switches with Syd. Syd heads towards the bathroom.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, BATHROOM - SAME

Syd takes off her shirt and wipes vomit from her chest. KNOCK AT DOOR. Amber enters with a clean shirt.

AMBER
I told you. It's ugly.

SYD
It's just a little throw up.

Amber hands Syd the shirt. When Syd grabs it, Amber notices Syd's track marks. Amber gives Syd a look of concern.

AMBER
How longs it been?

Syd looks away, too embarrassed to answer the question. Amber nods.

AMBER (CONT'D)
You know, you're no good to her if you're dead.

SYD
Am I any good to her alive?

AMBER
I can't get her to eat. Or to laugh, or to stay out of her head. Don't you dare take that from her.

Amber walks out. Syd contemplates.

EXT. RIVER WALK - DAY

Syd sits contemplating. She dials a number on her cell phone.

SYD
(into the phone)
Hey, I have a reservation for Syd Riley. I'm supposed to check in next week on the 15th. I wanted to change it until the week after. (pause) Yeah, checking in on the 22. Checking out on the 24th.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Syd, Kailey and Amber sit around the table eating.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd sits next to Kailey as NURSE LINDA inserts her port.

Nurse Linda begins to administer the drug. Syd sits back watching. Amber leans against the wall, arms crossed.

Amber walks into the kitchen.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Their conversation is inaudible....

Syd entertains Kailey as the drugs are being administered. Kailey laughs and for a moment, it is as if the chemo is not even taking place.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd and Kailey sit on the couch watching a movie. Kailey is extremely lethargic and struggles to stay awake, she finally falls asleep, she rests her head on Syd's lap. Syd watches her instead of the movie.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KAILEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd enters, carrying Kailey. She gently puts her into bed and tucks her in.

INT. A.A MEETING - CONTINUOUS

Syd inaudibly shares in a meeting.

INT. A.A MEETING - CONTINUOUS

Syd picks up a 30 day key tag.

EXT. RILEY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Syd puts her 30 day key tag in the mailbox along with a letter.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY

Makayla cooks while telling a story as Syd watches youtube videos of practice drills that she can use. Makayla is obviously annoyed with the lack of attention she's getting from Syd.

MAKAYLA
Are you listening to anything I'm fucking saying?

SYD
Yeah, I heard all of it.

MAKAYLA
Which part did you hear?

Syd looks up, caught in a lie.

SYD
(grins)
Alright I'm listening now.

MAKAYLA
I was saying that my friend’s having a party tomorrow night and I think you should come. It’s a valentine’s day dinner and I need a date.

SYD
You’re asking me on a date?

MAKAYLA
Pretty much, yeah.

SYD
You want all your friends to meet me? Is this like you’re coming out party?

MAKAYLA
Ive been out since the fifth grade.

Syd laughs.

SYD
When is it?

MAKAYLA
It’s Saturday, it starts at 7.

SYD
I don’t know if I can.

MAKAYLA
(annoyed)
Why not?

SYD
I usually hang out with Kailey at that time.

Makayla shakes her head.

SYD (CONT'D)
What?

MAKAYLA
I don’t understand why you can’t spend one fucking night with me.

SYD
What’s your fucking problem?

MAKAYLA
You spend all your time with an 11 year old. I’m asking for one night Syd.

SYD
Are you really doing this shit right now? Seriously?

MAKAYLA
All I’m saying is that it would be great if my girlfriend could spend at least one day with me. I don’t ask you for shit you stay here rent free and you can’t go to a party with me and meet my friends. Am I just a fuck for you-

Syd shakes her head.

SYD
You’re wrong for that. You’re really fucked up for that shit-

Syd storms off. DOOR SLAMS behind her.

INT. MAKAYLA’S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Syd enters, Makayla sits huddled over on the couch. Makayla looks up at Syd with tears in her eyes.

SYD
What’s wrong?

MAKAYLA
I did something.

SYD
What?

Makayla reveals deep, fresh cut marks on her arms. Syd is baffled

SYD (CONT'D)
What the fuck! Baby, why would you do this.

MAKAYLA
I’m sorry. I was scared, you weren’t answering I thought something happened to you. I thought you didn’t love me anymore.

Syd looks up at Makayla in bewilderment.

SYD
I needed to calm down. Why would you do this!

MAKAYLA
Because I’m fucked up Syd! Okay! The fucking kid isn’t the only one that needs you! I need you too!!

Syd holds Makayla as she sobs. Syd feels trapped, but she can’t let Makayla go, she’s afraid of what will happen if she does.

INT. MAKAYLA’S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Syd lies in bed wide awake, Makayla lies in the bed next to her sound asleep. Syd’s mind races. She slowly gets up and throws her clothes on.

INT. STONER’S HOUSE - SAME NIGHT

KNOCK AT DOOR gets Stoner off the couch. He answers the door to reveal Syd.

EXT. STONER’S HOUSE, PORCH - SAME

Syd sits on the porch high. Stoner sits next to her smoking a cigarette.

STONER
I ain’t seen you for a weeks. I thought you finally got your shit together.

SYD
Yeah, I been hanging with this kid. She’s got cancer.

STONER
Damn,

Syd nods, she sparks a cigarette.

SYD
You know, the more time I spend around her the less I wanna do this shit. Lately I been feeling like I actually belong on this planet.

STONER
So why you back here?

SYD
I don’t know. I just, no matter what I do I make everything worse. Sometimes I just want to disappear.

STONER
Yeah,

SYD
Just get on a bus and never come back.

STONER
What would that solve?

SYD
Maybe nothing, or maybe everything.

Stoner shakes his head and gets up.

STONER
Go home, Syd.

Syd nods and slowly gets up. Stoner begins to head in the house, then turns back around.

STONER (CONT'D)
If that kid is keeping you clean, you need to stay around her. And whatever the fuck made you have to come see me tonight, you need to leave that shit alone.

Syd nods and heads towards the bus stop.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Syd sits in a booth lost in thought. A milkshake in front of her. Lawrence enters and makes his way over. He takes a seat, grinning

LAWRENCE
I’ve been waiting on your call.

SYD
You said to call when I didn’t want to shoot dope anymore.

LAWRENCE
Yeah,

SYD
I don’t. But I don’t know how.

LAWRENCE
What’s your life like right now?

Syd looks away.

SYD
It’s a fucking mess.

LAWRENCE
You feel like you lost enough shit? Have you been through enough pain?

Syd nods.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Well, what are you willing to do to stay sober?

Syd shrugs.

SYD
I don’t know.

LAWRENCE
Wrong answer.

SYD
Well what’s the right answer?

LAWRENCE
The right answer is anything. You have to be willing to do anything and everything. To completely turn your thoughts and your life over to God.

Syd laughs.

SYD
God?

LAWRENCE
Any God you want. It could be the universe, it could be your fucking coffee cup, but whatever it is you have to understand that it’s in control. You’re not.

SYD
How long do you have?

LAWRENCE
11 years in 2 months.

SYD
11 years? No weed, no pills no nothing?

LAWRENCE
Nothing.

SYD
How do you go 11 years without anything?

LAWRENCE
The fist thing I did, was go 11 hours.

SYD
Do you miss it?

LAWRENCE
No.

Syd stares into Lawrence’s eyes. Lawrence stares back.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
(chuckles)
Syd, my life was fucked with dope. No way around it. I was fucking miserable. I was a piece of shit I couldn’t show up for my family they were done with me. I lost boyfriends, I lost jobs. I lost everything. I had two choices, keep living like that or try something different. Trust someone who knew more than I did. I hit my knees every night and everyday I help someone.

SYD
And that worked?

LAWRENCE
Yeah, it took time. It took working my steps, but it worked.

SYD
So if I had a rig full of dope, and I put it in front of you, you wouldn’t want to shoot it?

LAWRENCE
I wouldn’t shoot it.

Syd reaches in her pocket and sets a syringe full of heroin. She sets it on the table and waits for Lawrence to respond. Syd’s stares with sheer desperation and hopelessness. Lawrence looks at the rig and laughs.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
No matter what, you’re always going to have a reason to use. Because its a good day, because its a bad day because it’s fucking Tuesday. I mean come on you’re a heroin addict. Just like me. Its what we do. We use. You don’t need a reason to use. What you have to find, is a reason not to. And a God who can keep you from doing it.

EXT. DINER, PARKING LOT - LATER

Syd and Lawrence stand outside Lawrence’s pick up truck smoking as Lawrence tells a war story. Syd laughs, relating, enchanted by what Lawrence says.

LAWRENCE
Did you drive here?

Syd shakes her head. And points north.

SYD
I stay up the street.

LAWRENCE
Hop in.

I/E. LAWRENCE’S TRUCK - SAME

Lawrence drives, car pulls up to the apartment complex and stops. Syd prepares to leave.

LAWRENCE
Your first assignment. Put your cigarettes under your bed. When you get down on your knees to grab them, ask God to keep you sober for the day. And call me before you light up that cig. I'll tell you what to do from there.

SYD
So I gotta call you for everything?

LAWRENCE
I'll put it to you like this. You don't know shit. Every decision you've made so far got you fucked up. I don't want you wiping your ass without asking God or me about it first.

Syd chuckles and gets out the car.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I'm serious Syd. Call me tomorrow.

Syd nods. Lawrence pulls off.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Syd and Kailey are practicing. Amber sits in on the bench watching. Kailey is obviously tired but trying her best

They practice shooting drills, Kailey misses almost every one. Syd tries her best not to get frustrated.

SYD
Get some water. Let's take a break.

Kailey does as she's told and hydrates.

From the parking lot we close up on Makayla's car that speeds into the parking lot. Makayla gets out and approaches the basketball court. Syd goes in for a hug, but Makayla shoves her almost knocking her over.

MAKAYLA
You can't answer your fucking phone?

SYD
It's in my jacket. What's wrong?

MAKAYLA
We had plans to meet my friends for coffee. I sat there and waiting for you for an hour!

SYD
Makayla, I forgot.

MAKAYLA
But you didn't forget about this!

Kailey and Amber are watching.

SYD
This is a little bigger than me getting coffee with your friends-

MAKAYLA
This is more important?

SYD
Right now at this time, yes this is more important. I'm sorry. I forgot it was an honest mistake. But this is more important to me.

If looks could kill Syd would be dead.

MAKAYLA
Fucking remember this.

Makayla begins to walk away. Syd yanks her arm.

SYD
What does that mean?

MAKAYLA
You know what it fucking means! I don't mean anything to you so why does it fucking matter-

SYD
You do, but I need to be here right now. Can you understand that? Do you get that maybe this is helping me?

MAKAYLA
And I'm not.

SYD
I didn't fucking say that-

MAKAYLA
You didn't have to-

Makayla yanks her arm away from Syd and leaves. Syd doesn't know if she should run after her or not, but Kailey walks back over to her, seeing Kailey brings her back to focus.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Syd and Kailey sit at the kitchen table coloring.

KAILEY
Who was that girl?

SYD
Just a friend.

KAILEY
Why was she mad at you?

SYD
Because she didn't get what she wanted.

KAILEY
What did she want?

SYD
Unrealistic expectations of me.

KAILEY
What's that?

SYD
It's like, saying, "I want to go to the moon tomorrow". It's unrealistic because that can't happen. It doesn't mean it will never happen, it just means its unrealistic.

KAILEY
Sometimes I think me making the team is unrealistic.

Syd stops coloring.

SYD
Sometimes I think me staying off drugs is unrealistic.

KAILEY
Why do you do them?

SYD
Cus, between me and you, I'm really sad inside.

KAILEY
Yeah, me too. Not as much when I'm with you-

SYD
Same.

Syd concentrates on coloring.

KAILEY
Hey Syd,

Syd looks up.

SYD
Yeah,

KAILEY
Sometimes when I'm sad, I close my eyes and I tell myself I'm a basketball.

Syd smiles, she grabs Kailey's hand and squeezes it.

SYD
Kailey, you're gonna make the team. You're gonna play your way through college like I did and you're gonna get drafted. You're talented enough. We just gotta get this cancer out your body.

KAILEY
You remember the game when you hurt your knee?

SYD
Yeah, I do.

KAILEY
I was at that game. It was the night that my dad died. It was the best game of my life.

SYD
It was the worst game of mine.

KAILEY
I know you probably would, but I wouldn't change that game.
(MORE)

KAILEY (CONT'D)
Cuse if it didn’t happen I never would’ve met you.

EXT. RILEY HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Mrs. Riley is cleaning the kitchen. Erykah Badu plays on a stereo as she cleans. KNOCK AT DOOR. Brings her back to earth. Once the door is opened and Syd is revealed, relief covers Mrs. Riley face.

SYD
Hey mommy.

Mrs. Riley does her best to stay stoic, but it is clear that it is killing her inside not to wrap her arms around Syd. Instead, she crosses her arms.

MRS. RILEY
What are you doing here?

Syd smiles, but it fades when Mrs. Riley shows no reaction.

SYD
I just came to see you.

SYD (CONT'D)
Can I come in?

MRS. RILEY
Your sister and father are going to be home any minute. You can’t be here when they get here.

Syd nods.

INT. RILEY HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Syd sits at the kitchen table. Mrs. Riley wipes off the countertop.

SYD
Did you get my chips?

MRS. RILEY
Yeah. I put them in the drawer with all the others.

Syd tries not to let the stings affect her.

SYD
How’s everybody?

MRS. RILEY
Fine. Getting Symone ready for college. She leaves in a couple weeks.

SYD
Does she still hate me?

MRS. RILEY
She doesn't hate you. But could you blame her if she did?

SYD
I know I haven't showed up right. I know that I've been selfish.

MRS. RILEY
(scoffs)
I'm glad you realize it.

SYD
Mom, I'm doing good now.

MRS. RILEY
For how long? Two months, three months?

SYD
No. It's not like that this time.

MRS. RILEY
Every time its not like that Sydney. Every time you say that you're different. That you know what to do that you're going to start a new life and a new chapter and every time, we end up here. I'm sick of being here.

Syd's eyes dart to the top of the cabinets where a box of narcan sits.

SYD
I'm trying this time. I'm really trying. I made a mistake and I'm trying to fix it. Everyone makes mistakes mom.

MRS. RILEY
Yes. Everyone does make mistakes but you keep making the same one. And me and your father are tired.
(MORE)

MRS. RILEY (CONT'D)
Don’t you know that you were dead when the ambulance got you to the hospital? That I had to watch them revive (voice breaks) your ungrateful stupid black ass?

SYD
I’m changing. How else do you want me to explain it! What else do you want from me?!!

Mrs. Riley hangs her head, trying to keep her composure.

MRS. RILEY
Sydney, I want my daughter back. When you hurt your knee, there were only two directions you could have gone. I knew that God gave you two choices. You could use it to break you, or you could use it to build you. I can’t watch it break you anymore.

SYD
Mommy, I just want to be here.

Mrs. Riley shakes her head.

MRS. RILEY
Baby I love you. We love you. But you’re not welcomed in our lives anymore.

EXT. RIVER WALK - EVENING

Syd stands at the river, thinking. She clenches a syringe full of dope in her hand.

KAILEY V.O
If you could be anything what would you be?

Syd ponders

SYD V.O
I don’t know. A millionaire. What about you?

KAILEY V.O
I would want to be a basketball.

SYD V.O
Why a basketball?

KAILEY V.O
Because, even when the ball gets at its lowest, it always comes up. And it always bounces higher up than it does down.

SYD V.O
I like that shit!

SYD V.O (CONT'D)
(shouts)
I’m a basketball!!

KAILEY V.O
(shouts)
I’m a basketball!

SYD V.O
We’re basketballs!

BOTH V.O
We’re basketballs!!!

Syd chucks the syringe in the water.

INT. MAKAYLA’S APARTMENT - 12 PM

Syd and Makayla are in the middle of a heated argument.

SYD
(yelling)
I can’t fucking do this! Everything I do is fucking wrong!

MAKAYLA
(screaming)
You lie! You’re such a fucking liar its ridiculous!

SYD
I’m not lying about shit! I don’t have to lie to you I’m not fucking scared of you! The fuck would I lie for!

MAKAYLA
Then let me see it!

SYD
No! What's on my phone is none of your fucking business!

Makayla begins to break things to intimidate Syd. Syd laughs,

SYD (CONT'D)
You're fucking crazy!

Makayla throws a pan at Syd who just barely ducks in time to miss it.

SYD (CONT'D)
I'm leaving. I'm not doing this shit with you!

Makayla blocks the doorway, Syd tries to move her out the way, but can't.

SYD (CONT'D)
Move Makayla.

MAKAYLA
No! Not until you show me your phone.

SYD
Get out my way.

MAKAYLA
No!

Syd, enraged shoves Makayla on her way out.

EXT. RIVER WALK - SAME

Syd sits on the river walk crying. Her knuckles are bruised and raw. She rubs her head as if she is trying to erase memories.

START FLASHBACK:

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - 12 PM

Syd slams the door of Makayla's apartment and heads down the hallway. Makayla catches up to her and tries her best to physically stop Syd. Syd tries to get away from Makayla's grip.

SYD
Leave me the fuck alone!!

MAKAYLA
You can’t leave me right now! I can’t be alone right now Syd! Please!!

SYD
I need to calm down before I say some shit I can’t take back!

MAKAYLA
Like what?

SYD
Like I don’t fucking love you! Like I’m trapped!! Like all you do is trying to fix me like I’m your fucking ginuea pig and not your girlfriend! You are so fucking broken that you would rather drawn yourself in my problems than look at your own!

Makayla slaps Syd. Syd closed hand punches Makayla. She falls to the floor. Syd punches the hallway wall and leaves.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. RIVER WALK - SAME

Syd dries her eyes and pulls out her envelope from her back pocket. She counts her money, there is at least $400. Syd contemplates.

INT. BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Syd stands in line to purchase a bus ticket.

I/E. GREY HOUND BUS - CONTINUOUS

Syd looks out the window. PHONE BUZZES with texts and missed phone calls from Amber and Kailey Syd ignores them.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd checks into her hotel.

EXT. CRAB SHACK RESTAURANT, OUTSIDE SEATING - CONTINUOUS

Syd sits alone, people watching as she takes a few shots.

Everyone seems happy and connected, Syd is distant and dying inside.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SAVANNAH - CONTINUOUS

Syd aimlessly walks, drunk with cigarette hanging out of her mouth.

EXT. TYBEE ISLAND - EVENING

Its a beautiful day, not too many people are around, Syd enjoys the quiet as she looks out into the ocean.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ARENA, - EVENING 2018

A women's D1 tournament basketball game is in session.

An almost full crowd is hyped up. Syd with the poise of D1 point guard breaks through a full court press with no help and reaches past the half court line.

Now on a man to man defense, Syd makes a pass to TEAMMATE 1 and shakes her opponent. She heads back to the top of the key where the ball is passed right back. Syd's patient, she doesn't make a move.

Syd flexes her muscle, sending a message to her teammates. They position themselves to run an offensive play. Syd dishes out the ball to TEAMMATE 2, on the post. TEAMMATE 2 posts up and waits for Syd to re open at the bottom right corner pocket. It's clear that this play is revolved around Syd. TEAMMATE 3 makes a quick pass to Syd who is open for the three...

SYD V.O
Sometimes I wonder how life would've went if I would have just taken that shot.

She punk fakes, creating an opening to the basket. She drives in hard and goes for a layup but is body checked in mid air by the CENTER.

Center's body makes direct contact into Syd's right knee . She twists her knee on the fall and quickly grabs it in excruciating pain.

WHISTLES BLOW, as a foul is called. However, Syd stays on the ground in pain as her teammates cheer for the foul on the defense. TEAMMATE 2 notices Syd still on the ground runs to her.

TEAMMATE 2
What's wrong?

SYD
(wincing)
My knee!

From the stands, Mr. Riley, Mrs. Riley and Symone share a look of concern.

From the other side of the Arena, Kailey and RYAN MCLEAD, 30S, watch in anticipation waiting for Syd to get up.

RYAN
Shit.

KAILEY
Is she okay dad?

RYAN
I don't know Sport. That looked pretty nasty.

Back on the court.. COACH SCOTT and TRAINER race over.

COACH SCOTT
You landed pretty tough can you move?

Syd shakes her head, wincing in pain. Coach Scott looks at Trainer, a grim look on his face.

TRAINER
Let me take a look.

Trainer tries to examine, but the touch of him makes Syd scream out in pain.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kailey sits on the couch, defeated. Amber sits next to Kailey. A small trash can in her hand.

Kailey begins to regurgitate. Amber quickly sets the trash can in front of her and rubs Kailey's back. Tears fall down Kailey's face.

KAILEY
Where's Syd?

Amber looks at her watch and shakes her head in frustration.

AMBER
She should be here soon. You want to play a game? Maybe watch some TV?

Kailey shakes her head. She turns to face the window.

EXT. TYBEE ISLAND - EVENING

Syd sits in the same spot. She pulls out a syringe, bag of dope and bottle of water. She makes a shot.

SYD
This what you wanted. This is what you've been asking for.

Syd does her shot and immediately falls forward unconscious. She is in a weird position.

MAN, walks by with his dog. He notices her. He tries to get her attention. He can tell something's not right. He tries to wake Syd up but can't. He calls 911.

INT. ER - LATER

Syd sits on the edge of the hospital bed waiting to be discharged. Nurse enters, she hands Syd her discharge papers. We close up on them to see a list of nearby detoxes.

EXT. TYBEE ISLAND - MOMENTS LATER

Syd stands at the water. She begins to kick it then throws a full tantrum.

SYD
I just want to die! Just fucking let me die!!

Syd drops to the ground. She sits in the water. From Syd's POV we see a small basketball pin float besides her. Her face turns to bewilderment. She picks up the pin, not believing what she is seeing.

INT. DETOX - DAY

Syd checks herself into detox.

INT. DETOX, ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd, dressed in scrubs, tosses and turns in her bed.

EXT. DETOX, BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Syd, dressed in scrubs, smokes a cigarette fiddling with the basketball pin. She watches as DETOX PATIENTS play a game of basketball. Its clear she's thinking about Kailey.

I/E. GREY HOUND BUS - CONTINUOUS

Syd sits on the bus, looking out the window.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kailey lies lethargically on the couch, disappointment all over her body and face. Amber sits on the couch next to her.

AMBER
Do you want some water baby?

Kailey nods.

KAILEY
I thought she was coming.

AMBER
I did too.

Amber walks into the kitchen. She pours Kailey a glass of water. She opens the fridge and takes a swig. Not satisfied, she takes another swig. DOORBELL RINGS. Amber shakes her head, frustrated and takes one last swig.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Amber's face is relieved but as quickly as it came it is gone. It changes to anger. Syd tries to enter but Amber pushes her and closes the door, she doesn't want Kailey to see Syd.

SYD
I'm sorry I haven't been here. Some shit happened-

AMBER
No! You got fucking high! Do you know that that little girl has been asking about you for a week! I thought you were dead! This is hard enough for her! You promised her that you would show up you promised me!

SYD
I showed up!

AMBER
A week later! After you got high!! Off heroin!

SYD
I came! I showed up! I did what you fucking asked me to do!

Amber shakes her head, disgust on her face.

AMBER
(yelling)
You know what's sad? The fact that you are throwing your life away while she's in there fighting for hers!

Amber tries to compose herself.

SYD
I'm doing the best I can.

AMBER
If that's the truth then this was a mistake. I shouldn't have trusted you.

SYD
I fucked up and I'm sorry-

AMBER
Syd.. just go.

Syd leans against the wall,

SYD
Come on, I missed some practices. If it's about the money I can pay you back.

Amber's face turns to betrayl. She slams the door in Syd's face.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KAILEY'S ROOM - DAY

Kailey lies in bed, defeated. Amber lies with her rubbing her back in an attempt to comfort her. KNOCK AT DOOR. Amber gets up.

INT. A.A MEETING - DAY

Syd sits in the meeting fiddling with the basketball pin she found in the ocean. ALCOHOLIC is in the middle of a share. When finished, Syd shares.

SYD
I'm Syd, I'm an addict.

EVERYONE
Hey Syd.

SYD
I uh, I don't really know where to start. I've hated myself and my life for so long, it's like I've been living but I can't really remember the last time I've felt like I was alive. And then, I meet someone who is fighting to stay alive. And I, make this promise that I'll do my part to help her fight. I preach all this shit to her all day long about how when life pulls you down you gotta stand up and you have to fight and then when it's my turn to fight, I give up. I guess, I'm tired of being a hypocrite. Every time life has thrown me anything that I couldn't handle or didn't think I could handle I run away and use, but lately I'm tired of running away. I'm tired of giving up. For the first time in my life I want to fight.

(MORE)

SYD (CONT'D)
And I have a reason to, and that reason might be an 11 year old kid with cancer, but, it doesn't matter what gets us in the rooms all that matters is that we stay. And I want to stay.

EXT. MCLEAD HOUSE, FRONT PORCH - MORNING

Syd sits at the front porch, waiting. Amber opens the door.

AMBER
What do you want?

SYD
I fucked up. And I'm sorry.

Amber attempts to close the door.

SYD (CONT'D)
Look I'm clean alright. I haven't used. But I need that kid or I'm going to get high. And I know that she needs me. I've never been able to be there for anyone. I don't know what that looks like. But if you give me another chance, I swear to God that I'll try. Just give me another chance.

Amber tries to read Syd.

AMBER
I don't think she wants to see you right now.

SYD
Can I try?

Amber moves, Syd walks into the house.

SYD (CONT'D)
What's up champ!

Kailey shrugs.

KAILEY
Where were you?

SYD
Something came up-

KAILEY
Drugs??

Syd closes her eyes and shakes her head, defeated

SYD
Not drugs.

KAILEY
Bullshit!

AMBER
Kailey, watch your mouth.

KAILEY
No, drugs are more important, so go do drugs. Leave me alone.

Kailey storms off to her room. Amber looks at Syd who feels defeated.

AMBER
I told you.

SYD
I missed a couple practices.

AMBER
It’s not about the practices Syd, its about trust.

Amber closes the door on Syd.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Syd and Lawrence sit eating lunch. Lawrence enjoys his food while Syd sits fuming.

SYD
I mean, what the fuck do they want from me.

LAWRENCE
What anyone wants from you. Effort, consistency. You promised that kid that you would be there. Its deeper than missing practice. You fucked up. Accept responsibility.

SYD
So what the fuck am I supposed to do?

LAWRENCE
What do you want to do?

SYD
I don’t want her to hate me.

LAWRENCE
She doesn’t hate you. She just doesn’t trust you. Get her to trust you again, and prove this time that you’re worthy of it. Just like with anyone else in your life. Mend and repair.

INT. MAKAYLA’S APARTMENT - DAY

Makayla sits on her couch reading. Her left eye is still pretty swollen. Syd enters.

MAKAYLA
Hey,

When Syd sees Makayla’s eye, her heart breaks.

SYD
What the fuck.

MAKAYLA
I know, it’s not as bad as it looks. It doesn’t hurt.

Makayla gets off the couch and hugs Syd tight.

MAKAYLA (CONT'D)
Where have you been?

SYD
I went to Savannah. I needed to clear my head.

MAKAYLA
I know that. I know. Look, I’m sorry.

SYD
No. I’m sorry. I never shouldve did that. I can’t believe I did that.

MAKAYLA
It’s okay. It’s not the first time. My dad used to do way more than this to me. I can take it.

Syd shakes her head.

SYD
You shouldn't have to take it. It shouldn't happen.

MAKAYLA
You didn't mean it. I was acting crazy.

SYD
I think we should break up.

Makayla takes a step back, distraught.

MAKAYLA
No. You can't leave me now.

SYD
What are you talking about. Look at your face. Look at my face. We can't keep doing this.

MAKAYLA
When I need you the most you're gonna leave me? Just like every other person in my life-

SYD
Makayla-

MAKAYLA
I was there. When you didn't have anyone else. When you didn't have anywhere else to fucking go-

SYD
Stop throwing that shit in my face!

MAKAYLA
It's the truth! I need you right now.

SYD
What about what I need? What about what I want?

MAKAYLA
What do you want?

SYD
I don't know! But's not this!

Syd heads towards the door.

MAKAYLA
If you leave whatever else happens is your fault!

Syd stops in her tracks.

SYD
Stop doing that fucking shit to me! I have enough shit to deal with I don't need your shit-

MAKAYLA
Then leave! Fucking leave and you won't ever have to worry about dealing with my shit ever again I fucking promise you-

Syd's mind races. She heads towards the door, Makayla begins to sob. Syd gets to the door but can't leave.

SYD
Every time we fight I relapse. I can't do this anymore Makayla it's too hard its too much-

MAKAYLA
You said that you didn't want to fail me. The only way you'll fail me is if you leave me.

Syd shakes her head, she's confused. Makayla embraces Syd and kisses her. Syd doesn't kiss her back, she just lets it happen.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Syd stares at the ceiling as Makayla sleeps. She slowly gets up.

INT. MAKAYLA'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Syd paces the kitchen on the phone.

SYD
(softly, into the phone)
Yeah, I uh, I have a friend that is possibly suicidal. And, I just, I can't handle this situation anymore. (Syd's voice breaks) but I'm scared that if I leave this person they're going to kill themselves. (pause) Okay.
(MORE)

SYD (CONT'D)
The address is 2719 Patterson Ave. Apartment 51.

INT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence sits on his couch playing scrabble. KNOCK AT DOOR, he answers to reveal Syd holding a trash bag full of clothes.

INT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Syd sits across from Lawrence filling him in.

LAWRENCE
That my love is called a toxic relationship.

SYD
If that's the case then I've only ever been in toxic relationships.

Lawrence nods.

LAWRENCE
You know you can't go back to her?

SYD
Yeah, I know.

LAWRENCE
You have to let mental health services do they're job.How long's it been since you've used?

SYD
Since that night on the beach, so, about a week.

LAWRENCE
You know what that whole experience was don't you?

Syd shakes her head.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
It's a God moment. What are the chances of someone coming across you at the beach seconds after you overdosed? What are the chances of them reviving you?
(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
And what are the chances that you find a basketball pin floating in the ocean at the same time that you're begging God to kill you?

Syd ponders. She pulls the basketball pin out of her pocket.

SYD
I don't know.

LAWRENCE
He's talking to you. Now whatever happened with Kailey, you need to fix it. He's giving you hope, and you need to hold on to it.

SYD
I don't know how, she won't talk to me.

Lawrence ponders, he walks out the kitchen then returns with two tickets.

LAWRENCE
My nephew gave these to me. But I'm not much of a fair person. There's way too many people, and diseases and noises and god awful, greasy food. But kids love the fair. You should take Kailey.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amber sits on the couch writing in her journal. She is interrupted by the DOORBELL. She answers it to reveal SYD

AMBER
What are you doing here?

Syd puts her hands up.

SYD
Look, I fucked up. I can't change it. I can't promise that I'm gonna stay sober I can't promise that I'm gonna be a good influence because honestly I don't have my shit figured out. Okay. But I know that I have to try. I know that I have to be there for somebody else and she needs me right now regardless of anything she needs me and I need her.

Syd reaches in her back pocket and pulls out two admission tickets.

SYD (CONT'D)
I got tickets to the fair. You think she'd go with me?

Amber studies Syd. She shrugs her shoulders.

AMBER
Are you clean?

SYD
I haven't done anything in days.

Amber searches for the truth in Syd's eyes but can't find it, or doesn't believe it because Syd is unwavering. Amber leaves and returns with a UA.

AMBER
Here,

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, BATHROOM - SECONDS LATER

Syd pees into the cup, Amber stands at the door watching her. She hands the UA to Amber who waits to read it. Its negative.

AMBER
Okay, she'll be home from school any minute.

Syd nods.

SYD
How's she doing?

AMBER
She's better but she still has her days. Lately she's been less lethargic, eating more, sad but okay.

Syd nods

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Syd sits on the couch, nervous. Amber watches her. Kailey enters from school, when she sees Syd and she becomes guarded.

SYD
What's up champ.

KAILEY
What are you doing here?

SYD
I came to apologize. You were right. I chose drugs over hanging out with you. And I'm sorry. Cus I know that I hurt you a lot. And it hurts me knowing that I hurt you. Sometimes the people that we love and trust the most let us down, but, if you give me one more chance, I'll show you that this is important to me. And you're important to me. Plus, try outs are in less than a week and you're feeling a little better so we should practice today.

Kailey considers.

KAILEY
Maybe.

SYD
Yeah, and maybe we could go to the fair after practice.

Kailey's face lights up.

KAILEY
You got tickets to the fair?

Syd pulls out the tickets. Kailey looks at Amber.

AMBER
It's up to you.

Kailey nods.

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Kailey and Syd work on drills, Kailey kills it. Syd is hyped up. Its a great practice.

EXT. MCLEAD HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - LATER THAT DAY

Kailey gets in the car. Amber and Syd approach the car and stop to talk.

AMBER
I'm trusting you with her.

Syd nods.

SYD
I know. We’re gonna have a good time.

Amber sighs.

AMBER
Have her back by 10.

Syd nods and gives Amber a reassuring look.

SYD
Precious cargo, I got it. And I got you. I’ll see you tonight.

Amber nods, she waves at Kailey as Syd gets in the drivers seat. The pull off.

EXT. COUNTY FAIR - NIGHT

Kailey looks around taking everything in. Syd trails a careful distance behind her.

KAILEY
I wanna ride every single ride here.

Syd turns to Makayla.

SYD
Let’s do it.

MONTAGE OF RIDING RIDES AND ENJOYING FAIR

SYD, AND KAILEY A RIDE DIFFERENT RIDES

SYD AND KAILEY COMPETE IN A BASKETBALL SHOOTING GAME

KAILEY AND SYD PRACTICE AT THE PARK

SYD AND KAILEY PLAY AGAINST EACH OTHER

SYD INAUDIBLY SHARES IN A MEETING

SYD PICKS UP A CHIP LAWRENCE CHEERS FOR HER VERY PROUD

END OF MONTAGE:

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KAILEY'S ROOM - MORNING

Kailey is dressed in her gym shorts ready for practice, however she is sick and can't stop vomiting. Amber holds her hair back and rubs her back. Kailey is frustrated and begins to cry. Syd enters excited until she reads the room.

SYD
Whats going on champ?

AMBER
We had a rough night.

Kailey sits on her bed defeated

KAILEY
Try outs are in less than an hour and I can't stop getting sick-

Syd quickly grabs the trash can and puts it in front of Kailey just in time for her to vomit.

AMBER
I don't think she can do it.

Kailey starts to cry. Syd shakes her head.

SYD
You have to kid, you have to try. This is the moment. This is what we practiced for.

Kailey nods.

AMBER
I don't think it's a good idea-

SYD
It won't be perfect, right. But we're gonna try. We didn't come this far to quit.

KAILEY
But-

Syd looks Kailey directly in the eyes.

SYD
We didn't come this far to quit. Its not gonna be perfect, just like life. It's never perfect. We're basketballs remember? When we're at our lowest we bounce back higher.

Amber shows look of concern.

AMBER
Syd, it's not a good idea. She's weak she's probably dehydrated.

SYD
(adamant)
She's doing it. She has to try.

Amber grabs Syd's arm and pulls her into the hallway.

AMBER
You knew going into this that this was going to be the outcome. Its not a good idea for her to go out there.

SYD
So it's better for her to just quit? Fuck that.

AMBER
Syd, no.

SYD
Then why am I here? What's the point of all this.

Amber gives Syd a look.

AMBER
I don't want her to get her heart broken.

SYD
And I don't want her to quit because shit gets hard. If she goes out there and she fails, we'll deal with that. But she has to try.

INT. GYM, TRY OUTS - EVENING

GIRLS are stretching and warming up as Syd, Kailey, and Amber enter. Kailey is weak and intimidated. She stays close to Syd, holding her hand. She's beyond nervous.

KAILEY
Maybe I shouldn't do this-

Syd looks Kailey in the eyes.

SYD
Champ, you're a basketball.

Kailey nods. She sits down and changes her shoes. COACH, blows his whistle commencing the start of try outs.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Syd, Kailey, and Amber enter. Kailey slams her basketball shoes to the ground.

AMBER
You did good Kailey, you did your best.

KAILEY
I didn't make one shot! I got the ball stolen a hundred times! I threw up in the middle of the court!

AMBER
Kailey, you tried.

Syd is silent.

KAILEY
I knew I shouldn't have done it. I ruined it!

AMBER
Kailey-

Kailey glares at Syd eyes full of tears.

KAILEY
I never should've listened to you!

Kailey runs off to her room and SLAMS the door. Syd shakes her head and paces back and forth.

AMBER
Maybe that wasn't a good idea.

SYD
Bullshit,

AMBER
Syd, you know the odds. We all know the odds-

SYD
So she should give up? Should I give up because of the fucking odds?

AMBER
You know what I mean-

SYD
No! Me and her, we're in the same boat. Should I go out and get fucked up because of the fucking odds.

AMBER
Syd-

Syd storms out the house.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kailey sits on the couch, her head in a trash bin as she violently vomits. Syd holds her hair back.

INT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE , GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd hits her knees and places a pack of Newports under the bed. She begins to pray silently.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Syd and Lawrence sit at their usual booth talking.

INT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Syd sits at the kitchen table doing step work.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Syd sits on the couch with Kailey, Syd's phone rings, she ignores the incoming call from Makayla.

INT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE, GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Syd prays silently.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Amber washes a sink full of dishes. Syd enters and sets a few more dishes in the sink. She watches Amber, then decides to help her.

AMBER
I got it.

SYD
You wash, I'll dry.

Amber nods, and passes Syd dishes as she washes them.

AMBER
I'm curious.

SYD
About what?

AMBER
You.

SYD
What about me?

AMBER
How does a division 1 prospect just walk away from a sport she loves so much? Weren't you supposed to sign with the Minnesota Lynx?

SYD
Yeah, I was.

AMBER
That's Kailey's dream. Playing in the WNBA. It seems so simple. It's a simple dream but, cancer has a way of making everything so got damn complicated.

Syd nods.

AMBER (CONT'D)
How did you get on it- heroin?

SYD
After I hurt my knee, I got prescribed oxy's. Eventually I got tired of paying for prescriptions. Heroin was cheaper.

AMBER
What are you running from?

SYD
Why do you think I’m running from something?

AMBER
I can tell you’re running from something.

Syd shifts her weight from one foot to the other, getting uncomfortable.

AMBER (CONT'D)
It’s okay, I do the same thing.

SYD
What are you running from?

Amber Sighs. She wipes her hands on a dish rag and leans against the sink.

AMBER
Guilt. Guilt that I can’t make things better for Kailey. Guilt about Kailey’s father I guess.

SYD
I’ve never heard you talk about him before.

AMBER
We were high school sweethearts. He was a real prick when I met him. I didn’t think anything of him really. He was a party boy. I was too. But, when I got pregnant I stopped. He couldn’t.

Syd stops drying dishes, and gives Amber her full attention.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Ryan was a die hard UNO fan I mean, he loved sports. Especially basketball. (Laughs) He pretty much brainwashed Kailey into loving it too. You were his favorite women’s basketball player. Her’s too. He took her to every one of your games. Every weekend, it was their thing. It’s how they bonded. That game, when you bummed your knee Kailey and Ryan were there.
(MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)
It was the last night that she spent with her father.

SYD
What happened to him?

AMBER
He used to go drink at this Biker bar. To get away from me. I hated him going. I always gave him shit for it. That night he dropped Kailey off and he went. It got heated. Some guy got into it with another guy... bullets don't really have eyes you know.

Syd nods.

SYD
You don't blame yourself do you?

AMBER
If I wouldn't have been the nagging wife, if I didn't complain about how much he drank when he was home.. maybe-

Syd shakes her head.

SYD
You're not God you know?

Amber's eyes tear up.

AMBER
It's been hard. Going through all of this with Kailey. I feel like sometimes I'm just swimming, just swimming trying to get through all these currents and waves and I'm doing the best I can to keep my head above water you know? (Voice breaking) But I'm just drowning.

Amber wipes her eyes as tears fall.

AMBER (CONT'D)
I've been so scared. Trying to be strong but the truth is that I've been sinking. And it's been killing me inside. And then, just when I felt like I couldn't do it anymore you show up.
(MORE)

AMBER (CONT'D)
And for the first time in years I finally feel like I don’t have to go through this alone. Like, no matter what happens, I won’t go through it alone.

Syd pulls Amber in. Something she’s not used to doing, but its necessary. She holds her tight as Amber chokes up on her tears.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Whatever you’re running from, you have to face it because I can’t go back to going through this alone. And Kailey can’t either. We need you. I don’t think any of that shit happened for nothing Syd.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KAILEYS ROOM - DAYS LATER

Kailey lies in bed, its clear she hasn’t been out of bed in days. Dishes of half eaten food sit around the room. Amber enters and sets a bowl of soup on the dresser. Kailey doesn’t move. She just nods and turns back over to go to sleep. KNOCK AT DOOR.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amber answers the door. Syd enters

AMBER
She’s still not getting out of bed.

SYD
We’re going on a trip.

AMBER
What?

SYD
We’re gonna go to the beach.

AMBER
It’s the middle of April. It’s too cold for the beach.

SYD
She needs to get out of bed. I gotta get her out of bed. She needs this. And you need it.

AMBER
What is going to the beach gonna do?

SYD
What's sitting in the house gonna do?

I/E. AMBER'S CAR - HOURS LATER

Syd drives. Amber sits passenger while Kailey sulks in the back seat.

KAILEY
I want to go back home.

SYD
Well, I want a shot of heroin. So, it sucks to suck.

KAILEY
This is stupid.

SYD
No it's not.

KAILEY
Yes it is.

SYD
No its not!

KAILEY
It is Syd! I'm dying!! Get over it.

Syd abruptly pulls the car over and stops it.

SYD
Stop fucking talking like that-

KAILEY
Stop fucking telling me what to do you're not my mom!

AMBER
Can we all just stop-

Everyone takes a minute. Syd tries to catch her composure. She can't. She shakes her head and gets out the car. She paces on the side of the road. She walks away from the car and yells as loud as she can. Amber and Kailey watch her from the car, confused. She does it again. This time she feels relived Kailey laughs.

She hops out the car, and screams at the top of her lungs. Amber finally gets out and joins them. All three, scream at the top of their lungs. Feeling better, everyone gets back into the car. There's a long silence, until Kailey breaks it with laughter.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Syd, Kailey and Amber sit on a blanket. Enjoying the ocean. Kailey gets up and explores the beach. Amber watches Syd.

SYD
What?

AMBER
I just want you to know that I'm proud of you. And however this turns out, you have to know that you did your best.

Syd nods.

SYD
It's gonna be fine. She's gonna be fine.

AMBER
(treading lightly)
Yeah, but, she's advanced. You just, you can't go backwards if-

SYD
(defensive)
If what?

Amber nods, sensing she's pushing it too far.

SYD (CONT'D)
I came here last week and I tried to kill myself. God wouldn't let me. He gave me a sign. And someone saved my life. He did that for me as fucked up as I am. If he can save me, I know he'll save her. Cuse she deserves it. I don't.

Amber nods fighting tears. She puts her arms around Syd and kisses her forehead. Syd squeezes Amber's hand.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

Syd and Kailey enjoy themselves playing in the ocean, despite the cold temperature.

KAILEY
Its sooo cold!

Syd splashes Kailey. They start a splashing war. Kailey stops and looks out into the ocean.

KAILEY (CONT'D)
What happens when we die?

Syd shrugs.

SYD
I don’t know.

KAILEY
I’ve read about incarnation before. Like, coming back as another person.

SYD
Maybe,

KAILEY
Maybe I’ll come back as a basketball star.

SYD
You’re gonna *be* a basketball star.

Kailey shrugs. From Kailey’s POV we see Amber staring at the water lost in thought.

KAILEY
My mom’s gonna need someone. I don’t want her to be alone.

SYD
What the fuck are you talking about right now?

KAILEY
Will you please be there for my mom?

SYD
Quit your shit.

KAILEY
Quit yours!! I have cancer, Syd! People die when they have cancer!

SYD
And I'm an addict and people die of OD's but you don't hear me claiming and projecting that I'm gonna fucking die!

KAILEY
Because you have a chance to get better! I don't!

Syd shakes her head holding back tears.

SYD
Stop it-

KAILEY
You stop!

SYD
I'm fucking done with this.

KAILEY
I don't get a chance to be done with it! I don't get a chance to ignore it! It's the truth.

SYD
If you make it, I'll make it.

KAILEY
Syd, you have to make it if I make it, but you have to make it if I don't make it too.

INT. HOTEL, ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Kailey and Amber lie in their bed watching tv. Syd sits on her bed, bothered. She gets up and puts on her shoes.

AMBER
Where are you going?

SYD
Out.

Syd leaves.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - MOMENTS LATER

Syd walks around people watching.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Syd sits on the beach contemplating as she smokes a cigarette. PHONE RINGS. She answers.

SYD
(into phone)
Yeah,

AMBER O.S
Where are you?

SYD
Around.

AMBER O.S
You need to get here, something's wrong.

Syd quickly gets up.

INT. HOTEL, ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Syd enters to find Kailey shaking uncontrollably as she coughs up mucus. Amber looks up at Syd.

AMBER
She's got a fever. We need to get her back right now.

Syd covers Kailey in a blanket and picks her up. They rush to the car.

I/E. AMBER'S CAR - NIGHT

Syd concentrates on driving as quickly as she can. Amber sits in the back seat consoling Kailey who is at this point very ill.

AMBER
How long?

SYD
About an hour.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SAME NIGHT

Syd and Amber rush in, Syd carrying Kailey who is covered in sweat and still shaking. They walk up to reception and get Kailey checked in.

INT. HOSPITAL, KAILEY'S ROOM - SAME NIGHT

Kailey lies in bed sickly and asleep hooked up to an IV. and Syd sit keeping her company. Amber enters.

AMBER
I just talked to the doctors. She has pneumonia.

SYD
They can treat that.

AMBER
Her white cell count is low-

SYD
So what-

AMBER
It makes it difficult to treat. We have to consider complications.

Syd is in denial.

SYD
Pneumonia's treatable. She'll be fine.

Syd jumps up defensive.

SYD (CONT'D)
She'll be fine. I gotta go, I'll be back later-

Amber begins to sob. Syd can't take the emotion, and walks out the door. Amber follows her. She catches up to her at the elevator and grabs her by the arm.

SYD (CONT'D)
I need space.

AMBER
You need to remember why you did this in the first place. You did it to be there for her and she needs you now.

Syd shakes her head.

AMBER (CONT'D)
Syd, you run. You run when life gets hard. Its easy to be there when everything's going well. But its hard to be there when you're not getting what you want-

SYD
This isn't fair-

AMBER
Life isn't fair-

SYD
(yelling)
You think I don't fucking know that!

Heads turn.

AMBER
Syd, you came too far to go backwards. You can't go backwards. Not now.

Syd looks Amber in the face, fighting tears.

AMBER (CONT'D)
You can't quit because you don't get what you want.

Elevator opens, Syd gets on it and Amber doesn't stop her.

EXT. LAWRENCE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Lawrence sits enjoying a game of scrabble. He's surprised to see Syd enter.

LAWRENCE
I thought you'd still be in Savannah.

Syd sulks into a chair and sobs.

SYD
I can't do this. I can't be sober. I need to escape. This is too fucking much for me-

Syd sobs. Lawrence takes a deep breath and sits back.

LAWRENCE
So, lets say you do go use. What does that look like?

Syd shrugs

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Does it change whats going to happen?

SYD
I don’t want this to happen. This can’t happen.

LAWRENCE
What do you do when God tells you no?

SYD
What the fuck does that mean?

LAWRENCE
What you want to happen, this life that you’ve envisioned for you and Kailey of bliss, running off into the sunset healed and vibrant and free, it doesn’t look like that’s going to happen, Syd.

Syd shakes her head.

SYD
That’s not what I want-

LAWRENCE
I am completely aware of what you want and so is the God of your understanding. What you need to understand is that it looks like He’s telling you no. So the question I’m asking you is what do you do when God tells you no? What do you do when life doesn’t look like what you want it to look like? Does it justify you going to use?

SYD
Yes-

Lawrence shakes his head.

LAWRENCE
If we got what we thought we deserved we’d be dead.
(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
This isn’t about what we want. Sobriety is about living and accepting life the way that God wants it-

SYD
So God wants an 11 year old to fucking die and I’m just supposed to be okay with that?

Lawrence grabs Syd’s hand.

LAWRENCE
I nor anyone else would ever ask you to be okay with that. But I do expect you to accept that and work through it the best way you can, sober. Remember that this isn’t about what you want, it’s about what is. And we have to show up even when what is, is the exact opposite of what we want it to be.

Syd can’t wipe the tears as fast as they come.

SYD
Can I stay here tonight? I don’t trust myself to be alone.

Lawrence smiles,

LAWRENCE
You know, I think you’re finally starting to get how this program works.

Lawrence gets up and hugs Syd.

INT. LAWRENCE’S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Syd is asleep on the couch. Phone PINGS, Syd wakes up and checks her phone. Whatever she reads excites her. She jumps up and throws her clothes on.

INT. HOSPITAL, KAILEY'S ROOM - SAME

Amber stands and watches as nurses put Kailey on a ventilator. She knows this is the end, but she’s still not prepared for it. PHONE RINGS. Amber answers

AMBER
(into phone)
Hello,

I/E. SYD'S CAR - SAME TIME

Syd is driving talking on the phone

INTERCUT - PHONE CALL

SYD
I got some really big news-

AMBER V.O
(somber)
Where are you?

SYD
I'm on my way to you. She made the team.

Amber tries to keep herself from breaking down.

SYD V.O
Did you hear me?

AMBER
That's great news.

SYD V.O
I know, I knew it. I knew she would I could feel it!

Close up of Kailey, unconcious on life support.

AMBER O.S
Syd, I need you to get here. And I need you to be ready when you do.

Syd's joy turns to anger. She throws her phone on the ground.

INT. HOSPITAL, KAILEY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amber sits quietly in the room. When she sees Kailey on life support, it sends a shock through her body. Amber gets up and hugs her. Amber wipes the tears from her eyes.

AMBER
We're waiting this out, together.

Syd nods, finally accepting it. Amber wipes her own eyes and grabs her jacket.

AMBER (CONT'D)
I need some air, and some tea. I'm going down to the cafeteria.

Amber leaves the room. Syd pulls a chair up to the bed and grabs Kailey's hand and whispers in her ear.

SYD
Kid, you made the team.

Kailey squeezes Syd's hand and gently smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL, KAILEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Syd and Amber both do their best to sleep, Kailey is still unconcious Amber wakes up and makes herself a glass of water, realizing that there is no ice left. Syd wakes up as Amber is on her way out the room.

SYD
(tired)
What's wrong?

AMBER
I'm just getting some ice.

SYD
I'll get it.

Syd walks out the room.

INT. HOSPITAL, ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Syd stands in the elevator all alone. She closes her eyes.

SYD
I don't know what your plan is. I don't get it. And I don't fucking like this. But I need you to help me accept this, and stay clean. I need you to make me a basketball.

INT. HOSPITAL, KAILEY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amber stands around Kailey's body as Dr. And NURSE pronounce her dead.

DOCTOR
Time of death is 11:17 p.m.

Amber falls to the floor. Syd enters with a tray full of ice, she reads the room. And nods.

EXT. CEMETARY, KAILEY'S INTERMENT - DAYS LATER

Syd, Amber, and Lawrence and several others bury Kailey.

12 MONTHS LATER

EXT. BAKERY PARKING LOT - DAY

Syd is headed into the bakery.

NIKKI
Syd!

Syd turns around as Nikki, strung out, approaches her from across the street. She feels cornered, theres no where to run.

SYD
Hey,

NIKKI
Where have you been?

SYD
Around.

NIKKI
I miss you.

Syd nods,

SYD
You good,

NIKKI
Yeah, I just- I've been calling you
I thought you were dead.

SYD
No, I actually just started living.

NIKKI
We need to catch up or something-

SYD
I gotta go pick up a cake right now. But, it gets better Nikki. I promise you, it does.

Syd walks away and into the bakery.

INT. MCLEAD HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Amber, and Lawrence stand around the kitchen laughing and talking. Syd enters with a cake in hand.

LAWRENCE
Hello Mrs. One year!

Syd hugs Amber and sets the cake down.

AMBER
I still don't understand why you had to be the one to pick up your own cake.

SYD
Because now I finally can.

SYD V.O
I didn't get what I wanted. In life, we rarely do. What I did get was sobriety, and a chance to see the beauty in everything. Life is tragic, most times heartbreaking. But there's beauty in everything if you choose to look deep enough.

Amber puts one candle on the cake and lights it. As, Amber, and Lawrence sing happy birthday to Syd. Syd closes her eyes to blow out the candle, but before she does she opens her eyes again, Kailey stands across the table smiling at her. Syd winks at her and blows out the candle.