

The Company

"Employee of the Month"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The soft vocals and slow piano of Something Corporate's "Globes and Maps" carries us into the starkly bright morning.

We follow a butterfly, breathtakingly colourful, as it dips and weaves through air.

It nears a familiar house and twirls towards the second storey - coming in through an open window.

The butterfly lands on a book - a plain white manuscript with the words, "The Company - a novel by Peter Morgan" printed on the front.

A hand moves into frame, brushing the butterfly away, and we PAN UP as it flies out of the window - passing VI MORGAN's tired face.

We are in:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - VI'S BEDROOM - DAY

She leans forward, closing the window gently, and sits back on the window seat.

She's not at all startled when her MOBILE PHONE starts to RING from somewhere beside her. She flips open the phone and speaks into it, not waiting to hear the person on the other end.

VI
(into phone)
Front door's unlocked. Upstairs.
Third on the right.

She hangs up and waits.

The CAMERA stays on her for several long moments as we hear the sound of a DOOR OPENING and CLOSING and then FOOTSTEPS coming up the stairs.

Finally, we swing around to see ANDREW FRIAR enter Vi's room. He's out of breath.

ANDREW
Vi, what is it? Are you okay? Is everything...

She holds out the manuscript and Andrew takes it, reading the title. He sinks down onto her bed, flipping through the pages.

Vi's eyes don't leave the window.

VI

I didn't say anything. I don't...
I don't know how he found out.

ANDREW

I believe you.

VI

They'll do that memory thing,
right? Like they were going to
with Shane?

ANDREW

Maybe. I... I guess so. Vi, I'm
not really - -

She turns sharply, meeting his eyes for the first time. She looks fierce although fighting back tears.

VI

Well you should be "really".

Andrew sighs sadly and he comes to sit beside her on the window seat. He wraps his arm around her shoulders.

VI (CONT'D)

(quiet)

I can't take this away from him.
He's happy, Andrew. For the first
time in forever.

She takes the book from Andrew and stares down at the cover.

They sit silently together as we PULL BACK towards the open doorway.

One the last strains of the song, we:

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. THE COMPANY - BENSON'S OFFICE - LATER

CLOSE ON: FILE

As it's placed gently down on Benson's desk.

REVEAL: JENNA COOKE

Alone in the room and looking mighty relieved about it too. She backs up, about to slip out when - -

- - ALISTAIR BENSON enters, blocking her exit. Jenna stops, barely avoiding a collision.

JENNA
(laughing nervously)
Sir! Sorry! It's, ah - -

BENSON
My fault, Jenna.

He comes around her and moves further into the room.

BENSON (CONT'D)
I should make myself more
noticeable. Purchase an air horn
perhaps.

Jenna calms down. A joke. Jokes are good.

JENNA
I just... My report's on your
desk and I...

She trails off, watching as Benson pours himself a glass of water from a jug on his desk and then sinks down into his chair, rubbing his temples.

JENNA (CONT'D)
Are you okay, Sir?

BENSON
I fear we have a long way to go
until the backlash from Miss
Morgan's little stunt the other
day dies down.

Jenna sits down across from him.

JENNA
What happened?

BENSON

The employees. They're demanding to know why Violet is allowed to tell those close to her about the Company but they must keep every detail a closely guarded secret. It's just difficult. Without knowing more about the Shane Evans situation - -

JENNA

What more is there to know?

BENSON

If Violet was right - if assignments are continually leading Mr. Evans into the path of the Company - then he must have some connection to us that even I can't decipher.

(beat)

It would show weakness. If I were to announce the real reason Violet's friend kept his memory. A reason being one I don't fully understand myself.

JENNA

Sir, I'm sure nobody here thinks of you as weak. I mean, me. There's some weakness there. I've made mistakes... Ones which I feel... There were times in the past few days that...

BENSON

I forgive you, Jenna. I'm not angry.

Jenna sighs in relief. Benson raises his glass to take a sip.

BENSON (CONT'D)

I'm just disappointed, I suppose.

Her face crumbling, we realise that, to Jenna, this is far worse.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - DAY

Establishing shot.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - DAY

Andrew, taking in the quiet of the house, moves around the room.

ANDREW

(calling)

What if they come home? We can't pull the cousin trick on them since, well... I think they'd catch on.

VI (O.S.)

Mum's at work, dad's out grocery shopping or something - -

Vi enters from the front hall, drying off her damp hair with a towel.

VI (CONT'D)

- - And Penny and Cam have gone to school. My parents thought I left early.

Andrew turns and sees her outfit for the first time.

She's wearing her school uniform but it's a little more jazzed up than usual. Her shirt is untucked, she wears bright coloured socks and sparkley dangling earrings.

ANDREW

Let me guess, this is what you wear when The Cat in the Hat gives a guest lecture?

Vi narrows her eyes - tossing her wet towel at him.

VI

It's the end of school. Last day. Everyone gets to... cut loose a little. Relax, y'know?

Andrew slings the towel over the back of a chair as Vi, watching her reflection in the toaster, does her hair up into a messy bun.

ANDREW

Except for you.

VI

What do you mean?

ANDREW

Well... I figured you'd be spending the day... Y'know.

Vi's reflection just stares at him blankly.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 Trying to figure out what to
 do about...

He sighs, giving up.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
 Remember that three hundred page
 monster that details every single
 aspect of our un-deadness? No?
 I'm surprised because you seemed
 pretty broken up about it a
 little earlier.

She straightens and turns to face him.

VI
 Look, I'll deal with that. I
 will. Right now, I just need to
 get through this one last day of
 school. Can you let me do that?
 Please?

Andrew's stern look crumbles.

ANDREW
 Come on, I'll drive you.

He exits and Vi smiles, bouncing after him.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON ACADEMY - HALLWAY - LATER

ANGLE ON BANNER

Slung across the hallway, it reads, "SCHOOL'S OUT!".

PAN DOWN to reveal Vi walking arm in arm with ERIN FOWLER. He
 cranes his neck back, reading the banner.

ERIN
 I feel like we should throwing
 papers into the air and singing
 "We Belong Together".

VI
 Maybe next year.

ERIN
 So, two months of freedom. Plans?

VI
 Hmm... Beach?

ERIN

Awesome. If you do go the beach - make sure you tell me so we can be doing the exact same thing at the exact same time.

VI

Uh... okay.

ERIN

You look confused.

VI

I am confused.

ERIN

I just mean, you can be at the beach here while I'll be at the beach in Queensland. It'll be like we're together but... not.

Vi pulls Erin to a stop.

VI

Wait. Queensland?

ERIN

I thought I told you.

VI

Told me what?

ERIN

My parents and I are flying up to Queensland to visit my grandparents all holidays.

Vi takes a moment, trying to comprehend what he means.

VI

Like... all... holidays?

ERIN

Christmas, New Years, the lot. Right up until school starts again.

Vi, slightly depressed now, keeps walking. Erin quickly catches up to her.

ERIN (CONT'D)

It's not all bad. We can still call each other. And there's letters. Postcards, if you want me to get all touristy.

VI
(disappointed)
Yeah.

ERIN
Vi, I'm sorry.

A group of boys walk past them, heading in the opposite direction.

One thumps Erin on the shoulder and motions to the other end of the hall. Erin nods.

ERIN (CONT'D)
(to Vi)
I've got a soccer meeting. So
I'll see you after lunch, okay?

Vi gives him a smile - although we can tell she's struggling.

VI
Okay. See you.

Erin hurries after the others.

Before Vi can feel too down, SHANE EVANS pops out from around a corner and joins her.

SHANE
Vi...

A little startled, Vi jumps but continues walking.

VI
Were you just lurking?

SHANE
Little bit. Yes. Is that a
problem?

Vi gives him a strange look and then shrugs, letting it go.

VI
So what's up?

SHANE
I was gonna ask you the same
thing. Y'know... What's up
with...
(lowering his voice)
the Company?

VI
Shane, we can't really talk about
that here.

SHANE

I know. So, I was gonna suggest a code word or something. Like we could be saying this but it actually means that.

VI

Please don't make the code word "this".

SHANE

I was thinking more like "Copacabana".

Vi sighs.

VI

Do you mind if we talk about something else?

Shane, sensing something's bothering her, throws her a worried look but decides to move on.

SHANE

Gwen Hart's end of year party. Big blowout. Everyone's invited - even us. You wanna go?

VI

Yeah, sounds like fun.
(her face drops)
Oh but if I don't show up it's either because I'm still grounded or I was killed in a Benson-led firing squad. Both of which have a very, very high likelihood of actually happening.

Shane nods, perhaps not fully grasping the seriousness of her words, and the two push through a pair of double doors.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - DAY

CLOSE ON: VI

She's nervous. Her eyes dart around like she's got something to hide - and we all know that she does.

As she walks, she moves almost in slow motion. The sound of her breathing covers everything else until...

ANDREW (O.S.)

You nervous?

Vi snaps out of her daze to see Andrew leaning against the wall by the closed doors of the conference room, biting his nails. Vi joins him.

VI

It's just a meeting, right?
Another assignment?

ANDREW

Hope so.

He pats her on the shoulder and pushes himself off the wall.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

I'm going to go and find Jenna,
okay? Let her know about the...
thing.

VI

Yeah. The thing.

She leans closer.

VI (CONT'D)

(whispered)
Don't forget about the b-u-g-s.

Andrew rolls his eyes.

ANDREW

(whispered)
I'm pretty sure they can spell.

Vi glares and steps around him.

VI

Just go. Leave me to my grisly
fate.

Saluting, Andrew skips off down the hallway. Vi turns to the doors.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Benson, the only other person in the room besides Vi, hands her a piece of paper - her assignment. Vi takes it hesitantly.

VI

Um, thanks. Is... is that all?

Benson smiles eerily. We're not sure if it's meant to be eerie but it sure as hell is anyway.

BENSON
Yes, I believe it is.

Vi nods and slowly backs up.

VI
I guess I'll be going now.
(beat)
To do my assignment.
(beat)
Because it's my job.

She turns around but instead of walking, she keeps turning - doing a full rotation until she faces him again.

VI (CONT'D)
Did I do something wrong?
(quickly)
I mean aside from the obvious.

Benson chuckles.

BENSON
No. Everything's fine.

Vi, trying to believe him, exits.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - WOMEN'S BATHROOM - MEANWHILE

Completely empty and silent aside from the slow DRIP DRIP DRIP of a leaky tap.

The door swings open and Andrew enters, pulling Jenna by the hand.

JENNA
Andr - -

ANDREW
Don't say my name. Call me...
Carlos.

Jenna raises an eyebrow as Andrew lets her go and proceeds to check the stalls - all of them being empty.

JENNA
Okay. Would you care to explain
the meaning of this, Carlos?

ANDREW
I'd love to but just give me a
sec.

He turns on every hand drier - creating a storm of noise.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Alright. We're good.

JENNA

What's all this about?

Andrew takes a deep breath.

ANDREW

Last night Vi found a copy of a book her dad's been writing which just happens to be all about the Company including characters and events which are bizarrely close to real life but, at the same time, Vi has no idea how her dad got this information because she sure as hell didn't tell him and now we don't know what to do about it because there's no way Benson's gonna let this one slide so we're pretty much screwed unless you help us out.

There's a long beat as Jenna takes this in.

JENNA

Wow. It's really not Vi's week is it?

ANDREW

At the moment, we need you to keep your ear to the ground. If you hear rumblings of this, make sure it stays away from Benson and that psycho, Dautry, for as long as possible. Vi and I just need time to figure out a solution.

JENNA

So you don't have a solution now?

ANDREW

Not so much.

The hand driers switch off. After standing in the silence for a beat, Jenna launches forward, hugging him.

JENNA

(quiet)

Everything's going to be okay.

Andrew simply blinks as Jenna pulls away and hurries out of the room, leaving him stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - DAY

Andrew pulls up in front of a tall building. Vi, in the passengers seat, checks her assignment sheet against the number above the doorway.

VI
Yep. This is it.

ANDREW
Do you want me to wait and drive you home?

VI
No, that's okay. I'll just take the bus.

ANDREW
I'm concerned.

VI
Concerned? That's a new word for you.

ANDREW
Seriously. You need to talk to your dad.

Vi rolls her eyes and gets out of the car. She leans down, looking at him through the open door.

VI
And I will but right now, I've kind of got other things to deal with.

She holds up the assignment sheet.

Andrew, irritated, motions towards the building as if to say, "well, go on then".

Vi shuts the door and Andrew drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALD - RECEPTION - LATER

Out of breath, Vi tromps up the flight of stairs into the office. She heads straight for the main desk behind which sits a RECEPTIONIST, typing on a computer.

RECEPTIONIST
(without looking up;
still typing)
Sorry about the stairs. The elevator's busted.

Vi turns to see an "Out of Order" sign stuck over the closed elevator doors.

VI
(turning back)
Not a fan anyway.

RECEPTIONIST
Are you here for the assistant
job?

Vi takes a beat, unsure. The Receptionist stops typing and lifts a coffee mug to her lips. On it is the word, "Yes".

VI
(quickly)
Yes. Yep. Exactly.

The Receptionist nods and hands her a clipboard with a sheet of paper and a pen attached. She goes back to typing.

RECEPTIONIST
Take a seat over there and fill
this out. Someone will be with
you in a moment.

VI
Thanks.

Vi takes the clipboard and starts to move over to a row of comfy looking chairs when a woman blurs past her.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Are you here for the assistant
job?

Vi looks up to see a high powered business woman, EVIE MALONE (30s), standing a few metres away.

VI
Uh... Yes.

Evie turns and keeps walking. As she nears the corner...

EVIE
Then keep up, chipmunk.

Vi hurries after her.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALD - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Evie plows her way through the bustling room with Vi a few steps behind, trying to keep up.

Staff members practically jump out of Evie's way when they see her coming.

EVIE

My name is Evie Malone, I'm the junior editor here at the Garretton Herald. Although you might not be able to detect it, I say "junior" with intense bitterness because I've been working here for longer than our current editor, Mr. Holland, but am still required to do the work of an office mail boy.

She glances pointedly at Vi who has hurried up to her side.

EVIE (CONT'D)

Have you filled out your application yet?

Vi looks down, hoists the clipboard up and starts to write haphazardly.

VI

Still working on it.

EVIE

This assistant job is dangerous, let's just get that clear right now. You'll be required to go above and beyond the call of duty. That means on top of sorting, filing, typing and taking calls, you'll also be required to pick up dry cleaning, buy coffee, order lunch and shred incriminating evidence. Do you have a problem with any of that?

VI

No.
(beat)
Ma'am.

EVIE

Good.

They walk swiftly past the water cooler, where an employee holds out his paper cup for Evie. She takes it - still moving.

EVIE (CONT'D)

That's the water cooler. That's where you get your water.
(pointing around the room)
(MORE)

EVIE (CONT'D)
 Paper room for paper, break room
 for breaks, bathroom for - -

VI
 Baths?

Evie throws her an unamused glance and Vi shrinks down.

VI (CONT'D)
 Your assistant plus jokes equals
 bad. Got it.

They stop outside an office with frosted glass windows and door. We can't see inside.

EVIE
 Oh, you won't be my assistant.

Vi raises her eyebrows.

VI
 But I thought - -

EVIE
 Ever heard of "Dear Sam"?

VI
 The advice column?

EVIE
 The assistant job is for Sam
 Fielding.

BANG! A folder of papers comes hurtling at the window and Vi jumps, startled. Evie, not caring, nods to the room.

EVIE (CONT'D)
 That's Sam's office.

She holds out her hand.

EVIE (CONT'D)
 Your application?

Vi hands over the clipboard.

EVIE (CONT'D)
 You'll start work tomorrow.

VI
 Just like that?

Evie smiles for the first time.

EVIE
 Just like that. I assume you can
 find your way out?

Vi nods and Evie steps past her, heading back the way they came. After a moment, she stops and turns back.

EVIE (CONT'D)
Oh and by the way...

Vi drags her eyes away from Sam's office.

EVIE (CONT'D)
Good luck.

CRASH! A coffee mug - hitting the door frame - shatters.

EVIE (CONT'D)
You're going to need it.

Evie disappears, leaving Vi to throw a wary glance at the closed door.

FADE TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - PETER'S STUDY - LATER

Peter sits in his armchair by the roaring fireplace. All the other lights in the room are off, throwing dancing shadows across his face.

In the b.g, the door CREAKS open and Vi pokes her head inside.

VI
Dad... Have you got a minute?

Peter perks up and looks at her over his shoulder.

PETER
Anything for my Vi-Pie. C'mon in.

He motions her forward and Vi does so hesitantly. She hovers by his side and Peter leans forward, tapping the footstool in front of him.

Vi sinks down onto it. She looks down at her hands, avoiding his gaze.

PETER (CONT'D)
Something wrong, kiddo?

Vi takes a deep breath, summoning confidence, and looks up at him.

VI
Your book. It's... It's wonderful. Really.

Peter smiles.

VI (CONT'D)

I was just wondering... how did you... I mean...

(starting again)

How'd you come up with it? The idea?

Peter leans back, folding his hands across his abdomen and staring into the fire wistfully.

PETER

Where does anybody get their ideas? It's just... inspiration from the world around us, some little connection sparking off in our brains.

(beat)

I'm glad you like it though. I hoped you would.

VI

Why me?

There's a pause as he considers his answer.

PETER

The main character. She's based on you.

In another situation, this would be a flattering statement but it makes Vi's face pale in alarm.

PETER (CONT'D)

I can see you in a place like the Company.

Vi, almost looking physically pained, looks away.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - VI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Vi lies, tossing and turning, amongst the sheets on her bed. From somewhere o.s, her mobile phone RINGS and she sits up - clearly already awake.

Leaning over the side of her bed, she digs around on the floor, producing her phone.

VI
(tired; into phone)
Hello?

There's a pause as she listens. Her eyes widen.

VI (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Are you sure?
(beat)
How did they - -
(beat)
O-okay. I... I'll be right there.

She hangs up. A beat.

VI (CONT'D)
Crap.

And as she sits, perfectly still, in the moonlit room...

BENSON (PRE-LAP)
Please come inside, Miss Morgan.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Vi stands nervously in the doorway, Andrew by her side.

REVERSE ANGLE

Benson sits on one side of the long table, leaving his usual seat at the head of it free. Jenna sits on one side of him, GABRIELLE DAUTRY on the other. Divided along each side are six EXECUTIVE TYPES. None of them look happy.

BENSON
Andrew, you can wait outside.

ANDREW
I think - -

BENSON

No one cares what you think. I told you to wait outside.

Andrew takes a deep breath and squeezes Vi's arm. As he turns, he looks to Jenna. She gives him a sincere, pleading look. Andrew nods. He knows she wasn't behind this.

He exits, closing the door behind him. Benson motions to a chair (the only one) on the opposite side of the table.

BENSON (CONT'D)

Please sit down.

Vi walks forward - shaking - and sinks down into the seat, pulling it in tightly. She's pale, almost sickly looking, with dark circles under her eyes.

The room is silent. Vi stares guiltily down at her hands for a long while.

VI

Are you going to say anything?

BENSON

What do you want me to say?

Vi shrugs.

BENSON (CONT'D)

Believe me, there is nothing I could say that would make this any easier. None of us want to be here right now.

VI

How... How'd you find out?

BENSON

I think the real question is, were you ever planning on letting me find out?

Vi looks up at him, about to open her mouth when:

GABRIELLE

Benson, this is ridiculous. We're treating her like a child who's just been caught drawing on the walls. She's a criminal. A bad seed. I think she's made that apparent over the past few days.

JENNA

She's not - -

GABRIELLE

And I don't even know why you're here, Ms Cooke. Just looking for another opportunity to play the rebellious hero, I suppose.

BENSON

Gabrielle, please. This is a very delicate matter.

GABRIELLE

(scoffing)

Delicate! Ha! This girl has so far proven herself to be a priority one security risk. It's one thing to tell your best friend but a completely different matter to actually put it in writing.

VI

I didn't - -

BENSON

While I wish I could believe that you had nothing to do with this, Miss Morgan, the evidence is not in your favour. Now, we have to decide what to do.

GABRIELLE

I can have Doc down there in twenty minutes for a memory wipe.

BENSON

No. It's too late for that. Peter Morgan has been working on this project for far too long. To remove his memories of the Company now would pose a terrible threat to the rest of his brain function.

VI

S-so - so what are you going to do to him?

GABRIELLE

(ignoring her; to Benson)
Elimination. That's the only option, then.

JENNA

No!

GABRIELLE

Stay out of this, Cooke. This has nothing to do with you.

JENNA

(re: Vi)

But it has everything to do with her! You don't think that killing her father is going to break connections? You're jeopardising the future of everyone he's come into contact with. You're jeopardising the future of this Company.

Vi gives Jenna a small smile. Thankful to have someone on her side.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Besides, you're thinking about this all wrong. A memory wipe poses a threat, yes, but he'd still be alive. At least that's something.

Vi's smile drops.

VI

So that's it? A vegetable or dead. That's all you're giving me?

BENSON

Miss Morgan, no one is giving you anything. This is not a debate in which you plead your case. Now, unless you have something useful to add, I suggest - -

VI

(softly)

I'll fix it.

BENSON

Excuse me?

VI

Let me fix it. I know I can.

She stands.

VI (CONT'D)

Just please... You can't...
(pleading; teary)
You can't hurt him. Please.

BENSON

Very well.

GABRIELLE

(outraged)

Sir!

BENSON

(to Vi)

You have forty-eight hours to do what needs to be done. After that...

Vi doesn't need to hear any more. She nods and hurries out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

Vi sits on the front step, her chin in her hands. Shane pulls up on his bike and sets one leg down, balancing himself.

SHANE

Wow - you look like hell. Or what I imagine hell to look like if it hadn't slept in - -

VI

Four days.

SHANE

Exactly. Wait... Seriously?

(beat)

It's the Company, isn't it? Something's happened. Is it because of me? I can help, y'know. I mean I want to. Even though they did pretty much kidnap my family, hunt me down like a criminal and attempt to give me a back alley lobotomy.

VI

Shane. I swear, this has nothing to do with you.

SHANE

(a little hurt)

But I can still help.

Vi shakes her head and stands, moving towards the front door.

VI

You really can't.

She goes inside, closing the door behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALD - MAIN FLOOR - DAY

Vi, dressed in a smart skirt and white button down shirt, approaches the office of "Ask Sam".

Pausing, she listens for any commotion inside. Silence.

She knocks on the door.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALD - SAM'S OFFICE - NEXT

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

It's open!

The door opens and Vi enters, closing it behind her. Stepping over a discarded fast food bag, she looks around the very messy room, searching for the source of the voice.

MAN (O.S.)

Who're you?

VI

I - I'm Violet. Morgan. Violet Morgan. I'm, uh, Sam's new assistant.

A hand grasps the edge of the desk and a man pulls himself up, holding a portable video game in his other hand.

He's in his early 30s, cute but overall not a winner in the hygiene and personal grooming department.

This is SAM FIELDING.

SAM

I'm Sam.

Vi's a bit shocked.

VI

Oh. I... Well... I just kind of assumed... Aren't advice columnists supposed to be, y'know, girls?

Sam pockets the game and begins to clear papers and CD cases from on top of a silent computer.

SAM

Interesting. Starting your first day with gender stereotyping.

(MORE)

SAM (CONT'D)
What'll it be tomorrow? Racial
slurs? Envelopes filled with
anthrax?

Vi says nothing, embarrassed. Sam gives a heavy sigh and pulls out the chair at the desk, motioning to it.

SAM (CONT'D)
Well, get to work then.

Vi sits down, watching him as Sam prowls around the room - looking for something.

SAM (CONT'D)
A-ha!

He tosses aside a jacket to reveal a bag of mail on the floor which he hefts up onto the desk beside Vi. She pokes through the bag curiously.

VI
And, uh, what exactly am I
supposed to do?

Sam flops down onto a couch by the window and extracts the game from his pocket.

SAM
Simple. Just read me a letter and
type up my response.

Vi nods and yawns as she pulls the first letter from the bag.

VI
Excuse me.

SAM
Tired?

VI
Yeah, I - -

SAM
Don't care. First letter, please.

A beat. Vi narrows her eyes but opens the first letter anyway.

VI
(reading)
"Dear Sam. My boyfriend and I
have just moved in together but
now it seems that his mother is
always over at our place and -".

SAM
Toss it.

VI

What?

SAM

A guy, a girl and the guy's overbearing mother. It's like a bloody sitcom. Next.

Vi shrugs, tossing the letter into a garbage bin on her other side. She reaches for the next letter.

VI

(reading)

"Dear Sam. I'm a twenty-four year old single woman. Someone's been sending dead roses to my house every week. I've been getting strange phone calls, too, and I think I'm being followed. I've gone to the police but they didn't do much. Can you help me? Signed, Little Lamb".

Sam ponders for a minute and Vi sets her fingers over the keyboard, poised to type.

SAM

"Dear Little Lamb. Let me give you some statistics. 63% of all stalkers know either kung fu or kick boxing. 49% of them carry hunting knives on their person and 12% give up when they've got someone as fantastic as you in their sights. So, how does that help you? Get a security camera, buy a doberman, get yourself a weight lifter boyfriend named Tex and join the hell out of every self defense class down at the gym. This guy's a freak but you have the upper hand because you're not a little lamb. You're a lion. Good luck, Sam".

Vi takes a moment to finish typing up his answer. Then she pauses.

VI

Umm... Are those statistics real?

SAM

Vivian, was it?

VI

Violet.

SAM

Violet, did you know 34% of all statistics are made up?

He shoots Vi a smirk before getting back to his video game.

SAM (CONT'D)

Next letter.

VI

But I don't think that you're giving her very good advice if you're - -

SAM

Hey. Who's the professional here? I just need someone to read and type. Read and type. A monkey could do it.

(beat)

Well, the typing part anyway. But once they do find a monkey who can read out loud? I'll hire him.

(beat)

Now... Read and type.

Vi sighs in frustration and picks up another letter. She flips it over to open it but stops when she sees a message scrawled on the back.

"You know what you have to do".

Glancing up at Sam, she sees that he's fully immersed in his game. She looks back down at the letter and the message now says, "Thank you Sam!".

Vi looks to the computer screen.

CLOSE ON: SCREEN

Vi highlights Sam's response to "Little Lamb" and deletes it.

BACK TO VI

She starts typing, a small triumphant smile on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - BENSON'S OFFICE - DAY

Benson is busy going through paperwork when Gabrielle enters. She doesn't look pleased.

GABRIELLE

I can't stand by and let this happen, Alistair.

Benson looks up.

BENSON

Let what happen, Gabrielle?

GABRIELLE

You're putting the fate of the entire world in the hands of a sixteen year old girl. An irrational, immature sixteen year old girl.

(then)

Does the head office even know about this?

BENSON

I haven't quite gotten around to informing the head office as of yet.

GABRIELLE

Of course you haven't.

(beat)

I'm the Head of Security. How do you think it makes me look when I don't do everything in my power to stop a leak like this one?

Benson levels her with a steely gaze.

BENSON

I'd think that it makes you look like an employee who's just following orders from their boss.

There's a tense pause. Gabrielle grits her teeth.

GABRIELLE

Fine.

She starts to walk back towards the door.

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)

But I have to say, I think you'll regret this.

(beat)

Sir.

She exits.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALD - SAM'S OFFICE - LATER

They've been working for awhile.

There's now a stack of letters - read and replied to - beside Vi and Sam stands in the centre of the room, bouncing a rubber ball off the wall.

Vi leans back and stretches, flexing her fingers. Sam notices this.

SAM

Okay, take a break. Good job.

VI

Really?

SAM

Yeah, I don't think I've ever had an assistant who just typed out my answers without, y'know, complaining about them every two seconds. I'm impressed.

Vi looks a little ashamed of herself as she quickly leans forward and closes the Word document.

VI

Well, there wasn't much to complain about.

She yawns again and Sam stops bouncing the rubber ball. He tosses it to her.

SAM

Don't fall asleep yet. It's still early.

He motions for her to throw it back to him and she does so only for him to immediately toss it back to her. They continue to do this.

VI

Sorry. I just haven't been getting much sleep.

SAM

Trouble at home? School?

VI

How'd you know I went to school?

SAM

I'm not an idiot. What are you, fourteen?

VI

Sixteen. And I tried to dress older today. Look all professional and stuff.

SAM

There are two ways to be professional in a place like this. Sight and substance.

VI

Huh?

SAM

You either dress the part or act the part. I, as you can see, don't dress the part.

VI

So I guess acting professional here means throwing coffee mugs and breaking things?

SAM

I'm temperamental. Just be thankful Evie hired you yesterday and not last week - you'd probably have been thrown out that window by your second day.

VI

Why do you act like that? You seem nice. I guess. Maybe you could - -

SAM

Hey, hey. No giving advice to the advice columnist. It's like traveling through time and meeting yourself. The universe will probably implode or something.

Sam studies her. She's still sluggish and catching the ball more and more clumsily every time.

SAM (CONT'D)

So, like I asked before... troubles at home or school?

VI

And work. The whole lot.

SAM

Trouble at work? It's your first day.

VI

No. My other work. It's...

She sighs. As she catches the ball, she puts it to the side - stopping the game.

VI (CONT'D)

There's this choice I've got to make and I don't know... Well, it's hard.

Sam sinks down onto the couch, listening intently.

VI (CONT'D)

Well, not really. It's simple, I guess. I can hurt someone I love or hurt someone else - probably more than one someone else, actually. And these people... well... I respect them, y'know? They go through so much crap every day and they don't deserve it but... Love or respect.

(beat)

Simple.

They sit in silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

Vi exits the Garreton Herald building and sets off up the street. It's stretching into early evening now and people hurry to get home after a long day at work.

She passes a tiny news agent stand and watches as someone drops a magazine and bends down to pick it up.

They stand to reveal themselves as...

VI

(surprised)

Lenny!

LENNY spots her and grins as he slips the magazine back onto the rack. Vi joins him.

LENNY

Violet! Wow - this is so...

VI

Random?

LENNY

Totally. I never thought I'd see you again. Still riding the busses?

VI

Occasionally. But it's never like that time with the...

LENNY

And the...

They laugh, not needing to elaborate.

VI

So, I've heard a lot about you two. Congratulations.

LENNY

Uh, really? I didn't think she... well...

VI

No, Bianca and I don't usually hang out. Still mortal enemies, really, but she's been talking about you non-stop.

Lenny quirks an eyebrow.

LENNY

Really? I, uh, I haven't seen Bianca since that day on the bus.

VI

What? But I thought you two - -

LENNY

I mean, I called her a couple of times and everything seemed fine but she just... said she didn't want a boyfriend. So...

VI

Oh. Uh... My mistake, then. Sorry.

LENNY

No, no. It's okay
(laughing)
Don't look so bummed out. It wasn't a total loss.

VI

What do you mean?

LENNY

Well, I wasn't that great with girls. I'm still not, actually, but talking to Bianca made me realise that I wasn't a total failure.

A cute GIRL approaches, smiling. She carries a paper bag from a bakery.

GIRL

Hey, Lenny. They ran out of apple muffins so I got you an apple cinnamon. Hope that's okay.

She takes Lenny's hand and looks to Vi.

GIRL (CONT'D)

(cheerful)

Hi.

LENNY

Violet, I'd like you to meet my girlfriend.

Lenny grins, happier than we've ever seen him (even with Bianca).

CUT TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT HALL - DAY

Vi walks down the stairs, yawning and putting her hair up into a pony tail.

Reaching the floor, she hears someone moving around in Peter's study at the end of the hallway.

She stops and drops her head - knowing that now is as good a time as any to try talking to Peter again. She turns and walks down the hallway.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - PETER'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

Vi slips through the partially open door and walks into the darkened room. Confused, she looks around.

VI

Dad?

Behind her, a shadow nears. There's a CREAK of weight on the floorboards and Vi whirls around...

... only to let out an shocked SCREAM!

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - PETER'S STUDY - DAY

DOC sits calmly in Peter's armchair while Vi paces the room.

VI

You have got to be kidding me! Benson promised me. He promised that he'd let me handle this. And now he goes behind my back - he betrayed me.

DOC

That's just like him.

VI

Forty-eight hours! Ha! What a load of crap. He was just saying that to get me out of the way so he could send you in to do the dirty work.

DOC

And it is such dirty work.

VI

But it's not like you're taking any responsibility for it or anything. You attacked me!

DOC

In my defense, I thought you were your father.

Vi gives him a disbelieving look and sighs. She stops pacing and flops down into a second chair - across from Doc. After a beat:

DOC (CONT'D)

It was Gabrielle Dautry.

VI

What?

DOC

Head of Security. Gabrielle Dautry. She sent me here. I thought Benson knew but now... I'm not so sure.

Vi shakes her head - overwhelmed.

VI

I just don't know what to do. I'm trying to protect my dad. At least I think I am. It's on my list, anyway. But there are all these other things and all these other people telling me what to do and how I should be feeling and it's just... dumb. It's all dumb.

Doc presses his palms together, touching his fingertips to his lips - deep in thought.

DOC

Everything happens for a reason.

This sparks something deep down inside Vi. She looks up at him - her brain whirring. She opens her mouth to speak but...

CAROLINE (O.S.)

(calling)

Vi? Are you here?

Vi jumps up and looks frantically to Doc who is still seated.

VI

It's my mother! You've got to - -

The door to the study opens and Vi freezes. Caroline pokes her head inside and, once spotting Vi, opens the door wider.

CAROLINE

Good. There you are. I wanted to talk to you about tonight.

Vi raises her eyebrows. Can't Caroline see the strange, wild-eyed man sitting in her father's chair? Vi stiffly glances over her shoulder.

The seat is empty. Over at the window, the curtains move softly - pushed by a gentle breeze.

VI

(turning back to
Caroline)

What's happening tonight?

Caroline sighs in frustration.

CAROLINE

Vi, I swear I've told you this seven times already. We're going out to dinner. To celebrate.

VI

Haven't we already celebrated enough? What about the movies, the cake, the big banner that said, "Congratulations Dad!"?

CAROLINE

And you haven't been around for any of those.

Vi cringes.

VI

But - -

CAROLINE

But what?

VI

There's kind of this... thing. A party.

CAROLINE

Violet Louise Morgan. No, no and no. You are not going to a party instead of dinner with your family. Where are your priorities?

Vi, rolling her eyes, moves past Caroline and out into:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

VI

I have priorities.

Caroline walks after her, growing more irritated by the second.

CAROLINE

Just none that involve the wellbeing of your father, I see.

Vi stops at the bottom of the stairs, stung by Caroline's words.

VI

I care about dad. I do. I just... there are things that you don't understand. Ever since that night that I... that I died, things have been different.

CAROLINE

You don't have to tell me, Vi. I've seen it all.

(MORE)

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

And, honestly, I don't know what to do about it anymore. You're distant and detached. Secretive.

(beat; sadly)

You're not my Violet anymore.

They each take a quiet moment. Neither knowing how to remedy this thought. Then:

VI

(heading upstairs)

I'm going out.

CAROLINE

You are still grounded, young lady. I'm not quite sure what you did because all these groundings keep overlapping but you are not leaving this house and that's final!

But Vi's gone. Upstairs, a door SLAMS.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - VI'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door is thrown open and Caroline strides in.

CAROLINE

Just to make it perfectly clear, you're still coming out with us tonight - grounded or not and - -

She stops. The room is empty. Confused, Caroline moves over to the open window. She looks down at the lawn and groans.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(angry)

That girl.

We ANGLE DOWN on the front yard to see Vi jogging across the lawn to the footpath.

CUT TO:

INT. STREET - DAY

Vi walks quickly and with purpose. She occasionally glances over her shoulder - nervous about being followed although whether it be from her family or the Company, we can't be sure.

Her phone RINGS and Vi whips it out, a little nervously. She checks the screen and smiles.

VI
 (into phone)
 Erin? Hi.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FOWLER RESIDENCE - ERIN'S ROOM - SAME

Erin moves hurriedly around his bedroom, his mobile phone tucked in between his shoulder and ear. He is going through his closet, throwing things into a suitcase on his bed.

ERIN
 Hey, Vi. Is this a bad time? I mean, are you busy?

VI
 No, no. Just... taking a walk.

ERIN
 Oh, okay. This'll just take a sec but I needed to talk to you. I... I'm leaving a little earlier than expected.

VI
 What? How much earlier?

ERIN
 The flight's tonight at eleven.

VI
 B-but why? I thought we'd have at least a week before you - -

ERIN
 My granddad had a stroke today. So...

VI
 Oh God, Erin. I'm so sorry. Are you... Is everyone okay?

ERIN
 Yeah, I guess. I don't know. Everything's just a little crazy right now.

Erin tosses a pair of jeans into his suitcase and sinks down into the bed.

VI
 So I guess I'll see you when you get back. Um... next year.

ERIN

No, no. I'll be at the party tonight. Just gotta be home by nine. But, I can still see you there.

(beat)

It seems pretty messed up. To go to a party, I mean, when all this... God, I don't know. My parents said I should go.

VI

Yeah. Well, my mum just sort of banned me from ever leaving the house but I think I can make an appearance. Even if I don't... Well, do you mind if I stop by yours to say goodbye?

Erin smiles.

ERIN

I'd like that.

VI

Me too.

Off her faint glimmer of happiness...

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - DAY

Vi steps off the elevator shakily.

The numbness in her eyes sharpens into rage when she sees Benson depositing a file at the front desk.

VI

You might wanna try keeping a shorter lease on your employees.

Benson turns to her, not at all surprised at her tone.

BENSON

I've tried. Believe me.

VI

So you knew about this? You allowed it? After what you promised me?

BENSON

I'm afraid I'm a touch unclear as to what exactly it is that we're discussing.

VI

She sent Doc. He was in my house.

A beat.

BENSON

Oh.

VI

So you didn't...

BENSON

I was not aware of this. Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

VI

(icily)

You're welcome.

She starts to leave, heading back to the elevators, when Andrew turns the corner - arriving on the scene.

ANDREW

Hey, Vi. Look, I've been thinking about this whole thing and I've decided - it's totally messed up. I have no idea what - -

VI

Shut up!

Hurt crosses Andrew's face as he backs up a few steps. Even Benson looks a little startled.

VI (CONT'D)

I'm sick of this. I'm sick of not knowing what to do.

She jabs a finger in Andrew's direction.

VI (CONT'D)

I'm sick of you not knowing what to do - -

Vi turns on Benson, gritting her teeth.

VI (CONT'D)

And I'm sick of you never telling me what to do. Always giving these vague assignments, vague answers. It's crap - all of it! What if... what if all this stuff with my dad is... what it is. That's it. Maybe, like Shane, he was meant to know. Everything happens for a reason.

Benson considers this.

BENSON

Yes. That may be true. But you're forgetting that the universe doesn't always get it right the first time. That's why we're here.

(beat)

I believe that your father's book isn't the be all and end all. It's a catalyst. For what comes next.

VI

And what comes next?

BENSON

You tell me.

VI

That's it. That's exactly what I'm talking about. Why can't you just help me? Why can't you just tell me what to do?

BENSON

But if I did, Violet, would you listen to what I have to say? I know you'll do what's best for everyone.

Vi takes a moment and then nods numbly. Turning back to face the elevators, everything around her SLOWS DOWN, blurring into undefinable shapes. She sways to one side, stumbling.

VI

What's... best... for...

WHAM. She hits the floor - out cold.

FADE TO:

EXT. FRENCH CAFE - BALCONY - DAY

It's a gloriously sunny day, the brilliant blue of the sky is striking against the incredible structure of the Eifel Tower.

Nothing could be more perfect. It almost looks like a painting rather than real life...

.... But that's because it is.

A man, wearing a beret and pencil thin moustache, plays the accordion to a group of glamorous patrons who sit on the balcony of the cafe, admiring the view of the painted back drop.

Vi, wearing a flower print sundress, heels and little white gloves, strolls into frame, seating herself at a tiny table by the balcony railing.

A WAITER approaches, carrying a covered silver tray. He places it in front of her and whips away the cover to reveal a copy of the Garretton Herald newspaper. Vi raises an eyebrow and looks up at him.

VI
No croissants?

WAITER
Excusez-moi?

VI
Um... Okay. Uh, do you speak...
Err... Parlay... vou... Um...
English?

The Waiter simply gives her a dismissive smile and walks away. Vi sighs and looks down at the newspaper.

PENNY (O.S.)
That's all they serve here. You'd
better get used to it.

Vi looks up. PENNY MORGAN sits across from her, looking all high-society in a beautiful dress, wide brimmed sun hat and huge sunglasses.

VI
Penny, what are you doing here?

PENNY
Helping you, dorkus, so pay
attention.

The same Waiter approaches and hovers beside Penny. She turns to him and flashes him an amazing smile.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Bon jour, bon voyage! A la mode
crème caramel eau de toilette.
Film noir adieu menage a trois,
s'il vous plait?

The Waiter smiles, nods and hurries away. Penny turns back to Vi, looking very impressed with herself.

VI
What did you just say?

Penny waves her question away.

PENNY
Ah, it was nothing. Just French
stuff. You wouldn't understand.

She nods to the newspaper, still sitting in front of Vi.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Go on. You'd better read it.

VI
I don't feel like it.

PENNY
Everyone else is.

She nods her head to the other patrons who each have their faces buried in newspapers, even the Waiter and accordion player (who's accordion is strangely still moving and playing itself while he reads).

PENNY (CONT'D)
You don't want to get in trouble,
do you?

Vi scoffs.

VI
Yeah, as if I'd get in trouble.
Come on, Penny - -

A wailing police SIREN pierces the air and Vi leaps to her feet, her chair falling back and hitting the ground with a BANG.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vi jolts awake!

The siren has become the whistle of a BOILING KETTLE and it soon stops, followed by a hiss of pain and muttered expletives coming from the kitchen.

Vi slowly sits up to find herself on Andrew's couch - a blanket tucked around her.

Andrew enters the room, carrying two mugs of tea.

ANDREW
Good, you're awake. Otherwise I'd
be kind of tempted to throw this
all over you.
(beat)
(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

But I'm pretty sure that's assault.

He hands her one of the mugs and motions for her to move her legs. Vi does so and Andrew sits down at the end of the couch.

VI

What happened?

ANDREW

You passed out. I figured you didn't want to wake up in the Company. Probably start you off on some insane rant again so I brought you back here. I hope that's okay.

Vi manages a small smile.

VI

That's fine. Thanks.

(beat)

I'm sorry. For what I said to you. And for how I've been acting. I know none of this is your fault.

Andrew takes a sip of tea and sighs.

ANDREW

But it kind of is.

(beat)

I haven't been the best mentor. I haven't been the best friend, either.

VI

Are you kidding? You punched out a guy, you took the blame for me, you were arrested for me. I can't think of a better friend.

There's a KNOCK at the door and Andrew takes a moment - really not wanting to get up. He does, however, and opens the front door.

Shane pushes his way inside.

SHANE

Where is she? Is she here?

Vi perks up, putting her mug down on the coffee table. She stands, shedding the blanket.

VI

Shane? What are you doing here?
How did you even know - -

SHANE

I did some digging. Asked around.

Vi's eyes widen.

VI

Shane, who exactly did you ask?

SHANE

Cam. He said you were probably with Andrew and he gave me the address.

(after-thought)

So does, like, your whole family know about this or what?

VI

Cam doesn't know anything.

(beat)

At least I hope he doesn't because one family member on the Company's hit list is more than enough.

ANDREW

Can we get back on track, please?

Vi - your friend is in my apartment. I'd like to know why.

VI

Me too, actually.

She puts her hands on her hips, giving Shane a questioning stare. Shane gives her a "I can't believe this" look.

SHANE

Because I want to help! Damn it, Vi, I know something big is going on and now that I know about you - about what you do - I can help. Why can't you see that?

VI

Because I don't need your help, okay? This is my problem. I can deal with it on my own. The more people that get involved, the harder it becomes. Just... please...

(determined)

I don't need your help.

She looks around, as if suddenly feeling trapped or closed in. Then, she slips past Shane and Andrew and heads towards the door.

VI (CONT'D)
I'm late for work.

She disappears out into the hall and closes the front door behind her. Andrew and Shane stand in silence for a moment.

SHANE
Is she okay?

Andrew slumps down onto the couch, filling up Vi's old position.

ANDREW
I don't think so, mate.

CUT TO:

INT. GARRETON HERALRD - SAM'S OFFICE - LATER

Vi enters, flustered and breathing heavily, to find Sam attempting to do a handstand against the wall.

When he sees her, he drops to the floor and stands normally.

SAM
Thank god you're here. I could've hurt myself.

Vi hurries around to the computer and sits down.

VI
Sorry I'm late. I had... issues to deal with.

Sam gives her the once over.

SAM
Obviously none of those issues involved having a good night's sleep.

VI
(impatient)
Can we just get this over with?

Sam raises his hands in surrender as Vi reaches for the first letter. Sam jumps forward.

SAM
No, not that one.

He produced a folded envelope from his pocket.

SAM (CONT'D)
This one.

He hands it to her and Vi, somewhat confused, opens it as Sam sits down on the couch.

VI

Okay...

(reading)

"Dear Sam. I have a problem. I am stuck in the middle of two choices and neither looks good. One will hurt someone that I love and the other..."

Vi goes silent. Thinking. Then:

VI (CONT'D)

Did you send this in?

Sam feigns innocence.

SAM

Hmmm, nope. Don't think so. So, shall I dictate my reply and you type it up?

VI

Sam! This is about me!

SAM

Then you should pay special attention to my answer, then.

Vi shakes her head, angry and humiliated. She stands, screwing up the letter and throwing it in his direction.

VI

No. I've been working so hard to try and correct the crappy things you keep telling people. The last thing I want is your advice.

SAM

The last thing you want is someone telling you what you need to hear.

VI

What's that supposed to mean?

When he replies, he isn't harsh or rude. Simply honest.

SAM

You think I don't know how to do my job. But I do. You'll see.

His face betrays the vague glimmer of a smile but it could easily be mistaken for a smirk. Vi glares.

VI

Don't expect me on tomorrow.

She storms past him and out the door - SLAMMING it behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - CAFETERIA - DAY

Andrew enters and scans the room - searching for someone. Out of luck, he's about to leave when he spots DIANA CROSS moving along the buffet line with a tray.

Over at Diana, Andrew hovers by the metal railing separating him from her.

ANDREW

Hey, Diana.

She glances over her shoulder and groans.

DIANA

Oh, it's you. Where's your little friend? Oh, yeah. That's right. She's probably rotting in a dungeon somewhere for selling out the Company. You sure do have a good influence on people, Andrew.

ANDREW

Yeah, yeah. Witty barbed insults. I'll throw one back when I have time but right now I don't. Have time, that is.

(beat)

Have you seen Jenna?

Diana places a bowl of salad onto her tray.

DIANA

Jenna? Why would you want to find her?

ANDREW

Uh, because she's my friend, I need to talk to her, she's owes me money - take your pick.

Diana pauses, thinking, and turns to him.

DIANA

You don't know, do you?

ANDREW

Know what?

DIANA

Jenna can't help you with Vi's little problem.

(beat)

She's the one who told Benson about it in the first place.

Andrew's face drops. He's totally stunned...

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

... And now he's angry. Andrew stands in the doorway - glowering. He's staring intently at something inside the room.

Jenna stands with her back to him, sorting out some files. She senses something and turns around.

JENNA

Andrew, hi. I didn't - -

ANDREW

How could you?

He walks further into the room. Jenna's immediately nervous.

JENNA

I - I don't know what you mean. How could I what?

ANDREW

I thought you were on our side. I thought we wanted to help us. But you told him - right after I asked you not to.

JENNA

Andrew - -

ANDREW

And to think that I actually felt guilty about thinking you were involved in me getting arrested last week. Or was helping me escape just some plan of yours too? For making me trust you.

JENNA

I thought I was doing the right thing. You two couldn't handle this on your own.

ANDREW
(yelling)
And why do you think I came to
you?!

A beat. He steadies himself.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
But not anymore. We're through.
As friends as... whatever the
hell we were... I'm done.
(beat)
I will never trust you again.

He turns and exits. Jenna, ashamed and upset, sinks down
into a chair.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. FANCY FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A Waitress carries a tray of very complicated looking food, placing it down in front of Vi who leans forward, studying it curiously.

She pokes the mysterious food with her fork and, across the table, Penny raises an eyebrow.

PENNY

What's up with you?

Vi looks up and then glances around at CAM, Caroline and Peter who are all poised over their respective meals - watching her.

VI

Nothing.

CAROLINE

You've been very quiet. Aren't you happy for your father?

VI

Yeah. Yes. Of course I am.

PENNY

Because, Vi, this is a celebration. And you don't look very celebratory.

Vi just glares. Cam turns to Peter.

CAM

Thought about a cover yet, Dad?

PETER

No, no. That's not really my...

(beat)

Okay, well, yes. I've done some sketches.

He digs around in his jacket pocket, pulling out some folded up note paper which he passes to Cam.

PETER (CONT'D)

I'm not an artist but you get the idea.

CAROLINE

Peter, put those away. This isn't the place.

PETER

Oh, they won't mind.

(re: one page)

What about this one? The book is pretty "out there", I wanted something that'll reflect that but still won't look awkward on the best-seller shelf, y'know?

Vi, who has been staring down into her plate, looks up.

VI

Don't you think you're getting ahead of yourself a bit?

The family stops and looks at her.

VI (CONT'D)

I mean, you've only done the first edit and - let's face it - your book isn't exactly a Da Vinci Code to begin with.

CAROLINE

Vi!

PENNY

She's just sour that you didn't let her go to that party.

She leans forward and puts her hand "comfortingly" on Vi's.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'm sure they're having a great time without you.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT

Shane walks, bored and alone, through the frantic, crowded house party. Turning through a doorway, he finds himself in the kitchen.

NIKO SHELBY, the broad shouldered soccer captain, leans against the open refrigerator, handing out bottles of beer.

His girlfriend, GWEN HART, a bubbly yet studious type, sits on the kitchen bench, her arm around his shoulders.

SHANE

Hey, Gwen. Cool party.

GWEN

Aw, thanks Shaun. I'm glad you're having fun!

SHANE
Actually it's - -

NIKO
Here you go, mate.

He hands Shane a bottle of beer.

Turning away, he finds Bianca standing right next to him. Neither of them move - an awkward silence settling between them.

Slowly, he hands her the bottle.

BIANCA
You're not drinking?

SHANE
I'm being chivalrous. Take it or leave it.

Bianca takes the bottle and turns, giving Shane a flirtatious smile, as she moves into the rest of the party.

His eyes not leaving the retreating Bianca, Shane whips out his hand and grabs a bottle that Niko is handing to another kid. Then, he follows.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

CLOSE ON: EMPTY PLATE

As it's cleared away from the table. PAN UP to find Vi staring across the table at Peter.

WAITER
Can I interest you in some dessert?

Vi glances up to see the same Waiter from her dream. She does a double take.

CAROLINE
Vi, the gentleman asked you a question.

VI
Uh, sure. Dessert is good. Um, just bring me anything.

The Waiter turns and we notice that he's pushing a dessert cart. He places a chocolate something-or-other down in front of Vi.

VI (CONT'D)

Thanks.

We stay on Vi as she simply stares at her dessert. In the b.g, the Waiter moves around to each family member - placing a dessert down in front of them. The Waiter leaves.

VI (CONT'D)

I love chocolate.

Caroline raises an eyebrow.

CAROLINE

Then it's lucky that's what he gave you, sweetie.

Vi looks up.

VI

No, I mean...

She looks at Peter.

VI (CONT'D)

I really love chocolate. But...

She turns her head to Penny's dessert - a strawberry tart of some kind.

VI (CONT'D)

But I also love strawberries.

PETER

Delicious together. I wonder if they have chocolate covered strawberries on the menu.

(to Caroline)

Is that a French thing or not?

VI

But... what if we lived in a world where chocolate and strawberries weren't meant to be eaten together. It was like... illegal because if you did have some chocolate and then a strawberry... the world would cease to exist.

A beat.

PENNY

Is this a riddle or something?

VI

So what would you choose?
Chocolate or strawberries?

CAROLINE

Well, one makes you fat.

CAM

And some people are allergic to strawberries.

VI

(frustrated; tired)

No, no, no. That's not what I mean at all.

Cam leans closer to Vi.

CAM

Is this about... are you mad that I told Shane about Andrew? He said he knew him so...

PENNY

Andrew? Oh my God, is he that skeevy guy? What the hell are you still hanging around him for?

CAROLINE

Penny! Don't say 'hell'. This a sophisticated place, you don't - -
(beat; to Vi)
Who's Andrew?

PETER

I thought your boyfriend's name was Erin?

Vi shoots Penny a glare.

VI

Thanks, Penny. Thanks a lot.

PENNY

Well you've been acting so weird lately. Is it wrong of me to be worried about you?

VI

You're not worried about me. You're just a bitch!

CAROLINE

Violet!

PENNY

A bitch am I? Well, if that's the case I might as well live up to it.

She turns to Caroline and Peter.

PENNY (CONT'D)

Mum? Dad? Vi sneaks out of the house practically every single day to run around town with some uni drop out who she tells people is her cousin.

(beat)

He's not her cousin.

Vi stands. Their argument is growing louder and attracting the attention of other patrons.

Caroline looks absolutely mortified, Cam is trying to hide his face behind a napkin and Peter continues to stuff his face with his dessert, watching the show.

VI

You are such a cow, Penny!

Penny jumps up - yelling.

PENNY

Well you're a freak! Do you know how much crap I get about you at school for all the stupid stuff you do? Sometimes I wish you stayed dead. That way, at least people would feel sorry for me for the right reasons.

Something snaps inside Vi's mind. That's it. Vi turns to Caroline and points an accusing finger at Penny.

VI

She snuck a sixteen year old into a club and got her drunk and she helped write that school paper article about me and - AND she practically pushed me out of a tree!

Disjoined, rather random arguments, yes - but it does the trick.

Penny, her face red with anger, picks up her strawberry tart and hurls it at Vi. It smashes into her face - smearing her with cream and pastry.

Caroline stands.

CAROLINE

THAT IS ENOUGH!

The girls immediately go silent - as does the rest of the restaurant but Caroline doesn't seem to worry about that anymore.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(to Penny)

Can we go one day without you throwing something at your sister? Honestly, Penny - it's getting ridiculous.

Vi shoots Penny a smirk but Caroline turns on her next.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

And you! I have never been so humiliated in my life. Over the past few days, you have shown me that you have no understanding of what it means to be a good person. You have disappointed me for the last time, Violet. I'm not going to stand by and watch you throw your life away.

(beat)

Because this time, I don't think you'll get another one.

Vi wipes her face with the back of her hand and hurries away. Cam looks up, seeing her enter the bathroom.

Caroline and Penny sit down slowly and the restaurant starts to buzz with activity again.

A beat.

PETER

Check please!

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - LIVING ROOM - LATER

As Bianca dances to a fast paced pop song, she drops a bottle of some fruity alcoholic drink onto the carpet...

.... Where it clinks - empty - with a pile of more discarded bottles.

Bianca looks down and giggles.

BIANCA

We've had a lot.

She looks up to Shane who dances wildly.

SHANE

What?!

BIANCA

I said we've had - -

The song stops, replaced with a slow ballad. The two stop dancing and look around to see everyone else pairing up.

Shrugging, Bianca slings her arms over Shane's shoulders and he grasps her awkwardly around the waist. They move along to the music.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

I said, we've had a lot to drink.

SHANE

I agree with you and think that the Prime Minister needs to be informed.

(loudly)

Inform the Prime Minister!

Bianca laughs.

BIANCA

You know...

She looks up into his eyes.

BIANCA (CONT'D)

You're not so bad. For a...
freak, nerd, loser type person.

SHANE

You really need to develop your
vocabu... vocabla... vocabdury?

BIANCA

And you really need to stop
drinking.

SHANE

And you really need to kiss me.

Bianca leans up and presses her lips to Shane's. It's awkward, that's for sure. In fact, three words to describe it? Awkward, drunken and wrong.

After a few moments, they pull apart. Shane blinks. A beat.

SHANE (CONT'D)

Yep. Really need to stop
drinking.

Bianca tears herself away from him and sinks down onto an empty couch.

BIANCA

(laughing)

Oh my God. We just...

Shane sits next to her.

SHANE

I know.

BIANCA

I kissed you. You!

SHANE

Yeah. Know exactly what you're going through.

BIANCA

Oh my God.

SHANE

Wait... Is this a good "oh my God" or a bad "oh my God"?

BIANCA

Does it matter? I don't... like you that way.

(beat)

Or at all, actually.

Shane looks slightly disappointed but nods anyway.

SHANE

Exactly. And don't you have a boyfriend, anyway?

Bianca shakes her head.

BIANCA

Erin's not my boyfriend anymore.

SHANE

No. Not Erin. Lenny, Larry? Something with an L.

Bianca gasps, remembering.

BIANCA

Ah, yes. Lenny. My beautiful, manly, fake boyfriend, Lenny. He treats me so well. It's all just... swell. Which rhymes with well. But y'know, I guess we're just not meant to be together. Me and...

SHANE

Lenny?

BIANCA

Erin!

Across the room, Erin has just entered the party. He looks around - completely missing Bianca and Shane.

Following the direction of Bianca's stare, Shane sees him as well.

SHANE

Right, right. Because he's with Vi now.

(beat)

Can I just say, what's up with that?

BIANCA

I wish he would just go away.

SHANE

Then don't look.

Shane grasps her chin, turning her head to face him.

SHANE (CONT'D)

See? He's gone.

BIANCA

You're right.

SHANE

You're still thinking about him, aren't you?

Bianca looks shocked.

BIANCA

No! I'm over him, Shaney. You won't believe how over him I am. Erin who? Is what I'm saying.

SHANE

Okay. Then go talk to him.

BIANCA

Huh?

SHANE

You need closure, B. Tell him that you're over him.

Bianca puts her hand on his shoulder.

BIANCA

It is my firm belief that closure is overrated.

Shane stands, pulling her up with him.

SHANE

Go, woman! Girl power!

BIANCA
You're coming with me?

SHANE
Hell no!

He flops back down onto the couch. Bianca turns towards Erin and takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - FRONT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Erin, standing just outside of the living room, raises his eyebrows when Bianca stumbles - almost confidently - towards him.

BIANCA
Hi hi.

ERIN
Um, hey, Bianca.

BIANCA
My new friend Shaney-Shane told me that I should tell you that...

ERIN
Tell me what?

BIANCA
That I'm over you. Because I so am. In fact? I'm glad we broke up.

ERIN
You dumped me, Bianca. Remember?

BIANCA
And that was mean, I know. But it all worked out for the best. I'm happy being alone. In my big empty house. Which is, y'know, really big because I'm like super rich and everything.

ERIN
B, how much have you had to drink? You wanna sit down?

He takes her arm, attempting to lead her over to the stairs but she stands firm.

BIANCA
No. I need to tell you that I'm happy. But at least... at least you're happy.
(MORE)

BIANCA (CONT'D)

You're happy with her. And I'm
happy with no one but mostly
she's happy. Everybody's happy!

(beat)

Are you happy?

Off her questioning stare:

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - BAR - LATER

Vi exits the bathroom, her face now free of food. She looks up to her family still sitting at their table and stops. She takes a deep breath.

Then, she sees her Waiter (the Dream-Waiter to be more specific), sitting on a bar stool reading a copy of the Garretton Herald.

VI

(disbelievingly)

No, this can't...

She tries to shrug it off and takes a few steps back to the table but quickly turns back.

VI (CONT'D)

Excuse me. Could I borrow that
for a sec?

The Waiter hands it over and Vi looks down at the page he was reading.

"Ask Sam".

CLOSE ON: PAGE

The beginnings of a letter is seen. It's the same letter Vi read out to Sam - the one about her.

BACK TO VI

VI (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Dear Sam. I have a problem. I am
stuck in the middle of two
choices and neither looks good.
One will hurt someone that I love
and the other will hurt someone I
respect. Please help me. Signed,
Sixteen and Senseless".

She smiles a little at the name. Then, continues:

VI (CONT'D)

(reading)

"Dear Senseless.
(MORE)

VI (CONT'D)

There's no easy way out of this one. You seem to believe that a specific option will spare one and condemn another but this is not true. Everyone is a victim. Everyone will be hurt in some way. Remember, pain is a part of life. Love it. Embrace it. You know what you have to do. Good luck, Sam".

Vi lowers the paper, handing it back to the Waiter. She takes one last, long look at her family - attempting to recover from the earlier arguments.

Then, she turns and exits the restaurant.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - JENNA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jenna sits at her desk, her telephone at her ear as...

CUT TO:

INT. ANDREW'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

... Andrew sits on the floor, sipping a bottle of beer and letting his phone RING and RING.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - JENNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jenna sighs and hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Jenna passes by the open door, walking towards the elevator, when she sees a lone figure sitting inside the dark room.

Stepping cautiously inside, she sees that it's Benson.

JENNA

Sir? Are you okay?

BENSON

Why does everyone assume that I'm not okay if I decide to sit alone in a dark room?

(off her sad expression)

Although I'm starting to get the feeling that maybe you should be the one in here.

Jenna moves further into the room, adjusting the strap of her handbag over her shoulder.

JENNA

I'm just... confused. Is it possible to be a good person and a good employee at the same time? I mean, do you think I did the right thing?

BENSON

It is my belief that there are many right things. Right by your family, right by your co-workers and right by your friends. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can make any of these the ultimate "the" besides yourself. In other words, only you can answer that question.

JENNA

Got it.
(beat)
Do you think she'll...

BENSON

I believe that Violet will do the right thing.

Jenna smiles sadly.

JENNA

Whatever that is.

She starts to leave.

JENNA (CONT'D)

Well, good-night.

BENSON

Good-night, Jenna.

Jenna exits.

FADE TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - PETER'S STUDY - NIGHT

The dark room is illuminated only by the full moon, shining brightly through the window. Vi slowly approaches Peter's desk. Her face is blank. Emotionless.

She pulls out the top drawer and reaches in - lifting out a copy of Peter's book.

Her eyes glisten with welling tears. She takes a deep breath...

... And the destruction begins.

As Vi grunts and pants with exertion, we see the following - all in quick, disjointed cuts.

She rips the manuscript in her hands, tearing at the pages and sending them whirling around the room like a snow storm.

Ransacking the drawers, she finds more manuscripts and tears these apart as well.

Next, the filing cabinet and folders and folders of notes. All gone in seconds.

Vi, breathing hard, turns to the computer. Smashing it to the ground she takes the fire poker from beside the cold fire place and rams it onto the side. She hits and kicks and doesn't stop until the entire thing is just a wreck of plastic and wires.

Crying now, Vi stops. This isn't enough.

Dropping to her knees, she crawls to the fire place and piles in the mess of papers. She fumbles for the box of matches nearby and strikes one - quickly brightening her dull eyes for just a second - and tosses it into the fire place.

As the fire grows and hungrily devours Peter's work, she tosses more onto it. Then, she sits back and lets it burn.

CAM (O.S.)
(quietly)
Oh my God...

Vi whirls around, clambering to her feet to see Cam standing - shocked - in the doorway.

Behind him, Peter, Caroline and Penny appear. We almost see Peter's heart break as he sees the room.

Stumbling inside, he falls to his knees - his hand pressed over his mouth in horror.

PETER
What did you do?

VI
I saved you.

He can't hear her. He's staring into the fire place now.

PETER

It's gone. It's all gone.

Vi runs for the door, pushing past Caroline and Penny who simply let her go.

MUSIC CUE: "New American Classic" by Taking Back Sunday.

FADE TO:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MOVE ACROSS the couch on which Shane sits - alone and depressed. As we reach the arm rest...

FADE TO:

INT. PARRY RESIDENCE - FOYER - NIGHT

Bianca enters, stumbling over the front step, and leans against the closed door - taking in the empty house.

Picking up a vase holding flowers by the door, she hurls it at the marble stairs ahead of her. The vase SMASHES.

CLOSE ON: BIANCA'S FEET

Reaching down, she slips off her heels and walks, barefoot, up the stairs and over the broken shards of china.

After a few steps, she begins to leave smears of blood where she walks.

FADE TO:

INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jenna sits on the couch, hugging her knees to her chest as she nurses a cup of tea.

Wiping away an angry tear, she reaches forward and places the photograph of herself, Andrew and Vi face down on the coffee table.

FADE TO:

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Benson walks over to the window, staring out at the black, starry sky.

He presses a button on the window sill and the view changes to a breathtaking sunset.

FADE TO:

EXT. FOWLER RESIDENCE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

ERIN'S PARENTS load up the boot of a taxi, waiting in the street, while Erin stands on the foot path.

He looks up and down the street anxiously - expecting and hoping to have Vi arrive any second.

His father closes the boot and opens the door for his mother who climbs into the taxi.

Calling him over, Erin sadly throws one last glance towards the street as he slides into the back seat and closes the door.

FADE TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - VI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Vi enters, tears pouring down her face now. She looks at her watch and hurries to the window.

She pushes it. It doesn't budge. Confused, Vi looks down.

CLOSE ON: PADLOCK

Set firmly into the window and its frame. Vi's not going anywhere.

BACK TO VI

She turns and sinks to her knees.

FADE TO:

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - PETER'S STUDY - NIGHT

A bird's eye view. Caroline moves in - taking Peter by the shoulders and ushering him, Penny and Cam out of the room.

PUSH IN until we're right down on the scraps of paper lying on the carpet.

The following extract is visible, "... deeply grateful for the assistance of W.R Crenshaw without whom this book could never have been written".

PUSH IN closer until the name "W.R Crenshaw" fills the entire screen.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE