

THE COMPANY

"The Newbie"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - DAY

VI MORGAN sits on a couch by the wall. Her foot propped up on one knee, she fills in the scuff marks on her school shoes with a black marker.

VI
I don't like him.

A WIDER ANGLE reveals ANDREW FRIAR sitting beside her.

ANDREW
Me either. It's like he thinks he's the boss of us or something.

VI
Andrew, he is the boss of us.

ANDREW
On paper, maybe.

Vi puts the marker in her pocket. Then, she grabs Andrew's wrist and pulls it toward her.

VI
Where's your watch?

ANDREW
I don't have a watch.

She releases his wrist.

VI
Since when?

Andrew shrugs and Vi grumpily crosses her arms.

VI (CONT'D)
I just want to know what time it is.

Andrew leans forward and reaches off screen. He pulls back an arm - angling it so Vi can get a good view of the watch strapped around the wrist.

VI (CONT'D)
Thank you.

An even WIDER ANGLE reveals that the arm belongs to a GUY sitting cross-legged on the floor.

He's not the only one in an uncomfortable position. The reception office is packed with EMPLOYEES, squashed together like sardines.

ANDREW

How long?

VI

It's supposed to start now.

(beat)

Do you know what this meeting is about?

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW

Nope. Bet it's Sidney's idea, though.

Vi sighs.

VI

I really don't like him.

Off this, cut to:

INT. THE COMPANY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

SIDNEY DOBBS, smiling cheerfully, holds up a plate of delicately decorated cupcakes.

SIDNEY

Cupcake, anyone?

He looks around at the group of people standing in front of him (everyone from the reception office - Vi and Andrew included). No one responds.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Come on... Cinnamon frosting, marshmallow flowers...

Behind him, ALISTAIR BENSON hides an embarrassed cringe.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Alright, then.

He shoves the plate at Benson.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Get rid of those, will you?

Benson isn't quite sure what to do with them and continues to stands, holding the plate of cupcakes like an idiot.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Welcome to the Mentors-In-Reverse program. An initiative created by me - Sidney Dobbs.

He waits for applause. None comes.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Your new boss.

A few half-hearted CLAPS. Sidney, satisfied, continues:

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Every employee hired in the past month was given an aptitude test to see whether they would, one day, make a good mentor for other newly established runners. But - before we can send them off to teach, they must be taught!

Vi and Andrew share a bored look.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Now, all you field agents will have a future mentor tagging along for your current assignment. Show them the ropes, not just of the Company, but of how to work as a productive, functioning part of that Company.

Andrew raises his hand. Sidney, excited for a question, points to him.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Yes?

ANDREW
Do we get paid overtime?

SIDNEY
(beat)
No.

Andrew barely suppresses an eye roll. Sidney picks up a clipboard.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Now, the temporary mentor and future mentor teams.
(reads)
Fred Tucker and Lucy Chan...

Sidney continues to read names off a list while Vi quietly leans into Andrew.

VI
I can't believe I skipped school for this. Don't get me wrong, I'm grateful for everything you've done for me, Andrew, but I really don't have the time to baby-sit some newbie.

SIDNEY
Violet Morgan...

Vi pulls her attention back to Sidney.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
... With David Helsley.

VI
(to Andrew)
Who the hell is that?

Someone taps her on the shoulder. She turns around.

DAVID HELSLEY (19) towers over her. He flashes her a stunning, model-like smile and holds out a hand.

DAVID
You must be Vi.
(beat)
I'm the newbie.

For a moment, Vi doesn't move. Andrew nudges her in the ribs.

She takes David's hand - an embarrassed smile on her face.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. THE COMPANY - ELEVATOR - DAY

Vi and David stand side by side. Upbeat ELEVATOR MUSIC blares from the speakers - loud in the awkward silence.

VI
Sorry about that.

DAVID
About what?

VI
The "newbie" thing.

DAVID
(beat)
Oh. Okay.

VI
It's just that things have been kind of crazy around the Company lately.

David nods, understanding.

DAVID
You don't need to explain. It's fine.
(beat)
I mean, technically I am a newbie.

He looks her up and down.

DAVID (CONT'D)
How old are you, anyway?

Taking offense, Vi narrows her eyes at him.

VI
What does that matter? I can still do my job.

The elevator glides to a stop. The door opens. Vi and David walk out into:

EXT. SHOPPING PLAZA - CAR PARK - DAY

Vi weaves through SHOPPERS making their way inside the building. David hurries to keep up with her.

DAVID
(backtracking)
No, of course.
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
I was just wondering about the
school uniform.

Vi stops and looks down at her tartan skirt and white shirt
combo.

VI
Oh.

Her eyes flick apologetically to David. She keeps walking.

VI (CONT'D)
I'm seventeen.
(beat)
How old are you?

DAVID
Nineteen.

VI
Graduated last year?

DAVID
I dropped out, actually. In year
ten.
(without warning)
So, this assignment?

Vi's taken off guard by the quick change of subject. She
hesitates for a beat and then digs around in her skirt
pocket.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

As they exit the car park, veering onto the footpath, Vi
holds up the slip of paper.

VI
I got it yesterday. Someone named
Wendy Gardener. I think she must
be a kid or something because the
only listing in the phone book
was for a T. Gardener.

DAVID
(amused)
A tea gardener?

VI
What?

DAVID
Never mind.

He clears his throat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
The phone book. Nice trick.

VI
I have a good mentor.

DAVID
Have a good mentor? I figured
you'd be out on your own. Since,
you know, you seem to have a
pretty good handle on things.

Vi shrugs.

VI
He's giving me driving lessons.

DAVID
Huh?

Vi smiles.

VI
Never mind.

They move off screen.

EXT. WENDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Vi and David step up to the front door of a well-kept, two
storey house. Vi reaches for the doorbell.

DAVID
Wait!

She looks at him curiously.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I just... I don't know if I can do
this.

VI
Didn't picture you as being prone
to performance anxiety.
(beat; innocent)
Did that sound dirty?

David gapes at her, stunned. She presses the doorbell. They
hear it ECHO throughout the house.

David pulls himself together as the front door opens. TINA
GARDENER (38), a pretty but tired woman, stands inside.

TINA
Yes?

VI
Hi. We're --

TINA

Do you know Wendy?

VI

Um... Y-yeah. We're friends. Of Wendy.

TINA

She's, uh... She's not here right now.

She starts to close the door. Vi steps forward.

VI

That's okay. This visit is kind of unexpected. You see, we, um, we haven't really seen Wendy in awhile. I guess we've sort of... drifted apart.

Tina looks between them sadly. She holds the door open wider.

TINA

You'd better come in.

She turns, disappearing into the house.

Vi and David share a look between them. Intrigued, they follow.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tina, sitting in an armchair, pulls a crumpled tissue out of her pocket and dabs at her nose.

Vi and David sit on the couch diagonal to her.

TINA

It's been about a week. I've tried to talk to her. But she just won't listen.

Vi takes a quick glance around the room. Her eyes land on the end table by the couch.

There's a photograph of Tina and a smiling sixteen year old girl - Wendy.

TINA (CONT'D)

Maybe... if some of her old friends try... She might come home.

VI

Mrs. Gardener --

TINA

Call me Tina. And it's Ms, actually. Wendy's father... Well... He's not exactly part of the family.

VI

Oh. Right. Wendy mentioned that but I guess I... forgot.

DAVID

Is that why she ran away?

TINA

(surprised)

Oh, God no. It's just been Wendy and I for years. She's, well, I guess you could say she's used to it.

(beat)

It's... I suppose you parted ways before she met Ricky?

There's a beat.

VI

Oh, yeah. Never heard of him.

DAVID

She mentioned him once or twice.

Vi widens her eyes at David, irritated. He looks apologetic.

VI

What David means is that Wendy never told us about Ricky herself. We heard his name from other people. You know. Around.

TINA

Right. Well, she met him a few months ago and they really hit it off. I don't particularly approve.

David smiles.

DAVID

Isn't that the way it's supposed to be?

Tina forces a smile back. Then:

TINA

We never fought. Not like we did the day she left.

Tina starts to tear up. Vi leans forward and takes a tissue from the box on the coffee table. She hands it to her.

VI

Maybe... Maybe they're really in love?

Tina scoffs.

TINA

He's her first boyfriend. Of course they're not in love.

Vi twitches at that, frowning. Tina shakes her head.

TINA (CONT'D)

Anyway, that's not even the point. I love Wendy. I want what's best for her. But I've also known boys like Ricky, and...

She takes in a shaky breath and breaks down, crying.

TINA (CONT'D)

(through tears)

I just want my daughter to come home.

David looks away, uncomfortable. Vi keeps her eyes on Tina, a frown still on her lips.

EXT. WENDY'S HOUSE / STREET - DAY

Vi and David make their way towards the street - Vi, a few paces ahead of him.

VI

(outraged)

Did you hear that?! "He's her first boyfriend! Of course they're not in love!". What the hell would she know about it, anyway?

Reaching the side of the road, Vi whirls around to face David - her hands on her hips.

David's momentarily frozen by her glare.

DAVID

Uh... She seemed really upset?

Vi throws her hands up in disgust. Turning on her heel, she stalks away.

INT. HAPPY VAMPIRE - DAY

A man dressed as a VAMPIRE (slicked back hair, cape and plastic fangs) stands just inside the entrance. He holds a few dozen bat shaped helium balloons.

Vi and David enter. The Vampire immediately pounces on Vi, shoving a balloon at her.

VAMPIRE
(Transylvanian accent)
Welcome to ze 'Appy Vampire! 'Ave
a fang-tastic meal! Mwaha-ha-ha-ha-
ha!

David grins. Vi doesn't even crack a smile.

VI
(to Vampire; deadpan)
Don't make me stake you.

The Vampire's eyes go wide. He quickly steps out of her way.

As Vi and David walk forward, we hear the Vampire greet his next victim.

VAMPIRE (O.S.)
Welcome to ze 'Appy Vampire! 'Ave
a fang-tastic meal!

A CHILD begins to CRY.

Vi and David join the back of the line. It moves fairly quickly and they take a few steps forward every so often.

DAVID
This place is great.

Vi grumpily crosses her arms.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(hesitant)
Vi?

VI
I have low blood sugar. That's
all.

DAVID
That's... fine. But I was going
to ask about the assignment?

Vi sighs.

VI
What about it?

DAVID
 (as if it's obvious)
 What do we do about it? What do
 we do about Wendy?

Vi shrugs. David, fed up, angles himself away from her. Vi
 picks up on this.

VI
 Look, I'm sorry, okay? The
 Company's just really screwing me
 up at the moment.

DAVID
 Yeah, you said before.

VI
 (annoyed)
 Well, you're not exactly taking
 it in then.
 (beat)
 You have no idea what my life is
 like.

The customer in front of them steps aside, clearing the way
 to the counter.

PETER MORGAN, wearing a Happy Vampire uniform, looks up
 from the cash register.

PETER
 Welcome to the Happy Vampire. Can
 I take your order?

Vi doesn't react - the situation too bizarre to comprehend.

INT. THE COMPANY - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

JENNA COOKE moves up the stairs to the balcony.

She turns a watchful eye to the bustling work area below as
 she enters her office...

INT. THE COMPANY - JENNA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

... And almost runs straight into Andrew.

JENNA
 Oh! Sorry, Andrew.

ANDREW
 No worries.

But he doesn't get out of her way. He even gives her a
 huge, fake smile.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Nice day, isn't it?

JENNA
(not buying it)
Alright, what's going on?

She waits expectantly. In the silence, a TAPPING noise becomes audible.

Andrew sighs, giving up, and steps out of her way. He reveals PIERCE (22) who sits behind Jenna's desk, typing away on her computer.

Pierce looks sort of familiar - scruffy brown hair, blue eyes, a so-very-pleased-with-himself smirk on his lips.

Jenna turns to Andrew. He sits down across from Pierce, propping his legs up on the desk.

JENNA (CONT'D)
Can I ask what you're doing?

ANDREW
I'm in that Mentors-In-Reverse program, remember? Pierce is my... well, my new Vi.

JENNA
I got that part. But what are you doing in here, specifically?

ANDREW
Researching my assignment. It's a scientist. Or a doctor. Or a scientist who invented doctors. Not really sure.

JENNA
Hence the research.

ANDREW
How's it going over there, Pierce?

PIERCE
Hmm? Oh, yeah. Great.
(beat)
I'm winning.

Confused, Andrew leans forward and grabs the monitor. He yanks it around to see the screen. Pierce is playing internet poker.

ANDREW
Pierce!

PIERCE

What?

(beat)

Hey, when's lunch, by the way?

Andrew rolls his eyes.

ANDREW

There's a vending machine down
the hall.

PIERCE

Thank God.

Pierce hoists himself out of the chair. On his way out the door, he pauses:

PIERCE (CONT'D)

Got change for a five?

ANDREW

No.

Pierce exits. Andrew lets out a sigh of relief.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Kill me.

Jenna smiles as she goes to the desk. She sits down and starts to re-arrange the mess made by Pierce.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

No, this isn't funny. He's lazy,
he's annoying, he's about as
intelligent as a lobotomized
salamander. What kind of crazy
test decided that Pierce was
mentor material?

JENNA

He doesn't remind you of anyone?

Andrew thinks for a long moment. Then:

ANDREW

No. What are you talking about?

Jenna just shrugs, hiding a smile.

EXT. HAPPY VAMPIRE - DAY

Vi and David emerge into the sunlight, both carrying trays of food. They sit at one of the tables out front.

David warily studies Vi as she tucks into her fries. She doesn't look at him. Doesn't speak.

Then, she bursts out laughing! Wild, hysterical laughter like she's just heard the funniest joke on earth.

David jolts back in his seat, startled.

DAVID
Are you okay?

Vi puts her head down on the table.

VI
I just... I don't... He's...

DAVID
Vi?

Finally, she calms down. She looks up at him, wiping a tear from her eye.

VI
I'm not crazy, I swear.

David doesn't look so sure.

VI (CONT'D)
The guy that served us is my dad.
I was just... surprised.

DAVID
You didn't know he was working here?

Vi shakes her head, no.

VI
Him having any kind of job is kind of new to me.
(explaining)
He's a writer. Or, I guess he was one.

DAVID
What happened?

Vi takes a moment. She studies David, considering something. Then, she leans forward, lowering her voice.

VI
How much have they told you about the Company?

David looks intrigued.

INT. CAR - DAY

The car slows to a stop.

ERIN FOWLER, dressed in his school uniform, sits in the driver's seat. He looks up, out of the windshield, at a red stop light.

He sighs, bored, and looks around. He catches sight of something out the passenger side window.

He sees the Happy Vampire across the street. More specifically, Vi and David - leaning in close, talking animatedly.

Erin's shocked. A bit confused. He doesn't have any more time to react when a CAR HORN sounds from behind him.

He snaps back. The light has turned green. With one last glance at Vi and David, he drives off.

EXT. CITY - DAY/NIGHT

The passing of time. The sun travels through the sky, dipping down over the horizon. Night is here.

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sidney walks down the hall. DIANA CROSS turns out of a room in front of him - blocking his path.

She steps to one side. Sidney mirrors her. They try the other side - blocked again.

They both laugh awkwardly.

DIANA

Sorry.

Sidney steps aside, waving her past.

SIDNEY

After you.

Diana smiles nervously.

DIANA

Thanks.

She walks past him. Sidney watches her leave, eyeing her behind.

Diana suddenly turns. Sidney, afraid he's been caught, flings his head upwards - staring at the ceiling.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Mr. Dobbs?

Sidney looks back down. Makes eye contact.

SIDNEY

Er, ah, yes? C-call me Sidney, please. Mr. Dobbs is... Well, it's my neighbours cat, actually, but...

(stops himself)

Yes, what can I do for you?

DIANA

I just wanted to tell you that I think the Mentors-In-Reverse program is a really good idea.

SIDNEY

Really? Were you at the meeting? What am I saying, of course you were. And your name is...

DIANA

Diana. Diana Cross.

They shake hands.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Nice to meet you, Sidney.

She gives him a flirtatious smile. Sidney reacts in surprise.

INT. THE COMPANY - DINING HALL - NIGHT

Benson sits alone at a table. He barely touches the food in front of him, preferring to throw discreet glances around the room.

The other EMPLOYEES all sit in small groups. They talk, laugh, generally enjoy each others company. Benson's not included.

Then, Sidney pulls out a chair across from him.

SIDNEY

How's the grub?

He sits down, reaches over and steals a piece of lettuce from Benson's plate.

BENSON

Excuse me?

Sidney studies the lettuce. Disgusted, he flicks it onto the table.

SIDNEY

Bloody awful. Looks like my nan's compost.

Sidney stands. He starts to walk away. Then, turns back.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Well, come on, then!

Benson doesn't move.

BENSON
Why?

Sidney sighs. He returns to the table. Leans down, lowering his voice.

SIDNEY
Benny, you're better than this lot.

Benson stiffens. He digs his fork rather sharply into his food.

BENSON
I'd rather stay, thank you.

Sidney claps him on the back. He laughs.

SIDNEY
Come on. I'm buying you dinner.

Heading for the door, he spins around to face Benson. He grins.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
And that's an order.

Benson looks back down at his food. A beat.

He pushes his plate away. He stands and follows Sidney out the door.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

We focus on Vi and David, strolling down the street. It's chilly out and Vi brings her arms up, wrapping them around her body.

David notices this. He starts to shrug off his jacket. Pauses. Thinks better of it.

DAVID
So, Miss Mentor. What's next?

Vi eyes a bakery up ahead.

VI
Cinnamon rolls.

DAVID
I meant assignment-wise.

VI
Cinnamon rolls. It's in the hand
book.

Vi smiles. David shakes his head at the joke.

DAVID
But seriously...

VI
We wait for a Sign.

David points.

DAVID
Like that one?

Vi whirls around, her eyes eagerly searching. David cracks
a grin.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Made ya look.

Vi rolls her eyes as she turns back, facing ahead of them
again. Seeing something, her face lights up.

VI
Hey!

Up ahead, SHANE EVANS steps down off a bus. Still wearing
his school uniform, he adjusts his backpack.

Vi skips forward a few steps, joining him.

VI (CONT'D)
Shane! Hi!

Shane notices her and smiles in surprise.

SHANE
Hey, Vi. Missed you at school
today.

She motions to the uniform.

VI
Well, I did intend to go.

SHANE
Company stuff, right?

VI

Bingo.
 (beat)
 Speaking of...

She looks behind her. Linking her arm through David's, she pulls him forward.

VI (CONT'D)

Shane, this is David. He's a newbie.

Shane's eyes flick from their intertwined arms up to David's face.

SHANE

Hey.

David pulls his arm from Vi's and shakes Shane's hand.

DAVID

Nice to meet you.
 (beat)
 You're the one who sort of but doesn't really work with us, right?

SHANE

Yep. That's right.

VI

Where are you headed? I bet you're going to get cinnamon rolls.
 (to David)
 Because cinnamon rolls are awesome.

Shane points down the street, back the way they came.

SHANE

Actually, I'm just going to Wicker Records. Help Jimmy close up. You guys wanna come?

VI

Can't. Assignment.

Shane takes a moment, not quite believing her.

SHANE

Riiiiight. Well...
 (beat)
 Have fun, you two.

He moves around them and heads down the street - leaving Vi and David, once again, alone.

DAVID
Keep going?

Vi nods. They continue walking.

DAVID (CONT'D)
By the way, where are we going?

VI
(playful)
You ask a lot of questions. "What about the assignment? What are we doing now? Where are we going?". Jeez! Take a breath.

David shrugs.

DAVID
I dunno. I thought this was supposed to be, y'know, work.

VI
It's not?

DAVID
(beat)
Doesn't feel like it.

Vi's smile drops. She looks confused.

Then, as she looks up, a SKATEBOARDER weaves in front of them. The words "To Wendy" are printed across the back of his hoodie.

As the Skateboarder continues on into the crowded street, Vi quickens her pace. She starts to jog. David keeps up with her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Hate to sound repetitive but --

VI
We're following a Sign.

She points to the Skateboarder.

David frowns. From his point of view, the back of the Skateboarder's hoodie reads: "Bad Kid Skate Wear".

DAVID
But I can't --

VI
It's my assignment. Only I can see the Signs.

The Skateboarder rounds a corner. They dash after him...

... Only to find an empty street. Vi and David stop running.

VI (CONT'D)
(out of breath)
Or... not.

The sound of BREAKING GLASS and LAUGHTER catches their attention.

On their side of the street, a little way ahead, is an empty lot - surrounded by a fence.

The Skateboarder is seen walking through the lot towards a group of TEENAGERS, standing around a fire in a garbage can.

DAVID
What are we supposed to do now?

Vi shrugs.

VI
Talk to them, I guess.

She moves forward, slipping through a gap in the fence. She looks back at a hesitant David.

VI (CONT'D)
Or are you scared of some little kids?

She smiles and continues on. David looks apprehensive but follows.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. EMPTY LOT - NIGHT

Half a dozen unwashed, scruffily dressed teens huddle around the garbage can fire.

Some gulp down alcohol from glass bottles, TALKING and LAUGHING with each other.

WENDY GARDENER (16) - a shy girl, toughened up by her dark eye make-up and world-weary expression - steps away from the group. She slips a mobile phone out of her pocket.

ANGLE ON SCREEN

She flicks through the address book and lands on "HOME".

BACK TO SCENE

RICKY (16) - a blond kid with a pierced eyebrow - steps up beside her. He leans down, resting his chin on her shoulder.

RICKY

You can call her, you know.

Wendy quickly tucks the phone into her jacket. She turns to face him.

WENDY

I already know what she's going to say.

RICKY

(disbelieving)
Really?

WENDY

Yeah. It'll be exactly what she said last time we spoke... or... yelled, I guess.

(beat)

She told me to choose. You or her.

She steps forward and kisses him lightly on the tip of his nose.

WENDY (CONT'D)

And I made my choice.

Ricky smiles and wraps her in a hug. Closing his eyes, he whispers lovingly in her ear...

RICKY
You're all I need, Wendy Darling.

Wendy smiles.

VI (O.S.)
Hiya!

Pulling apart, they both turn. Vi and David head across the lot towards the main group. Vi grins, waving cheerfully.

Ricky shares a confused look with Wendy and they re-join the others.

RICKY
Hey...

Vi looks to Ricky, spotting Wendy beside him. Her eyes light up as she recognises her.

VI
Sorry for interrupting your little get together but I just wanted to come over and introduce myself. I'm Vi.

No one responds. She moves to stand directly in front of Wendy.

VI (CONT'D)
And you are?

Wendy nervously slips her hand into Ricky's but says nothing.

VI (CONT'D)
Ookay...

She shivers a bit in the wind.

VI (CONT'D)
It's cold tonight, huh? Why don't we take this inside? There's a bakery down the street. Who's up for cinnamon r --

David hastily steps forward, cutting Vi off.

DAVID
You guys know any good places to sleep?
(beat)
I tried the bridge by the aquarium on my first night but, man, that smell.

The teens chuckle a bit, nodding in agreement.

RICKY

Yeah, I know what you mean.

(beat)

The park's pretty good. There's this gazebo by the south entrance.

David flashes Ricky a brief, grateful smile.

DAVID

Cool. Thanks for the tip.

Then, with nothing more said, David turns and start to walk away. Vi, stunned, darts after him.

VI

What was that?

DAVID

They're homeless. Runaways probably.

VI

So we're just leaving? And how did you know about --

David just smiles.

DAVID

Now who needs to take a breath?

Back with the teens, Wendy watches after the retreating forms of David and Vi. She nudges Ricky in the side.

WENDY

Ricky...

He takes a beat. Sighs.

RICKY

Yeah, yeah.

(beat; calling)

Hey!

David and Vi turn.

RICKY (CONT'D)

You guys wanna have some fun?

David starts back to the group. Vi, worried, doesn't move.

VI

David...

Still walking, he glances back at her - and grins.

DAVID
Are you scared of some little
kids?

Now irritated, Vi grits her teeth and follows.

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

The front door opens and Peter enters, wearing a jacket
over his Happy Vampire uniform.

He holds two large paper bags from the fast food joint.

PETER
(calling)
Hello, I'm home!

CAROLINE
In the kitchen!

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Peter enters, finding CAROLINE MORGAN washing dishes.

CAROLINE
Hi, honey.

Peter comes up behind her. Kisses her on the cheek.

PETER
I brought dinner.

Caroline smiles thinly.

CAROLINE
Yes. I can smell it.

PETER
(hurt)
I just thought it would be
easier.

Caroline strips off the washing up gloves and turns,
apologetic.

CAROLINE
No, I'm sorry. I was just...

She smiles, sincerely this time.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
It's appreciated, Peter. Thank
you.

She takes the bags and starts laying the paper-wrapped
burgers out on the table.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Hopefully we won't have to rely
on fast food every night, though.

CAM MORGAN enters. Upon seeing the food, his eyes light up.

CAM
Happy Vampire! Yes!

He immediately sits down at the table and reaches for a packet of fries. Caroline pulls it away.

CAROLINE
Go wash up first.

Cam stands, GRUMBLING under his breath. He exits. Caroline takes a moment.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Oh, dear.

PETER
What?

CAROLINE
I think our son is turning into a teenager.

PETER
I was hoping we'd get a reprieve
after the last two.

They both laugh.

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - VI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Vi, with the household cordless pressed to her ear, stands at her open closet.

Already wearing a pair of jeans and a tank top, she pulls various shirts out and holds them up, studying them against herself in the mirror.

VI
(into phone)
No. I'm staying in tonight.

PENNY MORGAN enters. She flops down onto Vi's bed, bored.

VI (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Well, I don't know, Erin. It's
kind of a family thing. We're
probably just going to end up
playing board games or something.

Vi lays one shirt down on the bed. Penny makes a face, disgusted. Rolling her eyes, Vi motions to the closet.

Pleased at the invitation, Penny bounces over. She starts rifling through Vi's things as Vi sits down on the bed.

VI (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 What guy?
 (...)
 When did you see --
 (...)
 Oh. How did that dentist
 appointment go, anyway?
 (...)
 No, I am not changing the
 subject!

Vi sighs.

VI (CONT'D)
 He's just an old friend from my
 last school. I was just showing
 him around.

Penny raises her eyebrows.

VI (CONT'D)
 No, I don't know how long he's
 going to be in town. Look, Erin --

She glances up just as Penny pulls a skimpy, ruffled black dress from the closet.

VI (CONT'D)
 I've gotta go. I'll call you
 later.

She hangs up and walks over to Penny.

VI (CONT'D)
 (to Penny)
 I am not wearing that.

PENNY
 Why not? It's cute.

VI
 It's my year five Halloween
 costume.

Penny studies the dress for a moment.

PENNY
 You were a slut in year five.

Annoyed, Vi snatches the dress from her and tosses it onto the floor.

VI
It was bigger back then!
(then)
Penny, what are you doing?

PENNY
I came to tell you that dinner's here but I guess you're going to miss it.

Vi grabs a random shirt from the closet. She pulls it on.

VI
I'm going to a party.

PENNY
That you had to lie to your boyfriend about.

Vi ignores her. Downstairs, the DOORBELL RINGS.

PENNY (CONT'D)
Are you cheating on Erin with this guy from your old school? Which, of course, is another lie seeing as you had no friends back there let alone male ones.

Vi turns to her, irritated.

VI
I am not cheating on Erin, okay?!

CAROLINE (O.S.)
(calling)
Vi! David's here!

Penny smiles, knowingly.

VI
I am not!

Penny waggles her eyebrows. Vi grabs a jacket from the back of her desk chair and storms out of the room.

A beat. Penny casually scoops the Halloween dress up off the floor. She takes it with her as she exits.

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cam is back. He and Peter sit at the kitchen table, digging into their burgers.

Caroline enters with a confused expression on her face.

CAROLINE

Do we know a boy named David? He said he's a friend of Vi's.

As Caroline sits down, Peter nods. He speaks with his mouth full.

PETER

Probably the guy she was with today.

CAROLINE

What?

PETER

Probably --

CAROLINE

No, I heard you. What do you mean?

Peter swallows.

PETER

They came into work.

CAROLINE

(suspicious)

When?

PETER

I don't know. One o'clock?

Oblivious to what this information means, he takes another bite of his burger. Caroline's face darkens.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

A MAN, his face out of frame, turns away from the bar. He holds two glasses of beer.

As he weaves his way through the room, the liquid is dangerously close to spilling over the top.

The Man reaches his destination, with no major accidents, and sits down. He reveals himself to be Sidney.

Benson sits across from him at the tiny table. Sidney gets himself settled.

SIDNEY

Well, this is nice, isn't it?

Benson narrows his eyes.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

Oh, you're not going to start complaining about dinner, are you? It's hardly my fault - how would I know the kitchen closes after six? I'm not actually from this country, you know.

He takes a big gulp of beer.

BENSON

There's a fairly decent restaurant across the street.

Sidney grins.

SIDNEY

Look at you, changin' your tune. Suddenly all enthusiastic about our dining experience.

BENSON

(stern)

May I remind you that this was your idea.

A beat. Benson realises that may have been a little harsh.

BENSON (CONT'D)

But I am grateful for the invitation.

SIDNEY

Yeah, about that...

BENSON

What?

SIDNEY

Look, I know I'm supposed to be your boss and all. I mean, you're supposed to be "observing" me and taking notes about how to be a better director.

Benson looks uncomfortable.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)

But... I need your help.

BENSON

(stunned)

My...

SIDNEY
 Help. Yeah.
 (beat)
 They hate me. I can tell.

BENSON
 Who?

SIDNEY
 The employees.

BENSON
 They're supposed to hate you.
 You're their boss.

SIDNEY
 No, I know that. I just... Benny,
 you have no idea what it's like
 to feel so... alone. Like you
 don't fit in anywhere.

Benson reacts, looking sad. Sidney's statement isn't exactly true.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
 I just want them to like me.

Benson sighs. He looks up, towards the bar. He lifts his still full glass and raises two fingers on his other hand.

BENSON
 Two more, please.

Off this, cut to:

INT. CAR - NIGHT - MOVING

As David drives, Vi stares out of the window - uncommunicative. David glances at her.

He leans down and starts to fiddle with the radio dial. There's nothing but STATIC. He punches some buttons. GARBLED TALKING but nothing else.

David straightens back up, abandoning the radio. He glances at her again, a little sheepish.

DAVID
 It's a rental. Not exactly sure
 how it all works yet.

Vi nods. Then, a mobile phone starts to RING. Vi ignores it.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Probably your mum again, huh?

VI

Yep.

DAVID

Everything okay?

VI

Oh, yeah, fine.

(beat)

Just that this is probably my last night of freedom for the rest of my life.

The RINGING stops. David chuckles.

DAVID

Why's that?

VI

My mum found out I skipped school. So now she's mad at me, Erin's probably mad at me and --

DAVID

Erin is... ?

VI

My boyfriend.

DAVID

(beat; surprised)

Oh.

Vi shakes her head.

VI

It's fine, though. I'll figure out something to tell him. I always do.

DAVID

This happens a lot?

VI

I work for the Company. I lie to people I love everyday.

She sighs. Pats him on the shoulder.

VI (CONT'D)

Don't worry. You'll figure that out soon enough.

DAVID

Probably not.

Vi raises her eyebrows inquisitively.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I don't... really have anyone. I was just passing through Garretton when I... You know.

VI

Oh.

(realising)

So what you were saying to Ricky was...

DAVID

The truth. Yeah.

An awkward silence. Vi wants to say something. She doesn't.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Vi and David enter. They look a bit too clean-cut for this scene.

The PARTY-GOERS, spread around the room, are of the "unwashed, drug-addled teen" variety.

Vi stands on tip-toe to reach David's ear. She has to yell over the garage band style MUSIC.

VI

We should split up and look for Wendy!

David nudges her, drawing her attention to a group of people kneeling around a coffee table.

They SHOUT ENCOURAGEMENT as one of the group dances a knife between his fingers, his hand flat on the table top.

Vi looks disturbed. She steps a little closer to David and, together, they move off.

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Jenna stands at the reception desk, signing some papers.

Behind her, the elevator opens. Andrew strides in, casting an angry glare around the room.

JENNA

Hi, Andrew.

Turning, he heads for the hallway beside the elevator.

ANDREW

Gotta find him.

Jenna abandons her papers at the reception desk and scurries after him, concerned.

JENNA

Who?

INT. THE COMPANY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Andrew continues to move quickly, his determined gaze focused ahead of him.

ANDREW

Gotta kill him.

JENNA

Pierce, right? How's that going?

Andrew jerks to a stop. He turns to her, shocked.

ANDREW

How's that going? **How's that going?!**

JENNA

Not so good?

ANDREW

We met the assignment, right? Nice guy, very smart, knows a lot. I turn around and Pierce isn't there. As in, disappeared. As in Criss Angel Mindfreakin' gone.

JENNA

What?

ANDREW

But that's not the worst part. The assignment. He's a scientist. And he works alone. In a lab. All by himself. No friends, no one to talk to. Ever.

JENNA

Not seeing your point.

He grasps her shoulders and moves in close. His eyes are wide - having taken on a haunted, shell-shocked glaze.

ANDREW

I now know more about the classification of algae than any normal man should. If I hear the word chloroplast one more time...

He actually starts to tear up!

JENNA

Okay, okay, let's get you some water.

She takes his arm and leads him further down the hallway.

INT. THE COMPANY - BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Jenna and Andrew enter. Andrew still looks somewhat traumatised.

The pair freeze, however, when they see what's taking place before them.

Diana waits by a boiling kettle, an empty tea cup in one hand. Pierce sits up on the bench - slouched back, trying to look cool.

PIERCE

So, I've got these two tickets. I was thinking maybe me and you could --

DIANA

No.

PIERCE

Really? No? So, that's your immediate response but if you take a minute to think about --

Finally, Diana looks at him. Her expression is cold.

DIANA

No.

PIERCE

You don't even know what the tickets are for.

The kettle clicks off - finished boiling. She pours the water into her cup.

DIANA

Fine. What are the tickets for?

PIERCE

AC/DC cover ba --

DIANA

(immediately)

No.

She grabs a tea bag and heads for the door. As she passes Jenna and Andrew:

Wendy waves a dismissive hand as she sits down on the window seat.

WENDY

That's just Carl. He won't mind.

Vi awkwardly makes her way around the mattress, joining Wendy. She sits down. Dragging her eyes off Carl, Vi gets down to business.

VI

Can I ask why you're suddenly so... friendly towards me? We don't exactly have much in common.

WENDY

Oh no. That's where you're wrong.

VI

I am?

WENDY

Yeah. We're like sisters or... or the same person or something.

VI

Why would you think that we're --

Wendy rolls her eyes.

WENDY

Don't you get it? Me and Ricky, you and... What's your boyfriend's name again?

VI

Erin.

(catching up)

Wait? David? You mean... He's not my --

WENDY

You love David so much that you gave up everything for him, right? Well, that's what I did for Ricky. See? The same person.

She smiles, thrilled at what she's discovered. Vi is unsure.

VI

You love Ricky?

Wendy nods.

WENDY

Don't you love your boyfriend?

There's a beat. Vi smiles - but it's sad.

VI

I do. At least, I think I do. He said he loved me, as well. Which was... great. But... He doesn't remember saying it. So it's like... I don't know if it still counts, you know?

WENDY

I know exactly what you mean.

Vi raises an eyebrow in disbelief.

WENDY (CONT'D)

Ricky's done that. Back when he did...

She shakes her head.

WENDY (CONT'D)

But he's stopped now. Taking, you know, drugs and stuff. He doesn't need to.

(proud)

He says I'm his Wendy Darling.

(beat)

I'm all he needs.

Wendy smiles again, content.

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - BACK YARD - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A HAND

Being shoved into a jacket pocket. It comes out, clutching a handful of money.

ON SCENE

Ricky, standing over by the back fence, hands the money to an OLDER GUY.

The Guy reaches into his jacket and pulls out a small plastic bag of white pills, wrapped up with an elastic band.

From up on the porch, David watches them...

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE PARTY - HALLWAY - NIGHT

David marches quickly down the hallway. As he's about to pass an open doorway, Vi steps out of it. She jerks to a stop, barely avoiding a collision.

DAVID I've looked all over for you. VI I was just coming to find you.

A beat. David motions to Vi, offering her the first chance to speak.

VI
So, did you find Ricky?

DAVID
Yeah. He found a little something, too.

VI
What does that mean?

DAVID
Kid bought some drugs. Looked like prescription stuff but I didn't really ask for confirmation on that.

Vi looks shocked. David shrugs.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I mean, people take drugs. Teenagers take drugs.

VI
(indignant)
I don't --

DAVID
Just saying, we can't start getting all high-horse and shaking our fingers at him.

VI
High-horse?

David gives her an annoyed "topic, please?" look.

DAVID
But this means something, right?

Just then, Ricky walks past - not noticing them. Vi and David watch as he glances into the bedroom. He smiles.

RICKY
Wendy Darling!

He moves inside. Vi turns back to David.

VI
It means we've got a problem.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ricky sits down beside Wendy on the window seat. He moves to put his arm around her but Wendy shifts away - shrugging off her jacket.

WENDY
It's getting warm in here. All
the people.

She lays the jacket down beside her. Ricky wraps his arm around her shoulders and presses a kiss to her cheek.

RICKY
Better not lose it. We'll be
heading out there soon.

He nods his head behind them, out the window. Wendy pouts.

WENDY
Can't we stay here tonight?

RICKY
Nah. There's already a bunch of
people crashing here. No room.

Wendy nods, disappointed. Ricky pulls his arm back. His eyes sparkle with excitement.

RICKY (CONT'D)
But, hey, why don't we get a
motel room. I know a cheap place.
Four walls, warm bed, TV...

WENDY
That sounds great. How much money
do we have left?

Ricky's smile suddenly drops.

RICKY
Oh. Uh... Crap. I just... I kind
of lent it to a friend.

WENDY
What?

RICKY
I'm sorry, Wendy. I forgot.

WENDY

Ricky! That was the last of my savings!

RICKY

(beat)

Well... Do you have any more at home?

WENDY

At home? Ricky, I can't just go and ask my mother for money.

RICKY

You still have your key, though, right?

Wendy shakes her head.

WENDY

Ricky, no. We are not stealing from my mother!

RICKY

(beat)

Yeah. Yeah, you're right. I'm sorry. I was just...

He lifts a hand, smoothing down her hair.

RICKY (CONT'D)

We'll figure out another way.

Wendy nods, satisfied. She stands.

WENDY

I'm going to find Vi. Tell her we're leaving.

RICKY

They came?

WENDY

Yeah. I'll just be a sec.

She turns. Ricky watches her as she leaves the room. A moment passes. He looks down at her jacket.

Slipping a hand into the pocket, he pulls out a silver key.

INT. THE COMPANY - RECEPTION - NIGHT

Pierce sits behind the desk - spinning himself around in Glenda's chair.

Jenna emerges from the hallway. She wears her jacket and her purse is slung over her shoulder.

JENNA

Good night, Pierce. It was nice to meet you.

Pierce grabs hold of the desk, stopping his movement. He blinks at her, dizzily.

PIERCE

Yeah.

Jenna walks over to the elevator and presses the button. The doors immediately slide open. Just as she's about to enter, Pierce stands.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

It's Jenna, right?

Jenna turns back and gives him a friendly, if dismissive smile.

JENNA

Yes, it is.

PIERCE

Is that short for Jennifer?

JENNA

Uh...

She looks away, uncomfortable. Pierce moves around the desk, putting his hands up apologetically.

PIERCE

Sorry, I'm just curious. You don't have to --

JENNA

No, that's alright. It is short for Jennifer, actually.

Pierce smiles.

PIERCE

That's a beautiful name.

Jenna says nothing. Behind her, the elevator doors close.

PIERCE (CONT'D)

So, um, I know that we just met, well, today, actually. But I was just wondering, if you're not busy this weekend...

Jenna cringes a little, embarrassed.

JENNA
I am busy, actually.
(beat)
But that's very sweet of you,
Pierce.

Pierce looks down, scuffing his sneakers against the carpet.

PIERCE
Sweet. Yeah.

Jenna faces the elevator again.

PIERCE (CONT'D)
So, what are you doing?

JENNA
What?

PIERCE
This weekend. You're busy.

As she turns back, and without missing a beat:

JENNA
Taxidermy.

PIERCE
(beat)
Taxidermy?

JENNA
I take lessons. In...

PIERCE
... Taxidermy.

JENNA
Yep.

A long beat.

PIERCE
I'm gonna go see if that blonde
chick is still around.

He gives her a nod and then hurries off. Jenna watches him leave, her eyes landing on Andrew who stands just beyond the entrance to the hallway.

There's a slight awkward pause. Jenna turns back to the elevator and punches the button. Once again, the doors open.

JENNA
Good night, Andrew.

Andrew says nothing. Jenna steps into the elevator.

INT. THE COMPANY - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Jenna turns to face the doors as they start to close. Suddenly, Andrew appears - sliding his hand in between the doors to stop them snapping shut.

JENNA
(surprised)
Andrew! What're you doing?

ANDREW
I'm not Pierce.

JENNA
What?

ANDREW
I know we seem kind of... similar
but... I'm not him. Or he's not
me. Or whatever.

Jenna smiles, reassuringly.

JENNA
I know that, Andrew.

ANDREW
No, but... I mean... Do people
see me like that? All weird and
annoying.

JENNA
Maybe.

Andrew's face drops.

JENNA (CONT'D)
Back then.

He reacts in confusion.

JENNA (CONT'D)
Pierce is you. Two years ago.
(then)
You've changed, Andrew. You're a
different guy now. A better guy.

ANDREW
Oh.
(beat; touched)
Thanks.

JENNA
No problem.

He steps back, allowing the doors to slide smoothly closed.

A moment passes. The elevator CHIMES and the doors open again. Jenna frowns in confusion...

... Until Andrew steps partly into the elevator - his eyes bright, his face hopeful.

ANDREW

Jenna, do you want to go out with me sometime?

(quickly)

In a non work capacity, I mean.

JENNA

(beat)

Sure.

Andrew is taken off guard by the sudden acceptance.

ANDREW

Oh. Great. Because I thought I should get in before Pierce comes back. So, you know, you don't have to make up another excuse.

Jenna smirks.

JENNA

Who said I was making it up?

A beat. They share a smile. Andrew steps back into the reception office and the doors, once again, slide closed.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - KITCHEN - NIGHT

David enters, followed by Vi. She looks over her shoulder, checking for Wendy or Ricky.

She joins David by the sink. They lean in close, their voices urgent.

VI

Okay, here's the plan. We tell Wendy that Ricky lied to her about getting clean, then --

DAVID

Wait, hold up a second. Why the heck would we do that?

VI

To make Wendy see that her boyfriend's a liar. She'll go home, the connection between her and her mum will be fixed and --

DAVID

Who said the connection was to do with Wendy?

VI

You wanna see the assignment sheet again? Two little words on it. Wendy Gardener.

DAVID

Yeah, but assignments aren't always what you think they are, right? I mean, you think you've got to help one person when really, they were just a stepping stone to another?

VI

Your point?

DAVID

(beat)
Ricky.

VI

What? Ricky is not --

DAVID

But --

VI

With the interrupting! God!

David takes a deep breath, steeling himself. When he speaks, he's determined, straight-forward...

DAVID

We found Ricky through Wendy. Ricky's got an obvious problem that we can help with. Ricky is the guy.

Vi doesn't miss a beat.

VI

No.

DAVID

(incredulous)
What do you mean "no"?

VI

I mean, this is my assignment, we're supposed to help Wendy and you're an idiot.

David's irritation increases.

DAVID

I would think since you got so touchy over how little Wendy's mother thought of the whole relationship, you'd be fighting to keep the lovebirds together?

Vi, getting angry herself, puts her hands on her hips.

VI

I know how to separate my personal feelings from my job, David.

DAVID

So do I!

VI

Really? The only reason you think Ricky's more important is because you both know what it's like to sleep in a cardboard box! Well, congratulations!

A long beat. The NOISE from the party emphasises the stunned silence between them.

David looks hurt. Vi's mouth drops open - having realised that she went too far.

VI (CONT'D)

(soft)

David...

WENDY (O.S.)

Hey! There you are!

Wendy stands in the doorway. She smiles at them, not having heard the conversation.

VI

(distracted)

Wendy... Hi...

WENDY

Just came to say bye. Ricky and I are heading out.

She's about to exit, when she stops. She moves a little further into the room.

WENDY (CONT'D)

It was nice meeting you, Vi. And you too, David.

(beat)

Good luck with everything.

With one last smile, she's gone. Vi casts a quick glance to David. He looks down, avoiding her gaze.

EXT. PUB - NIGHT

Sidney and Benson, both drunk, stumble outside. As Benson regains his balance, Sidney slings an arm over Benson's shoulders.

SIDNEY
Wanna know a secret?

BENSON
Nope.

Sidney leans in, lowering his voice and slurring his words.

SIDNEY
I'm not actually qualified...
qualified... for this job.

They start walking up the footpath, not exactly moving in a straight line.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
Y'see, Benny, back in jolly old
London town, I was a floor
manager. Not even a head of
department.
(beat)
A floor manager, Benny.

He pulls himself off Benson and stops walking. He sways on his feet.

SIDNEY (CONT'D)
I should be the one observing
you.

Benson considers this for a moment. He shakes his head.

BENSON
You're drunk.
(beat)
Besides... I'm not so great. I
don't even... know where I fit in
anymore. My office isn't my
office and...

He walks forward a few steps. Looks around.

BENSON (CONT'D)
Where'd we park the elevator?

Sidney comes up behind him and slaps him on the back.

SIDNEY

I guess we're one and the same,
Benny.

(beat)

We're in this together, now.

He stumbles past him, continuing up the street. Benson doesn't move - taking in Sidney's sobering words.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

CLOSE ON TWO HANDS

Clasped together. Fingers intertwined.

PAN UP to reveal the hand-holding couple is Wendy and Ricky.

Their shoulders and the curve of their necks frame Vi and David, walking about half a block behind them.

David is focused solely on the couple ahead. Vi continually throws nervous, apologetic glances his way.

Up ahead, Wendy and Ricky pause. They share a quick, sweet kiss and Wendy ducks into a book shop. Ricky continues on alone.

Vi slows and stops walking. David, now a few paces ahead of her, stops and turns.

They don't say a word. Their expressions are steady. Set in their decisions.

Finally, David shakes his head. He turns away from Vi, continuing up the footpath - following after Ricky.

Vi's face falls as she watches him walk away.

INT. BOOK SHOP - NIGHT

It's near closing time. A few CUSTOMERS are lined up at the register, waiting to make their purchases.

Vi enters and immediately looks around for Wendy. She's easy to spot. Wendy studies a wall of books - her head cocked to one side to read the titles.

Vi approaches her, trying to act collected.

VI

Hey.

Wendy jumps, a little surprised.

WENDY

Vi! What are you doing here?

Vi dismisses the question with a hasty smile.

VI
Where's Ricky?

Wendy grabs a book from the shelf. She sits down on a couch by the window.

WENDY
He's gone to see a friend.
Someone who owes him money.

Vi sits down beside her.

VI
Why does he need money?

WENDY
We're going to get a motel room.

She giggles.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Wow. A few weeks ago, that would
have sounded so scandalous.

She glances out the window at the chilly night outside.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Now it's just about not freezing
to death.
(beat)
I can't believe how long Ricky's
been doing this.

A beat. She laughs again.

WENDY (CONT'D)
Actually, I can. You know, he
wanted to steal money from my
mother? How messed up is that?

A look of surprise passes over Vi's face at the mention of Tina.

VI
Maybe that's just the kind of guy
Ricky is.

Wendy frowns in disapproval.

WENDY
He wouldn't, though. If he did...
Well, I know my mother. She
wouldn't hesitate to call the
cops. I'd never see Ricky again.

Vi sits up a little straighter but shrugs, trying to be nonchalant.

VI

But if he was willing to do something like that in the first place, would that be so bad?

Wendy glares.

WENDY

You're starting to sound like her.

(beat)

I thought we were on the same page, Vi. You know... The same person.

VI

But we're not the same person, Wendy.

Wendy stands, hurt and angry.

WENDY

Yeah. Guess we're not.

She tosses the book onto the couch and heads for the door, stepping out into the night.

Vi sighs. She looks down at the book. A copy of "The Secret Garden". Taking the book with her, she moves back to the shelf.

She's about to replace it when she stops. The title on the spine has changed. It now reads: "The Tea Garden".

She's confused but only for a brief moment.

EXT. WENDY'S HOUSE - SIDE - NIGHT

Hidden in shadow, Ricky creeps around the outside of Wendy's darkened house.

Hearing SOFT VOICES, he carefully peers through the window.

Inside, Tina is on the couch - the TV flashing bright colours and shapes across her sleeping face.

EXT. WENDY'S HOUSE - FRONT - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky stands at the front door. He pulls the house key from his pocket. He moves for the lock --

-- When a hand clamps down on his shoulder! Ricky whirls around, swinging out a fist. David steps back, avoiding the punch.

DAVID
It's just me! It's David!

Ricky stops and catches his breath, recovering from the fright.

RICKY
Jesus, man!

DAVID
Sorry.

He eyes the key in Ricky's hand.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What're you doing, Ricky?

RICKY
(defensive)
What're you doing? You following me?

DAVID
I saw you.

RICKY
You saw me what?

DAVID
Buying drugs.

RICKY
So?

DAVID
There are people who can help you, you know.

Ricky shakes his head.

RICKY
Don't need help. All I need is money.

VI (O.S.)
Thought all you needed was Wendy?

David and Ricky turn. Vi walks up from the street towards them.

David grits his teeth in frustration. He takes a few large steps, meeting her halfway.

DAVID
(quiet)
Vi, I'm trying to work.

VI

So am I.

DAVID

I thought we agreed that I was going to deal with Ricky, you were --

VI

We didn't agree on anything. In fact, disagreement was pretty much the theme of our last conversation.

DAVID

So what are you doing here?

VI

I'm here to stop you from stopping Ricky from breaking into Wendy's house and stealing from her mother.

DAVID

Huh?

Vi sighs, frustrated at having to explain herself.

VI

If Ricky breaks in, Tina calls the cops, Ricky gets arrested, Wendy realises that Ricky lied to her and she comes home. Connection fixed.

DAVID

You think Wendy will want to come home after her mother sends the love of her life to juvie?

VI

(beat; sighs)
Oh, crap.

Then, they both look to Ricky. Only Ricky's not there. They know where he went, however, as the front door to Wendy's house gapes open.

VI (CONT'D)

Oh. Crap.

Off this...

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tina lies on the couch, fast asleep. Behind her, Vi's head pops into the doorway. She scans the room and sees Tina.

Vi tip-toes along the hall, past the doorway. David follows closely.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vi stops suddenly. David runs into the back of her.

VI

Ow!

DAVID

Shhh!

(beat)

But sorry.

VI

(muttered)

Should be bloody sorry.

DAVID

Is there something you want to say?

VI

No.

DAVID

Okay, then. Let's keep moving.

VI

(beat; embarrassed)

I don't know where to go.

David rolls his eyes. He steps around her, taking point. They start to move again. Vi glares daggers into his back.

VI (CONT'D)

I saw that.

DAVID

What?

VI

That eye roll. If you have something to say --

David turns suddenly, forcing Vi to collide with him. They hold this position for a few moments - pressed up against each other, sharing intense angry glares.

Finally, David's eyes flick away. He takes a step back. Vi looks embarrassed. Apologetic.

David turns back. They keep moving. Peering into doorways as they pass.

VI (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

DAVID

For what?

VI

For everything. For what I said and how I've been acting.

(beat)

I'm sure this assignment's been really fun for you.

David smiles. But Vi can't see it. As quickly as it came, he drops it.

DAVID

(sarcastic)

Yeah. Real fun.

VI

Hey, I'm trying to apologise, here!

DAVID

Nobody asked you to.

VI

Nobody asked you to be a jerk.

(then)

I thought you were nice. I thought you'd understand that I'm under a lot of pressure!

David stops walking, turning around again. This time, Vi has to presence of mind to stop walking as well.

DAVID

Oh, yeah? Pressure like what, Vi? What is this weight that's making you act like a huge bitch!

VI

I'm scared that my boyfriend doesn't love me!

There it is. A moment of clarity. Vi, realising what she's just said, looks embarrassed. David's face softens.

DAVID

(kind)

Well... Maybe you should ask him.

THUD! Vi and David immediately look to the ceiling.

VI

(still whispered)

What was that?

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tina jolts awake.

TINA

What was that?

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vi and David, having heard Tina waking, bolt for the stairs at the end of the hall!

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - TINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ricky is sprawled on the floor, his legs tangled in the bedsheets.

He reaches for Tina's purse, on the floor beside him, and continues to dig through it.

Vi and David enter. Ricky picks himself up off the ground.

RICKY

(normal volume)

What are you guys doing in here?

TINA (O.S.)

Hello? Who's there?

David takes the purse from Ricky, tossing it onto the bed.

DAVID

We have to go. Now.

All three turn for the bedroom door.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Standing in the hall, Tina punches a number into a phone.

TINA

(loud)

Whoever you are, I'm calling the police!

She nervously presses the phone to her ear.

INT. WENDY'S HOUSE - TINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They back up into the room, trapped.

VI

We can't go down there! She'll see us!

RICKY

Oh no.

DAVID

What?

They turn to him. He pats down his pockets, terrified.

RICKY

I dropped it! I dropped my pills!

He starts to fall to his knees but David grasps his arm and yanks him back up. He looks to Vi.

DAVID

We've gotta --

But Vi's not there. David looks around, confused.

VI

Come on!

David, still holding onto Ricky, whirls around. Vi's at the window, one leg already outside.

RICKY

But my --

He's cut off as David drags him over to the window.

EXT. WENDY'S HOUSE - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Balancing on the slanted rooftop, the trio run towards the back of the house.

They reach the edge of the roof. There's no tree, no drain pipe. Nothing at all to help them climb down.

DAVID

There!

He points to a pool in the yard next door.

RICKY

What?! Are you crazy?!

SIRENS pierce the silence of the night. They grow closer by the second.

Vi and David share a look. They're both scared, but know what they have to do. Vi nods...

... And they back up for a running jump.

Sprinting forward, they grab Ricky and fling themselves off the roof!

They sail through the air. Falling, falling, falling and --

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S YARD - POOL - NIGHT

SPLASH! The three collide with the surface of the water, breaking it and going under.

We stay on Vi as she struggles to get her bearings. Her hair tangles around her face, obscuring her vision. Which way is up? Where's David? How the hell is she --

-- A hand plunges down into the water and grabs a hold of her jacket.

EXT. NEIGHBOUR'S YARD - NIGHT

Vi comes up, gasping for air. David, dripping wet, kneels by the edge of the pool.

With David's help, Vi manages to climb out. She collapses onto the tile, coughing and spluttering.

They both catch their breath. Vi looks around.

VI
Where's Ricky?

DAVID
He split.

Suddenly alarmed, Vi looks back up at the roof of Wendy's house.

VI
What if Tina finds his pills?
What if she thinks it was Wendy
and --

David pulls the plastic bag from his pocket. Vi manages a smile.

VI (CONT'D)
You know, you're not so bad at
this.

DAVID
Think I'll make a good mentor?

Before Vi can answer, her mobile phone starts to RING. Only this time, it's garbled and weak. Vi pulls her phone from her pocket and tries her best to dry it on her already soaking jeans.

She checks the screen. It flashes "MUM CALLING" before flickering and going dark. The RING TONE slows and stops...

... Making the SIRENS audible again. They're closer now.

David stands and holds out his hand. Vi takes it and he pulls her to her feet.

VI

I think you'll be a great mentor.

Walking together, they head for the side gate.

VI (CONT'D)

Now, on a scale of one to ten,
how grounded do you think I'll
be?

As David starts to laugh, we cut to...

INT. JENNA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jenna, now dressed in track pants and a t-shirt, sits in an armchair. She reads a paperback novel.

A soft SHUFFLING catches her attention. She looks up, towards her front door.

Jenna puts the book aside and, a little nervous, crosses to it. She takes a look through the peep-hole and relaxes.

Turning back the multiple locks and chains, she swings the door open. There's no one there.

Jenna pokes her head outside and turns it to look down the hall.

JENNA

Hey...

Benson steps into the doorway. His suit is ruffled, his tie hangs loose and he's a little unsteady on his feet.

BENSON

I was just... and then I thought
I... But that's okay. Sorry...
I'll just...

He starts to stumble off down the hall. Jenna takes his arm. She guides him inside and shuts the door behind him.

She motions him to the couch. Instead, Benson sinks to the floor, his back pressed against the front door.

BENSON (CONT'D)
I shouldn't have come.

JENNA
Why not? It's always nice to see you.

Benson scoffs.

JENNA (CONT'D)
You don't believe me?

BENSON
I know that you all hate him.

JENNA
Who?

BENSON
(disdain)
Sidney.

JENNA
Ah...

She sits down on the floor beside him.

BENSON
Did they... I just want to know... Did they ever hate me like that?

JENNA
There's something in the air tonight, huh?

BENSON
What?

Jenna shakes her head.

JENNA
Never mind.

BENSON
(beat)
Did you ever hate me?

JENNA
If I ever felt about you, the same way I feel about Sidney, I wouldn't have opened the door.

Benson smiles, relieved.

EXT. PARK - GAZEBO - NIGHT

Ricky sits on the steps of the gazebo. He shivers in his damp clothes.

FOOTSTEPS approach. Ricky looks up, just as David sits down beside him. He groans, tired and fed-up.

RICKY
Stop following me.

DAVID
Last time. I promise.
(beat; incredulous)
You were really going to steal
from your girlfriend's mum?

Ricky shrugs.

RICKY
I needed money.
(beat)
Still need money.

DAVID
You could get a job.

Ricky scoffs.

RICKY
You think anyone would give some
runaway a job?

DAVID
Some might. The good ones. The
ones who believe in second
chances.
(beat)
I know a little something about
second chances, Ricky. And you've
got people who want to help you.
(beat)
I know Wendy does.

Ricky laughs, cold and bitter.

RICKY
What if I don't want her help? Or
yours or anyone's?

DAVID
That's fine. I just... I don't
think you can keep doing this on
your own.

Ricky stands. He shakes his head.

RICKY

I don't need anyone but me.

He turns, about to head off, when he sees Wendy. She stands a little way away.

Neither of them says a word. They just stare at each other. Ricky's eyes are hard, a little guilty. Wendy looks like she's hearing something that a part of her knew all along.

Then, Ricky walks away - slipping into the darkness.

David moves to Wendy's side. She blinks to hold back tears.

DAVID

Wendy?

WENDY

I'm okay. I... I'll be fine.

(beat)

You know, Vi's real lucky to have you.

David smiles - not quite understanding her meaning.

WENDY (CONT'D)

I'm going to head home.

DAVID

Do you need me to...

Wendy gives him a strong, confident smile.

WENDY

I'll be fine.

She walks away. For a moment, David watches her go.

Then, he turns and walks back up the gazebo. He takes a seat inside.

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Vi trudges up the driveway, the cuffs of her drenched jeans slapping wetly against the pavement.

As she nears the porch, the front door opens and Erin emerges, twirling his car keys around one finger.

Upon seeing each other, they freeze momentarily. Then, Erin continues, joining her on the front lawn.

ERIN

Your mum should work for the government. 'Coz she's got that whole interrogation thing down.

Vi says nothing. Guilt radiates off her in waves.

ERIN (CONT'D)
You said you were going to call
me back.

VI
Yeah...

ERIN
You also said you were staying in
tonight.

VI
Yeeah...

ERIN
You also said you knew that guy
from your old school.

VI
Yeeeeeeeah...

Erin sighs. Stepping back, he sits down on the porch steps. Vi hesitates for a moment, then sits next to him. Another beat.

ERIN
Why are your clothes all wet?

VI
Jumped in a pool.

ERIN
With that guy?

VI
He's just... Well, I guess he's
my friend.

ERIN
You guess?

Vi shrugs.

VI
Only met him today.

ERIN
Am I going to get an explanation
for any of this?

Vi shrugs again. Erin nods.

ERIN (CONT'D)
Okay, then.

He stands. Barely having taken a few steps, Vi grits her teeth and jumps to her feet.

VI
Erin, wait!

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Penny, dressed in her pajamas, walks down the stairs. As she passes by the front door, she hears:

VI (O.S.)
Can we talk?

ERIN (O.S.)
I came over here to talk. I'm
trying to talk. I --

VI (O.S.)
No, I mean... Can we talk about
something... specific?

Penny pauses, listening.

EXT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Vi takes a nervous - almost shy - step towards Erin.

VI
Specifically, something I need to
tell you.

ERIN
About tonight?

VI
No.

Vi takes a deep breath. She reaches out, taking his hand.

VI (CONT'D)
I love you.

Erin doesn't reply. In fact, he looks shocked.

VI (CONT'D)
Well?

ERIN
Vi...

Vi chuckles nervously.

VI
"Vi" what?

ERIN

I just don't know if I'm... I want to say it. I do. I just don't think I'm... ready.

VI

You're not... ready.

ERIN

Yeah.

A beat.

VI

Oh.

Vi's grip slackens. Their hands fall apart.

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - FRONT HALL - NIGHT

Vi enters, shutting the front door quietly behind her. Penny's no longer there.

About to head up the stairs, Vi hears CANNED LAUGHTER coming from the living room. She walks down the hall...

INT. MORGAN RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

... And pauses in the doorway. Penny sits on the couch in the dark room, eyes glued to the TV.

Vi, dragging her feet, enters and lowers herself down beside Penny.

There's a beat. Penny shuffles closer to her and, with one hand, gently guides Vi's head down onto her shoulder.

Penny rests her head on top of Vi's. They sit like this, silently, as the grating LAUGHTER of the TV sitcom fills our ears...

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE