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FADE IN:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

A black suit jacket lies on the bed and a cat sits on the jacket. LAURIE, 25, makes clumsy, bumping NOISES as she dresses off-screen. Her bedroom is spotless.

LAURIE (O.S.)
Charles! Get off!

The cat quickly moves.

Laurie's arm lifts the jacket off the bed, then brushes the cat hair off the jacket.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Laurie flips on the light and looks in the mirror. She wears glasses and her hair is pulled into a pony tail. Her bathroom, too, is spotless.

She groans loudly at the cat hair still on her jacket, then searches for a lint roller in a drawer. She rolls it over her shoulders, arms, and chest. She struggles to reach her back.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie stares at her teeth in the mirror for a beat. She opens her medicine cabinet and removes a toothbrush and toothpaste. She squirts toothpaste on the brush.

The phone RINGS.

Laurie sets the toothbrush down on the edge of the sink and hurries into her bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Laurie searches for the cordless phone as it RINGS. She finds it in the pocket of her bathrobe and answers it.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

(beat)

No, this isn't her number anymore.

Laurie hangs up and groans.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Jesus!

She tosses the phone onto her bed.

She looks at the clock. It is 8:42.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

I have to leave in two minutes ago.

She grabs her bag, slings it over her shoulder, and runs out of her bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Laurie picks up the coffee pot and holds it up to see how much is left. She grabs a mug and fills it, then puts it in the microwave.

She anxiously jumps around, waiting for the coffee. The microwave DINGS and she removes the coffee, sips it painfully, then makes a face. She chugs the rest, then sets the mug in the sink.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAURIE'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie yanks the garage door open, then pushes it all the way up. She walks in and the door falls halfway down.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie sits close to the steering wheel as she drives and grips it tightly with both hands.

Laurie speaks to herself in a low volume.

LAURIE
Shit, I forgot my brochure.
(sighing)
That's okay, I can print another
one.

Laurie groans, then freezes, remembering her unused
toothbrush.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BATHROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Her toothbrush sits unused on the edge of the sink.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

LAURIE
Shit!

She digs around in her bag while trying to watch the road.
She pulls out a pack of gum and shoves two pieces into her
mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie chews the gum in large, slow movements. She comes to
a stop light, rolls down her window to spit out the gum, then
is distracted by her bag falling off the seat.

She leans over to pick up her bag, then turns her head and
spits the wad of gum out the window without looking. It
lands on the passenger window of a car in the next lane.

Laurie looks horrified. She sees the driver of the car and
looks even more horrified.

The driver is MR. STRINGFELLOW, 55, Laurie's boss. He is
bald with scraps of black hair, has a large black mustache,
and large thick glasses.

Mr. Stringfellow looks disgustedly at the gum on his window.
He focuses angrily on Laurie, then curiously as if he almost
recognizes her.

Laurie looks away and stares straight ahead.

The light turns green and Mr. Stringfellow pulls away, still with a puzzled look.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Stringfellow's car continues straight ahead. Laurie makes a quick right.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAURIE'S CAR, STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - LATER

Laurie drives cautiously into the parking lot, looking around. She spots Mr. Stringfellow's car near the door, then parks far from it.

She looks at herself in the rearview mirror, lets down her hair, and furiously runs her fingers through it.

She takes off her glasses and squints at herself in the mirror.

She shrugs off her jacket and throws it into the backseat.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie steps off the elevator onto the third floor. She walks carefully, without her glasses, past people at their desks.

Mr. Stringfellow approaches, holding a cup of coffee. He wears a blue suit.

Laurie freezes.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Good morning. . .

He trails off, forgetting her name. He does not recognize her from the car.

Laurie slightly angles her face away from him.

LAURIE
(quietly)
Good morning, sir.

They pass each other.

Laurie exhales, relieved. She pulls her glasses out of her bag and slides them on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Laurie drops her bag on the floor and sits down at her desk. On her desk is a computer, a small framed picture of her cat, stacks of papers and catalogues, and a can of Diet Coke. Her cubicle is otherwise clean.

Laurie turns on her computer and swivels back and forth in her chair.

Laurie's co-worker, CAROL, 45, pokes her head over the cubicle wall.

CAROL
Hello in there.

Laurie jumps.

LAURIE
Hi, Carol.

Carol moves around to the open side of the cubicle. She's dressed in a white turtle neck under a long purple dress.

CAROL
Stringfellow wants a surprise meeting with marketing. Do you have the brochure?

LAURIE
Oh, sure, yes, I just need to print another one because I
(beat)
forgot it at home.

CAROL
Oh, jeez.

Laurie nods.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Well, hurry it up.

Carol taps the cubicle wall, then walks away. She calls back over her shoulder.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Meeting's in fifteen!

Laurie peers into the can of Diet Coke, swirls it around on the table top, then takes a big swig.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Laurie rushes into the room holding a manila folder to her chest. Carol sits at the conference table with MICK, 30 and handsome. Mick leans back in his chair and looks bored. Carol sits up straight, her hands in her lap.

Laurie nervously looks around for Mr. Stringfellow.

CAROL (CONT'D)
He's not here yet.

Laurie sighs and takes a seat on the opposite side of the table. She sneaks a look at Mick, but he pays her no attention.

Mr. Stringfellow breezes in and closes the door behind him. He scratches his thick mustache.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
I just received some fantastic news.

Laurie frantically claws the glasses from her face and hides them in her lap.

CAROL
(excitedly)
What is it?

MR. STRINGFELLOW
We've been ranked the ninth biggest credit union in the State.

Mr. Stringfellow holds up nine fingers.

CAROL
Wow! You're kidding!

Mr. Stringfellow nods, then shakes his head, then nods again.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Nope. We beat out Big Money Credit Union. They're tenth this year.

Mick looks disinterested.

MICK

Nice.

MR. STRINGFELLOW

Ninth biggest in the State! I think that should go on the brochure. What do you think?

CAROL

Oh, I think that's a fantastic idea!

Mr. Stringfellow looks at Laurie.

MR. STRINGFELLOW

What do you think. . .?

He again forgets Laurie's name. He looks to Carol for help.

Carol shields her lips and mouths "Laurie."

Mr. Stringfellow shakes his head and mouths, "What?"

Laurie watches them, her teeth clenched.

Carol shields her finger and writes each letter in the air as she mouths, "L-A-U-R-I-E."

Mr. Stringfellow silent repeats them back to himself. Then he snaps his attention back to Laurie.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)

Laurie!

They all look at Laurie for the first time. Laurie looks confused.

LAURIE

Uh. . .

She looks at Mick. He stares back blankly. She looks at Carol, then at Mr. Stringfellow.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Really? I don't think that's *such* a fantastic idea--

MR. STRINGFELLOW

Nonsense! Let me see the brochure.

Laurie opens the folder and slides the brochure across the table to Mr. Stringfellow.

He picks it up, looks at it, and nods while he talks.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
 Uh huh. Yes. Love the money
 graphic.

He looks up at Carol.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
 I love it. Let's add more neon and
 our fantastic news.

Carol grins broadly and clasps her hands together in agreement.

Laurie rests her forehead in her hand.

Mr. Stringfellow leaves the room, quickly followed by Mick.

Carol looks at Laurie.

CAROL
 Did you hear--

Laurie interrupts, annoyed.

LAURIE
 I'm on it.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - LATER

Laurie works on the brochure at her computer. The front page reads: "Statewide Credit Union: Ninth Biggest in the State."

PAUL, the computer guy, 25, wheels his chair over to Laurie's cubicle. Paul is tall and ordinary. He has an affection for Laurie, to which Laurie is oblivious.

Laurie looks at him out of the corner of her eye.

PAUL
 How's your computer working?

LAURIE
 Fine, Paul.

PAUL
Is it slow? I've been getting some
complaints about the Macs.

LAURIE
No, it's fine.

PAUL
Did you hear the big news?

LAURIE
Yes.

PAUL
I can't believe we beat Big Money.
They're like the best.

LAURIE
They've never been the best!
(lowering her voice)
First Credit Union is the best.
Big Money is always ninth.

PAUL
Not this year.

They sit in silence for a beat. Laurie's eyes jump from the
computer screen to Paul.

LAURIE
I'm working here, Paul.

PAUL
I know, but. . .

Paul leans back in his chair and puts his hands behind his
head.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Tomorrow's my birthday and we're
having a party in the break room
during lunch.
(beat)
Carol's making a cake.

LAURIE
Okay, I'll come.

Paul smiles and starts to wheel away.

PAUL
If you have any computer problems,
you know where to find me.

Laurie nods and absentmindedly waves her hand at Paul.

She looks at her watch. It is 12:30. Laurie grabs her bag and flees from her cubicle.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie sits alone on the shaded steps in the back of the building. She pulls a sack lunch out of her bag and removes a sandwich. She eats for two beats.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie chugs a bottle of Diet Coke.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie taps her finger nails on her teeth.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - LATER

Laurie sits at her desk. She stares at the cubicle wall and chews on her lip.

Paul rolls over in his chair.

Laurie continues to stare for a beat, then looks at him.

PAUL
(excitedly)
IT just had a meeting with Mr.
Stringfellow--

LAURIE
And he wants you to put the big
news on the website.

PAUL
Yes, but, *and*
(beat)
(MORE)

PAUL(cont'd)

He wants us to set up an office intranet!

Paul waits for a reaction from Laurie. Her face is blank.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You know, instead of sending e-mails to everyone.

LAURIE

Yesterday Carol sent me an e-mail about anthrax.

Paul doesn't sense her annoyed tone.

PAUL

I know! She said she's gonna be the first to post an article.

Paul rolls away in his chair.

PAUL (CONT'D, O.S.)

I'll let you know when it's up and running!

Laurie nods and waves her hand at him.

Mick walks by and Laurie watches him with a faint smile.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, PARKING LOT - LATER

Laurie exits the building with her shoulder bag clumsily hitting the door frame. She walks between the first row of cars.

Paul runs out behind her and stops.

PAUL

Hey, Laurie!

Laurie turns around. Her bag swipes the parked car beside her.

Paul raises his hand to wave, then awkwardly lowers it down to his side.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Don't forget about my birthday lunch! We'll probably order pizza!

Laurie nods and gives Paul a thumbs up.

Laurie walks two beats to her car. She fiddles with the keys in the door.

DANA, 30, drives up next to Laurie with her window down. She wears sunglasses and slides them down her nose to look at Laurie over the tops of the lenses. CLASSIC ROCK MUSIC plays on her stereo.

DANA

Hey!

Laurie turns, startled.

DANA (CONT'D)

Laurie, right? Dana! We met at the office block party last week. I work next door at the dentist's office.

Laurie wrinkles her brow, remembering.

CUT TO:

EXT. OFFICE BLOCK PARTY - FLASHBACK

The street and trees are decorated with streamers and balloons. MUSIC plays. People wear suits and eat finger foods.

Laurie stands alone, chewing on a stick of licorice. Dana wheels past in a black leather swivel chair with a giant bow stuck to the back. She holds a red plastic cup and is tipsy.

She wheels back and stops ext to Laurie.

DANA

What's your name?

LAURIE

(dubiously)

Laurie.

DANA

I'm Dana!

Dana wheels away. Laurie raises her eyebrows and slowly chews her licorice.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, PARKING LOT - PRESENT

LAURIE

Oh, yeah. You won the desk chair raffle.

DANA

Wanna come to happy hour at Jug o' Moonshine?

Surprised by the invitation, Laurie stumbles over her words as she lies.

LAURIE

Oh, uh, I shouldn't. I have, like,
(beat)
a lot of work things to do.

DANA

Really? Why don't you do them at work?

LAURIE

(quickly, lying)
Because I'm a slow worker.

Dana eyes her suspiciously.

DANA

Another time?

Laurie nods.

Dana waves goodbye and drives off. Laurie watches Dana's car for a beat, then opens her door.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER/EVENING

Laurie stands at the stove, staring into a pot on the burner. Music plays loudly from an adjacent room. Laurie's cat, Charles, sits expectantly at her feet.

Laurie breaks a handful of spaghetti and tosses it into the pot.

She turns to her cat and sings loudly to the music: "For Sentimental Reasons" by Rod Stewart. She sways as she sings.

LAURIE
(singing)
I love you for sentimental reasons.

The cat's ears go back.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
(singing)
I hope you do believe me--

The cat runs off screen. Laurie smiles and calls after him.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
You love it!

She returns to the stove and stirs the spaghetti in the pot.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

Laurie sits down in front of the glowing computer screen.
The room is dark.

Close-up of computer screen. A blank e-mail application is
open. Laurie stares at the screen for a beat.

She mumbles as she types.

LAURIE
Dear Mom. I haven't heard from you
in a while. I can't believe I've
been here for exactly a year,
today.

Laurie pauses. Her fingers hover over the keys.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Sometimes I wonder if you've
forgotten about me.

Laurie presses the backspace key until the last sentence is
deleted.

She continues and re-types the same sentence.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Sometimes I wonder if you've
forgotten about me.

Laurie stares at the screen for a beat. She cringes and
groans, then closes the e-mail application.

She swivels around in her chair and looks at the cat on her bed. She shakes her head as if to say, "No, can't do it," then pushes herself up from the chair.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - THE NEXT MORNING

Laurie steps off the elevator and bumps into Mr. Stringfellow. He wears the same blue suit as before.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Excuse me, miss.

He smiles awkwardly, then disappears.

Laurie drops her head and drags her feet into her cubicle.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Laurie slumps into her chair, on top of her shoulder bag. She sits lopsided for a beat, then removes the bag from her shoulder and pushes it onto the floor. She turns on her computer.

Carol pokes her head above the cubicle wall.

CAROL
Morning!

LAURIE
Morning.

CAROL
Check out the intranet!

PAUL (O.S.)
Hey! I wanted to tell her!

Laurie and Carol look in the direction of Paul's voice.

Carol smiles and shakes her head.

LAURIE
That was fast.

Carol disappears.

Laurie looks to where Carol stood and is startled to see her gone. She turns to the computer and clicks on an icon that says "Intranet." The page opens and there is one message posted. The subject reads "Paul's birthday lunch today!"

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Shit.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, COPY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie frantically searches through the cabinets. She opens and slams doors. Finally she pulls out a white piece of paper and a green marker.

She folds the paper in half, puts the marker in her mouth and yanks off the cap. On the outside cover of the paper she scrawls, "Happy Birthday. . ." She opens it and inside writes, "Paul!"

She stares at it for a beat, then sighs. She brings the marker up to the cap in her mouth and unknowingly writes on her upper lip.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie walks swiftly back to her cubicle, concealing the card at her side. Her eyes dart nervously around the room.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie sits in her chair and slides the card into a drawer, then slams the drawer shut. She exhales intensely.

She looks at her watch. It is only 10:00. Her head falls back and she looks to the ceiling. She drapes her arms over the armrests and swivels back and forth.

Mick appears at her cubicle and stares blankly at her for a beat.

MICK

You have the brochure?

Laurie jumps in her chair and sits up straight. Her face reddens.

MICK (CONT'D)
I gotta take it to the printer.

Laurie finds the manila folder on her desk and hands it to Mick without looking him in the eye.

MICK (CONT'D)
You got green marker on your lip.

He leaves.

Laurie's face falls and her eyes widen in horror.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie bursts through the door and rushes to the sink. She wets a piece of paper towel, then holds it under the soap dispenser and pumps out a mound of soap. She scrubs her upper lip with the paper towel. Liquid soap runs down her chin.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie splashes her face with water. She rubs her hands around on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - LATER

Laurie works at her computer. She pauses and looks at her watch. It is 12:30. She rolls backward in her chair and peeks around the cubicle wall. Carol is not at her desk.

Her eyebrows dart inward.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie walks to Paul's desk. He is not there.

Laurie hears LAUGHTER and TALKING off-screen. She pauses and listens for a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

People crowd the break room, talking and laughing. There are open pizza boxes and a covered cake on the table.

Laurie timidly enters the doorway with Paul's card in her hand. She looks around. Paul stands with Carol and others and shoves a piece of pizza into his mouth.

Laurie approaches Paul and Carol.

PAUL
There you are!

Laurie looks confused.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Carol said you'd gone out to lunch.

LAURIE
I was at my desk. . .

CAROL
Oops! Didn't see you there.

Laurie swallows and hands Paul the card.

PAUL
What's this?

He reads it and chuckles.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Thanks, Laurie.

Carol peers at the card from the corner of her eye. She scoffs to herself.

LAURIE
(coolly)
Where's Mick?

PAUL
I don't think office parties are his thing.

Laurie nods.

Carol clasps her hands together and lifts her shoulder in excitement.

CAROL
Cake time!

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, OUTSIDE BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAROL (O.S.)
I made it! I made the cake,
everyone!

MR. STRINGFELLOW (O.S.)
Pass the Mountain Dew!

Laurie steps out of the break room, holding a piece of pizza to her mouth. She walks down the hall toward her cubicle.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, PARKING LOT - LATER

Laurie approaches her car. There is a note stuck under the windshield wiper. She looks at it, confused, then removes and unfolds it.

Close up on the note. It reads: "Laurie, Happy hour at Jug o' Moonshine. Dana."

Laurie smiles wearily.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUG O' MOONSHINE BAR - LATER

The bar is a small, red building surrounded by a dusty dirt parking lot. The neon moonshine jug blinks on and off.

Laurie gets out of her car and walks toward the bar. She turns around and walks back to her car. She stops and walks back to the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. JUG O' MOONSHINE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Laurie enters the dark, empty bar. OLDIES MUSIC plays from the jukebox along the wall. There are a few men sitting at the counter. Two of the tables are occupied by older, motorcycle couples.

Laurie looks around for Dana. She spots her at a high table near the bar counter. Dana is hunched over a tall beer and mindlessly watches a sports game on the television.

Laurie approaches Dana. When Dana sees her she smiles with her mouth open and holds her hands up in the air.

DANA

You came!

LAURIE

Yeah.

Laurie looks around the bar.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

I've never been here before.

DANA

I usually come alone. Beer is fifty cents from five to six!

Laurie struggles to pull herself up onto the stool.

LAURIE

Wow. That's weird.

DANA

What do you want?

LAURIE

What you're drinking is fine.

Dana twists around in her stool and calls to the bartender, LARRY.

DANA

Hey, Larry! One more, please!

Dana turns back to Laurie and points a finger over her shoulder.

DANA (CONT'D)

Larry.

Laurie nods.

DANA (CONT'D)
So. What's your story?

LAURIE
Uh, I work at the credit union. . .

Larry brings Laurie her beer and she thanks him.

DANA
I know that, fool!

Laurie smiles, embarrassed.

DANA (CONT'D)
Do you have a boyfriend?

LAURIE
No. Do you?

DANA
Yes. No. Yes. Well, I'm sort of
seeing the dentist I work for.

Laurie's eyes widen.

DANA (CONT'D)
In my mind.

Dana laughs.

Laurie laughs, slightly uncomfortably. She takes a long swig
of her beer.

DANA (CONT'D)
So did you really have a lot of
work to do last night?

Laurie looks at her for a beat, trying to decide how to
answer.

She shakes her head.

LAURIE
That was a lie.

Dana sneers.

DANA
I know.

Laurie smiles. She drinks her beer.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - LATER/EVENING

Music plays loudly. Laurie sings even louder.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Laurie enters through the back door.

LAURIE
I'm home!

Charles the cat appears.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie opens the refrigerator. The contents are sparse. She removes a can of cat food and dishes some out into a small bowl for the cat.

She watches the cat eat for a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie checks her answering machine. She has no messages.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAURIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie opens the front door and removes the mail from the mail box. Close up on the mail in Laurie's hand as she flips through: one bill, one flyer reading "Have you seen me?", and one booklet of coupons.

Laurie groans and rolls her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Laurie sits cross-legged and slouched on the sofa, watching *The Apprentice* on TV. Her face is blank. The room is brightly lit by a few lamps and an overhead light.

Laurie holds a large stack of saltine crackers in a plastic wrapper. She eats one after another.

LAURIE
(mumbling to herself)
Crackers.

Crumbs fall onto her chest.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The sliding door is open a crack. The cat sits at the crack, watching the leaves fall from the trees.

Laurie crouches beside the cat and opens the door a little farther. A breeze comes in through the screen and ruffles her hair. She watches the backyard for a beat, then looks at the cat.

LAURIE
(whispering)
Let's pretend we're somewhere else.

She closes her eyes for a beat. A faint smile moves across her lips.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - THE NEXT DAY

Laurie enters her cubicle. She slumps down into her chair and clicks on the computer.

Paul appears out of nowhere and startles Laurie. She clutches her chest.

PAUL
There's leftover cake in the
fridge! Go nuts!

LAURIE
Thanks.

PAUL
Yeah, I saved you the piece with
the flower on it--

As Paul talks, a beautiful young blonde woman, FRAN, walks into the background.

Laurie interrupts, confused.

LAURIE
Who's that?

Paul turns around to look.

PAUL
That's Carol's replacement, Fran.

LAURIE
What?

PAUL
You haven't met her?

LAURIE
Where's Carol?

PAUL
She fell down the stairs and broke
her neck.

Laurie looks horrified.

LAURIE
What? When?

PAUL
Yesterday. You didn't know?

LAURIE
Oh my god!

PAUL
We're sending flowers. The card's
in the break room.

Laurie's mouth still hangs open. She stares at Fran for a beat.

LAURIE
Her name is Fran?

Paul nods.

PAUL
She's a *lot* hotter than Carol.

Laurie watches as Mick approaches Fran. They talk and laugh. Fran touches Mick's arm.

Laurie's face changes from appalled to disappointed. She turns to talk to Paul, but he is gone.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BREAK ROOM - LATER

Laurie enters the break room. She finds the display of flowers and the card on the table. She stands above the card for a beat and reads the other messages.

Mick enters and walks to the refrigerator. He stops and looks at Laurie as if he's seen her somewhere before, but cannot place her.

MICK
There's a meeting at eleven.

Laurie looks up. She notices him for the first time.

LAURIE
Okay.

Mick opens the refrigerator and removes a piece of cake on a plate. Close-up of the piece of cake in his hand: there is a large flower on the frosting. It is the cake Paul had saved for Laurie.

Laurie sees the cake and smiles dejectedly.

Mick exits. Laurie picks up the pen and signs the card. Close up of the card as she writes: "I had no idea. Get well soon."

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, MEETING ROOM - LATER

Laurie enters the meeting room. Mick and Fran sit together on one side of the table. They talk quietly and lean in toward each other.

Laurie sits, unnoticed, on the opposite side of the table. She stares at Mick and Fran from the corner of her eye.

Mr. Stringfellow enters. He wears a blue suit.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Good mid-morning, group.

FRAN
Good morning, sir.

MICK
Good morning.

LAURIE
Hello.

Mr. Stringfellow gestures to Fran and Laurie.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
I see you two have met.

Laurie and Fran speak simultaneously.

	LAURIE	FRAN
No.		Yes.

Laurie looks at Fran, confused.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Good!
(beat)
That poor Carol.

Mr. Stringfellow shakes his head.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
Slipped on a cat toy. Can you
imagine?

Laurie's eyes widen.

LAURIE
I didn't know she has cats.

Mr. Stringfellow nods solemnly. Then he claps his hands together to change the subject.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
So, Fran! How do you like our
digs?

He gestures around the room.

Laurie looks dubiously at Mr. Stringfellow, then to Fran.

FRAN
 Very well, sir. I love the
 employee photos hanging in the
 restroom.

LAURIE
 What?

Mr. Stringfellow smiles proudly.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
 I had one of the ladies in HR put
 them up this morning.

FRAN
 It's a great way to get to know
 everyone's faces.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
 My thinking exactly!

He turns to Mick.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
 Mick, my man!

MICK
 Yes, sir.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
 I've decided to send you and Fran
 to the National Credit Union
 Conference in November.

Laurie looks shocked.

Fran looks thrilled.

MICK
 Fantastic, sir. Where is it this
 year?

MR. STRINGFELLOW
 The great state of Wyoming!

LAURIE
 (sorrily, to herself)
 I love Wyoming.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
 And don't forget! Our annual
 Halloween party is coming up.
 (MORE)

MR. STRINGFELLOW(cont'd)

Attendance *and costumes* are mandatory this year.

LAURIE

What?

MR. STRINGFELLOW

It's no fun when Carol and I show up as Sonny and Cher and everyone else is in jeans!

Mick and Fran laugh.

Mr. Stringfellow points to Laurie.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)

I'd like you to send out a member e-mail about our sponsorship in the local circus.

Laurie drops her head. No one notices.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)

We get vouchers for one free show and camel ride.

Laurie nods, still looking at her lap.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, RESTROOM - LATER

Laurie enters the women's restroom. She stares at the employee photos on the wall and shakes her head in disbelief. Her eyes come across her own photo near the end of the row. It is an unflattering photo. Laurie makes a face at it.

A bathroom stall swings open and hits Laurie's photo on the wall. The frame crashes to the floor.

Fran comes out of the stall. She looks at Laurie, then bends to pick up the frame. She looks down at the picture.

FRAN

Jesus, it's you!

She looks up at Laurie.

Laurie nods.

LAURIE

(quietly)

I think I had pink eye. . .

Fran hangs it back on the wall, crookedly.

FRAN

We'll have to get mine up here soon!

LAURIE

I think everyone knows you already.

Fran smooths her hair in the mirror above the sink. She removes a tube of lipstick from her purse. Laurie watches as she paints her lips.

FRAN

Mick and I are going to lunch. I'll see you later to proof that carny e-mail.

Fran exits the restroom and Laurie's eyes follow her out the door.

Laurie walks over to the wall and levels her crooked picture.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - LATER

Laurie sits alone on the steps in the back of the building. She eats carrot sticks and drinks Diet Coke.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - LATER

Laurie sits at her computer. She mumbles as she types.

LAURIE

Statewide Credit Union continues its sponsorship of the local Nutty Brothers Circus. . .

She sits back in her chair and sighs.

She checks the intranet. Close up on the computer screen as she reads the newest message: "Friday, October 28 is our annual Halloween party! Attendance and costumes are mandatory. Costume contest and more! Please no outside guests."

Laurie purses her lips in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie walks to Paul's cubicle. The birthday card she made the day before is tacked up on his wall. Laurie smiles to herself.

Paul looks up at Laurie.

LAURIE
Do you have a costume for
Halloween?

PAUL
Well, Fran says I'd make a good
cowboy.

Laurie's face drops.

LAURIE
(grumbling)
That was fast.

PAUL
You should ask her for suggestions.
She has a lot of ideas.

LAURIE
She's been here for six hours!

Laurie groans, then walks away with her fists shaking at her sides.

CUT TO:

INT. JUG O' MOONSHINE BAR - LATER/EVENING

Laurie and Dana sit at a high table near the bar. The bartender, Larry, brings two tall glasses of beer, then disappears.

Laurie takes a long drink.

LAURIE
This *Fran* woman is a nightmare.

DANA
Is she old?

LAURIE
No! She's young.

DANA
Is she ugly?

LAURIE
No, she's gorgeous.

Dana make a face.

Laurie looks distraught.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
And now we have pictures of
everyone in the bathroom. . .

She looks up at the ceiling.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
And Mick loves her.

DANA
Mick Jagger?

LAURIE
No, the man I've secretly loved for
a year. But he doesn't even look
at me unless he has to.

DANA
He sounds like an idiot. Let Fran
have him.

Laurie's shoulders fall. She swirls her beer glass around on
the table.

LAURIE
How's the dentist?

DANA
Still clueless. Today when his
back was turned I pretended to lick
his hair.

LAURIE
That's weird.

Dana smiles.

DANA
And I wrote "I love you" in the
dirt on his car. He thinks his
wife did it.

Laurie looks at her with wide eyes.

DANA (CONT'D)
I probably won't have an affair
with him. I think he'd be boring
in real life.

LAURIE
Good. . .

Dana nods, then finishes her beer. Laurie looks at her own
beer. It is half full.

DANA
I think we should dance now.

LAURIE
What?

DANA
Yeah.

LAURIE
No.

DANA
Come on. Larry loves when people
dance.

Laurie looks to Larry at the bar. He slowly wipes the
counter top.

DANA (CONT'D)
I'll pick out a song.

Dana hops off her stool and walks to the jukebox. There is
silence for a beat while Laurie looks worriedly around the
bar. Then "Get On Your Feet" by Gloria Estefan plays.

Dana finds a clear spot between tables and dances in awkward,
jerky movements.

The few other people in the bar do not look at her. Larry
the bartender smiles.

Laurie remains sitting.

DANA (CONT'D)
Come on, you big lug!

LAURIE
I'm not good.

Dana points to herself as if to say, "Hello!"

Laurie makes a face, then slides off her stool. She joins Dana between the tables and barely moves her body to the music.

They talk as they dance.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
My office Halloween party is next week. I have to go and I have to wear a costume.

DANA
What are you gonna be?

LAURIE
I don't know.

DANA
Something that stands out. People love good costumes.

LAURIE
Fran said I should be a cat or a librarian.

Dana laughs.

They continue to dance.

FADE TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - DAY

Laurie approaches the restroom. Fran walks up quickly, also headed for the restroom. They stop and stare at each other for a beat. Fran exhales in exasperation.

Laurie gestures awkwardly for Fran to go first. Fran enters, followed by Laurie.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Fran enters a stall. Laurie sees Fran's newly added glamour shot on the wall of employee photos. She pauses for a beat, then turns around and walks back out.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BREAK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie enters the break room and opens the refrigerator. She removes a can of Diet Coke, opens it, and takes a sip.

Paul enters holding a video camera. Laurie's eyes widen and she stares at him with the soda can to her lips.

PAUL

Laurie! Do something for the staff video!

Paul moves closer to Laurie. She slowly brings the can away from her mouth.

LAURIE

Uh. . .

Paul stops recording and lowers the camera.

PAUL

We're gonna show it at the Halloween party.

LAURIE

Why?

PAUL

Stringfellow's idea. He wants everyone to be in it.

Laurie groans.

LAURIE

Paul, I really don't want to.

PAUL

I already got Fran doing a belly dance. Do you have any hidden talents?

Laurie looks at him in disbelief.

LAURIE

No!

Paul looks desperate.

Laurie groans.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

I can chug this Coke in five seconds.

Paul laughs. Laurie looks annoyed.

PAUL

Okay! Let's do it.

Paul holds up the video camera. Laurie holds the soda can to her mouth.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Action!

Laurie throws her head back and chugs the soda for three beats. Then she rips the can from her lips and breathes heavily.

Paul turns off the camera.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Wow! Nice.

LAURIE

Are we done?

CUT TO:

INT. JUG O' MOONSHINE BAR - LATER/AFTERNOON

Laurie and Dana sit at the high table. Both have meals and beers in front of them. Dana takes a big bite of her hamburger.

Laurie's elbows rest on the table, her head in her hands. She frowns.

Dana touches her finger to Laurie's forehead, between her furrowed eyebrows.

DANA

You're gonna have a million wrinkles there.

Laurie smiles and lightly rubs her forehead.

LAURIE
Your fingers are greasy.

Dana shrugs. She takes another bite and talks with her mouth full.

DANA
Let's hear it, face.

Laurie sighs and shakes her head.

LAURIE
I work with a bunch of idiots.

DANA
Don't we all?

LAURIE
No.

DANA
So they're idiots. You're not.

Dana wipes her mouth with a napkin.

DANA (CONT'D)
Dance time?

LAURIE
(laughing)
No!

DANA
Are you gonna eat?

Laurie looks down at her lunch.

LAURIE
Yeah.

She picks up her silverware and eats.

DANA
Look. What you need is a good
costume. Something with a lot of
leg, maybe.

Laurie looks doubtful.

DANA (CONT'D)
A lot of leg and a lot of chest.

LAURIE
I don't think so.

Dana finishes her beer.

DANA
You'll think of something.

Laurie chews and looks pensive.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HALLOWEEN WORLD COSTUME SHOP - TWO DAYS LATER

Laurie gets out of her car in the parking lot. She stares at the building for a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLOWEEN WORLD COSTUME SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie wanders an aisle of costumes. She picks up a French maid costume and stares at it for a beat. She puts it back on the shelf and continues down the aisle.

She mumbles to herself as she looks.

LAURIE
Something, something, something...

She stares at a grim reaper costume and tilts her head in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLOWEEN WORLD COSTUME SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie moseys by a wall of fake beards and facial hair.

LAURIE
(mumbling)
Something to stand out. . .

Laurie spots a thick black mustache and her eyes widen. She stares at the mustache, her mouth open, for a beat.

Her eyes narrow in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BREAK ROOM - FLASHBACK

Laurie stands at the counter, pouring herself a cup of coffee.

Mr. Stringfellow passes in the hallway, then quickly returns and pokes his head in the break room.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Hey, you. This area is for
employees only.

Laurie pauses mid-pour and looks confused.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
Is that my mug?

Laurie looks down at the mug in her hand. On it is a picture of her cat, Charles.

Mr. Stringfellow eyes her for a beat, then shrugs and leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLOWEEN WORLD COSTUME SHOP - PRESENT

A faint look of triumph flickers across Laurie's face. She takes a deep breath and grabs the black mustache.

CUT TO:

BEGIN MONTAGE SET TO MUSIC

INT. RESALE SUIT SHOP, DRESSING ROOM - LATER

Laurie wears a men's ill-fitting blue suit. She looks at herself in the mirror and tugs on the jacket sleeves.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUG STORE - LATER

Laurie tries on men's large reading glasses and squints at herself in the mirror. Her eyes are magnified behind the thick lenses.

CUT TO:

INT. SALVATION ARMY - LATER

Laurie tries on a pair of men's clunky black shoes. She walks around and stumbles into a rack of clothing.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER/EVENING

The whole Mr. Stringfellow costume lies on the bed: bald cap with scraps of black hair, glasses, mustache, blue suit, and black shoes. Laurie stands at the foot of the bed and stares at the costume. She chews on a fingernail.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, MEETING ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Laurie sits alone on one side of the table. Mick and Fran sit together opposite of Laurie, and Paul sits at the end of the table.

Mr. Stringfellow marches in wearing a blue suit. Laurie looks down at her lap.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Good morning, group!

Everyone mumbles a "good morning."

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
Big party tonight! Is everyone ready?

MICK
I got the booze lined up.

FRAN
I'm bringing my famous Halloween blood-sicles.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Mmm, sounds delish.

PAUL
And I finished editing the staff video.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Fantastic! I can't wait to see all
the great talents.

Laurie cringes.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
I have a Carol update!

Mr. Stringfellow waits for inquiries. No one speaks.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
She's coming to the party tonight!

LAURIE
What?

MR. STRINGFELLOW
She'll be a little groggy, but she
said she wouldn't miss it for the
world.

FRAN
Uh oh! The regular comes face-to-
face with her replacement!

Fran and Mr. Stringfellow laugh.

Laurie looks in disbelief at Fran, then at Mr. Stringfellow.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - LATER

Laurie walks back to her cubicle. Paul jogs up behind her.
They walk together.

PAUL
You have a costume for tonight?

LAURIE
Yes.

PAUL
What is it?

LAURIE
It's a surprise.

Paul smiles as if he knows.

PAUL
Librarian, right?

Laurie stops at her cubicle. She looks blankly at Paul, then enters her cubicle and leaves Paul standing alone.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, LAURIE'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Laurie sits at her desk and folds her hands in her lap. She closes her eyes for a beat. She stares at the cubicle wall and breathes heavily, nervously.

FADE TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER/EVENING

Laurie wears her costume, minus the glasses. She holds the glasses in her hand and stands in front of a full-length mirror. The bald cap is lumpy and awkward over her hair.

Laurie laughs to herself.

LAURIE
(imitating Mr.
Stringfellow)
I have fantastic news!

She smooths the black mustache with her fingers.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie stumbles into the kitchen in the clunky black shoes. The cat slinks away from her.

LAURIE
It's just me!

She grabs a huge bowl of candy off the counter and tucks it under her arm.

CUT TO:

INT. LAURIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie drives. She crinkles and twitches her nose against the tickle of the mustache.

She looks at herself in the rearview mirror. Wisps of hair poke out from beneath the bald cap. Laurie smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie gets out of her car, juggling the bowl of candy. She walks toward the building and tugs on her bald cap.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Laurie pauses at the door. She switches her real glasses with the costume reading glasses.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie walks slowly through the lobby. MUSIC and VOICES are heard off-screen.

She pauses at the entrance to the banquet hall. Inside people dance and mingle. The lights are low and strobe lights bounce around the walls and ceiling.

Laurie exhales and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Laurie sets down the bowl of candy on the long snack table. She swallows hard and looks around the room.

Paul approaches eating a red popsicle. He is dressed as a cowboy.

PAUL

Laurie!

Laurie nods nervously.

Paul looks her up and down. He peers at her face.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You're Dr. Phil!

LAURIE
What?

PAUL
Aren't you?

LAURIE
No--

Mr. Stringfellow approaches the snack table. He wears a pirate costume.

Laurie stiffens in anticipation. Her eyes widen and she breathes heavily.

MR. STRINGFELLOW
Dr. Phil! Great costume.

He claps Laurie on the back.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
I'm a pirate.

He grabs a handful of chips and returns to the dance floor.

Laurie watches him in shock.

PAUL
You should try one of Fran's blood-sicles. They taste like maraschino cherries.

Laurie stares at Paul with her mouth open.

A new song plays.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I love this song!

Paul runs to the dance floor, leaving Laurie awe-struck.

Laurie watches the dance floor. Mick and Fran dance together. Mick is dressed as an ancient Greek god in a white toga and brown sandals. Fran is dressed as Miss America in a swim suit, high heels, sash, and crown.

Laurie looks crushed.

Carol enters the banquet hall in a wheelchair. She is groggy and has a brace around her neck. She wears a red clown nose and disheveled, curly blond wig.

Mr. Stringfellow and Paul hurry over to her.

MR. STRINGFELLOW

Carol! How are you?

CAROL

I'm fine! A little hazy 'cause I came straight from the hospital, but. . .

(beat)

I made Jell-o jigglers!

She holds up a plate covered in saran wrap. Paul takes it from her.

PAUL

Great clown costume.

Carol smiles, her eyes half closed.

Paul takes the plate of Jell-o to the snack table. Carol follows in her wheelchair.

LAURIE

Hi, Carol.

Carol looks up at Laurie.

CAROL

Who are you supposed to be? Dennis Franz?

Laurie clenches her jaw and speaks through her teeth.

LAURIE

No. Dennis Franz is fat.

CAROL

Oh.

The music stops and Mr. Stringfellow speaks into a microphone at the front of the room.

MR. STRINGFELLOW

Attention. Attention, everyone. Now that Carol's here, we can watch the staff video.

Laurie drops her head.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (CONT'D)
Paul, how about settin' it up for
us?

Paul gives Mr. Stringfellow a thumbs up and disappears.

The lights dim even more and a screen drops down in the front
of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION - STAFF VIDEO

Mr. Stringfellow sits at his desk with his hands folded in
front of him.

MR. STRINGFELLOW (V.O.)
Welcome to our staff video. I'd
like to dedicate this to Carol who
recently fell down the stairs and
broke her neck. Now let's see some
office talent.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Stringfellow watches himself and smiles proudly.

Carol places her hands over her heart. She is touched.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

On the screen Fran does a belly dance. The crowd applauds
and whistles.

Next on the video an employee does backflips down the hall.
The crowd applauds and cheers.

Then Laurie chugs her Diet Coke. The crowd is silent, then
several people laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Laurie watches the video with a horrified look on her face.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Next on the video an employee plays a beautiful guitar piece. The crowd applauds.

CUT TO:

INT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Laurie watches the video with clenched teeth. She looks around the room, then grabs her bowl of candy and marches out of the banquet hall.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATEWIDE CREDIT UNION, PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Laurie bursts through the doors. She tears the reading glasses off her face and tosses them into the bowl of candy.

She sits down on the top step and cradles her head in her hands. She sits like this for a beat.

Dana walks up with her car keys jingling in her hand.

Laurie looks up at her, surprised.

LAURIE

Dana.

DANA

Stringfellow?

Laurie looks blankly at her for half a beat, then grins broadly. She nods.

LAURIE

Yes.

Dana stands over Laurie. She holds out her hands.

DANA

Come on. Up.

Laurie reaches out her hands and Dana pulls her to her feet.

DANA (CONT'D)

Candy!

She picks up the candy bowl and unwraps a piece of chocolate.

They walk toward the cars in the parking lot.

DANA (CONT'D)

So you wanna get a beer?

LAURIE

Yes!

DANA

Only if you wear the mustache.
We'll tell Larry you're my date.
Or my brother. Or both.

Laurie laughs. She reaches into the candy bowl in Dana's arm and pulls out the reading glasses. She chucks them across the parking lot and they land with a scratchy CLINK.

DANA (CONT'D)

Good arm.

LAURIE

Thanks.

Dana and Laurie get into Dana's car.

FADE OUT:

THE END.