

ACTING OUT

"Mamageddon"

Written by

Deirdre Mendoza

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Watchdog Pictures
4021 Holly Knoll Dr.
LA CA 90027

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FADE IN:

INT. SET OF TV SHOW "PREEMIES" - MORNING

We hear the anxious sound of low-pitched BLEEPING...

A white haze fills the screen. We're in an antiseptic hospital ward, where DR. BUNGMAN, 30's, intense, is framed against a row of incubators and life support ventilators.

DR. BUNGMAN

Nurse, adjust the temperature in here. What are you trying to do, cook the newborns?!

A servile young NURSE runs to the thermostat.

NURSE

But, Dr. Liz said we should --

DR. BUNGMAN

Oh, well, if Dr. Liz said...

DANA KINGSLEY, still glamorous, B-list, mid-40s, wearing a lab coat, floats onto set, props herself against a monitor.

DANA

No one's more concerned about our ponies...preemies...shit!

Preemies Director, TICK MADDEN, gym sculpted, but not much brainpower under the baseball cap, calls out.

TICK

Gahhh. Let's go again. Start with Dana entering. Dana?

Dana takes a few hesitant steps.

Dana's POV -- the room is gently SPINNING.

She steadies herself against the side of an incubator. Leans over it -- and VOMITS into it. Tick looks on in disbelief.

TICK

CUT! Dana, what the fu -- ?

INT. DANA'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door is ajar, revealing TWO, make up PEOPLE attempting to clean Dana up. She bats them away. Tick knocks and enters.

TICK

Could you give us a minute?

Tick checks his breath, discreetly pops a mint, leans in.

TICK

I've really tried to understand why you suffer, and why I can't fix it.

DANA

I know.

TICK

I've told you how dynamic and talented you are. When that didn't work, I scolded you, humiliated you, begged, and pleaded with you.

DANA

You did.

TICK

And, one time, I even shared at an Al-anon meeting. I'm out of tricks, Dana. Game over.

Dana looks away, stung.

TICK

I'm calling your agent.

DANA

Go ahead, call Bobby.

And then.

DANA (CONT'D)

What? You're firing me?

Tick nods, solemnly. Here it comes.

DANA (CONT'D)

Fuck you, Tick! You can't fire me. You'd better un-fire me right now! You know what, you're a shitting director!...shittery...yeah.

Tick walks out. Hair people follow. They've been here before. A naughty smile spreads across Dana's face, as she pours vodka into a baby bottle -- and drinks in peace.

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - MID MORNING

A Lincoln Towncar drives off the lot with DANA slumped in the backseat, still in costume, including her stethoscope.

EXT. DANA'S LAUREL CANYON HOUSE - DAY

MITCH, 30's, a beer-bellied transpo driver, opens the door for Dana, but she can't find her way out of the car.

INT. DANA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Mitch turns on the light, revealing floor-to-ceiling windows in a 1920's Spanish, killer views of the Canyon.

DANA
You're so cool, Mike.

MITCH
(sotto)
Mitch...

INT. DANA'S LIVING ROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Dana and Mitch go at it on the floor, Dana's legs over Mitch's shoulders, a stethoscope dangles from Mitch's neck.

CUT TO:

Dana snores loudly, one butt-cheek visible. A CAT, is parked on her back, licking himself vigorously.

CUT TO:

Cellphone RINGS and RINGS. Dana fumbles, finally answers.

DANA
Yeah..? Hi, Honey. Right,
Tuesday...Yes, I know. I know. I'm
coming...Okay, be there soon.

Dana makes a call.

DANA (CONT'D)
Bernice? Can you get Quinn from
school?. He's been waiting around
for someone to --

INTERCUT PHONE:

BIG PRODUCER'S HOUSE

BERNICE BAMFORD, 22, cherubic, crackerjack assistant.

Bernice
Dana? Are you okay?

DANA
Quinn needs a pick-up. Hello?

BERNICE

Uh, you fired me again two weeks ago. I had to get another job.

DANA

So, you can't help me out?

BERNICE

No, I...I'm sorry.

DANA

That's great, Bernice. Just great.

Dana tosses the phone. The cat jumps up.

INT. BATHROOM DANA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dana splashes water on her face. Pats dry, dabs some lipstick. In the mirror, she looks ROUGH.

DANA

Shit...

Dana pops a little pink pill, fluffs her hair.

DANA'S DRIVEWAY - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Dana gets into the backseat - for a beat - before realizing that she's the driver. She moves to the front, starts up the Mercedes, and backs out VERY SLOWLY.

EXT. VENTURA BLVD - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dana's Mercedes traveling slower than the other cars.

EXT. LAUREL CANYON IN STUDIO CITY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dana puts her blinker on, makes an epic turn into:

EXT. DOVER ACADEMY CARPOOL LANE

A parade of shiny new LUXURY CARS inches along. A Lexus-driving, Puffy-Lipped mom tries cutting in front of Dana.

PUFFY LIPS

Hello - you're in the wrong lane!!

Dana honks the horn.

DANA

Out of my way!!

Puffy Lips maneuvers her Lexus around a cone. Dana drives around the GUARD BOOTH, picking off three ORANGE CONES.

GUARD

Hey!! Ma'am...Ma'am!!!

As Puffy Lips cuts into the line ahead of Dana, Dana accidentally MOBS IT, charging full force into the back of a BEAMER -- BAM!! -- The Beamer slams into the Lexus -- and we're in a three-car PILE UP. For a moment, all is STILL.

STUDENTS trickle out. SECURITY GUARD into a walkie-talkie.

GUARD (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Holy shit! We need back-up. Looks like some kind of a Mamageddon!!!

Dana, limps a few feet, reaches in her mouth -- pulls out A back tooth. Chaos - as STAFFERS run toward the collision.

EXT. - GELLMAN ARTS BUILDING

QUINN KINGSLEY PUTTER, 12, clever, kind-hearted, stands on the sidelines with his buddy, FINLEY, 12, privileged.

Dana looks up, waves at Quinn.

FINLEY

Dude, is that your mom?

QUINN

(shrugs, embarrassed)

Yeah.

Puffy Lips grabs Dana's shoulder. Dana retaliates with an upper cut - right in the kisser.

PUFFY LIPS

Ahhhh. My nose!

DANA

Now it'll match your lips!

Quinn's POV -- cringing as his mom battles another mom.

The sound of trouble -- SIRENS arriving on campus as we:

FADE OUT.

OPENING TITLES

ON THE VERGE

EXT. DANA'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leaves cover the surface of the pool. Broken lawn chairs. Porch light cracked. The Mercedes needs a wash.

INT. DANA'S LIVING ROOM

Dana, supine, stares up at the ceiling from the sofa, eating a bag of chips. Clothes spill out of a suitcase. A cigarette burns in the ashtray. The zen-like *flutter* of a wind chime quiets Dana's busy mind.

She takes in the moment - just breathe - - until the door BUZZES, announcing a delivery.

DOORWAY ENTRANCE

A punk rock UPS WOMAN hands over a package.

UPS WOMAN

I need your autograph.

Dana signs for an official package, manages a smile.

UPS WOMAN (CONT'D)

Love your work.

DANA

Thanks.

Dana tears open the package, reads the documents from the mortgage company.

DANA (CONT'D)

Oh, shit...

UPS WOMAN

Hope it's not like divorce papers.

DANA

(mumbles)

Worse.

Dana closes the door, lies down. Behind a sofa pillow, she finds Quinn's lonely basketball sock. She rests it across her forehead - and sobs.

INT. BHUDDIST CENTER - DAY

Spiritual Seekers sit cross-legged, deep in meditation. Dana sits near the exit row with her eyes scrunched closed. Her phone flashes. She opens one eye to see I.D: BOBBY BENASIO.

EXT. BUDDHIST CENTER LOS FELIZ STREET - MOMENTS LATER

DANA

No, no, no, I'm glad you called. I was just obsessing about -- I don't know -- dying in my sleep. Okay, okay. Sci-fi? Like what, like shape-shifters? A female what? They're stationed on submarines. From a parasite invasion? Wow. That could be...interesting, I guess. No, no, I do want to work. Ok. Thanks.

Dana hangs up, lights a cigarette, mumbles to herself.

DANA (CONT'D)

Parasites...

She turns and exhales smoke - into the zen face of a MONK.

EXT. - POOL AREA/CHLOE & BEPPE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A pampered FRENCH BULLDOG sunbathes to a jazzy riff.

INT. - CHLOE & BEPPE'S HOUSE

From the pages of Dwell magazine.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Dana helps her sister, CHLOE KINGSLEY-VINELLI, unload the dishes. Chloe is a life coach, 40, fastidious, sheltered.

CHLOE

That's what I tell my clients -- don't stop! Just don't stop. When I'm training for the marathon, I feel invincible. Like I can wrestle a raccoon or something.

DANA

You - and a raccoon - really?

CHLOE

It's a metaphor. But maybe like, you know, a Guinea Pig or something. Anyway, do you still want to do that yoga retreat on the beach in Tulum? Beppe has miles.

DANA

Mexican yoga? Now?

CHLOE
Well, I didn't mean right now.
And then.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

DANA
I blew smoke in a Monk's face!!!

CHLOE
What? Why?

DANA
I need a job! Bobby's got his
feelers out but everything's just
falling apart. And that fucking
video...

CHLOE
(re the dishes)
Those go behind the blue ones.

Chloe climbs a stepladder to put away some shiny pots.

DANA
I forgot you put the plates in
alphabetical order.

CHLOE
I like things to be a certain way.
Is that a crime?

DANA
Bobby's pretty sure I'll get this
new sci-fi thing.

CHLOE
We don't watch sci-fi. Except for
the zombies. I think I had a weird
sexual dream about one of them.
Yeah, I'm pretty sure I did.

DANA
I just need a little help to get
through the next month or so.

CHLOE
What do you mean?

Dana tries to make it land softly.

DANA
Just until things pick up.

Chloe grabs a plate out of Dana's hand, dries it.

CHLOE

Don't ask mom. Nelson says she's on couch-lock, never leaves the house.

DANA

Well, yeah. What's so great about leaving the house?

CHLOE

You should check on her.

DANA

I know I should, but I'm too busy self-destructing.

CHLOE

Well, what about Dad?

DANA

What about him?

Chloe moves a plate that Dana had put away.

CHLOE

He's still so proud of you. We haven't told him about any of this.

DANA

Dad lives on the other side of the world -- in a yurt.

CHLOE

It's an intentional community. And he can still be proud of you.

DANA

I'm losing the house, Chloe. I got a threatening letter in the mail.

CHLOE

You need to flip the script. I tell my clients to imagine what they want their lives to look like and then --

DANA

I'm not your client. And I'm this close to living in my car.

CHLOE

What? Ughh! You can't live in an old car?!

DANA
It's called eviction.

CHLOE
Okay.

Chloe nods.

DANA
Okay? Okay, what?

Chloe shrugs.

DANA (CONT'D)
You haven't heard me since you were
12, -- and mom was in rehab in
orange County -- and I had to make
Hamburger Helper and tell you that
dad was humping the neighbor.

Chloe stops organizing and looks up, defensive.

CHLOE
I'm the one who found her mesh
bikini in the pool house, so.

Seeing she's upset Chloe, Dana softens.

DANA
Sorry. I'm really sorry.

And then. Chloe goes to her desk drawer.

CHLOE
How much do you need?

DANA
Whatever you can do. Five or six?

Chloe sighs as she writes a check, hands it over.
Dana hugs her. Chloe pulls back, confronts her.

CHLOE
We don't have to worry about where
the money's going, right?

OFF DANA -- pinned.

INT. JEREMY'S LOFT DOWNTOWN - EARLY EVENING

CLOSE ON -- EXOTIC FISH swimming in a sad little tank.

Pull back to reveal -- a white-walled artist's loft.
Oversized couches, piles of books, a lonely potter's wheel.

KIKO, 26, self-righteous, enterprising, noticeably topless underneath her apron, greets Dana at the door.

KIKO
(fake)
Dana..!
DANA
(fake)
Kiko!

Dana's POV -- Kiko's lively, self-supported boobs.

DANA (CONT'D)
I see that you're...out and about.

KIKO
Day 27 -- just powering through.
It's the Top Shelf Challenge -
- in solidarity with the
tribeswomen of Namibia. Plus, who
needs a bra?

DANA
Is my son around?

KIKO
Ya, I just made his favorite
cupcakes - Fudgy and Fabulous. Try
one! They're ridiculous.

DANA
How 'bout a dirty martini?

KIKO
Wait, I'm confused. Aren't you not
supposed to drink stuff like that?

DANA
I'll bet it's very confusing, Kiko.

KIKO
Jer-emmmmy? Your...Dana's here.

Jeremy Putter III, Artful Dodger handsome, always slightly depressed, shows up. Kiko bounces - back to work.

JEREMY
Hey, D! Did you bring her?

Dana hands over a SCULPTURE that doubles for a glazed VAGINA.
Jeremy cradles the sculpture in his arms.

JEREMY

Rhododendron Frigidis!! God, I've missed you.

He pecks the sculpture.

JEREMY

Wow. You know, she's still really powerful. Yet, enigmatic.

DANA

Most vaginas are.

JEREMY

C'mon, stop. It's a botanical.

Holding a deck of cards, Quinn darts out of his room.

QUINN

...Mom!!

They hug. Quinn pulls away.

DANA

How's everything going, Bug?

QUINN

Good, except for one of the fish died. A silver-spine neon tetra.

DANA

Oh...sad face.

QUINN

It's okay. He wasn't that gregarious - vocab word. How come you're here?

DANA

I miss you. I miss hearing about your day.

QUINN

Oh. I miss you too, mom. But I'm kind of watching "Suits."

Dana gives Quinn a hug. He wriggles away.

DANA

Okay. We'll do noodles. Promise.

QUINN

(speeding away)
Noodles, yes!

DANA

Love you!
(to Jeremy)
Is he okay?

Jeremy is distracted by the sculpture.

JEREMY

Yeah. He's...twelve.

DANA

His mom's not allowed to drive, the
girl's in the kitchen all day with
her dancing tah-tah's. It's a lot.

JEREMY

(sotto)
C'mon, stop calling her 'the girl.'
She thinks you don't like her.

DANA

I don't.

JEREMY

Okay, well, Kiko's killin' it with
the erotic cupcakes. And I've been
in the studio trying to slay this
beast. My friggin' potter's block!!

In b.g.,-- soft focus Kiko, wearing oversized oven mitts,
removes trays of colorful cupcakes. She calls out.

KIKO (O.S.)

Bae? Can you guys taste this and
tell me if there's too much nutmeg?

DANA

Bae? You're bae now? I didn't know
you were officially, you know,
'shacked up.'

JEREMY

I told you I was doing...this.

And then.

DANA

I want to take Quinn out to dinner.

Jeremy sighs, shakes his head. That wasn't the arrangement.

JEREMY

Uh, we'll talk, okay?

DANA
He needs his mother.

PRE-LAP - Sounds of chaos from the school beating.

PUFFY LIPS (O.S.)
Ahhh! My nose...!

INSERT - "Mamageddon!" video of Dana pounding Puffy Lips.

INT. BOBBY BENASIO'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Pull back to reveal two Amazonian, exotic, gender fluid ASSISTANTS pouring tea for Dana and BOBBY BENASIO. Bobby is late 50s, thick mustache, a zen-master, cunning, formidable.

DANA
Y'see - she threw the first punch!

MODEL ASSISTANT
Appear weak when you are strong.

EXOTIC ASSISTANT
And strong when you are weak.

DANA
Who are these two?

BOBBY
My new assistants - One's a black belt. The other one walks for YSL.

Bobby nods to the assistants. They bow and leave.

BOBBY
Let's cut to the chase. How's the sobriety going?

DANA
It's wonderful. You should try it.

BOBBY
Probably should. Y'doin' the steps?

DANA
Every day I wake up -- not a cloud, in the sky, warm sun -- and I make my grateful list, like my sponsor says. I butter my toast with flaxseed oil. And then, every cell in my body cries out for a nice vodka tonic -- without the tonic.

BOBBY

Okay, okay, well don't do what you want to do - do what they tell you.

DANA

I was never good at following rules - that was Chloe.

Bobby motions for her to sit on the sofa next to him.

BOBBY

(paternal)

I know you didn't really want to do Preemies. You wanted to do some off-off Broadway play in New York. But I pushed you to take it and make some real money.

DANA

You're right.

BOBBY

I could see Jeremy wasn't doing much with the pottery, and you wanted to send Quinn to that fancy school. Dr. Liz came along at the right time. So, here we are.

DANA

I never thought I'd miss her.

And then.

DANA (CONT'D)

Do you think Tick would consider..?

Bobby shakes his head.

BOBBY

Forget it.

DANA

Okay, well, what about the sci-fi, with the submarine commander?

BOBBY

I sent them the tape.

DANA

And..?

Bobby delivers bad news confidently.

BOBBY

They may want you to read.

DANA

They want me to read? For the part
of a submarine driver?

Bobby takes her hand.

BOBBY

Just a formality. And she's a quiet
hero. Could be a good stretch for
you. Use different muscles.

DANA

Look, I wasn't always so happy on
Preemies. I know I complained --

BOBBY

A lot.

DANA

But...shit, Bobby.

BOBBY

We're going to stay cool 'til this
puta de madre video goes away -
and then you've got to win this, --
win it for your boy.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

An UBER TAXI pulls up to a church. Dana gets out and stares
at a collection of friendly inked and bearded AA PEOPLE
milling about, smoking, giving each other warm hugs. Dana
stands apart from the group, lights up a cigarette.

INT. MEETING ROOM - LATER

Dana sits in the back, listening to the leader, DENNIS
WIGGINS, a Shakespearean-trained actor, 40's, cropped afro,
earnest. As he talks, we see that Dana recognizes him.

DENNIS (O.S.)

...some days you're in a dark cave
and you think, I'm always going to
be unhappy...And you see people
enjoying their lives, and you think
how can I get what you have?

CLIVE CHUA, 30's, tats, construction worker's build, gives
Dana a smirk, like we're too good for this.

DENNIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
...For today, I've come to believe
that by letting go of self-will,
saying I can't do it, something
else can, I've found
serenity...thank you.

The room applauds. Hugs for Dennis.

EXT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

Dennis spots Dana, walks over.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
(discreetly)
Dana, I didn't know...Okay, I knew.

DANA
Dennis! - oh my God - longtime.
They hug.

DENNIS
You look the same. Amazing.

DANA
Oh, c'mon.

DENNIS
This is where I hang out - with a
bunch of other drunks - for the
past 16 years.

DANA
Wow. That's...You still teaching?

DENNIS
Still at Westlake College.
Apparently, if you hang around long
enough, they promote you. They made
me chair of the drama department.

DANA
Good for you.
And then.

DANA (CONT'D)
I don't know what I'm doing here. I
mean, it's court ordered, so.

Dennis smiles, remembers the denial.

DENNIS
Mm-hmn. Do you have a sponsor?

She knows she should.

DANA

I've had a few. You know how it is,
people are busy.

Dennis nods.

DENNIS

I've thought about you. I'd love to
catch up.

DANA

Sure, yeah.

DENNIS

Well, why don't you come by the
campus. We'll have the lunch
special - you can meet some of the
folks in the department. It's a
real theatre crowd.

DANA

You said it's Community College?

DENNIS

How about next week?

DANA

Uh, so soon?

DENNIS

It's a date!

PRE-LAP - young voices singing a religious hymn.

INT. DOVER SCHOOL CHAPEL AUDITORIUM - DAY

CHAPLAIN COLLAZO, 30s, stands in the center, leading.
He's a modern man of the cloth, strong, charismatic.

STUDENTS are singing out. Soft-faced Quinn is swept up, his
round, pink cheeks puffing in and out, as he sings.

GELLMAN, 12 and droll, and Finley, annoy Quinn by
exaggerating and mouthing the prayer. Quinn elbows Gellman to
straighten up. Gellman elbows back.

GELLMAN

Dude, relax. What's your problem?

QUINN

C'mon. Quit it. Be serious.

GELLMAN

Since when do you care?

QUINN
I don't, but...

FINLEY
Let Gellman do what he wants.

GELLMAN
Yeah, I'm Jewish, anyway.

QUINN
(to Gellman)
That's no excuse.

GELLMAN
What?

Quinn goes back to singing. Finley mocks them both. With his finger to his temple, Finley makes the *Quinn's crazy sign*.

QUINN
...We find our way in the light of
the Lord...

The swell of the chorus drowns the boys out, as we pull back to an auditorium of young people singing harmoniously.

INT. JEREMY'S LOFT DOWNTOWN - EVENING

Jeremy sits at his potter's wheel, stares at a lump of clay.

INSERT - SFX - clay, taunting him like an enemy combatant.

Jeremy gets up, finds his vaporizer, takes a hit.

JEREMY
One of us is going down.

KIKO (O.S.)
Baeee?

Jeremy exhales, puts the vape on a shelf, sits back down at his wheel. Kiko walks in, dressed in a T-shirt that reads: KIKO'S LOVE BITES. She balances boxes of cupcakes.
You look good. What's different?

KIKO (CONT'D)
I'm fully dressed?

Jeremy pulls her in for a kiss, she sniffs at him instead.

KIKO (CONT'D)
Really, bae?

Kiko waves an imaginary stick.

KIKO (CONT'D)

Truth stick - I'm disappointed. You were going to get up early and listen to the motivational tapes.

JEREMY

I did. I did all that. For some reason the Sour Diesel gets me closer to my muse.

Kiko sighs.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

But I'm still, you know, far away.

KIKO

That's too bad, because I could've used help with the booty cakes.

Jeremy's let her down again.

JEREMY

You don't want me near the booties. I still have like a sinus thing. Does my nose look swollen?

KIKO

(mumbles)

You're always sick.

JEREMY

Actually, I haven't been sick since your mom visited and I got that clumpy rash on the back of my...

KIKO

While the truth stick's out, do you mind telling me what Dana was doing here the other day?

JEREMY

Oh, she was returning *Frigidis*. And she wanted to see Quinn.

KIKO

It'd be great if we knew when she was coming by.

JEREMY

Yeah. No, I know.

Kiko stands between Jeremy and his wheel.

KIKO

Is she on parole?

JEREMY

I guess she's not not on parole.

KIKO

I'm confused. Have you seen this..?

INSERT - VIDEO ON KIKO'S PHONE

"Mamageddon" - Dana pounding Puffy Lips at the school.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...Kingsley, who plays the wholesome Dr. Liz, had a beef with another mom in the pick-up line of The Dover School in what some are calling "Mamageddon"...

INT. CHAPLAIN COLLAZO'S OFFICE - MORNING

Walls feature books, plaques honoring big donors.
Chaplain Collazo welcomes Quinn, who is coming from Chapel.

CHAPLAIN

Mr. Putter, how can I help you?

Quinn looks down, nervously.

QUINN

Well, it's hard to say...

CHAPLAIN

Take your time.

QUINN

My friends don't understand. They think it's all a joke or something. But it's not.

CHAPLAIN

You're having concerning thoughts.

Quinn nods.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

That's very natural at your age.
Nothing to be ashamed of.

Quinn brightens. Chaplain offers Quinn a seat.

CHAPLAIN (CONT'D)

You have a special friend. She's in your class?

Quinn shakes his head, looks down.

QUINN

No, nothing like that, Chaplain.

Chaplain Collazo smiles sympathetically.

CHAPLAIN

I'm listening.

QUINN

Well, it's not really about a girl.

INT. MARINE AGE CASTING OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Three, Dana Look-Alikes are seated on couches, reading sides. They glare at each another. Dana signs in, sits apart. A casting assistant, 20s, all business, comes out to get her.

CASTING CHICK

Dana Kingsley?

Ears perk up. What's Dana Kingsley doing here? Whispers. Dana glares back at her look-alikes. She's in it to win it.

DANA LOOK-ALIKE # 1

See those cheekbones? - implants.

DANA LOOK ALIKE # 2

I hear she's a total sex addict.

DANA LOOK-ALIKE # 3

So?

INT. MARINE AGE CASTING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A Napoleonic male actor reads the part of CAPTAIN BECKER. The Casting Assistant turns to Dana.

CASTING ASSISTANT

Let's take it from 'eco-plankton.'

CAPTAIN BECKER

The ecto-plankton are forming a barrier -- you've got to steer around them!!!

Dana nods and pretends to steer the sub.

CAPTAIN BECKER (CONT'D)

Turn! 1.5 degrees! Keep turning!!

Dana exaggerates a difficult turn, gives it all she's got.

CAPTAIN BECKER (CONT'D)
Harder!! Harder!! Pitch the nose
down! Down...down! Not up!

Dana stops steering, groans.

DANA
(to Casting Assistant)
Ahm, I'm sorry - maybe I missed it -
but I don't seem to have any actual
lines in this scene...

CASTING ASSISTANT
Totally - it's all in your eyes.
(then, sotto)
You see a shimmering seawall up
ahead. It's on you to save the
entire crew. Okay?

Dana commits to saving the crew. Becker's still in character.

CAPTAIN BECKER
They're using their pleopods for
diurnal migration!!

Captain Becker locks eyes with Dana. It's tense.

DANA
You know what? I need a minute...

INT. PHO HOUSE NOODLE - EVENING

A noodle joint. Noisy, not as clean as you'd like it to be.
Dana sits opposite Quinn in a booth, looking over the menu.
Quinn is playing Words With Friends on his phone.

DANA
Babe, I need you to put that away.

QUINN
I'm almost done.

DANA
Now.

He puts the phone next to him, continues looking at it.

QUINN
You want to have a scintillating
conversation. Vocab word.

DANA

Actually, I'm a little down because I read with a scene hog for the part of a mute submarine driver.

Quinn looks up from his phone.

QUINN

Sweet. Do you believe in a divine spirit?

DANA

A divine...Uh, maybe.

QUINN

Mom - do you or don't you?

DANA

Well, I guess I'm not sure.

QUINN

Finley and Gellman think I'm weird because lately I pray a lot.

DANA

That's not weird, honey. What do you pray for?

QUINN

I don't know. It's personal.

Dana nods. She's concerned about him.

DANA

Oh, Bug, I know this hasn't been easy on you, living at Dad's with the new girl and all those...cupcakes.

Quinn's about to crumble.

QUINN

It's whatever.

Quinn sneaks a peek at his phone.

DANA

It's a lot. I'm trying to fix it.

QUINN

(reciting)

I know - you have a substance
abuse problem and you go to
meetings all the time. And you
don't hate dad.

DANA

No, no. Dad is...Dad. But you know
how much I love you, right?

With one finger, Quinn adds a word to the game. The SERVER
walks over.

SERVER

Card was declined. We are sorry.

DANA

Declined? Oh, shit, crap. Really?

Heads nod. Trying to save Dana from humiliation, Quinn
reaches for his wallet, takes out a few dollars.

DANA (CONT'D)

Quinn, put your money away.

The MANAGER walks over to the table.

MANAGER

No charge, Dr. Liz on Preemies!
(chuckles)
Everybody starts Out Small!

A gaggle of SERVERS surround the table. They all want a
selfie with the former Dr. Liz and Quinn.

WESTLAKE COLLEGE EXTERIOR - MID AFTERNOON

Rap music thumps in the b.g.

DANA'S POV -- Life on another planet.

Hacienda-style buildings, grassy patches where students kick
back. Snippets of Spanglish, Armenian... JASON, 23, a Humvee-
shaped Iraqi war vet, approaches Dana with a slip of paper.

JASON

Excuse me, ma'am, could you..?

Dana puts on her dark glasses.

DANA

So sorry - no autographs today. I
I'm just here for a meeting.

JASON
Ma'am? I'm looking for where the
Tech Center's at?

Dana deflates.

DANA
Oh. It's probably here somewhere.

JASON nods - and flees. Dana lights a cigarette.

EXT. COLLEGE FACULTY DINING - TEN MINUTES LATER

Dennis and Dana walk toward Dennis' colleagues.

DENNIS
...seriously, they don't usually
have the Tilapia tacos on Fridays.
I kind of let it slip you were
coming and -- voila!

BAMBI CARMICHAEL, 40s, queen bee, competitive, and NIC
FEBRERO, mid-30s, denim cowboy vibe, are hanging signs:
"HAIR" Comes to Westlake." Bambi waves a staple gun.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
There you are! Dana, this is Bambi
Carmichael, our assistant chair.

DANA
Hey, Bambi.

BAMBI
Welcome to Westlake. You're an
inspiration, especially Season Two.

DANA
Oh, thank you.

BAMBI
I did a recurring on "Blossom," so
I get it.

DANA
I'll bet.

BAMBI
It must be hard to leave the biz
after so many years.

DANA
Leave the...I'm sorry?

BAMBI

Oh, I thought Dennis said you might be thinking about teaching a class or two this fall.

Dana looks at Dennis, irked.

DANA

Teaching? Here? Oh, no, no. no. Just checkin' out the drama scene.

DENNIS

(to Bambi)

Dana and I go way back. You've heard about my Othello at UCLA...

BAMBI

Have we ever.

DENNIS

Well, Dana was my Desdemona.

And then.

DANA

Theatre is my real love. And what you people do here is...It's...I mean, it's hard to describe.

DENNIS

Bambi - tell her about "Hair."

BAMBI

It's going to be off the chain. Kabuki meets Woodstock...

NIC

...meets the voices of a new generation.

DANA

Wow.

BAMBI

We're skipping the big nude scene 'cause why get in a competition with the porn industry?

Nic dives in, shakes his head.

NIC

Uh-uh. You don't want to go there.

DANA

And you are..?

Nic takes off his hat.

NIC

Nic Febrero. I teach movement.

DENNIS

I'm sorry. Nicky came out here last fall from -- Wyoming?

NIC

Flipper Creek, North Dakota. Home of the Prarie Dog.

And then.

NIC (CONT'D)

Honor to meet you, Miss Kingsley. I just eat up the 'Preemies.' Love those little goobers.

DANA

Thank you, but you probably heard Dr. Liz took a leave of absence.

Bambi nods knowingly. She smells a rival.

NIC

(to Dana, sotto)

I just want to say, off-camera you look very...realistic.

Nick touches Dana's shoulder.

DENNIS

(professional tone)

Nic's a great fit - for the drama department.

Dennis winks at Nic. Nic flashes his twinkling white teeth.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

Well, we're going to mosey over to the theatre.

Dana looks at her phone.

DANA

Oh, I really can't. I've got a thing - and then this other thing.

Dennis flags down a golf cart.

DENNIS

C'mon, D!

INT. JEREMY'S LOFT DOWNTOWN - LATE AFTERNOON

Jeremy is on the sofa, staring at the TV, buzzed. Kiko's on the computer, crunching numbers. Her bare back is to us.

KIKO
Something's not adding up here,
Bae. Did we really spend \$147.33 on
organic buttercream?

JEREMY
(not listening)
Sounds about right.

KIKO
Could you look in my bag -- it's in
the bedroom -- and see if you find
any extra receipts?

JEREMY
Just about to watch my show.

Kiko shoots him a disapproving look.

KIKO
C'mon, Bae.

She claps her hands.

JEREMY
Bahhhh.

Jeremy gets up, passes Quinn's empty room. Looks back at a big book on Quinn's bed.

INT. QUINN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sports trophies. Posters of Kanye, Blake Griffin, Miley.
Jeremy picks up the book.

CLOSE ON - a copy of the Holy Bible

EXT. WESTLAKE CAMPUS GOLF CART TRAVELING - LATER

Dennis and Dana are traveling in style. The DRIVER is a know-it-all science student, 20, harried.

DENNIS
...and there you were, passed
out...cigarette in your hand, about
to burn down the house...

DANA

Oh, that sounds familiar -- Dana passed out or belligerent. I've heard from a few shrinks that without parents who actually parent you, you're kind of screwed.

DENNIS

I remember your mom was really pretty - but kind of checked out.

DANA

She never really checked back in. Lives in Pasadena with a sweet, passive-aggressive chiropractor.

The Driver grumbles.

DRIVER

Firefighters training on the lower quad...gotta take a detour...

DANA

Do you ever hear from Noah?

DENNIS

The hottest EMT in New Haven. God, I was crazy about him. For a while, I got cards at Christmas, but I never wrote back. One day I should thank him for getting me sober.

DANA

Really, why's that?

DENNIS

In my relentless effort to get over him, I hit bottom. Woke up in bed with some skinny white security guard -- without my wallet or my keys -- I got my ass to a meeting.

They drive around a big gathering of nurses in uniforms.

DRIVER

(mutters to himself)

Now I'll have to circumvent the nursing school luncheon.

DANA

They have nurses too?

Dennis nods. They arrive at the front entrance of the Main Stage Theatre.

DENNIS

Thanks - wait 'til you see this.

Dana checks her phone, sees - BOBBY BENASIO.

DANA

Oh - It's Bobby. I'll try to meet you inside.

INT. JEREMY'S LOFT /KITCHEN - SAME

Kiko adds pink, nipple-shaped "dots" to rows of cupcakes. She calls out to Jeremy.

KIKO

Bae? I think this is finally the right color pink!

She does a little victory dance.

INT. JEREMY'S LOFT /CERAMICS STUDIO - SAME TIME

Jeremy's muse has left the building. Seeing that Kiko is occupied, he hits the vape. He sits at the wheel with his hands on the mound of clay. He feels empty - and buzzed.

CLOSE ON - The palette spinning around and around, like the earth itself.

INT. BOBBY BENASIO'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Bobby, in a game with his Model Assistant, moves a rook.

MODEL ASSISTANT

(slight Brazilian accent)

This is check...

Bobby exhales silently, doesn't flinch. The phone rings.

INTERCUT - WESTLAKE PARKING LOT/BOBBY'S OFFICE

Bobby puts Dana on speaker.

BOBBY

Where are you?

Dana looks around. In the b.g. a creeky professor takes off.

DANA

Nowhere.

BOBBY

We heard back from "Marine Age."

DANA
Oh, that's great. What's up?

BOBBY
They're not ready.

DANA
What do you mean? For what?

BOBBY
For Dana Kingsley. Not today. But,
don't worry, they will be.

DANA
(getting loud)
This is bullshit. I'd like to shove
a submarine - up their ass. And
that creepy guy stepped all over my
lines -- not that I had any.

BOBBY
I'm sorry.
And then.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
You okay?

Dana lights a cigarette. A student gives her a dirty look.

DANA
Am I okay? Nope. Not at all.

Dana's anger swells. She drives off.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE QUINN'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Jeremy's POV -- Quinn messaging on his i-pad with a GIRL.
Jeremy looks relieved.

EXT. EL CANTINO RISTORANTE - TEN MINUTES LATER

A dive bar with pool tables and a heavy ranchero beat. Dana
eyes the tequila. A weathered BARTENDER comes over.

BARTENDER
What can I get you, pretty lady?
It is happy hour. One Cuervo
Manzanita coming up..?

Dana smiles, anticipating her drink. She looks around at the
older men in the bar, checks her phone. A text from Quinn.

INSERT - text: I got an 83% on my super hard science test!!

CUT TO:

INT. WESTLAKE MAIN STAGE THEATRE - A HALF HOUR LATER

Drama students huddle. LOLA MARTINEZ, 18, dark eyes, street smart in hightops and tiny shorts, walks into the spotlight.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Tell us your name, please.

Lola swallows. The spotlight frames her soulful face.

LOLA
(into mic)
Lola Martinez.

She taps the mic, clears her throat.

LOLA (CONT'D)
Lola...Martinez.

Dana enters and sits next to Dennis in a back row.

DENNIS
(whispers to Dana)
Hey! You're just in time. She took
Bambi's class last spring.
Her mother's in *prizzioni*.

DANA
(whispers)
Prison?

Dennis nods. Lola's pregnant belly, pops from a child-size frame. Her voice is soft at first, gaining power...

LOLA
How can people be so heartless...
How can people be so cruel...

INT. QUINN'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Quinn lies on his bed, gazing at the star-covered ceiling. Each planet in its orbit, each star an unanswered question.

INT. THEATRE - MOMENTS LATER

LOLA
...Easy to be proud...
...Easy to say no...

Dana looks at Dennis - she's all in.

END OF SHOW