RITA

"Pilot"

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TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- SMOKING SHED -- DAY

RITA MADSEN(43), sexy but not "done," youthful without Botox, edgy without trying, is leaning against a graffiti covered janitor's shed, smoking. Lush trees surround the shed, which is not visible from the rest of the campus, making it a favorite student hiding place for all things untoward in a private school, like smoking, make out sessions, graffiti. After one long final drag, she turns to stub the cigarette out on the wall, and she takes in the graffiti: "Charlotte loves Mike." "Charlotte + Mike 4ever." "Charlotte is a bitch whore with a rotten vag." Rita lets out a little sound that combines giggling and scoffing.

She stubs out her cigarette, tucking the butt into a small jar she carries in her handbag, and then her eyes land on one final piece of graffiti: "Rita is boning the principle." She looks at it for a while. Then she goes through her handbag, finds a marker, crosses out the erroneous "le" and replaces it with an "al."

With a pleased smile, she puts the pen away and ducks through the trees...

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- MAIN CAMPUS -- DAY

Rita emerges from the cluster of trees to find herself on the main campus of CABBOTT ACADEMY which feels like another world. The grounds are lush with nature. The modern buildings and streaming students suggest a privilege, with an artsy flair.

A couple of teen girls, TANYA and JACKIE, 15, approach, chatting, packs of cigarettes in hand. When they see Rita, they quickly hide the smokes.

TANYA
Oh. Hey Rita.

Rita smiles indulgently. They're so busted.

RITA
Tanya. Jackie. Were you planning to be late for my class this morning?

TANYA/JACKIE
No.

RITA
Good. Wouldn't want your parents' hard earned dollars to go to waste.

The teens heave a sigh and start to go back the way they came, but Rita clears her throat and holds out her hand. So annoyed, the girls hand over their cigarettes. And then head back toward the school. Rita calls after them.

RITA (CONT'D)
Smoking kills, Ladies!

She smiles and tucks their smokes in her purse. As a BELL RINGS and everyone begins to hustle toward the school doors, Rita picks up her step, heading to work.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- DAY

To establish: Beautiful, idyllic, lush.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- TEACHERS' LOUNGE -- DAY

The decor of the teacher's lounge reflects the privilege of Cabbott Academy. A high end espresso machine. Bose speakers. Plush sofas, lamp lighting, tables from Restoration Hardware instead of your standard school cafeteria circular jobs. Still, it's a teacher's lounge. A note over the sink reads, "Please remember that your mother doesn't work here." Framed art done by students over the years hangs on the walls. Clusters of teachers sit in groups around tables talking quietly, reading, spacing out.

Rita is staring at the fancy espresso machine in frustration. COLIN PAIGE, 45, aristocratic, British, and attractive despite himself, approaches.

RITA
New espresso machine?

COLIN
We organized.

RITA
You organized?

COLIN
The students got one in their lounge, so, yes, we organized.

RITA
There are people starving in the world. Politicians rigging elections. Polar ice caps melting. But this is what you organized?

COLIN
That attitude is why we didn't invite you to organize with us.

Rita can't help but smile.

RITA
Just...How do you work the damn thing, Colin?

COLIN
Oh, Rita. Technophobia is unbecoming in one so young.

As Colin makes Rita a cup of coffee, the principal, TERRENCE WELLS (attractive, bookish, 40) approaches Rita with NORA PARK (25). Nora is sweet, eager, and awkward.

TERRENCE
Rita, this is Nora Park.

RITA
Hi, Nora.

NORA
Hello. Hi. Hello. Nice to meet you. You teach English! I know because I studied the faculty roster. And I'm a fan.

RITA
You're a fan?

NORA
Of English. Languages in general.

Nora is one big smile. Rita looks to Terrence with a look that says, "Really?" He smiles. Colin hands Rita her coffee.

TERRENCE
Colin Paige, this is Nora Park. Colin heads the History department.

COLIN
Nora Park. New student? Welcome.

That was Colin, sourly commenting on Nora's age, before he quickly walks away, throwing a caustic look to his friend Rita.

TERRENCE
Nora's our new mythology teacher. She's fresh out of grad school.

RITA
You don't say.

As Nora wanders a little, looking around in awe, Rita looks at Terrence accusingly.

RITA (CONT'D)
She's twelve.

TERRENCE
She was top of her class at Harvard. And she's passionate,

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
which goes a long way with me. Will you show her around, introduce her?

RITA
...Of course.

Terrence smiles, grateful, warm, then takes off. Rita turns to Nora. Studies her. Jesus, what am I gonna do with this one? Sips her coffee. Wow, that is good.

RITA (CONT'D)
Okay, Nora. Let's walk.

Rita starts out, but notices that Nora isn't following. Nora is looking around in awe. Or in shock. Tears in her eyes.

NORA
Cabbott Academy. It's my dream job. Getting to teach a kid when she's six all the way through til she's eighteen! Seeing the growth. Seeing the mind *form*. I LOVE progressive education. No tests. No grades. Hands-on projects. Experiential education.

RITA
All for the low, low price of forty grand a year.

But Nora's too rapt to even process Rita's reality check.

RITA (CONT'D)
Come on, Nora. It's a big school.

Rita walks. Nora follows.

INT. SCHOOL / CORRIDOR -- DAY

Rita and Nora walk down the corridor, past modern classrooms with walls of windows, crowded with creatively and brightly dressed students, K-12. Rita walks quickly and confidently, while Nora walks with little dancing steps, eager, trying to keep up.

RITA
Kindergarten through 6th grade classes mostly occupy this wing. You're teaching Mythology?

NORA
Yes. I'm gonna have my children make life sized models of the Norse Gods!

RITA
Life size Gods?

NORA
Or...people size. I don't know. I'm just so excited!

Rita smiles. Starts walking again. Nora follows.

RITA
The assembly hall is here. We gather for morning assembly on Mondays and Fridays.
(then)
Terrence's office is there. Helen's office is on your left. She's the school counselor. Try your best to avoid her counsel.

Nora looks in the office to see HELEN, 40ish. Her office is warm and comfortable, colorful pillows, crystals hanging in the windows, throwing rainbows.

NORA
Her office is pretty.

RITA
A spider's web is pretty too. Don't fall for it.

Nora watches Helen a beat. Helen tries for an Earth Mother thing but underneath it she's painfully uptight. As evidenced by the fact that she is carefully arranging and rearranging her pillows. Her flowing clothes are the most expensive flowing clothes a fake hippie can find. But Rita's moved on.

RITA (CONT'D)
Nora?

Nora hurries to catch up.

RITA (CONT'D)
The library's there. And...here's the computer room where the nerdy kids are. --Hi Daniel.

DANIEL, 15, cute but slightly awkward, looks up. Annoyed.

DANIEL
Mom. Just cause I’m not afraid of computers like you are doesn’t make me a nerd.

Rita and Nora keep going.

NORA
You’re afraid of computers?

RITA
(ignoring the question)
Daniel’s my youngest, he's in ninth grade. Got two more, Molly and Nate, but they're out of school.

A BELL RINGS, and kids start swarming the hallways, on their way to their classes from their homerooms. Rita continues out of the building and into the courtyard, Nora dancing after her.

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- DAY

As they emerge into the bright sunlight...

RITA
You have kids?

NORA
Not yet, but I want three. I'm gonna name them Odin, Loki, and Freya. From Norse Mythology.

RITA
Of course you are. Okay, the music studio is across the courtyard to the right, and the art studios are back behind the dance studio...

A couple of GOTH TEENS walk past, on their way to the art studio. Nora looks at them, somewhat frightened. Rita notices, then spots KELSEY, 14 going on 30. She’s dressed as if she’s a partner in a law firm. A Prada suit, hose, heels. She’s a girl who seems at odds with the artsy environment.

RITA (CONT'D)
Kelsey, tell the class I'll be late. Ten minutes.

KELSEY
Will we get to my poem today?

RITA
I don't know, we'll see about that.

KELSEY
But I’m prepared.

RITA
You're always prepared.

KELSEY
Yes, I am. And my mother says you should reward my diligence with attention and focus.

A beat. Rita just stares at her.

RITA
Go to class before you’re late.

KELSEY
Why? You’re late.

RITA
I’m an adult, Kelsey. I have that right. I earned it by surviving my teenage years. GO.

Kelsey rolls her eyes and goes as Rita walks on, Nora at her heels.

NORA
I hope my kids are just as enthusiastic.

Rita looks at Nora, then stops.

RITA
Nora, you know how some kids try to look evil? Piercings, tattoos, the whole goth thing?
(Nora nods)
Well, evil doesn't look evil. It doesn't even try. Evil wears Prada and does its homework so it can strike when you least expect it.

Nora looks at Rita, frightened. Rita starts walking. Now, they hear NOISE and SHOUTING from a classroom.

RITA (CONT’D)
Your class is in there.

Rita points into a room where twenty 4th graders run around. Nora looks panicked for a beat.

RITA (CONT’D)
Life size gods, remember?

Nora smiles.

RITA (CONT'D)
Don't smile. Makes you look weak.

Nora tries to adjust and then they're in the doorway.

RITA (CONT'D)
(shouts)
QUIET!

Immediately, the room falls silent. These kids have mad respect for Rita.

RITA (CONT'D)
This is your new teacher, Nora.
She's my very good friend.
Tomorrow, I'm going to ask her how
things went, and she'd better tell
me that things went well. Okay?

The kids nod, wide-eyed. Rita smiles.

RITA (CONT'D)
Okay.
(To Nora)
Welcome.

Then she leaves. And she hesitates outside the door as she hears the class resume its chaos. She smiles to herself and heads off, leaving Nora to her trial by fire.

INT. SCHOOL -- RITA'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Artful, expensively framed posters of Shakespeare and Dickens and Charlotte Bronte line the walls. Rita leans on the windowsill and listens as TAYLOR (14), an awkward insecure boy in the throws of puberty, stands in front of the class and reads the Robert Frost poem, "The Road Not Taken" aloud, his voice and delivery shaky. He's reading from an iPad.

TAYLOR
"*I shall be telling this with a*
sigh somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the
difference."

Kelsey heaves a bored sigh. Rita gives her a withering look. Taylor looks to Rita, nervous.

RITA
Thank you, Taylor. Who told you to pick that poem?

TAYLOR
...I picked it myself?

RITA
Taylor. Who told you to pick it?

TAYLOR
...My mom.

RITA
And what does your mom say it's about?

Taylor looks down embarrassed.

TAYLOR
About life and taking chances.

RITA
It's about a path in the woods. How is that about taking chances?

Taylor doesn't answer.

RITA (CONT'D)
Okay, your mom says it's about life and taking chances, I say it's about... a dirty old perv who leaves his wife for a virgin.

A couple of girls in the class giggle.

RITA (CONT'D)
"*...long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth.*" That's his wife. She's old. Bent over. "*Then took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear...*" Grassy and wanted wear. That's the virgin. Robert Frost is an asshole. That's my guess.

The class laughs.

KELSEY
Robert Frost was not--

Rita cuts Kelsey off, keeping her focus on Taylor.

RITA
If you think it's about life and adventure, then tell me *why you think so.*

KELSEY
Frost won four Pulitzers--

RITA
You think cheaters don’t win prizes?

KELSEY
I think--

RITA
Kelsey, I'm asking Taylor.

KELSEY
Mom says I should participate in--

RITA
I don't care what your mom says, it's about Taylor now.

KELSEY
But he doesn't get it!

Beat. Taylor looks hurt. Rita looks at Kelsey, they have a little showdown.

TAYLOR (O.S.)
“I kept the first for another day?”

Rita turns around and looks at Taylor. Surprised.

RITA
Continue.

TAYLOR
“Oh, I kept the first for another day.” That means, like, he hasn’t gone down that road yet. So I don’t think that’s his wife. I think it’s a road he’s thinking he might come back to later. Except he just wants to take this other one now. Cause less people have been there. It’s like, it’s about not being a follower. Like, doing your own thing no matter what other people are doing.

Rita smiles.

RITA
Good job, Taylor. You can sit.

Taylor smiles a bit surprised at himself, and heads for his seat.

RITA (CONT'D)
And next time, choose your own poem.

Taylor nods.

RITA (CONT'D)
Okay, who's next?

Kelsey's hand shoots up. Rita ignores her.

RITA (CONT'D)
Ryan.

RYAN (14), a popular boy walks up to the blackboard.

RITA (CONT'D)
Did you choose for yourself?

Ryan nods.

RITA (CONT'D)
Let's hear it.

Ryan starts rapping Fifty Cent lyrics.

RYAN
I don't know what you heard about me / But a bitch can't get a dollar outta me / No Cadillac, no perms, you can't see / That I'm a mothereffin' P.I.M.P.

Rita can't help but smile. Kelsey broods aggressively.

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- DAY

Rita is walking past the long line of MERCEDES, BMW, LEXUS, and even a LIMO there to pick up the Cabbott day students. A 45 year old MOTHER IN CHANEL steps out of her Lexus.

MOTHER IN CHANEL
Excuse me? Rita? Rita Madsen?

RITA
Yes?

MOTHER IN CHANEL
My daughter is Laura Cummings. She's in your fifth grade English class. I wanted to let you know she's going to miss school next week for a family trip to Aspen so if you could just email me her homework--

RITA
Mrs. Cummings, you're holding up the carpool lane.

MOTHER IN CHANEL
(dismissive)
The lane can wait.

RITA
The homework doesn't cover what she'll miss in class.

MOTHER IN GUCCI
Well. Class doesn't cover what she'll miss in Aspen. The experience of travel is worth its weight in gold, Ms. Madsen, though I suppose I couldn't expect you to understand.

A beat. Rita would like to strangle her. But cars have started to honk, so...

RITA
I'll email you the homework.

MOTHER IN GUCCI
Thanks so much.

Annoyed, Rita heads for her car, a ten year old Volkswagon in need of a paint job, when Terrence calls after her.

TERRENCE
Rita!

She stops, looks back, and waits. He catches up. Happy to see her.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
How'd it go with Nora?

RITA
Great. She's a natural.

Hard to tell if that was sarcasm. Terrence smiles.

TERRENCE
She's young and eager.

RITA
Well. We'll break her of that soon enough.

Terrence smiles.

TERRENCE
I... I'm free tonight, if.. You know...

RITA
My son has this insane idea that I should meet his uptight girlfriend's uptight parents. They're coming for dinner tonight.

TERRENCE
Oh. Well...Okay. Feel free to call me later, if you need to... unwind.

RITA
How sweet of you to consider my needs.

She gives him a smile and climbs into her car.

TERRENCE
Rita.

She rolls down the window. Looks at him. He lets the false, casual front drop.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
I can't stop thinking about you.

And he doesn't mean that in a sexual way. She smiles. Indicates that he should come closer. He leans down to her level. Sexily, she whispers very close to his ear, simultaneously turning him on and shutting him down.

RITA
Try harder.

And then she smiles and starts her car. A little tortured, he watches her drive off. A BUMPER STICKER on her car reads "SAVE FERRIS."

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE -- DAY

A beautiful Victorian; faculty housing that far outclasses what Rita could afford if she had to pay for housing herself. Happily, she doesn't. Several GARDEN GNOMES and DECORATIVE FAIRIES peek out from behind well loved, colorful, flower patches and flowering bushes.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE / LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Rita arranges her home. Straightens pillows. Waters plants. Straightens the poses of some of the little TROLLS on the window sill. Rita collects them. Also she talks to them.

RITA
What happened to you, Joe? That bastard Ricky push you down?

She picks up "Joe" dusts him off, repositions him lovingly.

MOLLY (O.S.)
Do you *have* to talk to them?

Rita turns around and sees her daughter MOLLY (21), pretty without trying, unkempt, standing with a big bag over her shoulder. Rita smiles big.

RITA
Molly!

MOLLY
Hi, Mom.

They hug each other warmly.

RITA
Where's Jake?

MOLLY
He's sick. Couldn't make it. But he said to say hi.

RITA
How was the drive?

MOLLY
Three hours. Not bad.

Molly goes to the kitchen. Rita fiddles with some potted plants, removes some withered leaves.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Is Daniel home?

RITA
Yep. See if you can get him to come down from his room. He's embarrassed cause I found his jerk off sock.

Molly looks back into the living room.

MOLLY
Eeew.

RITA
Aren't you glad you're not a boy?

Rita smiles as Molly heads upstairs.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- CORRIDOR -- DAY

Molly walks down the hall and approaches Daniel's bedroom door. She stops, gets an idea, laughs a bit, thinks she's pretty funny. She takes off her sock and puts it on her hand as a hand puppet. She sticks her hand through the doorway and changes her voice.

MOLLY
(in a puppet voice)
Can I come in? I took a shower.

DANIEL
Go away!

Molly laughs, opens the door and enters -

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- DANIEL'S ROOM -- DAY

Daniel is sitting on a chair by the window reading a BANKSY book and listening to funky retro music. He's meticulously fashion conscious in his cool second-hand clothes. He doesn't look up. Molly enters cheerfully.

MOLLY
Hi!

Daniel doesn't answer. Molly tries with the hand puppet.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
(in her puppet voice)
Hi!

DANIEL
(annoyed)
It wasn't... What do you want?

Molly shrugs, throws herself on his bed.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Don't. I just made it.

Daniel puts down the book, gets up, pushes Molly off the bed and starts making it again.

MOLLY
What are you so grumpy about?

DANIEL
I'm not grumpy.

MOLLY
Right.

Daniel looks at her and warms a bit.

DANIEL
How long are you gonna stay?

MOLLY
We'll see.

Daniel smiles. Then he spots something through the window. BRADLEY, 15, a well dressed, well groomed, good looking kid with a tennis racket over his shoulder is walking by. Bradley tries to be discrete, but he is obviously looking up at the window, looking for Daniel. There's a short pause in the conversation. Molly watches Daniel attentively.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Why don't you go say hi to him?

Quickly, Daniel averts his eyes from the window.

DANIEL
What?

MOLLY
Say hi to him?

DANIEL
I don't know him.

MOLLY
His name’s Bradley Schiller. His sister used to go out with Nate.

DANIEL
I know who he is, but I don't *know* him.

MOLLY
He's gay. He came out last year, his dad freaked out, it was a whole thing.

DANIEL
And?

Daniel looks at Molly, tries to make a "so what" face, but it's not really working. She stares him down, like, let's not play this game anymore. Daniel reaches for his phone, shows Molly a picture of a girl.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
That's Trina, my *girlfriend.*

MOLLY
Sorry, Daniel, but your sensitive hairdo tells a different story.

Molly strokes his hair, he hits her hand away.

DANIEL
Don't touch my hair!

MOLLY
Such a straight thing to say.

Molly smiles and takes his hand.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Come on. Nate and Grace and her very normal parents will be here soon. We gotta make sure Mom isn't talking to the trolls.

Daniel smiles as she pulls him out of his chair.

INT. GRACE'S PARENTS' AUDI -- DAY

GRACE, 22, prettily dressed in pearls and silk, sits in the backseat beside NATE, 24. Nate's fun and sexy and he kinda knows it but he doesn't lean on it too heavily.

GRACE
She hates me.

Nate shakes his head. Through the rear view mirror, Grace looks to her parents TOM and NANCY, both 45, WASPS. Tom's at the wheel.

TOM
Come on. She can't be that bad.

NATE
She's not.

GRACE
She is.
(off Nate’s look)
Nate, she is! You're immune. You're like one of those children of AIDS patients, who turn out to be completely healthy.

NATE
Wow. Did you just compare my mother to AIDS?

GRACE
You know what I meant.

NANCY
Grace. I’m sure she’s lovely.

GRACE
Mom. Last time we came for dinner, she asked us how often we... you know.. While everybody was sitting there. Over dinner! As if that's a perfectly normal thing to ask your son about. Or his girlfriend.

Tom laughs a bit. Nate laughs along. Nancy looks a little disconcerted but tries to cover.

GRACE (CONT’D)
It's not funny.

NATE
She was worried about our relationship.

GRACE
I bet.

TOM
We'll take it as an experience.

GRACE
Believe me, it will be.

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE -- DAY

Tom's Audi rolls up to Rita's house and parks.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- DAY

With Molly and Daniel’s help, Rita is arranging platters of tapas and cheese. The doorbell RINGS.

RITA
Crap. Crap crap. Get the door, stall.

Rita licks her fingers, sees some tomato pesto on the floor, and quickly wipes it up with her sock.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE / HALLWAY -- DAY

Daniel opens the door with Molly right behind him. She lets out a little scream of joy when she sees Nate. Big hug.

NATE
Heeey! How’s life in the big city?

MOLLY
Big and cityish.

Nate gives his little brother a hug. Daniel accepts it with a smile then hugs Grace more reservedly. Tom and Nancy follow them inside and greet them politely.

NANCY
You must be Daniel.

DANIEL
Hi.

NANCY
And you're Molly? I'm Nancy.

Tom shakes hands as well, smiling jovially.

TOM
Tom.

DANIEL
Daniel. Nice to meet you.

Nancy takes off her jacket.

NANCY
Where would you like us to put our--

The kitchen door opens and Rita enters.

RITA
Hi! I'm Rita, you must be Nancy and... ...Tom?

Tom looks at Rita.

TOM
Rita?

There's a silent, loaded moment.

NANCY
Um...

GRACE
You two know each other?

TOM
Yes. We...

RITA
We do. We did. We...shit.

Beat. Nancy looks inquisitively at Tom.

TOM
We used to be... A long time ago, we...

RITA
Dated.

TOM
Right. Dated.

Grace is speechless, Molly laughs out loud.

TOM (CONT'D)
Well. Hi?

Tom hugs Rita awkwardly.

RITA
Hi... Tom...

Rita looks at Nancy.

RITA (CONT'D)
It's been a long time.

TOM
Yes, it... Your name wasn't Madsen then, was it?

RITA
No, I got married and...

Nancy pushes through the tension.

NANCY
You have a beautiful home, Rita.

RITA
It’s faculty housing. I could never afford it otherwise.

NANCY
Cabbott takes care of its own. I’m an alumna, you know.

RITA
Of course you are.

Beat.

NANCY
I hope you like Pinot Noir.

Nancy offers a fancy bottle of wine. Rita takes it.

RITA
Thank you. You didn’t need to do that.

NANCY
Oh, it was no trouble. I teach in the psychology department at Harvard, and there’s a fabulous little wine shop right there in the Square.

Rita takes that in, a smile glued to her face.

RITA
Perfect. ...Thank you.

NATE
Well. Let’s get out of the doorway, huh?

RITA
Sorry. God. Please. Come in and have a seat. I'll go get the... food.

People mumble yes, laugh awkwardly and enter the living room. Rita lingers, shaken. She looks to a pink-haired troll doll.

RITA (CONT’D)
Yeah. I know. It’s effing Tom.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Everybody sits around the table - Tom, Nancy, Nate, Grace, Molly and Daniel - in nervous anticipation. Eating olives and cheese. Waiting on Rita.

NANCY
I notice there's no television in the living room. That's very progressive.

DANIEL
It's not progressive. It's broken.

NANCY
The television?

NATE
Not the television. Our mother.

GRACE
She doesn't like technology.

TOM
Still?

Nancy looks at Tom. Strained. Not at all liking how well he seems to know Rita.

MOLLY
Refuses to carry a cell phone or use a computer--

DANIEL
Or own a television. Which pretty much just sucks.

NANCY
Huh. Interesting.

TOM
Don't do that.

NANCY
What?

TOM
Don't start psychoanalyzing her.

NANCY
That's my job, Tom.

TOM
You’re not at work.

A little tense now.

NATE
I’ll see what’s keeping her.

Nate gets up.

INT. RITA’S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- EVENING

Rita is hanging out an open window, smoking. Nate enters and busts her.

NATE
Addict.

RITA
Don’t name-call, it’s impolite.

NATE
Gimme a drag.

RITA
No.

She stubs out the cigarette. Hides it in a jar she keeps under the sink. Washes her hands. Composes herself.

NATE
Are you okay?

RITA
Do I not look okay? Grab a tray.

They both take trays of food and head to the living room.

INT. RITA’S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Rita enters with the food and takes a seat.

RITA
Cheers. And welcome.

NATE
Cheers! Bottoms up!
(then, winks at Daniel)
Right, Daniel?

DANIEL
Haha. I already told you, I'm not gay. I have a *girlfriend.*

NATE
Right.

Nancy looks at Grace, puzzled. Rita smiles, unaffected, drinks her wine.

TOM
You must have been pretty young when you had Nate.

RITA
Yep. Not that long after we broke up.
(beat, then at Nate)
God, maybe Grace is your sister!

Nancy chokes on her food. Daniel puts down his utensils, embarrassed. Nate looks at Grace, terrified.

RITA (CONT'D)
I'm kidding. I'm kidding! Breathe. God.

Nervous laughter.

RITA (CONT'D)
I was 19 when I had Nate, that's a year and a half after you. Don't worry.

GRACE
I just can't picture you two together.

Nancy smiles at her daughter.

NANCY
Neither can I.

TOM
We weren't really a good match. I think that's safe to say without hurting anybody.

GRACE
How did you meet?

TOM
I was an undergrad at Tufts. She was a high schooler who came to a fraternity party with a fake ID.

MOLLY
Ha! Sounds about right.

RITA
Don’t get any ideas, Daniel. I was a public school kid. Cabbott would crush you for a fake I.D.

GRACE
You dated a high schooler when you were in college?

TOM
Well, in fairness to me, she waited til I was in love with her to tell me the truth.

Oops. The words “in love” kinda sucked the air out of the room. Nate awkwardly pushes through.

NATE
Was she already weird back then?

TOM
Well...She smoked and drank and collected those weird little trolls with orange hair, remember those?

Nate and Molly laugh, Daniel smiles.

DANIEL
She still does.

TOM
Smokes and drinks?

MOLLY
And collects trolls.

Daniel points to the trolls in the window sill. Tom laughs loudly. Everybody laughs. Rita doesn't quite know why it's so funny, so she smiles, but she also looks puzzled from person to person. Nancy chuckles.

NANCY
God, how funny is that?!

RITA
Yes, that is... funny.

NANCY
(To Grace)
Can you imagine the look on Dad's face if I had those things around the house?

Nancy is on a roll.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Do you also name them?

RITA
I do, actually, I have a bitchy little one called Nancy.

Nancy stops laughing, Rita smiles as if nothing happened. All of her kids exchange glances and wither.

RITA (CONT'D)
More tapas anyone? No? Cheese?

Rita hands Tom the cheese.

RITA (CONT'D)
There's a sharp cheddar and.. Some other kind of cheese, I don’t know... And Brie.

MOLLY
Mmm, Brie... Tastes kinda like dick.

Molly’s trying to help. Trying to lighten the mood and distract from Rita’s name calling. Nate appreciates it.

NATE
Brie tastes like dick? Really? Is she right, Daniel?

Nancy looks shocked. Grace raises an eyebrow as if to say, “Can you blame them? They were raised by wolves.”

DANIEL
I'm not gay! Mom, say something.

RITA
Hey! No teasing your gay brother.

Nate, Molly, and Rita laugh. Nancy looks indignant, Tom shakes his head at Rita, and it makes an impact. Daniel gets up.

DANIEL
Funny. I'll be at Trina's.
(to Tom and Nancy)
That’s my girlfriend.

NATE
Wait, Daniel--

RITA
I'll get more wine.

Rita gets up and follows Daniel.

RITA (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Daniel. Sorry.

She means it. He doesn't care. He heads up the stairs as Rita heads into the kitchen.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE / KITCHEN -- EVENING

Rita is opening a bottle of wine when Nate comes in. Watches her a beat.

NATE
You know, maybe you could turn it down a bit the first time you meet Grace's parents.

RITA
Maybe *I* could turn it down?

NATE
You basically called her mother a bitch.

RITA
Because her mother was basically being a bitch. At my expense, by the way.

NATE
It was rude.

RITA
Speaking truth is not rude, Nathan. How do you not know that yet?

Off his heaving sigh...

RITA (CONT'D)
Have I ever asked you to change the way you are?

NATE
No. But I'd do it if you asked.

Rita rolls her eyes, turns her back, dismissing the conversation.

NATE (CONT'D)
Mom. It'd be good if you could find a way to get along with Nancy and Tom. I'm saying please.

She turns back.

RITA
I don’t understand why we’re still talking about this.

NATE
Because... Grace and I are getting married.

RITA
Please, you're 24.

NATE
You were 19 when you married Dad.

RITA
I was poorly parented, you were not.

NATE
I asked. She said yes.

Beat. Rita stops.

NATE (CONT'D)
So "us" ...is gonna include them.

A beat of shock plays across Rita’s face, and Nate is unsure how she’s going to react. But she recovers quickly, managing a huge smile and a huge hug.

RITA
Oh my God. Congratulations, honey. Oh my God! Why didn't you tell me sooner?

NATE
We were gonna tell you later tonight. So don't say anything, okay?

RITA
Of course.

She embraces him again. A wash of mixed emotions playing across her face, as Daniel walks in.

DANIEL
What's going on?

RITA
Nate’s getting married!

NATE
Mom!

RITA
What? He's on his way out! He won’t say anything!

DANIEL
Wow. Really? To Grace?

NATE
No, to Mom. YES, to Grace.

DANIEL
Wow. Okay. Congratulations, I guess.

Daniel gives him a quick hug and heads out. Nate shakes his head despairingly -- how is this his family? And starts to head back to the living room.

RITA
Nate?

He turns around.

RITA (CONT'D)
I’m happy for you. And I'll behave.

Nate smiles, grateful, and heads out. And what was really a very good act from Rita falls away instantly. Her smile disappears. Her hands start to shake. She stands there, just staring a beat, trying to process this night. Still wrapped around a bottle of wine, her knuckles are turning white. And Tom enters. Looks at her a beat as she tries and fails to get her game face back on.

TOM
Do you need any help?

RITA
No.

They stare at each other a long beat.

RITA (CONT’D)
They’re getting married.

TOM
I know.

A long beat.

TOM (CONT'D)
You look incredible. For what it's worth. You... you look better than you did at seventeen.

She stares at him a long, tortured beat. There is so much history here. There was once so much love. And there is still so much longing.

RITA
My son is marrying your daughter.

Tom nods. And they stare at each other a long, loaded beat.

RITA (CONT'D)
Are you in love with her?

TOM
Am I in love with my wife?

He holds her gaze.

TOM (CONT'D)
She's...my wife.

Rita nods. That's no kind of answer. And then she manages to open the bottle of wine.

RITA
Take this out to your family, Tom.

Tom does as he's told. Rita reaches for her hidden cigarettes under the sink, lighting one, not even bothering to hang out the window. A green haired troll doll stares at her from the window sill.

RITA (CONT'D)
Don't look at me like that.

She inhales the smoke greedily, turns the troll to face away from her.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE -- RESIDENTIAL STREET -- EVENING

Daniel walks down the high end, residential street. Large, meticulous New England Victorian's on the right, a Tennis Club on the left. It's a nice summer evening. He puts some earplugs in his ears and listens to some music. He sees Bradley, hanging with a group of boys outside the Tennis Club. His breath catches in his throat. But when Bradley turns to look at him, he looks quickly away and heads the other direction.

EXT. TRINA’S HOUSE -- ESTABLISHING -- EVENING

The house tells us that Trina’s family is wealthy but not gauche. Old money. Classic.

INT. TRINA'S HOUSE / TRINA'S ROOM -- EVENING

Daniel lays in TRINA's bed. Trina is 15 and adorable; preppy, pretty, confident, happy, and in love with Daniel. The room is dimly lit and music is playing. They’re making out gently, kissing. His hands do not wander.

DANIEL
Do you think I'm adopted?

Trina laughs and pulls away from the kiss.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I mean, there’s a small chance, right? A boy can dream.

TRINA
I could ask my Mom if she'll adopt you?

DANIEL
Then we'd be siblings and have kids with lobster fingers.

Trina laughs, Daniel smiles. She looks in his eyes, taking more meaning from that than he intended.

TRINA
You think we’re gonna have kids one day?

DANIEL
(a beat)
What?

She’s embarrassed she asked, so she just kisses him again. More passionately. Then...

TRINA
What I mean is, maybe we should start practicing.

She kisses him again. Then she picks up his hand and puts it on her breast, over her shirt.

DANIEL
Oh. Whoa. I...

TRINA
You’re so sweet, Daniel. You’re so respectful. But you don’t have to be.

DANIEL
I don’t have to respect you?

TRINA
I’m saying, I know you respect me. I know you love me. And...I’m ready.

DANIEL
For what?

Trina looks into Daniel's eyes. Then she takes his other hand and place it up, under her skirt. She gasps a little at the contact. He does not.

DANIEL (CONT’D)
Trina... Are you sure?

TRINA
My parents won’t be home for hours.

DANIEL
Yeah, but it’s... I mean, you have to be sure, right? The first time is supposed to be really important and--

TRINA
You are really important.

She reaches under her mattress and pulls out a condom.

TRINA (CONT’D)
And I am sure. Aren't you?

DANIEL
Sure! Sure, I'm... totally sure.

She smiles, and straddles him.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I'm probably just a little tired from--

TRINA
I'll wake you up.

They kiss.

TRINA (CONT'D)
(whispering)
What turns you on?

DANIEL
...You know. Breasts and... stuff.

So Trina pulls her shirt off revealing a pretty, lacy, expensive bra. Daniel looks around in a panic. Trina takes his hand. She moves it up to her breast. She leans in again and kisses his neck.

TRINA
Found anything you like?

Over her shoulder, Daniel has spotted a framed, signed, poster of TAYLOR LAUTNER, shirtless.

DANIEL
Yeah.

She smiles big.

TRINA
Feels like it.

And she begins to kiss him more passionately. Off Daniel, giving into it, his eyes locked on that poster...

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Rita, climbing into her car, waves to Tom and Nancy.

RITA
Lovely meeting you both. Or well, meeting you, Nancy. And...Tom... Okay. Good night.

TOM
Where are you headed so late?

RITA
Have to run a quick errand.

They wave back to her and Rita drives off.

NANCY
“Save Ferris.” Really?

GRACE
I told you.

NANCY
Are you sure you want to stay here?

GRACE
Nate said he’d help her with some repairs around the house. ...He’s oddly attached.

NANCY
Peter Pan syndrome?

GRACE
Can you blame him with a mother like that? ...It's just for a couple of days.

NANCY
Well, I'm just glad it's not us. Right Tom?

Nancy looks at Tom. He stands there in a trance-like state gazing at Rita’s garden gnomes, a soft smile on his face.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Tom?

She snaps him out of his trance.

TOM
Hmm? Yeah. Yes, absolutely.

GRACE
Do you think she'll let me use her as a case for my psychology thesis?

NANCY
Grace!

Nancy and Grace share a laugh.

GRACE
Well, from a psychological perspective, we should be compassionate. She has to have been through a lot to turn out like that.

Nancy and Grace share a smile that is anything but compassionate.

GRACE (CONT’D)
Plus...I love Nate. So...She's family.

Nancy sighs, conceding the point.

NANCY
Okay. I'll try. We'll all try.

They kiss goodbye, and then Grace kisses Tom.

GRACE
Bye Dad. Drive safely.

Nancy gets into the car and Grace walks back to the house. Tom glances one last time at the house. Then he forces himself to get in the car with his wife.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- NIGHT

We are on Rita's bare back as she rides someone on one of the plush leather sofas in the dimly lit teacher's lounge. We see only his legs as her body is blocking his torso from view. Their mutual moans build to climax. Rita collapses forward a beat, and then she rolls off, revealing Terrence, whose shirt is on but torn open as if Rita was in a big hurry.

RITA
...So glad you were working late.

Terrence smiles. So is he.

TERRENCE
Feeling better?

RITA
Much.

A beat.

RITA (CONT'D)
Can I smoke in here?

TERRENCE
No.

Off the two of them, half naked at work...

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- MORNING

School courtyard, morning. Rita walks across the lawn, moves through small groups of designer-clad kids on iPhones. She passes Kelsey, noticing that she's alone among the crowd, sitting on a bench by herself as every other kid laughs and connects with friends.

KELSEY
When you walk on the lawn, it kills the grass and ruins it for everyone else.

Rita just stops and looks at her.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
I'm saying, you're a teacher. You could try to set an example.

A beat.

RITA
Why are you always by yourself, Kelsey? I mean, why do you think?

KELSEY
I'm mature for my age. I don't relate to high school kids.

Rita looks at her a beat. Then she intentionally walks on the grass instead of the path directly next to it, heading into the building.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- TEACHERS' LOUNGE -- DAY

Rita enters, a little hungover from the night before, exchanges a look with Colin, glances at the coffee machine pleadingly, and sits down at a vacant table. As Colin laughingly goes to make Rita a coffee, Nora comes dancing over to her.

NORA
Goood morning!

RITA
Morning, Nora.

Rita smiles, unable to dislike Nora. Nora takes a seat.

NORA
So. You're probably excited to hear how my first day went.

RITA
I’m sure I will be once I have coffee.

NORA
(blowing past that)
It went well, it went very well. It was exciting, and educational, and interesting, and I don't think I have any questions.

RITA
That's good.

NORA
I have a question.

Rita smiles. Colin hands her coffee.

RITA
Bless you.

Colin glances at Nora.

COLIN
No students in the teacher’s lounge.

As he walks away...

NORA
No, I’m not a--

RITA
He knows, Nora.

NORA
Oh. Okay.

RITA
I have coffee. What was your question?

NORA
Oh. Okay. How... No... What do you do when the students throw stuff at you?

RITA
They threw stuff at you?

NORA
It's purely hypothetical.

RITA
Okay... Hypothetically, what did they throw at you?

NORA
Oh, it could be anything. Say, a pencil case about this big with some really hard edges.

RITA
Well, first you duck.

NORA
Good.

RITA
Then you pick up the pencil case.

NORA
Good.

RITA
And then you throw it back at the student's head.
(off Nora’s shocked look)
Nora, if anybody throws stuff at you, you crack down on them immediately. You show them who's in charge.

NORA
Yes.
(beat)
And...that would be me, right?

RITA
Yes.

NORA
Good.

RITA
Nora.
(to be clear)
You don’t actually throw it back at them because that would be illegal. You remove them from the classroom, send them to Terrence and have their parents pick them up immediately. And then their parents will find a way to blame it on you to Terrence while simultaneously shaming their child enough that it won’t happen again.

The school bell RINGS. Rita gets up. Nora gazes at her as if she's some kind of super hero.

NORA
As you know, I'm very into in Norse mythology.

RITA
Yes, you've mentioned that.

NORA
In the Icelandic sagas the hero always has a bard. I'd like to be your bard.

She's completely sincere.

RITA
Thank you, Nora. That won't be necessary.

Rita leaves and can't help smiling as she goes.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- CORRIDOR/HELEN'S OFFICE -- MORNING

Rita is hurrying to class. She passes Helen's office. Helen calls to her.

HELEN
Rita!

Rita picks up her pace. Helen emerges from her office.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Rita! A word?

Helen is earnest, humorless, and unintentionally condescending with one of those well cultivated, gentle, "I'm a peace-lover and you should be too" voices. Rita stops, barely managing politeness.

RITA
Helen, I have class.

HELEN
I'll walk with you.

Rita continues down the hallway, Helen falls in stride.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I had a talk with one of your students the other day, and she mentioned that--

RITA
I thought the school counselor had client confidentiality.

HELEN
Well, I didn't say who it was.

RITA
We better stop now though, before you say too much.

Rita tries to walk away from Helen, but Helen takes a firm grip of Rita's arm. Rita stops, looks at Helen's hand. Helen lets go. Beat.

HELEN
One of your students doesn't feel she gets the sufficient amount of attention.

RITA
Hmm. Who could that be?

HELEN
I just thought I'd mention it, before the situation develops.

RITA
The situation, as you call her, is rude, disrespectful, dominates my classroom as if she’s the teacher, and is consistently condescending to all the other students.

Helen looks around to make sure no one’s listening, then...

HELEN
Kelsey feels there is no room for her capabilities.

RITA
And I feel that Kelsey leaves no room for anyone else’s capabilities. I also feel that she’s a spoiled brat.

Helen smiles at Rita, indulgently.

HELEN
Rita, you’re an English teacher. It wouldn’t hurt you to exercise your vocabulary.

RITA
I'm sorry?

HELEN
What you call a 'brat' I might call 'spirited.' Or 'eager.' If you look past the impulse to label, you might be able to see nuances beyond black and white.

Rita sighs. Would like to punch her. Opts against it.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Did you know that the Inuits have twenty-two different words for snow?

RITA
Yes. They also have sixteen different words for incest, none of them making it okay. Excuse me, Helen. I have class.

Rita takes off, pissed.

INT. RITA'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Rita enters and the classroom full of 14 year olds instantly quiets.

RITA
Sorry I'm late. Who prepared a poem?

Kelsey's hand shoots up, along with a couple others. Rita locks eyes with Kelsey.

RITA (CONT'D)
Erica. You're first up.

ERICA, an eager, earnest girl, stands and goes to the front of the class.

ERICA
"I thank you God for this most amazing" by E. E. Cummings.
(then, reads)
i thank You God for this most amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky...

Rita is still locked on Kelsey. Kelsey glares. This means war. Rita smiles. She likes war.

INT. FORMAGGIO KITCHEN -- DAY

Daniel is wandering the aisles of this very high end cheese shop, looking for something, a little guiltily. He wanders the dairy section til he finds what he's looking for. Brie. There's so many different kinds. He doesn't know how to choose. Finally he just grabs one, and carries it to the check out. The look on his face suggests the kind of guilt usually associated with buying a pregnancy test rather than a block of cheese. The clerk smiles up at him.

CLERK
Just the Brie?

DANIEL
No. Yes. No. Cheddar too. I'll get some cheddar. Too.

Daniel rushes, grabs a small clock of cheddar, and hurries back to the counter, smiling.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
I like cheddar best.

The clerk smiles awkwardly, ringing up the cheese, as Daniel nods, sweating.

INT. T -- DAY

Daniel is riding the T, passing the colleges, swarming with students, wishing that was his life. He's listening to music on his iPod and checking out his hair via his reflection in the window. He straightens it.

He glances at a couple of HARVARD BOYS a few rows ahead. Handsome, older. He stares at them until they notice and he quickly looks away. As the boys get off at a stop, and the T starts up again, Daniel finds himself mostly alone.

Cautiously, Daniel takes the Brie out of his pocket, unwraps it, smells it and pulls back a bit. It's sharp. He looks at it, closes his eyes, moves it up to his mouth, hesitates and then takes a sizable bite.

Two seconds go by before the first symptoms of nausea occur. He throws down the cheese, holds his mouth and scrambles onto his feet. With his hand over his mouth and his convulsions, Daniel tries to signal to the driver that he has to stop.

Daniel can't hold it in anymore. He panics. Then he holds out the sleeve of his long sleeved, button down shirt, and vomits into it. Twice.

EXT. STREET -- DAY

At the T stop, Daniel gets out, totally pale and holding his arm high to prevent the vomit from running out. The T drives off and reveals Bradley on the opposite side of the street. Bradley looks at him, sees the raised arm and assumes that Daniel is greeting him. He smiles and waves back.

BRADLEY
Hey.

DANIEL
...Hi.

Bradley starts crossing the street toward Daniel. Daniel looks around for an escape route to no avail.

BRADLEY
You're Daniel, right?

DANIEL
Yeah.

BRADLEY
I'm Bradley Schiller. Your brother and my sister--

DANIEL
Yeah, I remember.

BRADLEY
Yeah. Well. Nice to officially meet you.

Bradley extends his hand. Daniel looks at it. There's an awkward beat in which Bradley just stands there with his hand extended. Daniel can't lower his own hand without causing the vomit to run out, so he dives in for a hug.

DANIEL
Hi.

Daniel pulls back quickly. His own hand is still raised. He scratches the back of his head with it to give it a purpose for being there. Awkward silence.

BRADLEY
I've seen you around a lot.

DANIEL
Yeah. I...live around here... So...

Beat. Bradley looks at Daniel's arm, which is still scratching the back of his head.

BRADLEY
You go to Cabbott?

DANIEL
Yeah. But just ‘cause my Mom works there.

BRADLEY
Oh. I’m at Bentley Prep. Always wanted to go to Cabbott but my Dad thinks it’s too artsy.

DANIEL
It is.

Beat.

BRADLEY
What's that smell?

DANIEL
I don't smell anything.

BRADLEY
It's smells like... It smells sour.

DANIEL
I don't smell...
(inhales)
Nope, nothing. I've gotta--

Daniel starts walking.

BRADLEY
You wanna walk together?

DANIEL
Aren’t you going to play tennis?

BRADLEY
I just finished.

DANIEL
Oh. Well. I'm headed the other way.

BRADLEY
You were headed down there, weren't you?

DANIEL
Was I? I'm tired, I didn’t sleep much last night. I was at my girlfriend's place, so...

BRADLEY
Okay.

DANIEL
We had sex.

Bradley nods, not quite sure why Daniel told him that.

BRADLEY
Okay. See y'around.

DANIEL
Bye.

Daniel starts walking in the wrong direction. Bradley walks in the opposite direction. Daniel curses himself. Once Bradley's gone, Daniel stops and lowers his arm. A small splash is heard as the vomit runs out and hits the sidewalk.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- TERRENCE'S OFFICE -- DAY

The office is well appointed, with custom furniture and floor to ceiling windows, over which curtains are currently drawn. Rita MOANS as she leans over a desk, and Terrence takes her from behind. Both are fully clothed. Rita's eyes are closed, his are open. She's into the sex, he's into her.

TERRENCE
Oh Rita...

RITA
Harder. Go harder.

He does. A little sign that reads "PRINCIPAL" hops along on the desk. The phone RINGS. Terrence looks at it.

RITA (CONT'D)
Don't touch that.

Terrence nods and picks up where he left off. Rita tries to get back into it, but the phone keeps ringing and Terrence can't focus. Finally, he reaches for it.

TERRENCE
(into phone)
Hello?

RITA
Wow.

Rita gives up and slouches down onto the desk. He's still behind her and inside her and on the phone.

TERRENCE
Yes, hello... No, no, it's fine, how can I help you? Uh-hm... Yes... No, I understand that...

RITA
(to herself)
Go ahead and have a chat, that's okay, I'll just wait here.

TERRENCE
Right, right. Yes, I'll handle it. And I'll be in touch. Just, let me have your number please.

Terrence looks around for a pen. Rita hands him one.

TERRENCE (CONT'D)
Yes.. Yes. Yes.. I got it... I will.... Bye.

Terrence hangs up. Rita turns her head and looks over her shoulder at him, waiting.

RITA
Are we doing this?

TERRENCE
That was Kelsey Robbins' mother.

Rita pulls herself free and pulls up her pants.

RITA
Okay.

TERRENCE
Kelsey feels that you're treating her unfairly.

RITA
What a load of crap.

TERRENCE
Did you tell her that "The Road Not Taken" is about Frost leaving his wife to screw a whore?

RITA
Not a whore, a virgin. A whore would make no sense. How is a whore a road less traveled?

TERRENCE
Rita--

RITA
I teach my students to think for themselves.

TERRENCE
Rita, even in a progressive school, there are rules and they do apply to you, too.

RITA
That's just a little hard to take seriously coming from a principal who was inside me 30 seconds ago.

TERRENCE
Fair enough. But I’m just one man. The Robbins have influence.

RITA
And by influence, you mean money.

TERRENCE
Not just money. They’re active, and involved, and if they turn against you...It’s political, Rita.

RITA
Hell hath no fury like a PTA scorned.

TERRENCE
I'm going to call them in for a meeting. And you’re going to have to find a way to make it right.

Rita puts on her jacket.

TERRENCE (CONT’D)
Wait. You're leaving?

RITA
Yes.

TERRENCE
But I didn't...finish yet.

RITA
You have a hand, Terrence. I know because you used it to answer the phone.

Rita leaves.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN -- DAY

Rita is sitting at the kitchen table. In front of her is a box of fireworks. Molly enters.

MOLLY
Fireworks? What are we celebrating?

RITA
I found them in the basement when I was looking for Nate's stuff.

Molly smiles at Rita, sits down. Rita looks a little sad.

RITA (CONT'D)
A minute ago, he was the Nate that hid fireworks in the basement, and now he's getting married.

MOLLY
Yeah.

RITA
To her.

Molly and Rita exchange a look. Molly feels similarly about Grace but she’s not gonna betray Nate by saying it to Rita.

MOLLY
Well. If it's what he wants.

RITA
She’s changed him.

MOLLY
Maybe. But maybe he wanted to change. ...He loves her, Mom.

RITA
Like that matters.

Molly laughs at that.

RITA (CONT’D)
How’s Jake? Feeling any better?

MOLLY
I broke up with him.

A beat as Rita takes that in. She looks at her daughter. Waiting for more. After a long beat, Molly fights emotion as she admits...

MOLLY (CONT'D)
He broke up with me.

Rita is genuinely upset. She pulls Molly close to give her a hug. Molly pulls away quickly. Hardening against her feelings and her mother's compassion which is too much for her.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
I can't believe I stopped smoking for that prick.

RITA
Molly... What happened?

Molly shakes her head, fighting the tears. Everything happened. Nothing happened. And she doesn't want to talk about it with Rita.

MOLLY
Nothing. I don't know. Whatever. I'm hot, and I'm great in bed, and I'll find someone better. ...Can I stay here awhile?

RITA
Of course. You can stay as long as you want.

Molly nods.

MOLLY
Thanks.

Molly takes off. Rita wants to go after her, but decides against it.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- STAIRWAY -- DAY

Molly hurries up the stairs, a race against her pain.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- CORRIDOR -- DAY

Once she's upstairs and out of Rita's sight and earshot, Molly lets the tears come. Her pain is overwhelming, but it's hers. She's not sharing it.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- DAY

Rita and Terrence are walking down the hall.

TERRENCE
It's not just Kelsey's parents. Helen agrees with them.

RITA
I don't care about Helen.

TERRENCE
And it's not like it's the first time they're complaining so just... just listen to them, okay?

RITA
Okay. But I'm doing this because you asked, and not because they're right.

TERRENCE
Fine.

RITA
Fine.

They pass Colin, who’s lingering outside a supply room door, an annoyed expression on his face.

TERRENCE
Everything alright, Colin?

COLIN
Someone’s crying in the supply closet. I’m afraid if I open the door I’ll have to offer sympathy.

He says “sympathy” like he’s smelling shit. FAINT SOBBING comes through the door. Rita pulls it open. Nora is in there. Nora looks around quickly and grabs a box of pens.

NORA
Oh, here they are!

But she just starts crying again. Rita takes a deep breath.

RITA
(to Terrence)
Go, I'll be there in two minutes.

Terrence leaves.

COLIN
I need paper.

Rita grabs a sheath of paper and hands it to him.

COLIN (CONT'D)
What's going on with Terrence? Are you and he still--

RITA
Colin. Walk away.

He does. Rita turns to Nora.

RITA (CONT'D)
What happened?

Nora sniffles.

RITA (CONT'D)
Nora, if they bully you, you have to show them who's in charge.

Nora shakes her head and wipes her eyes.

NORA
That's not... I've always been bullied. Kids used to call me Bore-a Nora, and Whore-a Nora. I'm used to that stuff. But I've never... NEVER... been told that I was unprepared! And I wasn't! I'd studied all night, I just got nervous, because she kept asking me all kinds of questions and--

RITA
Who?

NORA
Kelsey Robbins.

Rita looks away angrily.

NORA (CONT'D)
And then she told me I was unprepared. And a bad teacher. In front of the whole class.

RITA
That won't happen again.

NORA
But--

RITA
That won't happen again, Nora. And now I have to go, I have a meeting with Kelsey's parents.

Rita turns around and leaves.

NORA
(sing-song)
Rita the ruthless to the meeting
went forth--

RITA
(as she's leaving)
No bard!

Nora zips her mouth and smiles after Rita, her hero.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- TERRENCE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Terrence sits with Kelsey's parents MARK and ALICIA ROBBINS, both 40 year old WASPs. Attractive. Privileged. Entitled. Mark looks less committed to this meeting than Alicia. Awkward waiting. A tray with a silver coffee pot and ceramic cups sits on Terrence's desk.

TERRENCE
Coffee?

ALICIA
No.

MARK
Yes, please.

Alicia looks at Mark: this is not what they had agreed.

TERRENCE
She should be here any minute.
There was a--

Rita flings the door open and enters. It's immediately apparent to Terrence that she's going to be trouble. Rita doesn't shake Mark's politely extended hand, just sits down, arms folded across her chest.

RITA
So Kelsey feels I'm picking on her.

ALICIA
Judging from what she's told us
it's not just a feeling, it's--

RITA
Judging from what she's told you.
Has she told you that she made one
of our teachers, one of our newest
and most eager teachers, break down
in tears?

TERRENCE
Rita--

ALICIA
Excuse me, but we are here to discuss *your* behavior and--

RITA
My behavior depends on Kelsey's behavior.

ALICIA
I beg your pardon, but we are paying a small fortune for our daughter to attend this school and we expect--

RITA
I would think that for the small fortune you're paying you might expect your daughter to get an education, which is what I'm trying to give her.

ALICIA
Terrence?

TERRENCE
Rita, I think we should--

Fed up with Alicia and Terrence, Rita turns to Kelsey's father, Mark.

RITA
Kelsey is very mature for her age, that's what she tells us at least once a week, and if she believes that she's an adult, she should be prepared to be treated as an adult. But she isn't. She wants to behave like an adult but still have the rights of a child.

ALICIA
You're going to let her talk to you like that?

MARK
I'd like to hear her out, Alicia, before we tell the board to fire her.

TERRENCE
Rita, if we just take a step back, I think we can--

RITA
The truth, whether you want to face it or not, is that you have a very annoying child. Now I'm sure there's a fancy term for that, something that makes it sound better, but we're not going to solve this problem until we call Kelsey what she is: Precocious. Arrogant. Annoying.

Terrence's body slouches despairingly. Alicia gets up.

ALICIA
We're leaving. And Terrence, you can tell the board that they'll be hearing from--

RITA
Does she have any friends?

A beat.

RITA (CONT'D)
Mrs. Robbins, does your daughter have *any friends?*

A beat.

RITA (CONT'D)
You can talk to the board and you can have me fired and maybe you can even put her in another fancy private school where you pay the teachers to pretend there isn't a problem, but... *Wouldn't you like her to have some friends?*

ALICIA
Kelsey is unique and mature for her age, and that makes it difficult for her to form friendships with--

RITA
If you were a 14-year-old girl, would you want to be Kelsey's friend?

ALICIA
(to her husband)
Say something!

MARK
...Well, she can be a little annoying.

If looks could kill...

MARK (CONT'D)
Alicia. You think so too. Don’t you?

Alicia sits back down.

ALICIA
She can be... difficult, at times, but that doesn't give you the right to persecute her.

RITA
She's got it in her head that she's an adult. But if she thinks that adults tolerate that kind of behavior in other adults, she's in for a very lonely life.

ALICIA
It's not your job to raise her.

RITA
Okay. Do you want to be the one to tell her? Or do you want to be the good mother, who lets her cry on your shoulder? ...My oldest son, Nate, is marrying the wrong girl, pretty much just because she’s the opposite of me. And I would kill for someone else to tell him. Someone he fears preferably. Someone he grudgingly respects. Someone he might listen to so that I don’t have to either be the bad guy or watch him set himself up for a life of misery and say nothing.

Beat. Mark takes Alicia's hand. Alicia looks down.

RITA (CONT’D)
You need a bad guy. And I’m willing and able to help. With your permission.

A beat. And then Alicia nods almost imperceptibly.

RITA (CONT'D)
Okay.

They have a mutual understanding. So Rita gets up and leaves the meeting.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- HALLWAY -- DAY

Rita walks down the hallway; sees Helen coming toward her.

HELEN
Did you apologize?

Rita stops. Helen is habitually condescending. Just like Kelsey. And Rita has a flash of compassion. Stares at her for a long moment.

RITA
What would you do if your first love just came back...out of nowhere...married to someone else?

It's a sincere question. And it so startles Helen that she laughs, thinking Rita's fucking with her somehow. But Rita just holds her gaze.

HELEN
I...I've...never been in love.

And the two women stand there, in this painfully unexpected moment of mutual vulnerability. It takes Rita a beat to find her voice, then she talks quietly, almost urgently.

RITA
Go out tonight. To a dive bar. There's a good one in Kenmore Square, where the B.U. Professors hang out. Don't wear flowy, fake-hippie clothes, wear tight jeans, you have a great ass. Have three drinks. Maybe four. And when someone offers you a smoke, accept it. Shoot pool, badly. Laugh at anything that seems remotely funny. ...And maybe wear a baseball cap. You'd look cute in a baseball cap.

HELEN
Rita--

RITA
You can do it, Helen. I believe in you.

Rita's sincere as she walks away. Helen is so stunned, she just watches her go. Smiling to herself, Rita continues down the hallway, takes an orange from her bag, starts peeling it.

The school is empty. Most students have left. Rita passes the library, Kelsey is sitting in there, reading. Rita stops. Looks at her. Sighs.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- LIBRARY -- DAY

Rita walks in, Kelsey looks up.

RITA
Why are you still here?

KELSEY
I'm doing my homework.
(Re: the orange)
You can't eat in the library.

Rita defiantly eats her orange. Then she offers a piece to Kelsey. Kelsey shakes her head no.

RITA
Are you lonely?

Kelsey just looks at her. Her pain apparent behind her eyes.

RITA (CONT'D)
Come with me.

KELSEY
Where?

RITA
For once in your life, Kelsey, be willing to not know something.

Rita takes off. Kelsey hesitates a beat, then follows.

EXT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- SMOKING SHED -- EARLY EVENING

Kelsey watches, a little horrified, as Rita writes on the janitor's shed, "Nancy is a frigid bitch."

KELSEY
Who's Nancy?

RITA
Not the point.

KELSEY
What is the point?

Rita hands her the pen.

RITA
You write something.

Kelsey takes the pen but doesn't use it. Rita lights a cigarette.

KELSEY
Smoking's bad for you.

RITA
Kelsey. Do you think I don't know that? It says it on the package! ...Don't you get tired of yourself sometimes? Isn't it exhausting, always having to be right?

KELSEY
...I don't know how to stop.

RITA
Write. Something. On the wall.

Kelsey turns around and writes something on the wall. She moves out of the way. It's a smiley face.

RITA (CONT'D)
For the love of... Write something indecent! Write "dick," or "shit" or "Rita's a bitch."

KELSEY
Why?

RITA
Well, aren't I?

Kelsey hesitates. Then she writes. "RITA IS..." Then she stops.

KELSEY
I don't like it.

Rita is losing her patience.

RITA
Be a kid. Screw up. Make a mistake *for once in your life*. Be a kid, Kelsey, while you still can. You act like you're 40!
(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)
Maybe that's why the other students don't like you!

KELSEY
And you act like you're 14, maybe that's why the other adults don't like you!

Kelsey shouts it out loud. Then she picks up her things and leaves, storming back through the trees, leaving Rita alone. Rita is about to call after her but she stops herself. Cause what would she even say? So she smokes her cigarette, watching the sky turn red as the sun begins to set. Then she looks at the shed.

Among all the other graffiti, she spots Kelsey's words: "RITA IS." She blinks her eyes. Suddenly, it reads RITA IS ALONE. She blinks again: RITA IS SCREWED UP. Now, all the graffiti has been replaced with statements about Rita, which she takes in with sad acceptance: RITA IS A LOSER. RITA IS A WHORE. RITA IS A BAD MOTHER. RITA IS A CHILD. RITA RUINS EVERYTHING. RITA LOVES TOM.

She stops and looks at it. RITA LOVES TOM. She takes a deep breath. She blinks her eyes briefly and the wall has gone back to normal. She takes one last breath, puts her cigarette out on the RITA IS part of the wall. And walks away.

UNDER MUSIC:

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Determined, Rita walks around the living room pulling her trolls off of window sills and shelves and throwing them in a bag.

INT. CABBOTT ACADEMY -- TEACHER'S LOUNGE -- NIGHT

It's late and Nora is studying for tomorrow, a stack of school work in front of her. Colin and a small group of teacher's head out. Nora watches them go, then goes back to her work. Then she looks up, to see Colin standing over her.

COLIN
Are you of legal drinking age?

Nora nods.

COLIN (CONT'D)
Come on then. Join us for a drink.

She stares at him. And then smiles so big that he instantly regrets inviting her.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- RITA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Rita removes the trolls on her nightstand and stuffs them in the bag.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Rita walks with determination down the stairs to the basement.

EXT. KENMORE SQUARE -- NIGHT

Helen, looking genuinely pretty in tight jeans and a tank top, sits in a taxi outside a DIVE BAR watching attractive professionals go inside. She looks at the baseball cap in her hands. And manages to get out of the cab. But then she stands there, holding the cab door, not letting it leave. Staring. Staring. Too scared to go in. After a long beat, she gets back in the taxi, defeated.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- GUEST ROOM -- EVENING

Nate and Grace lie in the bed in the guest room, dressed for bed. Nate runs his hand over Grace's hair.

GRACE
Do you think it'll get weird between your mom and my dad?

NATE
Huh? No. That was ages ago.

Outside the window, fireworks explode. A LOUD BANG and lots of colors. Nate sits up in the bed. What the hell?

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- MOLLY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Molly, dressed to go out, touching up her make up in the mirror, walks over to the window and looks outside where more fireworks explode.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- DANIEL'S ROOM -- EVENING

Daniel, his computer open to a Wikipedia page of The Kinsey Scale, looks out the window.

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE -- BACK YARD -- EVENING

Rita stands in the darkness. She's taping a little troll to a banger. She lights the fuse and throws away the banger. A HUGE BANG and the troll is blown to pieces. She grabs another troll and ties it to a rocket. Daniel comes over to the garden door behind her and looks out.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Daniel stands and looks out of the garden door at his mother. Molly approaches, having thrown on sweats.

MOLLY
What's going on?

Daniel shrugs. Molly joins him at the door. Fireworks explode outside. Nate and Grace enter and walk over to them.

NATE
What’s she doing?

Daniel and Molly shrug and laugh.

MOLLY
She’s finally lost it.

NATE
About time.

They stand there for a while and look out at Rita. She is lighting the fuse of a rocket with a troll tied to it. She lets it go, then sees her kids in the doorway and runs to join them, to watch the sky light up with these kids she so deeply loves. As the fireworks explode...

DANIEL
I'm gay.

No one really reacts. Rita manages a small, proud smile.

MOLLY
Told you so.

DANIEL
Yeah.

Rita puts her arm around Daniel’s shoulder, kisses him. The family stands united, looking at the night sky as a giant rocket explodes and beautiful, colored embers shower down over the house. Off the light, reflecting in Rita’s eyes...

END OF SHOW *