

TWENTY-SOMETHING

What You Say

Written by

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COLD OPEN

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - STREET - DAY

PEOPLE(18-30's) walk around the streets of Manhattan.

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A beautiful, upscale, and wide building. Tons of PEOPLE(18-60's), enter and exit. A receptionist's desk is in the middle of the floor. Phones RING, lots of chatter; it's the everyday fast-paced, busy office environment to be expected in such a city.

There's a GROUP of about fifteen people(20's), who stand and listen to OWEN FIELDS(33), he sits on edge of a side table. He is a black, the passionate and kind boss who rocks a business tight-fitting suit.

OWEN

We're closing in on this soon,
guys. I need us all on top of
this...

ZEKE FIELDS(22), Black, Owen's goofy yet charismatic brother wears BAGGY JEANS and BAGGY T-SHIRT, reclines in his seat.

ELIZABETH "ELI" KING(21), Black, A vibrant braided beauty. She sits next to him in a rolling chair.

ZEKE

(whispers)
Man, this nigga boring.

OWEN (O.C.)

The launch party is coming up
sooner than we think...

Eli leans next to Zeke.

ELI

He's your brother.

OWEN (O.C.)

I need you all to know what to say
when they ask you...

ZEKE

(to Eli)
I don't be claiming him like that.

Eli scoffs and rolls her eyes.

OWEN

Zeke! You like to talk so much, can you tell me what you're going to say when investors ask you... why should I spend my money on Fields Oak Publishing?

Zeke smacks his lips and scoffs. Everyone turns around. They wait for his answer.

ZEKE

That's easy. Why not Fields Oak?

He laughs and the whole group looks at him funny. Eli rolls her eyes and looks over to the guy standing next to her chair.

TOMMY(23), Latino, a semi-feminine gay man dressed in a monochrome orange suit. Tommy and Eli share a cocky smirk.

OWEN

Wow. Let this be an example to all of you. Nepotism can be your downfall.

The group laughs.

ZEKE

(whispers to Eli)
What the fuck does nepotism mean?

ELI

I think what Zeke said is spot on.

The group of people quiet down they turn to look Eli.

OWEN

Eli, care to explain?

ELI

Obviously, he was missing some details, but he is right. Why not Field Oak?

ELI (CONT'D)

We are the only publishing house in New York with its own public library open to the public.

Eli nervously hold her hands.

ELI (CONT'D)

We're the only company to do any
and all books for underprivileged
schools.

She clears her throat.

ELI (CONT'D)

We are actually making a difference
within the writing community to
have a public platform. So why not
us?

She shrugs her shoulders and looks around the room.

Owen claps, everyone follows.

OWEN

And that right there is why I pay
you the big bucks! Take notes,
Zeke.

ZEKE

(mockingly)

Take notes, Zeke. Shut the fuck up.

Eli chuckles and looks up at BRITTANY(25), one of
those blonde Instagram influencers with an unimpressed look.

OWEN

I don't know what you're teaching
these assistants, Brit, but it
seems to be rubbing off on them.

BRITTANY

I don't want to take all the
credit, but yes, I am. There's a
lot of teaching
and...rubbing...going on.

TOMMY

(to Eli and Zeke)

Is she serious?

Eli and Zeke sigh.

ELI

Yup.

ZEKE

Yup.

OWEN

Um cool.

A BEAT.

Thank you again, Eli. Everyone,
please take the time to come up
with your own answer as to why not
Fields Oak.

He gets up from the side table and walks near the conference
room exit.

OWEN (CONT'D)

The party is getting closer and
closer, so I need all of you on top
of your game. Class dismissed.

He exits, the group chuckles, and disperses.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - OFFICE SPACE - DAY

The office looks like IKEA threw up in there. MODERN DECOR fills the wide open space. Multiple desks are placed outside the main conference room.

Tommy sits on top of his desk.

TOMMY

(to Eli)

That man is so fine. Suit's a bit too small but still fine as hell.

ELI

It is small, isn't it?

TOMMY

Mhm.

They both laugh. Zeke walks upon them.

ZEKE

What are y'all laughing at?

TOMMY

How Eli ate you up just now.

ZEKE

Man, please. You heard her? I was right, after all.

TOMMY

That is not at all what she said.

ZEKE

Uh, yet it was. She said Zeke was right, we should go with what he said.

TOMMY

(whispers to Eli)

Delusional.

Eli chuckles and looks up at Brittany as she approaches the trio.

BRITTANY

Alright you guys, Owen has the finalization paperwork you all need to look over and submit by tonight.

She opens up her binder and hands out SHEETS OF PAPER to Zeke and Tommy and a healthy stack to Eli.

ELI

Hold up. Why do I have so much more to do than everyone else?

BRITTANY

(mocking)

Why not give you more than everyone else?

ELI

Are you kidding? I'm being punished for saving Zeke's ass? Shouldn't he get more work for his dumbass answer?

TOMMY

(to Zeke)

Told you.

ZEKE

Can we leave my ass out of this, please? Since Brittany is doing a lot of rubbing these days.

Brittany scoffs at his comment.

BRITTANY

Shut up. You knew what I meant!

ZEKE

Did we?

She rolls her eyes and ignores him.

BRITTANY

(to Eli)

What you say reflects on the rest of us.

TOMMY

And yet you still took credit for
(air quotes)
teaching us when we all know you don't teach shit.

BRITTANY

I delegate, thank you very much.

TOMMY

(mocks her)

Only cause your privilege allows.

Zeke and Eli laugh to themselves.

BRITTANY

Look, you do the work I give you.
You don't like it, I'd be happy to
tell Owen about it. You like that?

Eli tenses up.

BRITTANY (CONT'D)

I didn't think so.

ELI

Look, all I'm asking is that this
be divided evenly.

She lifts up the stacks of paper.

ELI (CONT'D)

This will take me all night.

BRITTANY

Then you better hurry up. Lord
knows you need the beauty rest.

Brittany exits with a strong turn and hair flip.

TOMMY

Here.

Tommy grabs the stack of papers from Eli. He takes two sheets
and then gives some to Zeke. The process continues till
there's no more paper.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

We got you.

ZEKE

Speak for yourself.

Zeke gives Eli back her paperwork, flashes a peace sign, and
walks away. Tommy pats her on the back.

TOMMY

Don't let her make you take your
eyes off the prize. Someone has
to be the one to take her job.

Eli lights up at his suggestion as he walks away. Eli takes a
moment and walks into the bathroom.

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - WOMENS PUBLIC BATHROOM - DAY

Wide bathroom, multiple stalls, marble sink, counters, and one big mirror

Eli checks under the stalls before she digs into her pocket and pulls out a WEED PEN. She stands in the mirror and takes a long hit.

INT. WOMEN'S PUBLIC RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS - DREAM SEQUENCE

As she blows the smoke, ELIZABETH(21), dressed in all black, Eli's conscience like an angel and devil, exits a stall. She sits on the counter.

ELIZABETH

What's up, bitch! Took you long enough.

ELI

Hey! Girl, y'know I be working.

Eli grunts in frustration.

ELIZABETH

True. What's wrong?

ELI

Brittany's dumbass. She called me ugly as if we all didn't see her pre-nose job.

She pauses.

ELI (CONT'D)

(whispers)

They did a good job, though. There's like no scarring.

ELIZABETH

One way to defeat a Karen ass bitch is to take something from her. Like her job.

They both laugh.

ELI

I don't think I can handle a lead position right now. Like everyone else sees me as someone that's like capable as fuck.

She hits her pen.

ELIZABETH

But bitch you are! We're capable.

ELI

No we're not. I'm the only one
earning a paycheck. I'm a mess--

She coughs.

ELI (CONT'D)

I don't know what I did--

She coughs some more.

ELI (CONT'D)

to make people think I'm that
responsible.

She passes the pen to Elizabeth. She takes a long hit, which
confuses Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)

How do you do that and not cough?

ELIZABETH

Bitch, I'm not real.

ELI

Oh yeah.

She laughs.

ELIZABETH

Look, you're at the this point in
your life where nothing makes
sense. It's not supposed to.

Eli drifts off and looks in the mirror.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

But there is nothing wrong with
envisioning your life to be better
than what it is now. One day you'll
realize how capable you actually
are.

ELI

Do you think Owen goes to the
tailor and purposely asks for a
smaller suit or is it the way he
washes it?

Elizabeth sighs.

ELIZABETH
 (disappointed)
 You should really stop
 smoking during work.

ELI (CONT'D)
 I gotta stop smoking at work.

Elizabeth puts the pen down and enters a stall. Brittany startles Eli when she walks into the bathroom. She rushes to grab the weed pen and puts it in her back pocket before she could see. Brittany rolls her eyes and scoffs as she enters a stall.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - OFFICE SPACE - DAY

Zeke spins in his chair while he's on the PHONE.

ZEKE
 You know you can't talk like this
 while I'm at work.

He shakes his head.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
 Oh yeah, why not?

ZEKE
 Cause...
 (whispers)
 I'll get hard.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
 God, you're such a boy.

ZEKE
 I am not ashamed.

MICHELLE (V.O.)
 Think you can stop by when you're
 off?

ZEKE
 I can. Want me to pick up anything?

MICHELLE (V.O.)
 A bottle of wine...maybe two.

Zeke makes loud SMOOCHES into the phone and hangs up. Everyone notices plus Eli. She turns back around in her seat and texts on her phone.

INSERT: TEXT-NIGGAS ARE WEIRD.

INT. APARTMENT - MARS ROOM - DAY

A monochromatic pristine room that is organized compulsively. Decorated with an impeccable taste. Ballerina trinkets and posters are everywhere.

MARINA "MARS" FELIX(21), Afro-Latina, fiery and loyal. She's lays on her bed when her phone VIBRATES. She reads a book called Outing Yourself by Michelangelo Signorile.

INSERT: OUTING YOURSELF BY MICHELANGELO SIGNORILE BOOK COVER.

She types on her phone.

MARS
(to herself)
So are women...because I like
them...because I'm bi.

She shakes her head and deletes the message.

MARS (CONT'D)
They can't help themselves.
Pasta for dinner?

She closes her phone and puts it onto her nightstand. She notices and picks up the mini ballerina statue and toys with the material. She grunts loudly and throws it on her bed and gets up.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The living room is a bit cluttered with lots of FURNITURE and MISMATCHED DECOR. Yet, still spacious.

Mars sits down on the couch next to her roommate, THEO AVERY(22), Black, light-hearted, and goofy. Slouches as he watches TV on the couch.

MARS
What the fuck? Is that porn?

THEO
Nope. Adult film.

MARS
What's the difference?

THEO
It's tasteful.

Mars grabs the REMOTE to see the title on the TV.

ACT TWO

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - ELI'S DESK - DAY

MONTAGE - ELI'S WORKDAY

Timelapse.

- A.) She listens to music.
- B.) She eats at her desk.
- C.) She scrolls through her phone.
- D.) Types on her computer.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - ELI'S DESK - NIGHT

EMPLOYEES(20's-40's), wave goodbye as they walk past her desk.

Eli sits at her desk and sorts through mounds of paperwork. She exits the office.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - STREET - NIGHT

Eli walks down the steps to get to the subway.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

An overcrowded train. OLD MAN(60), sleeps in his chair. PREGNANT WOMAN(30), speaks on the phone as she rubs her belly. Three KIDS(11), laugh as the subway SCREECHES.

An annoyed Eli leans against a pole. PASSENGERS(10-60's), bump and push her.

Two OLD WOMEN(70), embrace each other.

Eli grins slightly at the couple.

DEREK AND MARK(30's), in FAST FOOD UNIFORMS and NAME TAGS, watch a video on Derek's phone of BLACK INCEL(30's), the Andrew Tate type, rants into a microphone.

INSERT: BLACK INCEL'S YOUTUBE RANT VIDEO.

BLACK INCEL (V.O.)
 All I'm saying is that women are
 put on this Earth to take from you,
 kings!

Derek nods his head in agreement.

BLACK INCEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Don't let basic bitches stop you
 from seeing the bigger picture. We
 are better than them because we
 have something they want!

Derek nods again.

DEREK
 Mhm, that's facts.

BLACK INCEL (V.O.)
 That's why we must remind them how
 ugly they are, how we can't have
 them walking around thinking they
 are tens. We are the tens. Simple.

MARK
 See niggas like him, get it. They
 are trying to take us for our
 pockets.

DEREK
 Yup.

ELI
 (to herself)
 What the fuck?

Eli watches in confusion, then turns the other way.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - NIGHT

Modern apartment building, far from upscale but clean and
 wide.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

She steps onto the elevator a COUPLE(20's), make out in the
 corner. They ride with her to the fourth floor.

They exit first. She follows behind them.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eli digs into her purse to find her keys. She bumps into her neighbor CHARLIE MONTGOMERY(21), brown skin, charming with a gorgeous smile.

CHARLIE
Hey you!

Eli pauses.

ELI
H-- Hey.

CHARLIE
How're you doing?

ELI
Great. I'm mean...I'm good. How are you?

He smirks.

CHARLIE
I'm doing good, too! I was actually thinking about you this morning.

ELI
Really?

Her eyes light up.

CHARLIE
Mhm. I was cleaning the couch and found some hot Cheetos crumbs under the cushion.

He moves closer and grabs the end of one of her braids.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Probably from the last time you were over.

Her smile drops.

ELI
Oh. It was cause I was eating them lying down.
(whispers)
That's probably not good for me.

CHARLIE
You probably eat in bed don't you?

ELI
No! Not lately anyways.

Charlie chuckles.

CHARLIE
What are you doing, la--

ELI (CONT'D)
What are you up to toni-

They both stop and then laugh at each other.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I was wondering if maybe you'd want
to chill later. Dante still isn't
back from London just yet. You
could...stay over?

She struggles to keep her composure.

ELI
Yeah, maybe later. I've got some
work to finish.

CHARLIE
That's cool. I'm on my way to the
gym, but text me.

He pecks her on the cheek and then walks away. He turns
around to check her out again and licks his lips.

He presses the elevator button and then enters. Eli sighs and
fans herself off. She walks to her door but struggles to
unlock it.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The suitcase and duffle bag block her path into her home.
Mars and Theo stand side by side in front of their couch.

MARS
I think this belongs to you...

Theo and Mars take one step apart from each other and reveal
Christina as she cries on the couch.

Eli SLAMS the door closed.

CHRISTINA
Hey Eli...

THEO
Welcome home, Eli. Don't worry, we
were taking good care of the sister
we didn't know you had.

He fakes laugh. Mars nods in agreement. Eli stares at Christina in shock, then back at her roommates.

ELI

Christina? What're you...why're you here right now?

Christina runs to Eli to hug her, then sobs.

CHRISTINA

I didn't get accepted into Berkeley. Mom and Dad couldn't have been happier. They wanted me to start training at the bakery.

THEO

Bakery?

Christina turns to him.

CHRISTINA

Yeah, our Mom owns a bakery.

MARS

What's it called?

CHRISTINA

Justice's Bakery?

THEO

Who the fuck is Justice?

CHRISTINA

Our mom?

THEO

(to Eli)

So your parents own a whole bakery but we couldn't upgrade our family plan on Spotify?

ELI

Shut the fuck up, Theo.

He grabs his chest like he's hurt. Eli squeezes Christina's shoulders.

ELI (CONT'D)

Christina. Why're you here?

Christina inhales deep.

CHRISTINA

(quick)

I've got til the end of summer to apply for next year's program. There was no way I was gonna stay in Arizona for another year so Mom and Dad guilt trip me into taking over the business.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

So I pulled a you and just left.

Eli shoves Christina.

ELI

Are you insane? I left for school. You ran away because you didn't want to work all summer? That's not pulling a me. It's called being dumb.

MARS

It sounds like you.

Eli gives Mars the finger.

THEO

(to Mars)

Somebody had a rough day at work.

MARS

Let's just start dinner... since there's an extra mouth to feed.

She pauses.

MARS (CONT'D)

Are you positive Michelle is coming?

THEO

Yeah, of course she is.

MARS

(dry)

Great.

She forces a smile.

Eli rolls her eyes. She grabs her sister. She opens the large window and crawls out onto the fire escape. Christina follows behind.

EXT. APARTMENT - FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT

A plain fire escape that can only hold a few people.
Christina grabs onto the railing.

CHRISTINA

How come your roommates didn't know
about me? It's kinda hard
explaining to them I was your
sister. Theo almost called the
cops.

ELI

Really?

CHRISTINA

Yeah. What are you like,
embarrassed by me?

ELI

What? No. Never.

CHRISTINA

So why don't they know about me or
Mom's bakery?

ELI

I don't... really talk about my
life in Arizona.

Christina nods. She looks at the gorgeous view of Brooklyn
and the luminous Manhattan skyline.

CHRISTINA

Nice view.

ELI

Look, I'm happy to see you. I am.
It's just a heads up would've been
nice.

She gets close to Christina.

CHRISTINA

A heads up? Do y'know how hard it
is to get a hold of you? I was
convinced you got a new number and
didn't tell anyone.

Christina pulls away.

ELI

That's not fair! I have a full-time
job, and I'm a full-time student.

(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)
 I've been busy but not unavailable.
 If you were in a crisis, I'd drop
 everything.

CHRISTINA
 Do you hear yourself? I need to be
 in a crisis to hear from you? You
 didn't even tell me that you were
 coming home for my graduation.

ELI
 But--

Eli's phone RINGS.

INSERT: ELI'S PHONE SCREEN: DAD.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Fuck, Christina!

She shows Christina her phone screen.

ELI (CONT'D)
 Do they even know you left?!

Christina stands up and stares at her sister's screen.

CHRISTINA
 Yes!

ELI
 Then why's he calling me?!

CHRISTINA
 (sarcastic)
 It has been awhile since he's heard
 your voice.

ELI
 Christina!

CHRISTINA
 They think you picked me up from
 the airport this morning.

ELI
 Christina!

CHRISTINA
 Are you going to keep yelling at me
 or are you gonna answer your phone?

Christina points at the phone as it rings. Eli picks up it
 and holds it to her ear.

ELI
Hey, Dad...

Eli glares at Christina then turns around and crawls back into the apartment.

Christina turns to the view one more time.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eli stomps to her bedroom door. Mars and Theo watch Eli. Both don't move.

MARS
(whispers)
She's pissed.

He nods.

ELI (O.C.)
Yeah, picked her up this morning.
Yes, in a taxi.

Christina rolls her eyes crawls back into the apartment. She walks to the kitchen.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A messy kitchen with decor scattered everywhere. A PICTURE OF BEYONCE hangs on the fridge door.

Christina pulls out a chair from the table. Theo and Mars stand still at the stove.

CHRISTINA
You guys aren't actually making
dinner, are you?

Theo and Mars both turn to face Christina.

THEO
Nope.

MARS
Not at all.

MARS (CONT'D)
We didn't want to make a lotta
noise and miss out on what you were
saying. We did start the pasta
though. Theo, hand me the sauce.

Theo's phone rings.

THEO

Shit! It's Michelle, be right back.

Theo exits the kitchen. Mars rolls her eyes.

CHRISTINA

Who's Michelle?

Mars walks to the fridge to grab Alfredo sauce.

MARS

It's his girlfriend. She's probably calling to cancel on us again because she's too busy.

She grabs a pan and pours Alfredo sauce in it. Mars violently stirs the sauce.

CHRISTINA

What does she do?

MARS

She's a designer. You might've heard of her, Michelle Keating.

Christina slams her hand on the table.

CHRISTINA

Michelle Keating! He's dating the Michelle Keating? She's like the youngest designer to have her own collection at New York Fashion Week!

Mars stares at Christina.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

What? I'm a fashion major.

MARS

Yeah, that bitch. Grab those plates behind you and set the table, please.

Christina stands up and grabs the PLATES out of the cabinet.

INTERCUT: THEO AND MICHELLE'S PHONE CALL.

INT. APARTMENT - THEO'S BEDROOM - LATER

A typical musicians' room, dirty, unorganized, and POSTERS everywhere and a MINI DRUM SET in the corner.

Theo paces around while on the phone with Michelle.

THEO
So you really aren't coming?

INT. MICHELLE'S PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Upscale and luxurious apartment. EXPENSIVE TRINKETS all along side the wall.

MICHELLE KEATING(28), racially ambiguous, bitchy, and rich.

MICHELLE
Don't be mad at me. I can't control when I'm needed for a show.

She paces around.

THEO
Of course, I'm not mad at you. I'm just saying, this is the fourth time you've skipped out on me. I haven't seen my own girlfriend in a month!

MICHELLE
What'd you want me to do? Put my whole career on hold to eat ramen noodles with your roommates?

THEO
We're making alfredo!

Theo exhales. Michelle rolls her eyes.

MICHELLE
Ew. Even worse.

THEO
I just miss you, okay?
I'm constantly canceling gigs to just see your shows...to see you.

MICHELLE
I miss you too. I'm sorry, I'll try to do better.

THEO
You always say that.

She stares out the window.

MICHELLE

This month is crazy for me, but as soon as I'm free, I'll be right over...

(seductive)

And do that one thing you like...

Theo grins.

THEO

Fuck. I really do like that one thing.

MICHELLE

I'm sure you miss it a lot too.

THEO

You bet your sweet ass I do.

Michelle's front door click opens and Zeke walks through the door with GROCERY BAG in hands.

THEO (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I love yo--

Michelle jumps up from her couch.

MICHELLE

Love you too! Talk to you later, bye.

Michelle hangs up quick and runs over to Zeke at the dinner table.

ZEKE

Who was that?

He pulls out a BOTTLE OF WINE from the grocery bag and sets it on the table.

MICHELLE

Just my assistant.

She grabs a hold of him and puts her arms around his neck.

ZEKE

You say "I love you" to your assistant?

MICHELLE

We're really close...

ZEKE
(seductive)
How close?

Michelle smirks at him then kisses him deep. He pulls her close. It is slow at first it becomes more passionate. Michelle grips the front of Zeke's shirt while his hand grip her legs to pick her up and place her on the table.

—
END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. APARTMENT - THEO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Theo stands still and listens to the DIAL TONE.

THEO
 (to himself.)
 I love you...

Theo looks at his phone, a picture of Michelle is his lockscreen, and then he exits his room.

INT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

He bumps into Eli. They stop in front of each other.

ELI
 Michelle's not coming?

THEO
 Nope.

Theo looks into the kitchen from the hallway at Christina and Mars.

THEO (CONT'D)
 Is Christina staying?

Eli groans.

ELI
 Yeah...

THEO
 Eli... Why didn't you tell us?
 You've always been private about
 your life before New York.

ELI
 So what?

THEO
 So we've never wanted to pry in
 case it was some big dark secret,
 but Christina's here, and she's
 anything but dark.

Eli scrunches her face. Theo's mouth drops. He realizes what he just said.

THEO (CONT'D)

I mean that in like a figurative way cause obviously, she's, you know...dark but I meant it like, you know..

Eli pauses, looks at Theo, and then glances at Christina and walks into the kitchen. Theo follows behind her.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mars sets the pot with pasta in the middle of the table.

MARS

(bad French accent)
Dinner is served!

Everyone looks at her, confused.

MARS (CONT'D)

What? It's French.

THEO

Nice try.

Christina giggles, and Mars sits down.

MARS

(baby voice)
Is Chelle not coming to dinner? Is that what makes Theo grumpy?

She pinches his cheek. He glares at her.

MARS (CONT'D)

That's like what the fourth time this month? She must really hate slumming it in Brooklyn with us.

Theo slams down his fork.

THEO

What's your problem with her?

Mars scoffs at him. She puts food on her plate. Theo snatches her fork from her.

MARS

Excuse you?

THEO

I'm serious. What's your fucking problem?

THEO
 He's our weed man. He sells to the
 whole building. He's just making
 his rounds.

ELI
 Theo!

Theo gets up to answer the door. He shakes his head.

THEO
 There are no weeds in New York.
 That was a terrible lie.

Theo opens the door Luce barges inside.

LUCE
Show them hoes how you bankroll!

THEO
 Sup bro?

They dap each other up.

LUCE
 How're my favorite customers?

Luce walks closer to the kitchen table, he winks at Mars.

LUCE (CONT'D)
 (to Mars)
 Hey, beautiful.

MARS
 Ew.

He pauses when he notices Christina.

LUCE
 Who dat?

He points at Christina.

CHRISTINA
 I'm Christina, Elizabeth's sister.

They shake hands.

LUCE
 Who?

He pulls his hand away.

ELI

Me!

LUCE

Then why she call you Elizabeth?

ELI

Because that's my name?

She sighs loudly.

LUCE

Then why do we call you Eli?

ELI

It's my nickname.

LUCE

Shouldn't it be El-e?

ELI

No, I prefer...what do you want,
Luce?

Theo walks to the fridge. He grabs a JAR of money off the top.

THEO

Don't even answer that, bro!
I'll take all the OG you got. After
tonight's events, we could all
use some.

CHRISTINA

Eli, you smoke weed?

Theo, Luce, and Mars look up at Christina and then at Eli at the same time. They wait for her response.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ELI THE STONER

- A.) Eli rips her bong.
- B.) She lights multiple joints in her mouth.
- C.) She coughs up smoke on the couch with Theo and Mars.
- D.) Zeke hypes Eli as she uses a homemade gas mask bong.
- E.) Theo, Eli, Mars are about to leave the apartment.

ELI

Wait! Should we smoke before we
go?

CHRISTINA
He just took my plate.

MARS
He does that sometimes.

Eli hands Christina her plate. She stands up to make herself a new plate.

ELI
Here.

Theo grabs his PINEAPPLE BONG from the cabinet above the stove. He sits back down and breaks apart the weed to fit into the mouthpiece.

ELI (CONT'D)
Theo!

THEO
What?

Eli gestures her head at her sister. Christina blankly stares at Theo.

THEO (CONT'D)
What am I looking at?

ELI
No smoking at the table

MARS
Since when?

ELI
Since right now!

Eli grabs the bong from him, but he snatches it back.

THEO
Christina? Do you mind if I hit my bong in my house, which I pay for, that you are a guest in?

CHRISTINA
Uh, no, I guess.

THEO
Great, cause I was gonna do it anyway.

Eli rolls her eyes as Theo rips from the bong. He passes it to Mars. Christina watches them in awe as Mars sparks up.

CHRISTINA
Just like the movies... I think
I'm starting to like it here
already.

ELI
Don't get used to it.

The table gets silent at Eli's remark.

LUCE
(exaggerated NYC accent)
You know the facts, bro. His baby
moms ain't thinking bout him, you
know why...

He nods his head.

LUCE (CONT'D)
Cause she thinking about me! Ahh!

He pauses and gasps slightly.

LUCE (CONT'D)
Oh, she robbed him?

He goes back to eating his food.

CHRISTINA
So you've guys known Eli a long
time, right?

MARS
(coughs it up)
Three years.

CHRISTINA
Wow. That's a long time and for
some reason Eli has never mentioned
either of you.

Theo takes another long hit from the bong and passes it back
to Mars.

MARS
We could say the same about you.

CHRISTINA
(offended)
So, you must know a lot about her.

THEO
Pretty much.

CHRISTINA
 Oh yeah? Do you know her boobs
 aren't real?

Everyone gasps.

LUCE
 A bomb just dropped nigga. I gotta
 go.

He hangs up and rushes to the table.

ELI
 Christina!

CHRISTINA
 Eli!

Eli points at her sister.

ELI
 She's lying! She's been
 telling that lie ever since I hit
 puberty.

MARS
 (mumbles)
 They are abnormally perky.

THEO
 Yup.

LUCE
 Yes they are.

CHRISTINA
 She begged our parents for a boob
 job when she turned sixteen!

MARS
 Girl--

LUCE
 Damn.

Eli notices Theo hyper-focused on her chest, and she snaps in
 his face.

ELI
 (yells)
 Would you stop it?

Theo shakes his head and snaps out of the trance.

THEO
 Huh? What?

Christina giggles, which aggravates Eli. She stands up.

ELI

If you think for a second I'm going
to let you stay here, you're crazy.

Christina moves closer to Eli's face.

CHRISTINA

You're really gonna kick me out?
Where the hell am I gonna go?

ELI

Oh God, don't be so dramatic,
Christina. There's a home that you
can go to.

CHRISTINA

I cannot go back there! I cannot
face Mom and Dad because...

She hesitates.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

Because...I didn't get into Berkely
at all. I lied! I thought I was a
shoo-in, so I didn't apply anywhere
else. I'm a fucking failure.

Christina pushes her chair out of the way, shaking the table.
She storms off to Eli's room and SLAMS her door.

Awkward pause.

LUCE

So...are your titties real or...

Everyone stares at Luce. Mars raises an eyebrow.

LUCE (CONT'D)

I'll...uh...let myself out.

They watch Luce exit the apartment.

The room is quiet. Theo and Mars lock eyes with each other.
Mars suggests they exit with her head, and Theo nods; he
clears his throat.

THEO

I think we're gonna...head to the
roof. Pack a joint.

MARS

Yeah, you guys need some...space.

They pause for a moment, then get up from the table as abruptly as possible. They exit.

Eli sighs and walks towards her bedroom door. She pauses, runs back to the table, and grabs the LIGHTER and bong to take a quick hit.

She exhales, puts it back on the table, and walks to her bedroom door.

She knocks and cracks her door open. She gets a peek at Christina, and sobs as she lays face down on the bed. She enters all the way.

INT. APARTMENT - ELI'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A cozy and spacious Brooklyn bedroom. Decorated from top to bottom of POSTERS, TRINKETS, and PICTURES with a giant window in the center.

ELI

Hey.

Christina continues to sob into her bed which makes Eli cringe. She sits down on the edge of her bed.

ELI (CONT'D)

Christina...why didn't you just tell me?

Christina lifts her head up for a moment.

CHRISTINA

(blubbers)

It's embarrassing. I didn't want you to think I was a fuck up.

She puts her head back down.

ELI

Are you kidding me? My whole life's about fucking up. I fucked up like three times today. If I don't fuck up...something's truly wrong.

Christina lifts her head back up.

CHRISTINA

Really?

Eli reaches to rub the back of Christina's calf.

ELI
Yes, really!

Christina cries harder.

ELI (CONT'D)
Come on, sit up.

Christina flips over and scoots to the end of her bed to sit next to Eli on the edge. Eli puts her arm around her.

ELI (CONT'D)
You're certainly not the first person to be rejected from your dream school and I'm the last person to judge you. I promise.

CHRISTINA
I just...don't understand what's going on. Nothing feels right anymore like I'm lost right now.

She continues to cry.

ELI
Oh girl, welcome to the rest of your life. High school gave you security, and now that you're out of it and on your own...you'll always feel lost. I feel lost right now.

CHRISTINA
(sniffles)
But you're like...old.

ELI
The fuck? I am 21.

Christina shrugs.

ELI (CONT'D)
Not the point...Look, I wish that I could tell you that it's all going to get better, but you're eighteen...it's all pretty much downhill from here.

CHRISTINA
This is the worst pep talk ever.

ELI
True, but it might bring you some comfort. Sometimes, things just
(MORE)

ELI (CONT'D)
don't work out, but there's
always tomorrow.

Christina groans.

CHRISTINA
Sorry for saying your boobs are
fake.

ELI
It's okay. They're a blessing and a
curse...sorry for trying to kick
you out.

CHRISTINA
Does that mean I get to stay?

She lights up.

ELI
Yes, but I want you to understand
that New York is not the love story
the movies make it out to be. You
have to get a job and deal with
rats just like everybody else.

Christina squeals and jumps on the bed.

CHRISTINA
Yes, yes, yes! I can do that!

She squeezes Eli.

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)
(in one breath)
You're the best! I love you so
much. I'm going to hop in the
shower because JFK is a nasty ass
place, but I'm so excited to be
living here with you.

ELI
(dry)
Yay.

She kisses Eli and hops off the bed. Eli pauses for a moment
and glances at her MIRROR in front of her. She groans and
puts her head in her hands.

EXT. APARTMENT - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

It's a fairly plain roof with tree lights hanging from poles
on the edges of the railing.

The view of Brooklyn stretches out before them as the lights from the streets and other buildings illuminate the night sky.

Theo and Mars lean on the rails. They share the packed joint.

THEO

I think it's a farce. She just didn't want to tell Eli she's in that life.

MARS

Dude, just because she has a Louis Vuitton duffle doesn't mean she's a drug dealer. Shit, I have one.

THEO

And you're sure you know exactly what your parents do for a living?

Theo goes to put the joint to his lips, but Mars stops him. She takes it out of his hands.

MARS

You're cut off.

Theo watches as she puts the joint out on the ground. He pouts. She turns her attention back to the view.

MARS (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm sorry about what I said to about Michelle. I shouldn't have called her a cunt. That wasn't cool.

THEO

What? You didn't call her a cunt.

MARS

Really? I must've thought about it in my head.

Theo shakes his head.

MARS (CONT'D)

She makes you happy, and I should be happy for you. You're my bestie for the resties. I should be more supportive.

THEO

Thank you. I'm sorry, too; I shouldn't have said you're a bitter bitch who's gonna die alone.

MARS
You didn't say that.

THEO
Really? Thought I did.

She pinches his arm. He then flinches. They laugh.

MARS
I'm not a bitter bitch.

He laughs.

THEO
You're right. You're just hella
picky when it comes to niggas.

She sighs and leans over the edge.

MARS
I don't even know if I'm gonna end
up with one.

THEO
What do you mean?

Mars realizes what she says and stands back up.

MARS
Nothing. I just mean...what if I'm
one of those people that never get
married? Like...Whoopi Goldberg!

Theo nods.

THEO
Hmm, that makes sense.

MARS
Also ballet has been taking up a
lot of my time...

THEO
Then it's just not in the cards for
you right now.

MARS
Uh-huh.

Eli opens the roof door. She walks to the edge toward her
roommates and stands on the other side of Theo.

MARS (CONT'D)

I didn't know you were coming up. I just put out the joint.

ELI

It's okay. I don't want to smoke anymore.

They gasp.

ELI (CONT'D)

Tonight! I don't want to smoke anymore tonight!

THEO

Oh good.

MARS

You had me worried there for a second.

She chuckles at them and sighs.

ELI

I know you guys have questions--

THEO

Are you aware she's smuggling drugs?

Mars hits him on his arm.

MARS

Theo!

ELI

What is wrong with you?

THEO

What? That's a valid question.

ELI

Anyways... look, I don't want you to think that I never trusted to tell you about my home life. I was just so focused on getting here...I never brought up where I came from.

Mars and Theo nod as they listen.

ELI (CONT'D)

I had no friends when I was living at the dorms, so I had no one to tell my life story. Then I met you guys, and...we've just had so much fun the last few years; I just never got around to it. I'm sorry for that.

MARS

You have nothing to be sorry for...

Mars walks around Theo to put her arms around Eli.

MARS (CONT'D)

Even though we did almost call the police on Christina...

Eli smacks her lips.

MARS (CONT'D)

When you're ready to tell us, we'll listen.

Mars hugs her.

ELI

Thank you guys.

THEO

We got you.

Theo gently pushes Mars away and grabs Eli to lean over to lay his head on her chest.

THEO (CONT'D)

Yup. I knew they were real.

The girls groan in disgust and hit him to get off her.

ELI

You're so gross!

MARS

Dude!

THEO

Alright, alright.

They laugh. Eli checks her phone screen and sees a text from Charlie 45 minutes ago.

INSERT: ELI'S PHONE SCREEN FROM CHARLIE: YOU STILL BUSY?

She squeals, which startles the roommates.

ELI

I totally forgot! Charlie wanted me to sleepover.

She gasps.

ELI (CONT'D)

I gotta shave.

She zooms past her roommates to open the roof door and stomps downstairs. Mars and Theo watch her.

MARS

Good talk!

THEO

At least one of us is getting some.

He pouts. Mars pulls his arm to drag him downstairs after Eli.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Eli, Theo, and Mars exits the elevator and walks down the hallway to her apartment. They stops when she sees Charlie and Christina.

CHARLIE

(laughing)

Wait, really?

CHRISTINA

I swear. She's freakishly tall because she used to drink gallons milk.

THEO

(mumbles)

Damn...

Eli is flabbergasted at the sight. Charlie finally notices the group.

CHARLIE

Hey, what's up yall?

Theo and Mars wave.

ELI

H...hi. What are you doing out...here?

CHARLIE

You hadn't answered my text, so I thought I'd knock on the door, and Christina answered...

He pokes her side with his elbow. She giggles.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And we just started talking...
You didn't tell me you had a
sister.

MARS

(mumbles)

Yikes.

Eli fake laughs, glances at him, then at Christina who's
hyper-focused on Charlie.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. FIELDS OAK PUBLISHING - ELI'S DESK - NEXT DAY

Tommy sits on the edge of Eli's desk.

TOMMY

Damn! You were ready to get dicked down, and you find out your sister was chatting him up?

She groans, slouched in her rolling chair.

ELI

Oh, please don't say it like that!

TOMMY

So, what happened next?

ELI

Well, after she was done embarrassing me...

She sits back up and scoots closer to her desk.

ELI (CONT'D)

I pulled her into the apartment and kindly reminded her as the big sister...I can still beat that ass.

Tommy chuckles.

TOMMY

She was probably starstruck. I can't imagine there's a lot of lightskin men in the country.

ELI

Where do you think Arizona is?

He shrugs; he looks up and points to Owen and Brittany in the corner.

TOMMY

Look at *too little suit* and *Nose Job Barbie* over there.

Eli turns around to see a hysterical Brittany laugh and hit Owen really hard.

ELI

He looks so uncomfortable. I'd die if he looked at me like that.

TOMMY
 People with no self-awareness...it
 looks like fun.

They both laugh. Zeke approaches with a pep in his step with coffee in both of his hands.

ZEKE
 Two iced coffees for my two best
 friends. You've been working hard,
 so I thought I'd treat you.

He sets them down on her desk.

ELI
 Treat us?

TOMMY
 Best friends?

Zeke laughs loudly, which startles both of them.

ZEKE
 Oh, Tommy! You're so funny.

TOMMY
 Now what the fuck got into you?

ZEKE
 If you must know...

He gets closer to them.

ZEKE (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 A woman.

ELI
 Ew.

TOMMY
 Ha! You got pegged!

ZEKE
 What! No, I said that wrong. I got
 into... a woman.

He pats himself on the shoulder.

TOMMY
 Bor..ing...

Eli chuckles, and Zeke smacks his teeth. Tommy picks up his coffee and brings it to his lips. Zeke snatches it out of his hand and walks away.

ZEKE

(mumbles)

Ruining my mood...you get no coffee
from me.

Tommy gasps and watches him walk away.

TOMMY

I can't believe anyone would want
to share DNA with him.

ELI

At least somebody is getting some.

END OF SHOW