Dee: A Feature Length Drama

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DEE
A Feature Length Drama
By Laura McCarter

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DEE
By Laura McCarter
TREATMENT APRIL 2019

OVERVIEW:
“DEE” is a feature length drama about a young addict who pursues a career in music in an attempt to keep her brother’s memory alive after his untimely death tears her family apart. The story explores how the characters deal with drug abuse, loss, broken families, toxic relationships, and pursuing one’s dreams. The film will feature original indie rock music for several of the characters who write and perform their own songs. It’s A Star is Born meets Beautiful Boy.

CHARACTER SET UP:
We meet DAPHNE “DEE” RUSSELL while her older brother DANIEL RUSSELL is giving her a guitar lesson. Dee has always looked up to Daniel. She wants to be good at the things he’s good at. She wants him to be proud of her, but he would be no matter what. Dee took after Daniel’s rebellious nature, but Daniel’s natural charisma always got him out of trouble. Dee, on the other hand, was always grounded for one reason or another. Daniel was her only friend and ally in the house.

Dee’s relationship with her mother, CLAIRE RUSSELL, is a different story. Dee never fit the image Claire had for her daughter, so Claire had never been supportive of the things Dee wanted to do, even though those were the same things Daniel was doing. This created a distance between Claire and Dee.

ERIC SKILTON is Daniel’s best friend, and quickly becomes Dee’s love interest. He’s in Daniel’s band THE SADDEST FACTION as a bassist, but he’s no musician. His friends needed a bassist, and he didn’t have anywhere else to be, so why not? He’s never been particularly good at anything, really, but his fun-loving nature has kept him in the inner circle with a few good friends, and that’s gotten him this far. His main job in the band is making sure everyone has a good time after the show.

STORY:
At the beginning of the film, Daniel gives Dee a guitar lesson before they head off to the Saddest Faction’s show at a grimy bar. While there, Eric shares his beer with underage Dee and defends her against a creepy old drunk.

After the show, everyone goes to a party at Eric’s house. Bongs, lines of coke, beer pong, pills. The flirting between Dee and Eric becomes more and more obvious, making Daniel uncomfortable, and a little angry. When Dee and Eric slip away to Eric’s room, Daniel finds a bag of heroin in Eric’s bag, which Daniel uses to get back at Eric for messing around with his sister.

Daniel ODs on Eric’s heroin, and Dee finds his body the next morning. Eric does everything he can to try to save him, but it’s too late. Claire blames Eric for her son’s death, since Eric was Daniel’s best friend. She verbally attacks him after Daniel’s funeral, which just validates Eric’s feelings about the situation and makes him feel awful. Dee stands up for him, saying that if it’s his fault, it’s her fault, too.
Dee and Eric get closer to one another, bonding over their shared loss. Eric numbs the pain with drugs, which Dee starts to do as well. In an attempt to hold onto the memory of her brother, Dee starts playing his guitar.

Years later, Dee is playing small shows on restaurant patios with her best friend, ALYSSA NICHOLLS. At one of their shows, they are approached by JUSTIN HILL, an artist manager, who offers them the opportunity to go on a four-month tour, playing for one of his clients GRAHAM GLEASON.

Eric wants Dee to turn down the opportunity so she can continue supporting him through his unemployment. Claire is afraid going on tour will be too much for Dee, who has recently been through a recovery program for her addiction issues. All the negativity makes Dee want it more, so she takes Justin up on his offer and goes on tour.

It goes well for a while. She and Alyssa are fulfilling their dreams of performing for real audiences and getting to travel across the country: Chatanooga, Greenville, Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, New Orleans. Justin lets Dee and Alyssa play some of their original songs on stage at one of their shows. During the concerts, Dee even sees visions of Daniel in the crowd cheering her on.

Dee and BRANDON JANG, the drummer in Graham’s band, develop a friendship while on the road. Dee has an obvious crush on Brandon, but Alyssa brings it to her attention that Brandon is married. Dee cools it with the flirting, but still takes any chance she can to spend time with him.

But despite how well it seems to be going, Claire was right; the tour is too much for her. She starts using drugs again, and it affects her performances and relationships with Alyssa, Justin, and the rest of the band. Now the visions she sees of Daniel when she’s high on stage are morbid and terrifying. She finally makes the decision to stay clean for the tour—maybe just some alcohol here and there, it couldn’t hurt.

The distance between Dee and Eric put a strain on their already unhealthy relationship. Dee doesn’t have time to constantly call or text him. Eric, assuming Dee is hooking up with all of the rock stars she’s spending her time with, cheats on Dee while she’s away. It’s not the first time he’s cheated in their relationship, either. But his unwarranted jealousy gets the better of him, and he decides to show up at the band’s hotel in New Orleans to surprise Dee.

He arrives in the middle of the night and stumbles upon Dee and Brandon drinking a bottle of whiskey at the hotel pool. Eric is immediately suspicious and defensive toward Brandon. This escalates until, at dinner one night, Eric tries to fight Brandon. Eric doesn’t even land a punch, but manages to bust Dee’s lip when she tries to pull him away from Brandon.

Whenever he gets the chance, Eric smokes a joint, snorts a line, or pops a pill. It makes it hard for Dee to stay sober, and Eric is offended that she won’t get high with him like she used to. Those moments were when they were the happiest. But Dee resists, making Eric even more frustrated because he doesn’t know how else to connect with her. Dee is also frustrated. She sees the life she could have, but Eric is holding her back. She decides to break up with him, but as if he knew what she was thinking, he comes to her with a romantic gesture and says he wants to be there for her and support her in her sobriety. He promises to stay clean too. Dee decides to give their relationship another shot.
At their next destination, Houston, Justin gets the band an amazing gig at the House of Blues. He also invites a colleague, STEVE CANMORE, who is looking for a new artist to sign, and Justin tells him Dee and Alyssa are worth checking out. This is the biggest opportunity they’ve ever had, so they bring their everything to the show. It goes perfectly, and Canmore asks Dee, Alyssa, and Justin to meet for brunch the next day to discuss potential details of a record deal.

Dee hurries back to her hotel to tell Eric the great news. He missed the show because he “wasn’t feeling well,” but when Dee gets back to the room, she finds him in bed with a TRASHY WOMAN they saw outside their motel the night before, drugs on the table. Dee kicks out Eric and the woman before they can even get dressed. The woman books it, but Eric uses his key to come back in while Dee is in the shower, takes his clothes, almost all of Dee’s money, and her car keys.

She’s so distraught that she doesn’t notice anything missing. She relapses on the meth they left behind and stays up all night, destroying Eric’s and the trashy woman’s belongings, which they didn’t have time to grab on their way out. Dee finds heroin in the woman’s shorts pocket.

In the morning, Dee is still strung out, but dozing off. The sunlight from the window wakes her up, and she remembers the incredibly important brunch, which she’s late for. Her keys are nowhere to be found. She tears the room apart looking for them. Nothing. It dawns on her, and she looks for her envelope of money. It’s also gone. She realizes Eric must have taken it. With no other way to get to the meeting, she bribes the hotel receptionist to give her a key to Brandon’s room, takes his car keys because he’s sleeping, and goes to the meeting.

But it’s too late. She shows up as Canmore is leaving. Justin is irate, especially after seeing that she’s high. He kicks Dee off the tour. Alyssa is also upset that they lost the opportunity of a lifetime. She leaves Dee too. Dee cries on Brandon’s shoulder. He comforts her, which she takes the wrong way. She tries to kiss him, but is rejected. He makes her to leave.

Now Dee has nothing. She goes back to her hotel room. The only thing there for her is the drugs. She shoots up the heroin and overdoses. She wakes up in the hospital, lucky to be alive. When she is released, she goes back to the hotel to get her things, but her guitar isn’t there. It’s still in the van with the other equipment, but the band is already gone. She has to use all of her remaining money to pay the cab driver, so she’s entirely alone, with no money, on the streets of an unfamiliar city.

After a rough night on the street, Dee catches a ride with RAY HOOPER, a surprisingly wise old trucker on his way to Miami. Ray helps Dee see that there is still hope for someone in her position. As they drive through Atlanta, Dee asks Ray to drop her off at her old rehab center.

There’s a guitar in the Clear Meadow Rehab rec room. Dee wakes up hours before anyone else so she can play. During her six-month stay, Dee finishes the song that she’s been working on for a long time. One morning, IAN ELDRIDGE overhears Dee playing while he sneaks out for an early morning smoke. He is immediately impressed and fascinated by her. He sketches pictures of her in a notebook. They become good friends, and Dee steps in to stop Ian when she catches him sneaking drugs into rehab.
When Dee gets out, she tries to mend her relationships with Claire, Alyssa, Brandon, and Justin. She can’t get a second chance with Justin, but she gets Daniel’s guitar back from Alyssa, and the friends reconnect. She plays Alyssa her new song, and it’s so good, Alyssa encourages Dee to record it and send it out to labels.

Brandon happens to have recording equipment, so they go to him to get the song done. Things are definitely awkward between Dee and Brandon, but he and his pregnant wife are happy. Dee is relieved she didn’t ruin their relationship, but she can’t help but be a little jealous.

Dee and Claire’s relationship has changed drastically since Claire came to visit Dee in rehab, extending the metaphorical olive branch. Claire, now supportive of her daughter’s music, not only drives Dee to Justin’s office to try to make amends, but also takes a recording of Dee’s song to a radio station, unbeknownst to Dee.

After Ian gets out of rehab, a few weeks later, he and Dee go out to lunch to celebrate. As it turns out, Eric is the new busboy at the restaurant they choose. Eric gets irrationally jealous of Ian, but wants to talk to Dee about getting back together. Dee has nothing to say to him, so she and Ian walk out.

Eventually, Dee finds Ian overdosing, in a very similar scene as Daniel’s OD. But this time she’s not too late. She performs CPR, calls 9-1-1, and saves him. She takes him back to rehab and promises to visit whenever she can.

While at Clear Meadow, Dee notices that the guitar is no longer in the rec room. Apparently, someone was using it to sneak drugs in. Dee offers to come in and give free, supervised guitar lessons so that the patients still have a creative outlet while they focus on their sobriety.

The film ends with Dee giving one of these guitar lessons, mirroring the first scene with Daniel teaching her how to play. Across the room, without her knowledge, her original song plays on the radio.
DEE

By Laura McCarter

PITCH APRIL 2019

Today I’m pitching my feature length drama, “Dee.” After the death of her older brother tears her family apart, a young addict tries to keep her brother’s memory alive by playing his guitar and pursuing a career in music. It’s A Star is Born meets Beautiful Boy.

The main character is Dee, a passionate, head-strong musician. She’s been independent and rebellious her whole life, always grounded for one reason or another. She was always following in her brother’s footsteps, playing his video games, learning how to play his guitar, and when he started doing drugs recreationally, she started dabbling in them too.

Eric is Dee’s long-term boyfriend. He was also Daniel’s best friend. He’s never had any real talents or drive to do anything. But his fun-loving nature has kept him in the inner circle with a few good friends, and that’s gotten him this far.

Daniel, Dee’s brother, was her closest friend and ally growing up. Like Dee, he’s always had a rough side, but his natural charisma helped him get out of things more easily. He started a band with his friends, and they’re actually not too bad. He also has a tendency to experiment with any drug he gets his hands on.

Claire is Dee and Daniel’s mother. Dee never fit the image Claire had for her daughter, so Claire was less than supportive of the things Dee wanted to do, even though those were the same things Daniel was doing. This made Dee feel inadequate, like she could never live up to the standards set up for her, and that created a divide between Dee and Claire.

Dee met her best friend and bandmate, Alyssa while Dee was playing her guitar in the park, trying to make money to move out of Claire’s house. Alyssa recognized Dee’s talent and approached her. They’ve been playing together ever since. Alyssa is quick to speak her mind and isn’t afraid of calling Dee out, which Dee needs quite a lot.

Justin is an artist manager looking for performers to go on tour with one of his clients. He meets Dee and Alyssa at one of their shows, and Justin offers them the opportunity to go on tour. If the tour goes well, he may be able to get Dee and Alyssa a record deal of their own. Justin is a no-nonsense manager. He’s all about his work, and he hates when other people don’t take it as seriously.

In the beginning of the film, Dee and Daniel go to a party at Eric’s house. At the party, Dee and Eric hook up, and Daniel ODs on heroin. Dee finds his body the next morning, but it’s too late. Dee and Eric get closer, bonding over their loss. Eric numbs the pain with drugs, which Dee starts to do as well. In an attempt to hold onto the memory of Daniel, Dee starts playing his guitar.

Years later, Dee and Alyssa are approached by Justin at one of their small shows, and Justin offers them the opportunity to go on tour. Eric wants Dee to turn it down so she can continue supporting him through his unemployment. Claire is afraid going on tour will be too much for Dee, who has recently been through a recovery program for her addiction issues. This negativity makes Dee want it more, so she takes Justin up on his offer and goes on tour.
It goes well for a while. Dee and Alyssa are living out their dream. Justin even lets them play some of their original songs at a few of the shows. Dee sees visions of Daniel in the crowd cheering her on. But Claire was right, and it is too much for her. She starts using again, and it affects her performances and relationships with Alyssa, Justin, and the rest of the band. She finally makes the decision to stay sober for the tour, but that’s when Eric shows up to surprise her. Mostly because he doesn’t trust her on the road with so many musicians.

Eric causes problems from the second he arrives, trying to start fights with the band members, tempting Dee with drugs. Eventually Dee catches Eric cheating in her hotel room and kicks him out. Though she maybe should have seen it coming, she is devastated. She relapses with the drugs he left behind and stays up all night destroying his things.

The next day, Dee oversleeps and is late to the most important meeting of her career, which could potentially get her a record deal with one of Justin’s colleagues. In her rush to leave, she realizes that Eric stole her car and money. She finally shows up to the meeting after taking another bandmate’s car, but it’s too late. Justin is irate, as he was the one who recommended her to the record label. It’s the last straw. She loses her job, her best friend, everything. She goes back to her room, where she has nothing but Eric’s heroin. She shoots up, overdoses, is hospitalized, and then is put out on the streets of an unfamiliar city.

She eventually gets a ride with an old trucker who shows her that there is more still hope for someone in her position. As they drive through Atlanta, Dee asks him to drop her off at her old rehab center. While she’s there for six months, she uses the guitar in the rec room to finish the song she’s been working on. Claire visits her, extending the metaphorical olive branch, which allows them to start mending their relationship.

When Dee gets out of rehab, she tries to fix her other relationships. Justin isn’t willing to give her another chance at this point, but he tells her where she can find Alyssa. And her guitar. The women start to make music together again, and Alyssa convinces Dee to record her new song to send out to labels. Claire, now supportive of her daughter’s music, takes the recording of Dee’s song to a radio station, unbeknownst to Dee.

After visiting a friend in rehab, Dee sees that the rec room guitar is gone. Someone was using it to sneak drugs in. Wanting to give back and help the patients have a creative outlet while they focus on their sobriety, Dee offers them free guitar lessons, using Daniel’s guitar. The film ends as Dee is giving one of these lessons and across the room, her original song plays on the radio.

While Dee and I are very different people for a number of reasons, we have both experienced unhealthy relationships and the loss of a loved one, and we both have pursued our passions that stem from the memory of those we lost. I believe I bring a genuine perspective to the script, and I hope others see that and are able to connect to these characters.
Logline: After the death of her older brother tears her family apart, a young addict tries to keep her brother’s memory alive by playing his guitar and pursuing a career in music.
Comps

A Star Is Born

Beautiful Boy
Dee
Carly Chaikin

Eric
Nat Zang

Daniel
George Finn

Claire
Marisa Tomei

Alyssa
Paige Hurd

Justin
Blue Kimble
Daphne “Dee” Russell

A passionate, head-strong musician.

Carly Chaikin
Eric Skilton

Dee’s boyfriend; Daniel’s best friend.
Daniel Russell

Dee’s older brother.

George Finn
Claire Russell

Dee and Daniel’s mother.

Marisa Tomei
Alyssa Nicholls

Dee’s best friend.

Paige Hurd
Justin Hill

An artist manager with Dynamic Music Management.

Blue Kimble
Plot Summary

Act 1
- Daniel’s death (overdose)
- Dee discovers love for music
- Poor relationship with Claire
- Developing relationship with Eric
- Going on tour

Act 2
- Fun and games on tour
- Deteriorating relationship with Eric
- Drug abuse
- Losing everything
- Overdose

Act 3
- On the streets of an unfamiliar city
- Back to rehab
- Taking sobriety seriously
- Rebuilding important relationships
- Dee’s music on the radio
DEE

Written by

Laura McCarter
FADE IN:

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

DAPHNE RUSSELL (17) hates it when people call her Daphne. It’s DEE. She sits cross-legged on a couch in a black t-shirt with “SADDEST FACTION” printed on it.

Sitting next to her is her brother, DANIEL (21), skinny with long hair, sunken eyes, an endearing smile. He’s holding an ACOUSTIC GUITAR, the letter D scratched into the headstock.

DANIEL
This is C.

Daniel shows Dee where to put her fingers on the frets.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
And this is F. Got it?

DEE
Yeah.

He passes the guitar to her, and she mimics him.

Dee plucks the strings awkwardly.

DANIEL (singing)
“I saw Sally changin’ clothes, she
was in the perfect pose, Sally let
your bangs hang down.
I saw Sally bending over, she
looked like a four leaf clover,
Sally--”

The front door SLAMS. Their mother, CLAIRE (45), a few loose hairs escaping from the tight bun on her head, comes in with an armful of groceries. She drops them on the table.

CLAIRE
Daniel! Stop with that horrible song!

Dee and Daniel LAUGH. Daniel puts his guitar in the case.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Help bring in the groceries.

Daniel brings groceries in from the car. Dee takes groceries out of bags and puts them in the fridge.

Dee looks at the clock on the stove.
DEE
We gotta go, Danny. We’re gonna be late.

CLAIRE
Late for what?

DANIEL
The show I told you about. You should come.

CLAIRE
At that trashy bar? No thank you. And you definitely shouldn’t be taking your sister there.

DEE
I’ve been there before, mom. It’s fine.

CLAIRE
What?! When have you been there before?

Dee shrugs. Daniel looks at the time.

DANIEL
Damn. We really should be going.

Claire SIGHS and gives the kids a look.

CLAIRE
Fine, go.

Daniel gets his guitar, kisses Claire on the cheek.

INT. DIVE BAR – NIGHT

Dee and Daniel sit at a dirty table in an almost empty bar, lit only by neon beer signs with Daniel’s bandmates: ERIC (21), OWEN (20s), and CODY (20s).

A SERVER brings four beers to the table. When she leaves, Eric slides his beer to Dee. She takes a sip, slides it back.

DANIEL
Let’s do it.

DEE
Good luck!

The guys go to a small stage in the corner where instruments are set up. The drum kit matches Dee’s Saddest Faction shirt.
Daniel and Owen grab their guitars, Cody sits behind the drum kit, and Eric picks up the bass.

DANIEL
Thanks for coming out. We’re the Saddest Faction.

They start PLAYING an ORIGINAL INDIE ROCK SONG.

Dee CHEERS and SINGS ALONG.

An OLD DRUNK comes out of the bathroom, sees Dee, stumbles over to her. He leans over her against the table.

OLD DRUNK
(yelling over the music)
Hey little lady. What are you doin’ here all alone?

Dee rolls her eyes and scoots away.

OLD DRUNK (CONT’D)
Come on, don’t be like that.

Eric notices the Drunk making Dee uncomfortable. He sees that the cord to his bass is between the Drunk’s legs.

Eric whips the cord up, hits the Drunk in the balls.

The Drunk YELPS and grabs himself, GROANS, leans on a barstool. He looks around to see what hit him, but sees nothing and limps away, confused and embarrassed.

Dee LAUGHS, Eric winks at her.

EXT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

The Saddest Faction and Dee walk to their cars.

CODY
That was sick tonight!

OWEN
But I bet we’d sound better if we unplugged Eric’s bass.

Cody, Daniel, and Dee LAUGH. Eric shoves Owen playfully.

DANIEL
Don’t listen to him, Eric, you know we need you.
ERIC
Only cause you don’t know anyone else who can play.

DANIEL
You can play?

ERIC
Man, shut up. You guys coming to the house?

DANIEL
I’ll be over later, but I gotta get Dee back home.

DEE
What? No, I wanna go too.

Daniel gives Dee a look.

ERIC
Yeah dude, just let her come hang out for a little bit.

Daniel redirects his look to Eric.

DANIEL
Fine.

INT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Dee, the bandmates, and a few other FRIENDS sit around a coffee table where Eric breaks up lines of cocaine.

Cody drums his fingers on the armrest of a dirty old chair and bangs his head to the rapid beat of the LOUD MUSIC.

Dee leans over the table to snort her line. Eric steals a glance down her shirt while she’s bent over.

EXT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE – DECK – NIGHT

A round of beer pong. Dee and Eric vs. Daniel and Owen. Eric tosses the ping pong ball and misses by a long shot.

DEE
Damn, my shoulders are getting sore carrying this team.

ERIC
Yeah? Let me help you with that.
Eric massages Dee’s shoulder. Daniel throws a ping pong ball and hits Eric in the head.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Ow! What the hell, Dan?

DANIEL
You two need to chill.

DEE
What are you talking about?

Daniel gives her a warning look.

INT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE - LATER *

Eric walks in from the deck and sees Dee alone in the kitchen, getting a beer out of the fridge.

ERIC
I was wondering where you wandered off to.

DEE
Damn, you caught me stealing your last beer.

ERIC
Want something a little stronger?

DEE
What?

Eric takes a BAGGIE OF HEROIN out of his jacket pocket.

DEE (CONT'D)
No thanks, I’m more of an uppers girl.

ERIC
Ah, gotcha.

He pockets the baggie, takes off his jacket and drapes it over the chair.*

Dee sips her beer. She catches Eric staring at her.

DEE
What?

ERIC
Nothing.
Oh my god, just make out already!

Eric moves closer to her. They stare at each other.

**DEE**
What are you--

Eric slips his arms around her and they kiss. Dee is caught off guard and drops her beer. It SHATTERS, spills everywhere.

**DEE (CONT’D)**
Shit!

**ERIC**
Don’t worry about it.

Eric grabs a rag and throws it on the spill. He grabs Dee’s hand and leads her to his bedroom.

**DEE**
Wait, Danny will kill us...

**ERIC**
You’re a big girl. He’ll be fine.

They go into Eric’s room.

**EXT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE – DECK – NIGHT**

Daniel, Cody, and Owen smoke a joint outside. Daniel STRUMS his guitar between hits.

**DANIEL**
Where’s Dee?

**CODY**
I haven’t seen her in a while.

Daniel passes Owen the joint and goes inside.

**INT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS**

Daniel puts his guitar in the case and walks down the hallway. He gets to Eric’s room and hears Dee MOANING inside.

**DANIEL**
Fucking Christ.

He goes to the kitchen, accidentally knocks Eric’s jacket off the chair. The BAGGIE OF HEROIN falls out of the pocket.

Daniel picks it up, smirks.
DANIEL (CONT'D)
F**k around with my sister, see what happens.

Daniel looks through Eric’s pockets and finds a needle, grabs a spoon from a drawer.

He sits on the couch, puts the heroin in the spoon with a little water and cotton, heats it with a lighter, fills the needle, wraps his belt around his arm, injects himself.

INT. ERIC’S ROOM - MORNING

Dee and Eric lie naked in bed.

Dee’s PHONE ALARM goes off. She turns it off and looks over at Eric, smiles.

Dee picks up the bong on the table and takes a hit.

She gets out of bed, puts clothes on, kisses sleeping Eric.

INT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE - MORNING

Dee, hair a mess and eyeliner racooning around her eyes, comes out of Eric’s room.

Daniel is splayed out on the couch.

DEE
Get up, Danny. Mom’ll be up soon, we gotta go.

Daniel doesn’t move. Dee grabs an empty box of cigarettes off the counter, throws them at Daniel. Still nothing.

DEE (CONT’D)

Danny?

She walks to him slowly.

DEE (CONT’D)

Danny, get the fuck up.

She sees vomit around his mouth and on his shirt.

She grabs his arms and shakes him, then retracts quickly after touching his skin. She SCREAMS.

Cody runs out of his room, but freezes when he sees Dee sobbing over Daniel.
Eric is close behind Cody. Seeing what’s happened, he pulls Dee away from Daniel.

DEE (CONT'D)

NO!

ERIC

Hold on!

Eric starts to give Daniel CPR.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Cody! Call 9-1-1!

CODY

Dude, we have drugs everywhere.

ERIC

Then flush them! We need a fucking ambulance!

Dee hyperventilates on the floor.

* Cody runs around the house with his phone to his ear, getting rid of everything he can.

Eric keeps performing CPR.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It’ll be okay. Come on, Dan! Come on!

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Dee, puffy-eyed, stands at the front of a church sanctuary between Claire and HENRI RUSSELL (50), her father.

A PICTURE OF DANIEL and an URN sit on a table beside them.

* MOURNERS line the walls of the sanctuary waiting to give their condolences.

EXT. CLAIRE’S HOUSE - DAY

Claire’s minivan pulls into the driveway. Dee and Claire get out and walk toward the house.

ERIC (O.S.)

Hey Dee.

Dee and Claire turn to see Eric standing across the street next to his car.
Claire storms over to him.

**CLAIRE**
How could you come here today?  

**DEE**
Mom!

**ERIC**
Ms. Russell, I’m--

**CLAIRE**
You were his best friend! You knew he had issues! How could you bring that shit around him?

**ERIC**
I didn’t--

**CLAIRE**
He died because of you!

Her words cut deep.

**DEE**
Mom! Stop! If you blame him, you have to blame me too.

**CLAIRE**
Exactly. Where were you? Why weren’t you there to stop him?

Dee and Eric share a guilty look.

Claire **SCOFFS** and goes inside, **SLAMMING** the door.

Eric looks down at his feet. Dee wipes tears from her cheeks.

**DEE**
Don’t listen to her. She’s just upset.

Eric nods. Dee takes his hand.

**DEE (CONT’D)**
Let’s just get out of here.

**INT. ERIC AND CODY’S HOUSE – DAY**

Eric rushes in. Dee tries to keep up.
DEE
Eric, wait! Are you okay? You haven’t said a word the whole way here.

ERIC
No, I’m really not okay, Dee. Your mom’s right. It’s my fault.

DEE
You didn’t make him do anything.

ERIC
It was my-- Look, I just need to be alone right now. You can hang out here, but I just need some time.

DEE
Eric--

ERIC
No! Just stop. I... I’m about to go in there to shoot up, Dee. I don’t want you to see that, but I just can’t fucking deal with this. Not right now.

Eric turns to go to his room.

DEE
Wait. Why do you have to? I mean... What’s it like?

Eric stops, SIGHS.

ERIC
(voice breaking)
It just... It feels a lot fuckin’ better than this.

He goes into his room.

Dee sits on the couch, but quickly realizes it’s where Danny died. She jumps up, tears welling in her eyes, breathing hysterically. She paces, tries to take calming breaths.

She goes to Eric’s door. Hesitates before going inside.

INT. ERIC’S ROOM - DAY

Dee’s phone VIBRATES on the nightstand. She stirs and GROANS. The phone STOPS VIBRATING.
Dee sits up and grabs the phone. There’s a SMALL RED BRUISE on the inside of her elbow.

    DEE
    Shit.

Eric rolls over to face her.

    ERIC
    What?

    DEE
    I should get home before my mom has an aneurysm.

INT. ERIC AND CODY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Heading to the door, Dee sees DANIEL’S GUITAR CASE in the corner. She stops and stares at it.

Eric hugs her from behind, kisses her shoulder.

    ERIC
    You should take it.

INT. DEE’S BEDROOM - DAY

Dee sits on her bed with the guitar in her lap. She puts her fingers on the frets like Daniel showed her and STRUMS the strings awkwardly.

INT. DEE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Five Years Later.

Dee, now 22, sits on a different bed in her own apartment with Daniel’s guitar, PLUCKING the strings with ease.

Her fingers dance over the frets like she’s been playing her whole life.

INT. JCT KITCHEN AND BAR - DAY

Dee leans over the bar in a mostly empty restaurant writing in a notebook, then scribbling out what she just wrote.

She has her long curls pulled back in a ponytail and wears all black with a white, stained apron around her waist.

ALYSSA (23) wearing the same uniform, sits next to Dee.
DEE
I really hate the second verse.

ALYSSA
Oh my god, seriously? I thought we worked that one out.

DEE
It could be better.

Alyssa groans.

ALYSSA
Look out, Martin’s coming.

Dee closes the notebook and puts it in her apron pocket. Alyssa pretends to wipe down the bar.

MARTIN (56), a tall man with slicked back hair and tight dress pants, the manager, walks up.

MARTIN
I’m not scheduling any more shifts with you two together.

DEE
We’re just trying to finish this song before the show on Friday.

MARTIN
If you don’t get back to your tables, you won’t have to worry about the show on Friday.

DEE
Come on, Martin. It’s dead right now.

MARTIN
Maybe that’s cause we have shitty servers.

Dee SIGHS as she and Alyssa go to their tables.

INT. DEE’S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Dee walks into the apartment with more stains on her apron. Eric, now 26, sits on the couch in sweats and a dingy shirt. Dee sits down on the couch next to him. Eric puts his arm around her shoulder. Dee takes the joint he’s been smoking.
DEE
Any luck today?

ERIC
Nah. I don’t think it would have worked out anyway. The manager was a cuck. I should be his boss.

Eric CHUCKLES.

DEE
Well do you have any other interviews lined up?

ERIC
Not yet.

DEE
But you’re applying to more places tomorrow, right?

ERIC
Oh my god, can’t we just chill for thirty seconds without you being up my ass about this shit?

DEE
I need your help with bills, Eric. I can’t keep working doubles like this. You need a job.

ERIC
I know! Damn!

Eric takes his arm from around her shoulders and scoots away. Dee looks annoyed, but sighs.

DEE
I’m sorry. It’s been a shitty day. I just need a break. I barely have time to practice anymore. That’s why I got this job in the first place, so I could focus on my music. It’d just be nice if I had a little help.

ERIC
Yeah, I know, I’ll try to go to more places tomorrow.

Dee puts her head on Eric’s shoulder.
ERIC (CONT'D)
If you need a break though, I think I can help you with that.

He pulls a small bag with a few round, white pills out of his sweatpants pocket. Dee’s eyes widen.

DEE
Where’d that come from?

ERIC
I helped Trevor move. He hooked me up. And you act like I never bring home any bacon.

DEE
I would prefer cash.

She takes the pills from Eric.

DEE (CONT'D)
I don’t know. I’ve been doing better lately.

ERIC
You just said you need a break. You’re so stressed you can’t get anything done. One night won’t kill you.

She SIGHS, sits up, starts clearing off the coffee table.

Eric puts the pills on the table, crushes them with a burned-out-candle-turned-ashtray. He lines up the powder.

Dee takes a dollar out of her server book, rolls it up, snorts a couple of lines. Eric does the same.

EXT. JCT KITCHEN AND BAR PATIO - NIGHT

Dee and Alyssa are on a stage in front of a small crowd.

Dee PLAYS DANIEL’S OLD GUITAR and SINGS lead vocals. Alyssa PLAYS KEYBOARD and HARMONIZES.

JUSTIN HILL (35) sips a beer and watches them with little interest. He flags down a SERVER who brings his check.

They end cover of “COCAINE JESUS” by Rainbow Kitten Surprise. Light APPLAUSE from the crowd. Justin stands to leave.
DEE
Thank you. This next one is one of our own. Hope you like it.

They start PLAYING AN ORIGINAL SONG. Dee has a powerful alto voice, good for belting the chorus.

Justin stops, watches them, sits back down.

Dee catches Justin staring intensely. His face doesn’t flinch, brows furrowed. Dee is unsettled by him, looks away.

INT. JCT KITCHEN AND BAR - NIGHT

Dee and Alyssa take shots at the bar.

Martin comes out of the kitchen with two envelopes in hand.

MARTIN
Did you guys pay for those?

DEE
Maybe.

MARTIN
I’ll just take it out of your cuts then.

ALYSSA
Come on Martin! Let us celebrate a little.

Martin opens each of the envelopes and takes out a ten dollar bill from each. He hands them the envelopes and walks away.

DEE
What a dick.

TAMMY (30), the bartender, sets two drinks in front of them.

DEE (CONT'D)
We didn’t order these.

TAMMY
I know. He did.

She nods behind them and they turn to see Justin sitting alone. He lifts his beer to them.

DEE
Oh my god. That’s the creepy dude I told you about.
ALYSSA
I don’t know. Is it creepy if he looks like that?

Alyssa smiles and waves at him.

DEE
Don’t encourage him.

ALYSSA
Shh! He’s coming over.

DEE
Oh my god, you’re such a hoe.

ALYSSA
Shut up, don’t be weird.

Justin leans on the bar next to Dee. He has a smug smile on his face now instead of the grimace.

JUSTIN
Great show tonight.

DEE
Thanks, glad you liked it.

ALYSSA
I’m Alyssa. This is Dee.

JUSTIN
Justin Hill.

DEE
Well, thanks for the drinks, Justin. Have a good night.

Dee turns away from him.

JUSTIN
Actually, I have a proposition for you guys. I’m an artist manager. I have a client going on tour in a couple of weeks, and some of the band dropped out at the last minute. I came out tonight to scout some talent. I think you two might be perfect.

Dee and Alyssa look at each other.
DEE
Yeah, and I’m sure you and your “client” would love for us to come over to your place for an “audition” tonight, right?

Justin gives her a confused look.

JUSTIN
Well, you would come into the studio for that. If you’re interested, we can set something up for next week.

He pulls two business cards out of his pocket and hands them to Dee and Alyssa. They look at them.

DEE
Holy shit. You’re serious?

JUSTIN
I am.

DEE
Oh my god.

Alyssa hits Dee on the arm and points to Justin’s card.

ALYSSA
“Dynamic Music Management?” Aren’t they the ones who discovered Louise Young?

JUSTIN
Oh, yeah. Louise is great. She was playing shows like this, too, when I first met her.

Dee stares up at Justin in disbelief.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
You alright?

DEE
Wha-- Yeah, sorry. I just can’t believe you’re here... at our show.

JUSTIN
And yet...

Justin gestures toward himself.
JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I liked what I saw tonight. Who writes those originals?

DEE
We both do.

ALYSSA
Quit lying.
(to Justin)
She writes them.

DEE
But she helps.

JUSTIN
Do you have any others?

DEE
We have four. And one more in progress.

JUSTIN
That’s great. If I were you, I’d play more of your originals in your shows, and sooner. You’re not a cover band. People need to hear what you write.

DEE
Wow, thank you so much. We’ll definitely do that.

JUSTIN
Anyway, if you’re interested in the tour, give me a call. If all goes well on the road, I might consider representing you myself.

ALYSSA
You’re kidding!

JUSTIN
I’m not. Sleep on it. It’s a big decision. You’ll have to be on the road for four months, and the pay won’t be that great at first, but it’s a chance to get out of playing restaurants for a few bucks a night. You have my card.

DEE
I don’t need to sleep on it. We’ll go.
Justin looks to Alyssa. Dee nudges her.

**ALYSSA**
Oh, I-- Of course. Let’s do it!

**JUSTIN**
Great! Come by my office and we’ll discuss the details.

Justin drains the rest of his beer.

**JUSTIN (CONT'D)**
Enjoy the rest of your evening, ladies.

Justin walks toward the door.

Dee and Alyssa watch him leave, mouths agape.

**INT. DEE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Eric sits on the couch. Several empty beer cans on the coffee table. He smokes a crack pipe.

Dee runs in and throws her guitar case on the couch.

**DEE**
We’re going on tour!

**ERIC**
What?

**DEE**
There was a manager at the show. He wants us to go on tour with one of his clients!

**ERIC**
Holy shit! That’s great, babe!

Eric hugs Dee and spins her around.

**DEE**
We’ll be gone for four months. I’ll have to learn all the songs in like a week, but--

**ERIC**
Woah, back up. Four months? That’s a long time for you to be gone.
I know, it sucks, but this is such a good opportunity.

I don’t know. It’ll be weird being here without you.

Actually, I was thinking…I might have to break the lease.

Eric rubs his head, frustrated.

What the fuck, Dee? You’re leaving and kicking me out?

If you think you can help with rent, I might not have to break it. Have you heard back from any--

No, Dee. I haven’t fucking heard back.

Okay, sorry. Damn.

Where am I supposed to go?

Doesn’t Cody have a spare room? You could stay with him. It’d be just like old times.

I don’t want to go live with Cody. I can’t just take all my shit over there. This is my place too, Dee!

I don’t know what to tell you, Eric. I have to do this.

No, you don’t have to.

I’d be insane if I didn’t.
ERIC
I think you’d be insane to throw away a five year relationship because some stranger wants you to put your life on hold to follow him around the country!

DEE
Throw away our relationship? What are you talking about?

ERIC
I don’t know if I’ll be waiting around for you all that time.

DEE
It’s just four fucking months!

ERIC
This is bullshit!

DEE
This is what I’ve been working toward for years. Maybe you’d understand that if you had any passion for anything, but you can’t even get off the god damn couch to work for something other than fucking pills! That’s what’s bullshit!

Eric storms into the bedroom, knocking over and breaking a lamp, slamming the door behind him.

DEE (CONT’D)
Are you fucking kidding me?!

Dee sits on the couch and rubs her temples. She looks at her guitar case. Then at the pipe on the coffee table.

She grabs the crack pipe and the lighter. She takes a hit. And another. She lets out a long exhale. Her knee bounces.

INT. MAJESTIC DINER - DAY

A hungover Dee sits in across from Claire in a booth.

A SERVER refills their coffee and sets an egg-white omelet and a fruit cup in front of Claire.

CLAIRE
You sure you don’t want any food?
DEE
This is fine.

Dee sips her coffee. Claire swirls her spoon in her coffee, scraping it against the mug, successfully irritating Dee.

Claire scrutinizes Dee’s messy hair, dirty clothes, dark circles under her eyes.

CLAIRE
When was the last meeting you went to?

DEE
Mom, stop.

CLAIRE
I worry about you. I don’t want to drive you to Clear Meadow again.

Dee sips her coffee while Claire eats her omelet. An awkward silence. Dee taps her nails on the table.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You seem upset.

DEE
I’ve just been fighting with Eric a little bit lately.

Claire SIGHS.

CLAIRE
What about this time?

DEE
Alyssa and I got approached by an artist manager. He wants us to go on a four-month tour. Eric is freaking out about it. He really doesn’t want me to go.

CLAIRE
A tour? With a band?

DEE
Yeah, it’s an amazing opportunity! He’s being so selfish about it.

CLAIRE
Do you think that’s really a good idea for you?
DEE
Of course it is. Why wouldn’t it be?

CLAIRE
Those people won’t be a good influence for you. And what about your job? You can’t afford to just leave to drive around the country. You need to focus on something more stable than this silly little music hobby.

DEE
Wow.

CLAIRE
What?

DEE
It’s not a hobby, mom. It’s my dream.

CLAIRE
Why are you still going on with all this? It’s been five years. You’re going to have to let it go eventually. It’s not even your dream. You have this obsession with doing everything Daniel did. You have to move on with your life at some point.

Dee stares open-mouthed at Claire.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
Daphne--

DEE
Of course I can’t let go. He wasn’t just my brother, he was my best friend. I feel like he’s... I feel like I’m keeping a part of him alive. Music is the only thing he gave me.

CLAIRE
No, that’s not the only thing.

DEE
What’s that supposed to mean?

CLAIRE
You know what it means.
Dee glares at Claire, grabs her purse and storms out of the diner. Claire puts her head in her hands.

INT. DEE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dee stuffs some clothes in a suitcase. The front door CLOSES.

ERIC (O.S.)

Dee?

DEE

In here!

Eric comes into the bedroom.

ERIC

What are you doing? Why aren’t you at work?

DEE

We’re leaving tomorrow. I’m staying with Alyssa tonight and leaving from there.

ERIC

What the fuck, Dee? I thought we decided it’s not a good time for you to go?

DEE

No, you decided that. I decided I can’t miss this opportunity.

Eric rubs his head.

ERIC

So you’re gonna go? Just like that?

DEE

This is something I’ve wanted to do... Forever. You know that. If you really care about me you’ll help me make this work.

Dee hugs Eric.

DEE (CONT’D)

You have until the end of the month to find a place. I’m sure Cody would let you stay with him. Maybe you can even come out and see me on the road sometime.
Dee picks up her bag and her guitar case.

ERIC
Dee, come on!

DEE
I gotta do this. I love you.

She kisses him and hurries out the door.

ERIC
Fucking bitch.

I/E. CARAVAN - DAY

An van and two cars drive down the interstate. Dee and Alyssa in one car, Justin and GRAHAM (28) in the van, and BRANDON (27) and NICK (25) in the other car.

Dee and Alyssa dance and SING along to the RADIO.

INT. THE REVELRY ROOM - CHATANOOGA VENUE - NIGHT

Dee squints at the lights as she steps onto the stage.

CHEERING from the small crowd.

Dee grabs her guitar. Alyssa stands behind the keyboard. Brandon is on drums, Nick on bass. Graham grabs his guitar and goes up to the mic.

Dee’s hands tremble. She looks at Alyssa, who grins widely at her, not nervous at all. Dee takes a steadying breath.

Dee studies the set list taped to the stage floor.

Brandon counts them off, ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR.

They PLAY.

The audience bobs to the music and CHEERS.

Dee starts to relax a little and get into the rhythm.

She looks into the crowd.

In the front row, DANIEL smiles up at her proudly.

Dee does a double take, stops playing. Blinks, and he’s gone.

She looks around for him in the audience, realizes she’s stopped playing, looks at Graham nervously. He’s livid.
The band keeps playing without her. Graham glares at her, but nods his head to the beat to help her jump back in.

She finally starts up again.

The audience CHEERS encouragingly.

INT. THE PICKLE BARREL BAR - NIGHT

Six shot glasses CLINK together. Dee, Alyssa, Brandon, Graham, Nick, and Justin celebrate their first show.

JUSTIN
Great job tonight, guys. If this is what the rest of the tour is gonna look like, I’m excited.

GRAHAM
Yeah, it was almost a perfect show.

He makes eye contact with Dee.

DEE
I’m sorry, I thought... I just saw something weird in the audience.

GRAHAM
Who gives a shit what’s happening in the audience? You made us look like idiots up there. Some of us take this shit seriously.

JUSTIN
Yeah, well it’s the first show. Plenty of time for rehearsals and improvement.

Justin looks at his watch.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Speaking of which. Practice in the hotel conference room. Nine a.m. I’m headed back. Have fun tonight, but don’t be late in the morning.

Justin leaves. Graham and Nick follow him out. Graham gives Dee a side eye as he walks away.

INT. CHATANOOGA REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

The band is warming up. Brandon walks up to Dee.
BRANDON
You’re playing that part wrong.
It’s not like this.

Brandon plays air guitar and makes GUITAR NOISES.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
It’s actually like this.

He plays air guitar again, only slightly differently.

DEE
Oh, like this?

Dee mimics him, actually playing her guitar.

BRANDON
Oh my god, no. Get your shit together. Like this.

He plays his air guitar again. Dee joins in. They jam out for a minute. Graham looks over at them and rolls his eyes.

Brandon stops.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
Ugh, whatever, it’s fine. You’ll get there.

He walks back to the drum kit and sits down.

Dee looks back at him. He smiles at her while spinning a drumstick in one hand.

Dee turns around to see Alyssa staring at her with arms crossed and eyebrow arched. Dee blushes and looks away.

Justin comes in.

JUSTIN
Okay, you guys ready?

Brandon counts them off with FOUR BEATS and they PLAY.

INT. DEE’S CHATANOOGA HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dee and Alyssa lay on the bed watching TV with empty fast food wrappers on the bed around them.

ALYSSA
You know Brandon’s married, right?

Dee looks surprised, but plays it cool.
DEE
Oh, is he? Cool.

Alyssa LAUGHS.

DEE (CONT’D)
What?

ALYSSA
Nothing. Just thought you should have that info since you were begging him to impregnate you earlier.

DEE
Ew, no I wasn’t.

ALYSSA
I get it dude, he’s bangable. Just keep it in your pants. We don’t need homewrecker drama fucking this tour up.

DEE
I’m not a homewrecker.

ALYSSA
Mistress, then. Just don’t.

DEE
I won’t, damn!
(beat)
And I’m in a relationship too. Did you forget about Eric?

ALYSSA
(under her breath)
I was kinda hoping you had.

DEE
Dude!

ALYSSA
Look, Eric’s a nice guy, but, like, what’s he doing? Ever?

DEE
We’ve been through a lot together.

ALYSSA
Yeah, and you got through it. Now you’re doing some cool shit and he’s in the same place he’s always been.

(MORE)
Dee doesn’t respond. She turns her attention back to the TV, but Alyssa’s words stuck with her.

INT. RADIO ROOM - GREENVILLE VENUE - NIGHT

The band is on stage, PLAYING the song Dee messed up on at the first show. Graham glances at her like he expects her to fuck up again.

She kills it. The audience loves them.

SERIES OF SHOTS - ON TOUR

A) The caravan making it’s way across America. Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis.

B) Playing shows at various venues.

C) Daniel in the crowd, cheering Dee on.

D) Dee having the time of her life on stage.

INT. THE FIREBIRD - ST. LOUIS VENUE - NIGHT

The band waits to go on stage. Justin talks to the CONCERT MANAGER across the room. They shake hands, and Justin walks toward Dee and Alyssa.

JUSTIN
You guys want to open with a couple of your songs?

DEE
What? Really?

JUSTIN
Yeah. Just got the OK. You have fifteen minutes if you get out there now.

ALYSSA
Oh my god!

Dee picks up her guitar and they head toward the stage.
INT. THE FIREBIRD - STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Dee and Alyssa walk onto the stage. SCATTERED APPLAUSE.

They share an excited look, a nod. They play another ORIGINAL SONG. Heads bob in the crowd.

Dee scans the audience for Daniel. He’s nowhere to be found.

She looks to the wings. Daniel is there, standing behind Justin, watching Dee proudly. She beams at him. Justin gives her a thumbs up.

She holds out a LONG NOTE, the crowd CHEERS.

INT. DEE'S ST. LOUIS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dee and Alyssa are practicing one of GRAHAM’S SONGS. One of Dee’s strings breaks.

    DEE
    Fuck.

    ALYSSA
    You have another one?

    DEE
    No, I don’t think so.

She looks in a pocket on her guitar case. Nothing.

    ALYSSA
    Graham probably has one.

Dee GROANS.

INT. ST. LOUIS HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

    Dee KNOCKS on Graham’s hotel room door. He opens it and gives her a confused, irritated look.

    DEE
    Hey, sorry. Do you have a G string I can borrow?

Graham’s eyebrow goes up.

    DEE (CONT’D)
    For my guitar. Not...

Graham CHUCKLES a little.
GRAHAM
Yeah, sure.

He steps aside and lets her in the room.

INT. GRAHAM’S ST. LOUIS HOTEL ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Nick is sitting at the desk lining up some white powder.

DEE
Oh, hey. Sorry, didn’t mean to interrupt.

NICK
Hey. No worries.

Graham looks through a bag for a spare string.

DEE
Is... Is that--

NICK
You’re not a narc are you?

Dee LAUGHS.

DEE
Fuck no.

NICK
Want a bump?

Graham glares at Nick.

NICK (CONT'D)
It’s my shit dude, chill. She can have some.

Graham hands Dee the string. She hesitates for a second.

DEE
Yeah, I’ll have a little one.

Nick hands her a rolled up dollar. She snorts a line. She wipes her nose with her sleeve.

DEE (CONT'D)
Damn.

NICK
First one’s free. I got some other stuff too if you’re looking to buy.
Dee thinks for a minute.

**DEE**
Okay, cool. Alyssa’s waiting on me.  
Gotta get back.  
(to Graham)  
Thanks for the string.

Dee leaves the room.

**INT. DEE’S ST. LOUIS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Dee comes in and closes the door a little too loudly.

**ALYSSA**
You good?

**DEE**
Huh? Yeah, great. Got the string.

She switches out the strings quickly.

**ALYSSA**
Wanna go over Graham’s new song?

**DEE**
No, we should work on some of our own stuff. I have a ton of ideas.

Dee grabs her notebook and flips through the pages rapidly.

**ALYSSA**
But we have another show in two days, and we still haven’t gotten the changes on the third verse.

**DEE**
We’ll work on that in rehearsal tomorrow! We need to be ready if Justin wants us to play our own songs again.

**ALYSSA**
Justin won’t let us play anything if we don’t have this shit figured out by rehearsal.

Dee throws herself on the bed in front of Alyssa dramatically. Alyssa LAUGHS.

**DEE**
Ugh! Come on, my muse is calling to me, I have to listen!

(MORE)
DEE (CONT'D)
I don’t give a shit about Graham’s songs right now.

ALYSSA
Where did all this energy come from?

Dee grabs her guitar.

DEE
It’s not even that late. We can do the other songs later.

Alyssa looks at her phone.

ALYSSA
It’s ten thirty!

Dee starts STRUMMING the chords to HER NEW SONG. *

Alyssa rolls her eyes.

I/E. DEE’S CAR – DAY

Dee drives and Alyssa sleeps in the passenger seat. They’re following the caravan to the next stop on the tour.

Dee looks over at Alyssa and SIGHS.

She puts her phone to her ear.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CODY’S HOUSE – DAY

Eric sits on the edge of his bed playing a video game. A NAKED WOMAN sleeps behind him. His phone VIBRATES. He looks at the caller, SIGHS, answers it.

ERIC
Yo.

DEE
Hey babe! How’s Cody’s place? You guys having a good time?

ERIC
Yep.

DEE
You okay?
ERIC
Mhm.

DEE
Doesn’t seem like it.

ERIC
Nah, it’s cool. You’re out having a great time with Graham and the guys, leaving me on read. I get it.

DEE
First of all, I told you Graham’s a dick. And I’m sorry I haven’t texted you. I haven’t had much free time.

ERIC
Not enough free time to send a fucking text?

DEE
Oh my god, Eric, please don’t be like this. I know it’s hard. I miss you too. But I didn’t come out here to half-ass this. I thought you supported me.

ERIC
Yeah, well I didn’t know supporting you meant supporting you leaving to shack up with four dudes and your slutty friend. I can imagine what happens in that hotel room.

Eric looks back at the Naked Woman in his bed. Grabs her ass.

DEE
We have separate rooms, dumbass.

ERIC
Yeah, that’ll stop ‘em.

Alyssa stirs. Dee looks at her.

DEE
(whispering)
I can’t do this right now, Eric.

ERIC
What? Your new boyfriend there?

DEE
Alyssa is asleep in the car.
ERIC
Yeah, sure.

DEE
I’ll talk to you s--

Eric hangs up on her. She SIGHS and turns the RADIO up.

EXT. GAS STATION – DAY
The caravan stops for gas. The band stretches their legs.
Nick leans against the truck. Dee walks up to him.

DEE
What stuff do you have?

NICK
You tryina buy?

DEE
Yeah. Got any K?

NICK
Yeah. Twenty-five for fifty mil.
Only a hundred if you get five.

DEE
Cool. I’ll get five.

Nick reaches into the truck for his bookbag.

DEE (CONT’D)
But... I was wondering if I could owe you until we get our money from Justin.

Nick puts the bookbag down and raises an eyebrow at her.

DEE (CONT’D)
I’m good for it, I swear. We’re getting paid in a few days anyway. And it’s not like you don’t know where to find me.

Nick thinks for a minute.

NICK
Fine.

He takes some pills from his bag and hands them to her.
INT. DEE’S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dee throws her bookbag on the bed. She opens it and takes out a smaller bag. She dumps out makeup and toiletries. A baggie of small white pills falls out too.

She crushes a pill and lines up the powder, snorts a line, lets out a long SIGH of relief. Snorts another line.

INT. NEW ORLEANS REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Everyone, minus Dee, gets ready for rehearsal. Justin paces up and down. He looks at Alyssa.

JUSTIN
Where is she?

ALYSSA
I don’t know. I saw her last night. She was going to bed early I think.

Dee runs in, wearing the same clothes from the night before.

JUSTIN
Wow, thank you for joining us, Dee.

DEE
I’m so sorry. I slept in. I don’t know what happened.

Dee puts the guitar strap over her shoulder, ready to play.

Justin glares at her with arms crossed.

DEE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry, Justin.

JUSTIN
Don’t apologize to me. You guys are the ones who’ll look like idiots on stage tonight if you sound like shit cause one of you couldn’t make it to rehearsal.

DEE
I can’t be the first musician to be a little late.

JUSTIN
Yeah, but you’re not good enough to just show up whenever you want. Can we play now?
Dee nods. Justin gestures to Brandon who drums FOUR BEATS and the band starts to PLAY.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOTEL - DAY

Alyssa and Dee get on the elevator.

ALYSSA
Want to hang out and watch a movie or something before we head to the venue?

DEE
Not really.

ALYSSA
Are you okay? Still upset about what Justin said in there?

DEE
I just want to go back to my room for a while.

They get off the elevator and go to their respective rooms.

INT. DEE’S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dee throws her guitar on the bed and flops down next to it. She looks over to the pills on the bedside table. She rolls over so she’s not facing them. Closes her eyes. After a beat, she sits up and snorts a fat line, passes out.

LATER

KNOCKING at the door.

Dee jerks awake, stumbles over to the door. It’s Alyssa.

ALYSSA
You ready?

DEE
Huh? Yeah. I was just taking a nap.

Dee grabs her guitar case and follows Alyssa out.
INT. THE PARISH ROOM - NEW ORLEANS VENUE - NIGHT

The band PLAYS.

Dee has trouble keeping up with the tempo. She knows it’s going terribly. She looks into the crowd anxiously.

Daniel’s there, but he looks different. Dark, sunken eyes, translucent skin, a pained expression.

Dee tries to shake the image. She’s stopped playing.

The Graham glares at her. The others give her confused, concerned looks, but they keep playing.

Off stage, Justin is fuming.

Dee muddles through the rest of the show.

INT. THE PARISH ROOM - BACKSTAGE - LATER

The band walks off stage. Graham shoves past Dee.

JUSTIN
What the fuck was that?

DEE
I’m sorry, I’m not feeling myself tonight. Maybe I’m coming down with something.

Justin grabs Dee’s face and looks at her huge pupils.

JUSTIN
You’re fucking high!

Dee glances at Nick, who’s watching the argument with Alyssa and Brandon. Nick walks away to look for Graham.

DEE
No, I--

JUSTIN
Yes you are! What made you think you could play a show like this?

Dee looks down at her feet.

DEE
I’m so sorry, Justin. It won’t happen again, I swear.
JUSTIN
If you fuck this up, that’s it.
Potential doesn’t mean shit if you
can’t work like a professional.

DEE
I know. It won’t happen again. I’m
sorry.

Justin walks away from her.

JUSTIN
Pack this shit up. Let’s get out of
here. That was fucking
embarrassing.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS HOTEL POOL - DAY
Alyssa floats in the pool. Dee sits at a table nearby and
writes in her notebook.

ALYSSA
You’re really not getting in?

DEE
I’m working.

ALYSSA
You’ve been working all day.

DEE
I just want to get this fucking
verse right.

ALYSSA
You won’t come up with anything if
you don’t let your brain rest.

Dee ignores her. Alyssa swims to the side of the pool.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
Want to talk about what happened
last night?

DEE
I know I fucked up, okay? I’m
sorry.

ALYSSA
I don’t give a shit about that. I
just want to make sure you’re okay.
DEE
I’m fine. Don’t worry. I’m not gonna fuck up the tour. I know how important this is for us.

ALYSSA
Fuck the tour. I’m worried about you, Dee. Remember how many songs we wrote right after you got out of rehab? That was such a good time.

DEE
Yeah.

ALYSSA
You need to take care of yourself. Tour or not, do it right. Daniel would want you to.

Dee looks up from her notebook.
Alyssa goes back to floating.

INT. DEE'S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Dee looks at the baggie of pills in her hand.
She takes it to the bathroom and opens the toilet lid. She hesitates for a long time, looking at the pills.
Finally, she dumps them in the toilet. Watches them swirl in the water. Flushes them.
Dee goes to the bed, takes out her guitar and STRUMS.
Her phone lights up. A text from Eric. She ignores it.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOTEL BAR - NIGHT
Dee, Alyssa, and Brandon sit at the otherwise empty bar.
The BARTENDER walks over to them.

BARTENDER
Last call.

DEE
What? No!

The bartender ignores her and starts cleaning up.
DEE (CONT’D)
One more round.

Alyssa grabs her stomach.

ALYSSA
Ugh, I really can’t. My stomach is already plotting its revenge.

The bartender sets the shots down. Brandon takes his. Dee takes both hers and Alyssa’s.

Alyssa gives Dee a concerned look.

Dee, Alyssa, and Brandon walk to the lobby.

DEE
What are we gonna do now?

BRANDON
I have some whiskey up in my room.

ALYSSA
No, I’m gonna call it a night.

DEE
Aw, come on!

ALYSSA
I’m exhausted!

Dee groans.

DEE
Fine. Goodnight, Grandma.

Alyssa stumbles drunkenly to the elevators, blows Dee a kiss.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS HOTEL POOL - NIGHT

Dee and Brandon sit at the edge of the pool with their feet in the water, passing the bottle back and forth.

Dee slaps her foot on the water, splashing Brandon. They laugh, he acts like he’s going to push her in the pool.

ERIC (O.S.)
What’s going on here?

Dee and Brandon look up to see Eric standing by the gate.

DEE
Eric? What are you doing here?
Dee stands up and stumbles to him. Brandon follows her.

BRANDON
Hey, man. I’m Brandon. Nice to meet you.

Eric glares at Brandon, ignoring his outstretched hand, puffing out his chest.

ERIC
This why you’re ignoring my calls? To hang out with this fucker?

DEE
My phone’s in my room charging, I didn’t... Why are you here?

ERIC
You said I could come visit, right? Thought I’d surprise you.

BRANDON
You must be proud of Dee. She’s so talented. You’re a lucky man.

ERIC
What’s that supposed to mean?

Brandon looks between Dee and Eric, LAUGHS to himself.

BRANDON
Nothing. Nice to meet you, Eric. See you guys later.

Brandon picks up the bottle and goes inside.

Dee takes Eric’s arm.

DEE
Let’s go back to my room. I’ve missed you.

INT. DEE'S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dee and Eric lie naked in bed. Eric gets up.

DEE
Where are you going?

Eric opens his bookbag and pulls out a plastic bag of joints. He lights one and gets back in bed. He offers it to Dee.
I’m okay.

ERIC
Really?

DEE
Yeah, I’m tired. I’m gonna go to sleep.

Dee rolls over, pretends to sleep. Eric blows smoke at her.

DEE (CONT’D)
What the hell?

ERIC
Yeah, what the hell? I thought you’d be excited to spend some time together.

DEE
I am, but I have rehearsal in the morning.

ERIC
Whatever.

Eric takes another hit. Dee tries to sleep.

INT. NEW ORLEANS REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Eric leans against the wall while the band warms up. Justin walks in. He stops when he sees Eric.

JUSTIN
Who are you?

DEE
This is Eric, my boyfriend.

JUSTIN
Hi. No boyfriends at practice.

DEE
Right, sorry.
(to Eric)
I’ll see you in a few hours.

She gives him her hotel room key, kisses his cheek.

The band sets up for practice.
INT. HARBOR SEAFOOD & OYSTER BAR - NIGHT

Dee, Eric, Alyssa, Brandon, Graham, and Nick are eating a nice dinner, drinking, and LAUGHING. All eyes are on Brandon.

BRANDON
So there we are in the middle of the rainforest, and Viv is wearing these platform heels and dress-cape-thing that’s getting caught on branches, and the cabin is another three miles away. I know I’m never gonna hear the end of it, so I carry her, and all our bags, up this damn mountain.

DEE
That’s so sweet.

Eric shoots an irritated look at Dee, glares at Brandon. He gets the HOT SEVER’s attention.

ERIC
(re: his drink)
Can I get another?

BRANDON
Yeah, she thought so too. But when we got there, she was mad I wanted to take a nap instead of, you know, “honeymooning.”

Everyone but Eric LAUGHS.

Eric watches the way Dee looks at him. His ears RING as he gets angrier. He puts his arm around Dee.

The Hot Server brings Eric his drink. He checks out her ass as she walks away. Dee notices and elbows him in the side.

He drains half of his drink in a few gulps.

DEE
(quietly)
Babe. Slow down.

ERIC
(to Hot Server)
One more.

EXT. HARBOR SEAFOOD & OYSTER BAR - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Everyone walks back to their cars. Eric’s arm is around Dee.
BRANDON
(to Dee)
Think Justin is gonna let you guys play your songs tomorrow?

DEE
Oh, I don’t know. That might have just been a one time thing.

BRANDON
He’d be dumb not to let you. You’re so good. Eric, you must be excited to finally see your girlfriend in action.

ERIC
The fuck’s that supposed to mean? You think I haven’t seen her in action before?

BRANDON
I mean in a big concert like this.

ERIC
You think you know her more than me cause you’ve “seen her in action?”

BRANDON
What? No.

DEE
Eric, what the hell are you talking about?

BRANDON
What’s your problem with me, dude?

ERIC
I don’t like you’re fucking attitude?

BRANDON
My attitude?

ERIC
That’s what I said.

Eric gets in Brandon’s face.

DEE
Eric, you’re drunk, leave him alone.
ERIC
This fucker thinks he’s better than everyone.

The other bandmates stop and watch the altercation.

BRANDON
No I don’t. Even though it might be true in some instances. *

Brandon straightens up, showing the height he has on Eric.

Eric swings at Brandon, but Brandon ducks, then punches Eric in the stomach.

When he straightens back up, Eric swings at Brandon again, but Dee grabs his arm. His elbow accidentally goes into her mouth, sending her backwards.

DEE
What the fuck!

She puts her hand over her busted lip.

Graham and Nick get between Eric and Brandon.

Eric storms off toward Dee’s car.

INT. DEE'S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dee holds ice to her lip, berates Eric.

DEE
Do you even realize how this makes me look? This is my fucking job, Eric. They could kick me off the tour!

Eric GROANS.

ERIC
I said I’m sorry.

DEE
You can’t get drunk and punch people for no fucking reason!

ERIC
I had a fucking reason! I see the way you look at him.
DEE
What are you talking about? We’re just co-workers. He’s married.

ERIC
Oh, so that’s the only thing stopping you?

DEE
You’re fucking ridiculous.

ERIC
Am I? You used to look at me like that.

Dee sits down on the bed next to him, SIGHS.

DEE
Eric, you don’t have anything to worry about. I swear. This is fucking stupid.

Eric pulls out a baggie of pills.

ERIC
We just need to unwind and spend some time together. Reconnect. It’s been too long.

DEE
Oh... I don’t really... Want to.

ERIC
Since when?

DEE
No, well I want to. It’s just... I’m trying to stay clean.

ERIC
Oh.

DEE
For the tour, you know? Justin has us on a ridiculous schedule. It’s just better if I’m... All there.

ERIC
You’re drunk right now though.

DEE
I’m fine with a couple of drinks.

Eric pops a pill in his mouth.
DEE (CONT'D)

Seriously?

ERIC

What?

Dee SIGHS.

DEE

Nothing.

Dee gets in bed.

ERIC

Jesus Christ, what’s wrong?

DEE

Nothing! I have to get up early for practice tomorrow.

Dee sets her alarm for 8 a.m. and closes her eyes.

Eric turns on the TV. Some sitcom with a loud LAUGH TRACK.

Dee opens her eyes and glares at him, covers her ears with a pillow, tries to sleep.

INT. DEE'S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Dee’s alarm goes off.

Eric jerks awake and sits up. He reaches over Dee and grabs the phone, fumbles around with it until the alarm stops.

Dee rolls over, but doesn’t wake up.

INT. NEW ORLEANS REHEARSAL SPACE - DAY

Dee rushes in.

DEE

My alarm didn’t go off I’m sor--

GRAHAM

Save it. He’s not here yet.

DEE

Where is he?

Graham shrugs.

Dee walks up to Brandon sitting at his drum kit.
BRANDON
How’s your lip?

DEE
I’ll survive. I’m sorry he tried to fight you. He--

Justin comes in.

JUSTIN
Sorry I’m late, everyone, but I just got off a very interesting phone--
(to Dee)
What the fuck happened to you?

DEE
It was-- We went to a club after dinner. Some asshole tried to start a mosh pit. Punched me in the mouth.

JUSTIN
Damn. We’ll have to cover that with makeup for the show. Anyway, the reason I’m late. House of Blues Houston had a cancellation. We’re gonna leave for Texas a couple days early and play there on the eighteenth.

GRAHAM
Are you serious? House of Blues? That’s amazing!

JUSTIN
I also talked with a friend at Rhythm Records. He’ll be in the area, so he’s coming to the show.

Justin looks at Dee and Alyssa.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
He said his label is looking for some new talent.

DEE
Really? Do you think--

JUSTIN
Let’s just say, we should all bring our A-game.

Justin winks at Dee. Dee and Alyssa share an excited look.
JUSTIN (CONT'D)
So we better get practicing.

Brandon counts them off with FOUR BEATS and they PLAY.

LATER

The band packs up their equipment.

JUSTIN
I have your money from the last few shows.

He passes out envelopes of cash. He hands Dee her envelope.

DEE
Thanks... Can I talk to you about something?

JUSTIN
Sure. What’s up?

DEE
I just want to let you know... I was late to rehearsal again this morning. I got in just a couple of minutes before you did.

JUSTIN
Okay... Why are you telling me this?

DEE
I just want to be honest. And I wanted you to hear it from me instead of anyone else.

JUSTIN
Graham?

Dee shrugs.

DEE
I’m sorry. I don’t know what happened. I’m gonna start setting, like, five alarms so I’m sure I get here on time. I don’t want to disappoint you again.

JUSTIN
I appreciate your honesty. Just be careful about how you spend your time. And who you spend it with.

(MORE)
Justin walks away and hands Alyssa her envelope.

Dee sees Nick staring at her. He taps his envelope. Dee takes some bills out of her envelope, gives them to him.

INT. DEE’S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dee opens the door and sees Eric snorting lines.

ERIC
Hey.

Dee rolls her eyes and walks out.

INT. ALYSSA’S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Alyssa opens the door and lets Dee in.

ALYSSA
What’s up?

DEE
Can I hang out in here for a little bit?

ALYSSA
Yeah of course... Anything you wanna talk about?

DEE
Not really.

ALYSSA
Okay. Wanna watch a movie?

INT. ALYSSA’S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dee and Alyssa eat snacks from the vending machine and watch a chick flick.

The GUY in the movie does some big romantic gesture to get the GIRL. She swoons.

DEE
I think I need to break up with Eric.
Alyssa looks at Dee wide eyed.

DEE (CONT'D)
I can’t do this anymore.

ALYSSA
Yay!

DEE
Dude...

ALYSSA
I’m sorry.

Alyssa grins. She’s not sorry.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT *

Dee stands outside her hotel room. She takes a deep breath before opening the door.

INT. DEE'S NEW ORLEANS HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS *

Eric jumps up to greet Dee.

ERIC
Hey babe.

He kisses her cheek.

There are burgers and fries on the desk. Fast food wrappers are folded up and used as plates. There’s a plastic cup with a couple of limp flowers in it.

DEE
Are those the flowers from by the pool?

ERIC
Yeah. I know it doesn’t look great. I just wanted to do something for you. I’m sorry I’ve been a dick.

DEE
Eric...

ERIC
I know all of this is important to you. And you’re important to me. If you have to be sober to make this work, I’m gonna be sober with you.
DEE
You don’t have to--

ERIC
I want to. I need you to know how much you mean to me, Dee. I love you.

He hugs her. She hugs him back reluctantly.

DEE
I love you too.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS HOTEL - DAY
The band loads up the van and the cars.

GRAHAM
House of Blues, baby! Woo!

DEE
(to Alyssa)
I’ve never seen him that happy.

Alyssa LAUGHS.

She jerks her head in Eric’s direction. He’s loading bags in the trunk of Dee’s car.

ALYSSA
So you’re staying with him?

DEE
It was bad timing. And I think he might actually be putting in an effort now.

Alyssa shrugs. Eric slams the trunk closed and comes to Dee, kisses her.  *

ERIC
You girls ready?

I/E. DEE’S CAR - DAY
Eric drives while Dee and Alyssa SING along to the RADIO.

The caravan makes its way to Houston.
INT. OMNI HOUSTON HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Everyone stands around as Justin checks them in.

The RECEPTIONIST hands Justin keys. Justin hands them out.

JUSTIN
Okay, Nick and Graham, Brandon and me, and Alyssa and Dee-- Oh.

DEE
Only three rooms? We had four last time.

JUSTIN
This hotel is more expensive. Our budget only covers three.

ERIC
So I don’t have a room?

JUSTIN
I don’t bankroll boyfriends.

DEE
We’ll just get another room, and Alyssa can have one by herself. No big deal.

Dee goes up to the counter.

DEE (CONT'D)
Hi, how much for a room?

RECEPTIONIST
I’m sorry, we don’t have any available rooms now. You can check at the Motel Six. It’s just two blocks away.

EXT. MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Dee and Eric walk toward the entrance.

Paint is chipping on the building. A few beat up cars sit in the parking lot. Half the lights on the sign don’t work.

A SKINNY WOMAN in short shorts and a crop top leans against the wall outside one of the rooms and smokes a cigarette.

Eric lags behind and stares at the woman. She winks at him.
INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM – DAY

Almost everything in the room has at least one stain.

Dee gets dressed. Eric is in bed.

DEE
We’re probably going straight to
the House of Blues after rehearsal.
You should just meet us there.

ERIC
I don’t know if I’m gonna make it.
I’m tired from driving all night.

DEE
All night? We were in at eight.

ERIC
(sharply)
I just don’t feel good, okay?

DEE
Okay, no problem. If you feel
better in a few hours, will you try
to make it? It’s our biggest show
yet.

(beat)
I’d just really like you to be
there. It’s okay if you can’t.

ERIC
I’ll try. If I feel better.

DEE
Thanks. We’ll probably go out after
the show, so I’ll be late getting
back.

She kisses him and leaves.

INT. HOUSE OF BLUES – HOUSTON VENUE – NIGHT

The band is on stage PLAYING.

The crowd CHEERS and dances.

Justin watches from a balcony. He’s standing next to STEVE CANMORE (41), well coiffed, top buttons of his expensive shirt undone, gray chest hair visible.

Canmore nods to the music. Gives Justin a look of approval.
INT. HOUSE OF BLUES - BACKSTAGE - LATER

Canmore and Justin are waiting for the band as they exit the stage. Justin high-fives Graham.

JUSTIN
Great show, everybody! This is Steve Canmore from Rhythm Records.

CANMORE
Really nice up there tonight.
(to Graham)
You’re Graham? I like your songs.

GRAHAM
Thank you, Mr. Canmore. That means a lot.

CANMORE
But you two.

Canmore points to Dee and Alyssa.

CANMORE (CONT'D)
Justin told me to keep an eye on you two tonight. I like what I saw.

DEE
Really?

CANMORE
Really. I also understand you’re looking for a label.

Dee and Alyssa look at each other and freak out a little.

CANMORE (CONT'D)
Of course, I can’t go based on a single show. How about we meet for brunch at Bloom and Bee tomorrow at nine to talk.

ALYSSA
That would be amazing!

DEE
We’ll be there!

CANMORE
Great. I’ll see you then. Justin, you come along too.

JUSTIN
Of course.
CANMORE
Perfect. Well, I’ll get out of your hair. You guys have a good evening.

Canmore shakes Dee’s hand. Smoothly passes a hundred dollar bill into her palm.

CANMORE (CONT’D)
Drinks are on me tonight. See you three in the morning.

Canmore leaves.

Dee and Alyssa SCREAM with excitement when he’s gone.

DEE
Holy shit, Justin. Thank you so much.

JUSTIN
I just got him here. He wouldn’t have stayed to chat if you didn’t impress him. Congrats.

BRANDON
Yeah, congrats guys! We going out to celebrate?

ALYSSA
Hell yeah.

DEE
I’m gonna go by the hotel first. Eric can’t miss this!

EXT. MOTEL SIX - NIGHT

Dee digs her room key out of her bag. She opens the door.

INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eric is in bed, on top of the Skinny Woman they saw smoking outside the hotel the day before. The woman MOANS.

DEE
What the fuck!

Eric jumps out of the bed and starts putting his underwear on. The woman SCREAMS and covers herself with the blanket.

ERIC
What are you doing here?
DEE
What am I doing here? This is my
* god damn room!

ERIC
Dee--

DEE
What the fuck is that?

There are needles and plastic bags of crystals on the table. *

ERIC
Listen, I just needed to do it one
last time. I didn’t think you were
gonna be back so soon.

DEE
So you thought you’d have enough
time to fuck some stranger who
brought you meth?
(to the woman)
What are you still doing here?

The woman stumbles out of bed, not stopping to get her
things, taking the sheets to cover her as she leaves.

DEE (CONT'D)
What happened to all that shit you
said?

ERIC
I do want to get sober with you,
* baby. I just needed to say goodbye.
Just one last time.

DEE
So what was she? A junkie hooker or
slutty drug dealer?

ERIC
Oh, like you haven’t slept around.

DEE
What are you talking about? You’re
the only person I’ve been with in
five years.

ERIC
Yeah, right. Everyone fucks around
at some point.
DEE
So you’ve done this shit before?
How many times have you cheated on
me?

ERIC
Dee--

DEE
No. I don’t even want to know. Just
get the fuck out.

She shoves him out the door wearing only his underwear.
She sits in front of the door and CRIES.
Eric BANGS on the door.

ERIC (O.S.)
Dee! I need to get my shit! Let me
in!

Dee goes into the bathroom and SLAMS the door.

INT. MOTEL SIX BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS
Dee turns on the shower, gets in.

EXT. MOTEL SIX - CONTINUOUS
Eric BANGS on the door.

ERIC
DEE!

He digs around in his pockets and pulls out the hotel room
key. He CHUCKLES and opens the door.

INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM - CONTINUOUS
Eric comes in, hears the WATER RUNNING.
He grabs his bag and shoves some clothes in it.

INT. MOTEL SIX BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS
Dee leans against the shower wall and sobs.
INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dee’s bag lays on the floor. The envelope of money sticks out. Eric picks it up and counts the bills.

He puts the envelope in his jacket pocket.

The shower SQUEAKS off.

Eric grabs Dee’s keys off the table and hurries out the door.

Dee comes out of the bathroom. Her eyes are puffy.

She looks at the trashed hotel room.

The woman’s clothes are on the floor. She kicks them out of her way. A small balloon of heroin falls out of a pocket.

She picks it up, tosses it on the table with the meth.

She sits on the sheetless bed and cries.

Looks over at the drugs on the table.

Picks up her phone, dials a number.

The phone rings a couple of times.

ALYSSA (V.O.)
Hey, It’s Alyssa, leave a mess--

Dee hangs up. She looks at the drugs again.

She grabs a bag from the table and takes a crystal out of it.

She puts the crystal back in the bag, then throws all the drugs in the trash can.

She paces the room. Sits on the bed, sobs.

She hurries to the trash can and gets the drugs out.

She takes out a crystal, scrapes off some powder, snorts it.

DEE
Fuck.

She stands up and paces the room again, more urgently now.

Time passes.

Dee buzzes around the room.
She goes through the bag Eric left, throws his things in the trash can, lights a match, drops it on top.

She burns the woman’s clothes too.

Throws the flaming trash can in the tub, turns the shower on.

Sobs on the bed.

Snorts more lines.

Clicks through the TV stations rapidly, not watching anything.

INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM - MORNING

The bright sun from the window wakes Dee. She squints her eyes and sits up slowly.

Brunch. Fuck.

DEE

Oh my god!

She reaches for her phone. It’s dead.

DEE (CONT’D)

Fuck!

She plugs her phone in, throws on clothes.

INT. BLOOM & BEE - DAY

Alyssa, Justin, and Canmore sit with untouched mimosas.

There’s a fourth mimosa in front of an empty chair.

Canmore looks at his watch.

ALYSSA

I didn’t see her car in the parking lot at her hotel, so I thought she’d already be here.

CANMORE

Should we give her a call?

Alyssa takes out her phone and calls Dee, then hangs up.

ALYSSA

Straight to voicemail.
INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM - DAY

Dee goes to grab her keys from the table. They aren’t there. She grabs her purse and looks through it. Nothing. She dumps the contents of the purse on the bed. No keys. She tears the room apart, looking everywhere. Nothing.

DEE
Where the fuck are my keys?

It hits her. She opens her bag. The envelope is gone.

DEE (CONT'D)
You’ve gotta be kidding me!

She runs out of the room.

EXT. MOTEL SIX PARKING LOT - DAY

Dee looks at the empty space where she parked last night.

DEE
What the-- Fucking asshole!

Dee runs down the street to the other hotel.

INT. OMNI HOUSTON HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

Dee BANGS on one of the doors.

DEE
Brandon! Brandon, let me in! Wake up!

A door across the hall opens and a man sticks his head out.

MAN
Keep it down out here!

DEE
Sorry, I just--

The man SLAMS the door.
INT. OMNI HOUSTON HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Dee runs to the desk where the Receptionist is typing.

    DEE
    Hi, I need a room key for 702.

The receptionist hits a few buttons on the computer.

    EMPLOYEE
    That room is under Justin Hill’s name.

    DEE
    Yeah. He’s my boss.

    EMPLOYEE
    I’m sorry, that isn’t your room. If I remember, you’re not even staying at this hotel.

    DEE
    Please, you have to let me in! I’m late for the biggest meeting of my career!

    EMPLOYEE
    I’m sorry, ma’am.

Dee GROANS, pulls out her wallet, and slaps down a twenty.

INT. OMNI HOUSTON HOTEL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dee shoves the key in the door and opens it.

INT. BRANDON’S OMNI HOUSTON HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dee shakes Brandon. He groans and rolls over.

    DEE
    Brandon! I need your car!

Brandon lets out a loud SNORE.

Dee scribbles a note, grabs his keys, runs out.

INT. BLOOM & BEE - DAY

Canmore looks at his watch.
CANMORE
Looks like she isn’t coming. And I have another meeting this afternoon.

He stands up. Justin and Alyssa stand up too.

Canmore shakes Justin’s hand.

CANMORE (CONT’D)
It was good seeing you again, Justin.

JUSTIN
I’m sorry to waste your time, Steve.

Dee runs up to them.

DEE
Mr. Canmore. I’m so sorry I’m late.

Canmore looks at her. She’s a mess and her pupils are huge.

CANMORE
No, this is good. I like seeing who someone really is early on. Saves time and money. So thank you, Dee.

Canmore nods to Justin and Alyssa, then walks out.

Justin shakes his head at Dee and walks out too.

DEE
Justin, wait.

She follows him.

EXT. BLOOM & BEE PARKING LOT - DAY

Dee catches up to Justin at his car. She grabs his arm.

DEE
Justin--

JUSTIN
Do you realize how embarrassing that was for me?

DEE
I’m sorry, I--
JUSTIN
I should have known something like this would have happened. If not now, eventually. I don’t know why I talked you up to him so much. Do you know how this makes me look?

DEE
It was Eric. He took my keys and I--

JUSTIN
Did he also make you get high? Put a gun to your head? Threaten to kill you or something? Take some fucking responsibility for your shit, Dee. You screwed this up. Not Eric. You’re done. Go home.

DEE
What?

Justin gets in the car and SLAMS the door.

Dee turns to Alyssa.

DEE (CONT’D)
Al. I’m sorry.

Alyssa looks at the ground. She won’t meet Dee’s eyes.

DEE (CONT’D)
Alyssa.

ALYSSA
Justin’s right. You need to get your shit together.

Alyssa gets in the car with Justin.

Dee watches them drive off.

INT. MOTEL SIX ROOM – DAY

Dee lies on the bed, SOBBING.

A KNOCK on the door.

She sits up quickly, hides the drugs under a pillow, opens the door. It’s Brandon.

BRANDON
I heard what happened. Are you okay?
Dee shakes her head no. Brandon puts his arms around her and she cries into his shoulder.

LATER

Dee and Brandon sit on the bed.

DEE
So that’s why I had to steal your car. I’m sorry.

BRANDON
Don’t worry about it. He’s a piece of shit. I’m sorry.

Dee sobs again.

DEE
This is all so fucked up. It’s not even my fault! If Eric didn’t bring that bitch to the room...

Brandon looks away from her.

DEE (CONT’D)
What?

BRANDON
I don’t know. I just feel like I saw something like this coming.

DEE
So this is my fault?

BRANDON
No, I’m not saying that. I just... He’s been a dick since he’s been here. You just deserve better than a guy like that.

Dee looks at Brandon. He smiles at her.

She leans in for a kiss.

Brandon leans away.

BRANDON (CONT’D)
What are you doing?

DEE
Oh my god, I’m sorry.

BRANDON
Dee, I’m married.
I know, I’m sorry. I thought you were-- I just--

Brandon stands up.

I have to leave.

Dee gets up, tries to hold him back.

Brandon, wait.

He shrugs her off and walks out, SLAMMING the door.

Dee SOBS. She knocks her bag onto the ground, kicks a chair.

She sits on the bed and hits her head repeatedly.

Stupid! Fucking stupid!

She curls up and cries some more. She pulls the pillow toward her, then remembers the drugs she hid there.

She steadies her breath and sits up.

She grabs the heroin.

She looks through a bag until she finds an old spoon, a needle, and an elastic band.

She puts the heroin in the spoon with some water and holds a lighter under it. Her hands shake.

She loads a needle, rolls up her sleeve, and wraps the band around her arm, then injects herself.

She falls back on the pillows and takes the band off.

She closes her eyes and is still for a while.

Her breathing becomes shallow erratic. She GURGLES.

She spits up, COUGHS and CHOKES.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dee lies asleep in a hospital bed hooked up to machines. Her hair sticks to the sweat on her forehead.

She opens her eyes and sits up slowly, looking around.
A young NURSE walks in.

NURSE
Hey, look who’s finally awake.

DEE
What happened?

NURSE
You got lucky. That’s what. Maid walked in on you OD-ing in your hotel room. Don’t worry. You’ll be fine.

DEE
Can I leave?

NURSE
In a few days.

Dee looks around the room.

DEE
Where’s all my stuff?

NURSE
I don’t know.

DEE
Great.

The nurse checks Dee’s vitals and leaves.

Dee turns the TV on and flips through the channels.

The nurse returns, sets a tray of hospital food front of Dee.

Dee looks at the food, vomits over the side of the bed.

The nurse SIGHS.

Dee curls up in a fetal position on the bed.

NURSE
There’s some anti-nausea meds on your tray. Take those and try to get some food in you.

Dee ignores her.

NURSE (CONT’D)
I’ll be back to check on you in a little bit.
Dee closes her eyes and shivers.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Dee wakes up.

DOCTOR TRESCH (60), white haired, is looking at her file at the end of her bed. He looks up at her as she sits up.

TRESCH
Hi Daphne, I’m Dr. Tresch.

DEE
Dee.

TRESCH
I’m sorry?

DEE
My name is Dee.

TRESCH
Oh, okay. How are you feeling?

DEE
Well, my cheating piece of shit boyfriend stole my car; I blew the biggest career opportunity I may ever have; my best friend hates me; I kissed a married man, who rejected me; and a maid found me dying. Now I’m here, with no friends, no job, no money, thousands of miles from home, no way to get back, nowhere to go if I ever do get back, stuck in this shitty bed, eating this shitty food, and talking to you. So, yeah. I’m fucking fantastic, Doc. How are you?

TRESCH
Thank you for asking. I’m well.

He looks back at her chart.

TRESCH (CONT'D)
We’re going to release you today, but I’d like to talk with you about a rehabilitation program we have here. It’s completely optional. You would check yourself in.

(MORE)
But it’s a great treatment center.
One of the best in the state.

No, thank you.

Alright. I’ll just leave this here.

Dr. Tresch sets the brochure on the table and leaves.

A nurse will be here in a few hours
to discharge you.

The nurse comes in.

Ready to get out of here?

Yep.

Anyone we can call to come pick you up?

No.

You sure? No friends or family?

I’m not from around here. Just call a cab.

Okay, hon.

The nurse walks out.

The CAB DRIVER (50s) stops in front of the motel.

Seventeen sixty.
DEE
My money is inside. Just give me one second. I’ll go get it and be right back.

The cab driver SIGHS, annoyed, and puts the car in park.

INT. MOTEL SIX - DAY

Dee goes up to the counter where an EMPLOYEE is standing.

EMPLOYEE
Hi! How can I help you?

DEE
I was a guest here a few nights ago. I... Left unexpectedly. There were some things in my room.

EMPLOYEE
Oh, you must be Miss Russell. One second.

The employee goes to the back room. She comes back a minute later with a duffel bag and a bookbag.

EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
Here you go.

DEE
There was also a guitar in there.

EMPLOYEE
No, this is everything.

DEE
No, there was a guitar. I need that guitar.

EMPLOYEE
I’m sorry ma’am. This was everything in the room.

DEE
Shit!

Dee snatches the bags from the employee and storms out.

EXT. MOTEL SIX - DAY

Dee stands next to the cab. She takes out her wallet and pulls out some money.
DEE
I only have fifteen.

CAB DRIVER
Seventeen sixty.

Dee empties some coins into her hand and counts them, then offers the money to the cab driver.

DEE
Sixteen thirty-four?

The driver snatches the money and starts the car.

CAB DRIVER
(under his breath)
Piece of shit.

He drives off.

Dee shoulders her bags, then walks down the sidewalk.

EXT. PARK - EVENING

Dee keeps walking. She gets to a park as the sun sets. *

She sits on a bench and goes through her bookbag. She takes out her phone. Dead. She looks for her charger. Not there.

Across the park, TJ (26), wearing a baggy hoodie and a buzz cut, sits on another bench.

A SKINNY GUY walks up to TJ.

Dee watches them. It looks like the skinny guy passes something to TJ while they shake hands.

TJ hands the skinny guy a plastic fast food cup. The skinny guy opens it and looks in, closes it quickly, walks away. *

Dee stares at TJ for a minute. Gets up.

She sits down next to him. He looks her up and down.

TJ
What’s up, girl?

DEE
Hey. I was just wondering... What was in that cup you just gave that guy?
TJ
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

TJ stands up and starts to walk away.

DEE
Wait!

She follows him.

DEE (CONT’D)
I’m not a cop.

TJ
Lift up your shirt.

DEE
What?

TJ
Show me you’re not wearing a wire.

Dee hesitates and looks around. No one is close to them. She lifts up her shirt, revealing her bare stomach.

TJ (CONT’D)
What do you want?

DEE
What do you have?

TJ
I got crystal. How much do you have?

DEE
I don’t have any money. But I really need something right now.

TJ looks at Dee’s body again. He licks his lips and smirks.

I/E. TJ’S CAR - WOODS - NIGHT

Dee smokes meth from a glass pipe. She hands it back to TJ. He takes a hit, then puts it in the console.

He grabs Dee’s hand and puts it on his crotch. He MOANS, then pushes Dee’s head down too. She goes with it.

LATER

Dee puts her shirt back on. TJ lights up a cigarette.
DEE
Can you take me back now?

TJ
What’s the rush sweetheart? Want another hit?

He takes out the pipe and offers it to Dee. She takes it and holds the lighter under it.

TJ reaches into the back seat for his clothes. While he’s not looking, Dee grabs one of the several baggies of meth out of TJ’s bag and puts it in her own.

TJ (CONT’D)
Where do you want me to take you?

DEE
The park is fine.

TJ
Really?

DEE
Yeah.

TJ
Okay.

He starts the car.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Dee gets out of the car and TJ drives away.

Dee walks around for a while. She sits next to a pond.

She takes out the meth, puts some on her pinky, snorts it.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Dee walks along the road until she gets to a bridge where the interstate crosses over.

There are HOMELESS PEOPLE in sleeping bags under the bridge.

Dee sits with her back against a concrete wall. Her knee won’t stop bouncing. She stands up and starts pacing around under the bridge, leaving her bags against the wall.

She turns and sees a HOMELESS MAN unzipping her duffel bag.
DEE

HEY!

Dee runs toward him.

The homeless man grabs the bag and runs. Dee chases him, then * stops. She picks up her bookbag and holds it tight.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Dee walks along the road with her thumb out. Several cars pass her without stopping.

Finally, an eighteen wheeler stops next to her. The driver, RAY (60s), rolls the window down.

RAY
Where ya headed?

DEE
Where are you going?

RAY
Miami.

DEE
That works.

Dee climbs in the cabin.

INT. EIGHTEEN WHEELER - CONTINUOUS

Ray extends his hand.

RAY
Name’s Ray.

DEE
Dee.

Dee shakes his hand.

RAY
Nice to meet ya, Dee.

Ray starts driving. He turns up the radio and starts whistling along to a BLUEGRASS SONG.

Dee leans her head against the window, closes her eyes.

Ray gives Dee a worried look.
INT. EIGHTEEN WHEELER - DAY

Dee sleeps. Ray Facetimes his wife, EILEEN (60s), long gray hair in a braid, glasses.

* EILEEN
Look who came to see Grandma today!

She switches the camera, revealing a baby girl, DANY.

RAY
Well, hey there, Dany! Since when are you up and walking?

Dee opens her eyes, sits up.

* EILEEN
Earlier this week. I’ll send you the video Katie took. Oh-- Looks like your friend’s getting up.

Ray looks over to Dee.

RAY
Thought you’d be asleep all the way to Florida!
(to Eileen)
I’ll talk to you later, Eileen.

EILEEN
Alright, y’all drive safe.

RAY
You girls have fun today.

Ray hangs up.

RAY (CONT’D)
Got you a burger.

He nods to a fast food bag in the back seat.

Dee grabs the bag and looks inside. A burger and fries.

DEE
You didn’t have to do that. I don’t really have any money to pay you back.

RAY
Ah, don’t mention it. My treat.

DEE
Was that your granddaughter?
RAY
Yep. My first. She got me wrapped.

He holds up his pinky.

DEE
Her name is Dany?

Ray CHUCKLES.

RAY
Short for “Day-neris”. However you say it. From some show my daughter likes.

Dee smiles a little, bites into a fry. A long silence.

RAY (CONT'D)
You know, I met one of my best friends while he was hitchhiking. He was tryin’ to go from Illinois to Washington State. Wanted to look at some whales or some shit out in the Pacific. Loved travelin’. Wanted to see the country. I could only get him to Colorado. But we kept in touch.

Dee takes a bite of the burger.

RAY (CONT'D)
You shoulda seen that buddy of mine when I first picked him up. Strung out of his mind. Almost didn’t stop for him. I’m glad I did, though. He’s a good man. He was just down on his luck. Needed someone to be on his side for once. We all do.

DEE
I guess.

She takes another bite.

RAY
He’s doin’ real good now. Got him a job with my company. Now he’s travelin’ all over and seein’ the country. Fifteen years clean now.

DEE
Really?
RAY
Took him a few tries. Rehab didn’t stick the first couple times, but he kept at it. Didn’t like finding rock bottom over and over. That’s a hard hole to climb out of.

Dee stares ahead, deep in thought.

RAY (CONT’D)
I’ve seen a lot of interesting people. You’re one of ‘em.

Dee doesn’t say anything.

Ray drives on in silence. They drive past a sign that reads “WELCOME, WE’RE GLAD GEORGIA’S ON YOUR MIND.”

DEE
Ray?

RAY
Yes ma’am?

DEE
Do you think you could make one quick stop in Atlanta before you head south?

RAY
Well sure. What’s in Atlanta.

DEE
I’ve got a whale to see too, I guess.

Ray smiles.

I/E. EIGHTEEN WHEELER - NIGHT

The eighteen wheeler comes to a stop on a city street.

RAY
My truck won’t fit on those side streets.

DEE
Here is fine. Thanks.

Dee gets out of the truck. Ray leans out the window.
RAY
Hey, hold on. I got something for you.

He pulls out a coin out of his pocket and tosses it to Dee.

She looks at it. It’s a 15 year sobriety chip.

She gives Ray a confused look. He shrugs.

RAY (CONT'D)
I don’t really like talkin’ about myself. Thought you needed to hear it though.

DEE
Ray, I can’t take this.

RAY
I don’t need it anymore. You might have use for it though.

Dee reaches for her bag.

RAY (CONT'D)
Good luck, Dee.

DEE
Thanks for the ride, Ray.

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - GROUP MEETING ROOM - DAY

Dee sits in a folding metal chair in a circle of PATIENTS.

PHILIP (40), the NA leader, addresses them.

PHILIP
We have a new face in the circle today.
(to Dee)
Want to introduce yourself?

DEE
Uh... Yeah. Sure. Hi, I’m Dee, and I’m an addict.

EVERYONE
Hi Dee.

DEE
Hi. It’s my second time at Clear Meadow. I thought I was in control when I left last time.
(MORE)
I was still getting messed up sometimes, but I was able to handle myself. Good things started to happen for me, too. Everything was finally falling into place. But then I fucked it all up, and now I don’t have anything. That was my rock bottom, but I saw that it could still be a lot worse. And this guy... *

Dee reaches into her pocket and takes out the 15-year chip.

He helped me see it can also be a lot better. So that’s why I’m here. To see if it can stick this time and things can get better.

PHILIP
Thanks for sharing, Dee. Welcome back.

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dee lies on the top bunk in a room with two bunkbeds. She turns the coin over between her fingers. She cries silently.

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - REC ROOM - DAY

Dee sits by herself on a couch reading a book. Other patients are talking and playing cards, but Dee keeps to herself. Across the room, IAN (27), attractive and confident, is playing an acoustic guitar, really badly. He hits the strings quickly and violently, making a loud, harsh, DISCORDANCE. A few girls sit around him giggling.

Dee glares at him angrily. He notices her watching and winks. She rolls her eyes and goes back to her book.

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - REC ROOM - MORNING

The rec room is empty. Dee walks in and picks up the guitar, tunes it, starts playing and singing one of her SONGS.

IAN (O.S.)
Holy shit. You’re really good. Did you write that?

Dee turns around, startled.
IAN (CONT'D)
Sorry, didn’t mean to scare you.

DEE
I didn’t think anyone would be up yet.

IAN
I was just taking a walk. You should be on the radio or something.

DEE
Yeah, well I blew that chance.

IAN
There’s always more chances. Especially if you’re talented.

DEE
You just met me.

IAN
Well I never met Jimmy Hendrix, but I know he’s a hell of a guitar player.

DEE
I’m no Jimmy Hendrix.

IAN
So what? You’re... It’s Dee, right?

DEE
Yeah.

IAN
I’m Ian.

DEE
Okay.

IAN
Well, I’m gonna sneak a smoke before breakfast. See you later.

DEE
See you.

She looks at her guitar and smiles to herself.
INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - CAFETERIA - DAY

Dee sits with a lunch tray in front her, but instead of eating, she writes lyrics on a napkin.

She looks up and catches Ian holding a notebook and staring at her. He smiles at her, takes a pencil to the notebook.

EXT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - DAY

Dee takes a walk in the yard. Ian sits under a tree drawing.

A bee BUZZES near Ian. He freaks out, jumps up, flails his arms, runs as far away from the bee as possible. He drops his notebook in front of Dee.

Dee LAUGHS, picks up the notebook. Flips through a few pages.

IAN
Hey!

He tries to snatch it away, Dee dodges him.

In the notebook are beautiful PENCIL DRAWINGS. Most of them are dark, unsettling.

DEE
Holy shit.

She stops on a drawing of herself, leaning forward to write in a notebook. It could be a black and white photo.

IAN
I’m sorry, I was--

DEE
Sorry? Ian, these are amazing!

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - REC ROOM - MORNING

Dee sits on the couch playing guitar and singing the song she’s been working on. Ian sits next to her sketching.

A nurse comes into the rec room.

NURSE
Russell. You have a visitor.

Dee looks up. Claire is standing in the doorway.
EXT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - DAY

Dee and Claire sit on a bench in the garden.

DEE
I know what you’re gonna say.

CLAIRE
What’s that?

DEE
You told me so. I couldn’t handle being on the road.

CLAIRE
I wasn’t going to say that...

DEE
I just had to go. And everyone telling me I shouldn’t go for this reason or that reason... Even though your reasons were valid. It just made me want to go more.

CLAIRE
You’ve always been that way. No one can tell you anything.

A beat.

CLAIRE (CONT’D)
I’m... So incredibly proud of you, Daphne.

DEE
What? Why?

CLAIRE
I never thought you would willingly come back here. 
(voice breaking)
You’ve come so far.

Claire dabs her eyes with a tissue.

DEE
Mom, don’t do that.

CLAIRE
I’m sorry. I just worry so much about you. Ever since Daniel... It felt like I lost two kids that day. Seeing you turn around like this...
Claire gets choked up. Dee wipes away a tear, hugs her mom.

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - NIGHT

Dee walks down the hall.

In a corner, Ian is saying goodbye to a VISITOR. The visitor slips something to Ian. Ian folds it into his waistband.

The visitor leaves. Ian turns and sees Dee.

DEE
Who was that?

IAN
A friend.

DEE
Must be a good friend, bringing you presents in rehab.

Ian LAUGHS.

IAN
What else are friends for?

Dee crosses her arms and gives him a look.

IAN (CONT'D)
What? Want me to share?

DEE
What do you got?

Dee puts her hand out. Ian looks down the hall, takes a baggie from his waistband, hands it to Dee. A bar of Xanax.

DEE (CONT'D)
Nice.

Dee drops it, crushes it with her foot.

IAN
What the fuck, Dee!

DEE
Yeah. What the fuck? Have you been sneaking shit in this whole time?

IAN
Why are you so mad about this? Everyone does it.
DEE
I thought you were serious about getting sober.

IAN
I am, but you know how it gets sometimes.

DEE
Of course I know. But I’m not gonna knowingly let you do this. I wish I had someone to throw away my shit when I was on the road.

IAN
That was fucking expensive, though.

DEE
I’ll pay you back. Just don’t forget why you’re here.

Dee walks back down the hall.

DEE (CONT'D)
Come on. Let’s go eat.

Ian SIGHs, follows her to the cafeteria.

INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - MEETING ROOM - DAY

Dee and the others sit in the circle of folding chairs. There are a lot of new faces.

PHILIP
Dr. Lorino mentioned to me that someone is set to check out today. Dee? Want to say anything?

DEE
Sure. I’ve been looking forward to this day, but now that it’s here, I’m nervous. It’s weird. I wasn’t nervous at all last time I got out of rehab. I was just ready to get away from this barf-green paint job.

Some of the patients in the circle LAUGH.

DEE (CONT'D)
When I came in six months ago, I had lost everything. I still don’t have anything.

(MORE)
DEE (CONT'D)
Maybe that’s why I’m more nervous to get out this time. Or maybe it’s because I didn’t know last time how easy it was to fall back into the same habits once you leave. I don’t know if I’ll stay clean when I’m out there. But... Now I’ve seen what I’m capable of. Now I feel like I have a reason to try. So that’s what I’ll do. I’ll try.

The patients APPLAUD as Philip gives Dee her 6 month chip. * Ian looks at her proudly.

EXT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB – DAY
Dee walks outside. Ian follows her with her bag. Claire gets out of her car and waves to Dee. Dee hugs Ian.

IAN
Good luck out there.

DEE
Good luck in here. Six more weeks. * You can do it.

IAN
I’ll see you soon.

Dee goes to Claire, hugs her. They get in the car.

INT. DEE’S BEDROOM – NIGHT
Dee folds clothes and SINGS DANIEL’S SONG to herself. Claire appears in the doorway, behind Dee, quietly listening. Claire’s eyes fill with tears. She lets out a SOB. Dee turns around.

DEE
Mom? What’s wrong?

CLAIRE
That... That’s Daniel’s song, isn’t it? I haven’t heard it in years. It’s... So beautiful.
DEE
That’s always been my favorite.

CLAIRE
I hate that I never got to appreciate his talent while he was here. And I’ve been doing the same thing to you. I’ve been an awful mother.

Dee hugs Claire.

DEE
No you haven’t! You’re an amazing mom. You’ve given us everything. We were just dumb, ungrateful kids. Especially me.

Claire wipes her eyes.

CLAIRE
Well, we’re here now. No use dwelling on the past.

They smile at each other.

I/E. CLAIRE’S CAR – DAY

Claire drives while Dee taps her fingers on her leg to the MUSIC on the radio. Claire makes a turn.

DEE
I thought we were going to that new Korean place.

CLAIRE
We just have to make a stop first.

Claire pulls into the parking lot of the music studio.

DEE
What are we doing here?

CLAIRE
Just go see if he’ll talk to you.

DEE
Why are you making me do this?

CLAIRE
Don’t go in with any expectations. Just apologize. Work the steps.

(MORE)
CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What’s the worst thing that can happen?

Dee looks at the building hesitantly. She GROANS.

DEE

Fine.

She gets out of the car.

INT. MUSIC STUDIO - DAY

Dee approaches the receptionist, MARIE.

MARIE

Can I help you?

DEE

I need to see Justin.

MARIE

Is he expecting you?

DEE

I... No. He isn’t. I just wanted to talk to him about something. Real quick. Five minutes.

MARIE

I’m sorry, Mr. Hill has a very busy schedule today.

Dee SIGHES.

Through the glass wall behind Marie, Dee sees Justin and a CO WORKER walk to his office with a coffee in hand.

Justin and the Co Worker LAUGH and sip their coffee.

DEE

Justin!

Justin looks at her.

MARIE

Ma’am! You need to leave!

Justin comes into the lobby.

JUSTIN

Dee? What the hell are you doing here?
DEE
Justin--

JUSTIN
Are you high?

DEE
No! No, I’m really not. I... I’ve actually been sober for almost seven months now.

Justin crosses his arms, letting her go on.

DEE (CONT’D)
I’m sorry for doing this without calling. I just want to apologize for... You know.

Justin SIGHS.

JUSTIN
Come on in.

MARIE
Mr. Hill, your four o’clock--

JUSTIN
I know. Thank you, Marie.

Dee follows Justin to his office.

INT. JUSTIN’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS
Dee sits in a chair across from Justin.

DEE
I know why you had to let me go.
I’m sorry for everything. I hope I didn’t ruin the rest of the tour for you guys.

JUSTIN
We got a replacement for the next show. It worked out.

DEE
Okay. That’s good.

JUSTIN
I’m glad to hear you’ve gotten some help. No hard feelings.

Justin extends his hand to Dee. She shakes it.
JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Good luck, Dee.

Justin escorts Dee to the lobby.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
You still writing music?

DEE
Yeah. I finished my song in rehab.

JUSTIN
They had a guitar for you to play?

DEE
Yeah. You don’t still happen to have mine, do you?

JUSTIN
No, but I know who does.

I/E. CLAIRE'S CAR - DAY

Dee gets in the car.

CLAIRE
Okay, Korean?

DEE
Actually, can we do that another night? There’s somewhere else I need to go.

Claire smiles at Dee and drives off.

INT. PIANO BAR - NIGHT

Dee walks into a dark, smoky bar.

Alyssa is playing a baby grand piano on a stage.

She finishes the song and the crowd CHEERS.

Some people come up and put tips in a glass bowl on the piano. Others give her slips of paper with song requests.

Alyssa looks at one of the requests, then laughs and starts PLAYING a rendition of “BABY GOT BACK.” *

The crowd LAUGHS. Dee smiles while she watches Alyssa play.

LATER
Alyssa gets a drink at the bar. Dee taps her on the shoulder. *

**ALYSSA**
Dee? Oh my god! What are you doing here?

**DEE**
I heard they had some sick pianists here. I had to check it out.

**ALYSSA**
It’s been so long. Do you want a drink or anything?

**DEE**
No, actually. I’m good. Almost seven months good, actually.

**ALYSSA**
Really? That’s amazing.

**DEE**
Thanks... I’m sorry about everything that happened. You probably hate me still.

**ALYSSA**
It’s in the past. And I should have been there for you more.

**DEE**
You were always there for me, though. And that’s not what I needed. I needed a wake-up call.

Alyssa nods. They stand there in an awkward silence.

**DEE (CONT’D)**
I was wondering... I just talked to Justin, and he said you might still have my guitar...

**ALYSSA**
Yeah, I figured you’d probably want that back. It’s at my place.

**INT. ALYSSA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Dee sits on the couch. Alyssa comes out of the bedroom with Dee’s guitar case.

Dee takes out the guitar, tracing her fingers over the carved letter D in the headstock.
ALYSSA
You said you’re done with that song, right? Let me hear it.

Dee PLAYS her NEW SONG.

When she finishes, Alyssa stares at her, mouth agape.

ALYSSA (CONT'D)
Holy shit, dude. That’s insane.

DEE
Shut up.

ALYSSA
No. Seriously. It’s amazing. You need to get this song out there. Call Justin or something and--

DEE
Yeah, no. He’ll give me another shot when pigs freeze over.

ALYSSA
What?

DEE
It’s not gonna happen.

ALYSSA
Okay, well who needs Justin? Why don’t you just record it yourself and send it out to people?

DEE
I don’t know...

ALYSSA
Come on, what do you have to lose? You already know someone who can edit it for you.

DEE
I do? Who?

EXT. BRANDON’S HOUSE - DAY

Dee and Alyssa walk up to a small, well-kept house. Dee is holding her guitar.

DEE
This is really not a good idea.
ALYSSA
Calm down. He already said he’d help.

Alyssa KNOCKS on the door. Brandon opens it.

INT. BRANDON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS
Brandon leads Dee and Alyssa inside.

BRANDON
My studio is back here.

DEE
Thanks for doing this, Brandon. You really don’t have to.

BRANDON
No worries. I need all the practice I can get.

He never looks directly at Dee.

ALYSSA
Where’s the bathroom?

BRANDON
Down the hall on the left.

Alyssa goes to the bathroom.

Brandon leads Dee into a small room with recording equipment: mics, sound mixers, a two screen monitor, foam on the walls. His drum kit is in the corner.

DEE
When did you start editing?

BRANDON
I’ve been doing it for years, but I picked it up again when we got back from the tour.

DEE
Speaking of the tour... I owe you an apology. For causing problems with the band and... You know. It was never my intention to put a strain on your marriage.

BRANDON
You didn’t. Viv and I are fine.
DEE
Oh, good! I would feel awful...
Anyway. I’m still sorry.

BRANDON
Hey, it’s in the past. And you were going through a lot. I feel bad for leaving you like I did.

DEE
You shouldn’t.

Alyssa comes in.

ALYSSA
What are you standing around for?
We got work to do!

LATER

Dee PLAYS and SINGS into a microphone.

A KNOCK on the door.

VIVIAN (27), naturally beautiful, pregnant, smiling, enters holding a tray of chips and dip.

VIVIAN
Sounds great in here! Thought you guys might be hungry.

Brandon takes the tray, kisses her, touches her big belly.

BRANDON
Dee, Alyssa, this is Viv.

Viv hugs Alyssa, then Dee, tightly, taking them by surprise.

VIVIAN
I’ve heard so much about you guys!
I’m glad Brandon had such good friends with him on tour this time.

Dee makes eye contact with Brandon. He looks away, grabs a chip from the tray.

EXT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB – DAY

Dee stands outside the rehab center next to her mom’s van.

Ian comes out the front door. Dee runs to him, hugs him.
DEE
What do you want to do first?

IAN
Eat something that’s seasoned with something other than salt, please.

INT. MAJESTIC DINER - DAY

Dee and Ian sit in a booth looking over menus. Eric comes out of the kitchen with a bus tub of dirty dishes. Dee sees him, puts the menu in front of her face.

DEE
Fuck.

Ian looks at Eric.

IAN
Who’s that?

DEE
My ex. I guess he finally got a job.

IAN
The dude who stole your car?

Dee nods. Eric looks up, sees them.

ERIC
Dee? What are you doing here? Who’s this?

DEE
This is Ian. We’re just trying to eat.

ERIC
You her boyfriend or something?

DEE
Oh my God.

IAN
We’re just friends.

DEE
Not like it’s any of your business.
ERIC
Yeah, whatever.

IAN
I hear you got a new whip recently.

Eric gets nervous. Looks at Dee.

ERIC
I... I don’t have it anymore...

DEE
Why not?

ERIC
I wrecked it. I’m sorry.

DEE
You know what, whatever, I don’t even care. That’s been the least of my worries.

She grabs her bag, gets up.

DEE (CONT’D)
Come on, Ian.

Ian follows her out.

ERIC
Dee, wait! Can we talk?

DEE
I don’t have anything to say, Eric.

INT. BRANDON’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dee, Alyssa, and Brandon bob their heads along to DEE’S SONG.

DEE
Holy shit, Brandon. This is amazing! Thank you!

BRANDON
Don’t mention it. If you get a good response to this one, maybe we can record your other ones.

ALYSSA
It sounds great, Dee! Who are you gonna send it to first?
DEE
Oh... I don’t know. Haven’t really thought about it.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Claire is stirring something in a pot on the stove. Dee comes inside, puts her bag on the counter.

CLAIRE
Hey! You guys finish the song?

DEE
Yep.

CLAIRE
That’s great!

DEE
I guess.

CLAIRE
What’s wrong?

Dee SIGHS.

DEE
I don’t know. I guess I’m just freaking out about the idea of sending it to people.

CLAIRE
Why?

DEE
What if I get another shot, and I * screw it up again. *

CLAIRE
Well, the fact that you’re scared tells me that you won’t let yourself screw it up. If this is something you want to do, you have to go for it.

DEE
Yeah, I know. I think I’m just tired. I’m gonna go lie down.

Dee goes upstairs.

Dee’s bag lies open on its side. Claire sees the USB in it.
Claire takes the USB, puts it in her pocket.

INT. RADIO STATION - DAY

Claire walks up to the RECEPTIONIST at the front desk.

CLAIRE
Hi, I have something for your Local Spotlight program.

She hands the receptionist Dee’s USB.

EXT. IAN’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dee BANGS on Ian’s door.

DEE
Ian! What the hell? We were supposed to meet at the movies an hour ago!

She tries the door knob. It’s open. She lets herself in.

INT. IAN’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ian lies on his couch, unconscious, vomit on his shirt.

Dee sees a FLASH of Daniel the night he died.

DEE
Fuck! No no no!

She runs to Ian, starts giving CPR, simultaneously taking out her phone to dial 9-1-1.

DEE (CONT’D)
Come on, Ian!

9-1-1 OPERATOR (V.O.)
9-1-1, what is your emergency?

DEE
My friend OD’d! I need an ambulance!

Dee drops her phone, continues CPR.

Ian GASPS, sits up, COUGHS, looks at Dee, terrified.
INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - DAY

Dee brings Ian back to rehab. While he’s filling out paperwork, Dee looks around. She notices the guitar isn’t in the rec room anymore. A nurse walks by. Dee grabs her attention.

DEE
Hey, what happened to the guitar that was here?

NURSE
They confiscated it.

DEE
Why?

NURSE
Someone was sneaking drugs in. Hid them in the guitar.

DEE
So what? Now they don’t have anything to do in the rec room?

NURSE
They have a TV.

DEE
Yeah, the world’s oldest, smallest TV. They need something to do. Other than thinking about drugs.

NURSE
I don’t know what to tell you. They’ve been cracking down lately. Nothing can go unsupervised.

DEE
What about lessons?

NURSE
What?

DEE
Weekly guitar lessons. Supervised. I’ll bring in the guitar, and take it with me when I go. I’ll be there the whole time.

NURSE
You’re talking to the wrong person, honey.
INT. CLEAR MEADOW REHAB - DAY

Dee sits on the couch in the rec room, playing Daniel’s song. Ian and several PATIENTS sit with her.

She hands the guitar to MAYA (18), skinny and shy. Shows Maya where to put her fingers.

DEE
This is C. And that’s F. Just strum like this four times, then switch.

Maya does so, a little awkwardly.

DEE (CONT'D)
That’s great!

Ian smiles while he watches Dee teaching the patients.

At the nurse’s station, the nurse watches the guitar lesson.
She picks up a magazine, turns up her RADIO.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)
Now we got a new artist for our local spotlight, Dee Russell. We don’t know much about her, but we hope to hear a lot more from her soon. You heard it here first.

DEE’S SONG starts playing. The nurse taps her foot to it.

Dee watches proudly as Maya strums Daniel’s guitar. Her eyes go to the “D” scratched into the headstock.
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EDUCATION  
• Master of Arts in Professional Writing • Kennesaw State University (KSU) • May 2019  
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ACHIEVEMENTS  
• Finalist in the 2019 Screencraft Writers Summit Pitch Competition  
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Teaching  
• Graduate Teaching Assistant (TA) • English 1101 Instructor • KSU • Aug 2017-Dec 2018  
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