

**HANNAH ROYCE'S QUESTIONABLE CHOICES**

"PILOT"

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COLD OPENING

FADE IN:

EXT. INTERSTATE 80 - DAY

A Subaru speeds down the highway, passing cars.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Hey, how 'bout stepping on that gas pedal?! It's the one on the right!

INT. HANNAH'S SUBARU - SAME TIME

HANNAH ROYCE, 36, pretty but real (confident, street smart, trainwreck), driving fast, swerves around a car and then glares at the SCHLUBBY GUY in the driver's seat, who glares back. She talks to him like he can hear her, but he can't.

HANNAH

Oh, don't look at me like that!  
I'm sure you've never been late before. I'm sure you've never made a bad choice. How 'bout occasionally choosing not to have fries with that?

The guy flips her off and she flips him right back as she speeds past. She keeps talking, to whom we don't know.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

But who am I to talk, right? Who runs out of gas on the one day they absolutely can't? The problem is that empty light never really means "empty." It's more of a suggestion. Well, that doesn't work for me! If there's wiggle room, I'm gonna wiggle right past the Exxon station and try to make it to the Sunoco with the guy with the arms and the abs. So don't give me a choice, because if it's my choice I'm gonna say, I don't need an umbrella, I don't need renter's insurance, you don't need to wear a condom --

She covers her mouth and looks back, where we see her passenger for the first time, a sweet-looking kid, JAMIE, (8, handsome, mixed race), wearing headphones, reading a book.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

You didn't hear that did you?

JAMIE  
(not looking up)  
What's a "condom"?

HANNAH  
You're wearing headphones!

JAMIE  
Should I be wearing a condom to  
this interview?

HANNAH  
No! You never need to wear one. I  
mean, not never, some day, but not  
for a long time, and then always -  
(changing the subject, as  
she maneuvers around)  
Why is everybody driving like  
they're an hour early for a dentist  
appointment?

JAMIE  
Don't worry. We're gonna make it.

HANNAH  
We better. I had to pull every  
string in my... string box to get  
this interview. Chicago Latin is a  
prep school. Why's it harder to get  
into than an episode of Westworld?

JAMIE  
You didn't have to do all this, Mom.

HANNAH  
That's the whole point! I'm doing  
things differently now. That's why  
I applied for that fellowship at  
the hospital. I'm making better  
decisions, for all of us, because  
sure I'd prefer to be rescued by  
some Prince Charming who wants me  
to stay home all day drinking wine  
and watching *Ellen* until he comes  
home with a bouquet of flowers and  
breath that smells like wintergreen  
gum, but I'm starting to think that  
guy's not gonna show up. So  
instead, you're gonna go to this  
great school, I'm gonna become a  
doctor, and we're all gonna start  
making better decisions -- shoot,  
that's our exit.

And with that she RIPS the wheel to the right and crosses four lanes of traffic. We cut outside and watch and it's a little hairy but somehow she makes it until...she doesn't. She ever so softly CLIPS a Mercedes. We cut back inside.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Dammit! Are you okay, honey?

JAMIE

Yeah. What was that sound?

HANNAH

(pulling over)

I clipped his big dumb fender. Now you're really gonna be late. Aghh! I'll send out a text, see if anyone in the family can come pick you up.

JAMIE

Maybe my dad.

HANNAH

His moped's always broken.  
(to herself, as she texts)  
And also, he drives a moped.  
(as she sends the text)  
Why didn't I go to the next exit?

JAMIE

Especially right after you decided to not make any more bad decisions.

HANNAH

Hey, don't be smart. I'm getting you into this school.  
(getting out)  
Now let me go try to convince this putz it was his fault.

As Jamie rolls his eyes, ducks down and goes back his book:

**EXT. HIGHWAY SHOULDER - SAME TIME**

Hannah gets out of the car and STOMPS over to the Mercedes. As she goes, she talks to herself, rehearsing.

HANNAH

...no, you listen to me, you pompous sonuvabitch. I was making a perfectly safe lane change and you came out of -- Holy crap!

Because the driver of the Mercedes has just gotten out and he's REALLY HANDSOME!, like wind-blowing-through-his-hair, angels-singing handsome. This stops Hannah in her tracks for a beat but then she shakes it off, gets back on message:

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Do you even look where you're going  
or do you just text and drink and  
sleep behind the wheel?

MERCEDES GUY

(wry smile)

Wow. Both guns blazing, huh?

She's about to double down, but that smile....

HANNAH

I just thought I'd spin the wheel  
and see if I got lucky.

MERCEDES GUY

Well, good news, I am pretty drunk.

She laughs. He's not drunk, he's just charming.

HANNAH

I'm sorry. I'm really late and I  
was about to miss my exit and...  
anyway, here's my info.

As he takes out his phone to photo her i.d. and insurance.

MERCEDES GUY

(reading)

Hannah Royce. Good solid name.

HANNAH

Oh, thank you. That's not all  
that's...solid? What am I saying?  
Um...I'm really sorry to mess up  
your nice car. Or... your wife's?

MERCEDES GUY

(giving her card back)

No wife. Yet. Fingers crossed.

(taking out a pack)

Gum?

Hannah looks at it. Whoa. It's...

HANNAH

Wintergreen.

There's an awkward, charged beat. Then:

MERCEDES GUY

Hey, I'm gonna go out on a limb here. And don't think I go around getting into accidents so I can meet young attractive women, but... You wanna get a drink sometime?  
(off her stunned silence)  
With me?

HANNAH

Oh. With you? You had me until you threw that part in.

MERCEDES GUY

(smiles)  
So...whattya say?

As Hannah's about to say he can do much more than buy her a drink, a DRIVER'S ED car pull up beside her.

HANNAH

(under her breath)  
Oh no.

A man, 37, in a short-sleeved button down, BARRY (pony-tail, know-it-all, ex-stoner), sits in the passenger seat. A girl, SCARLETT, 15, (sullen, pretty but not skinny), drives, badly.

BARRY

Admit no fault, Hannah!

MERCEDES GUY

Who's that?

HANNAH

(doesn't even look)  
Hmm? No idea.

SCARLETT

Mom! I need a new driver's ed teacher. Dad's the worst!

MERCEDES GUY

Oh, is that your daughter?

HANNAH

My what? My daughter? How could an attractive young woman like myself have a 15-and-a-half year old daughter? If that's even how old she is, how would I know?

A nice pick-up truck pulls up. A boy, CARTER, 13 (looks 9, chip on shoulder), ice pack on his eye is in the passenger seat. The driver, LEWIS TIBBETS, 45, (gay, but not in a fun way) mustache, tucked in Oxford, leans across Carter.

LEWIS

Hannah, our son seems to have an anger issue that he doesn't get from me.

(then, noticing Mercedes Guy, awkwardly flirty)

Hello. I'm Lewis.

MERCEDES GUY

Hi?

Mercedes Guy looks at Hannah, like, what's going on?

HANNAH

This is so weird. I must look like this Hannah all these strangers know.

Just then, a heavy-set black man, J.L., (36, not brilliant, not that well-groomed) in sweats and sandals, riding a beat-up moped, skids to a stop, whips off his helmet.

J.L.

Is Jamie okay, Hannah? Where is he?

Jamie POPS out of Hannah's car. (We hadn't seen him yet).

JAMIE

Hey, Dad. I'm fine. I was hiding in the car while Mom tried to convince this putz it was his fault.

As J.L. goes and gives Jamie a hug, Hannah turns to the Mercedes Guy. She's about to explain, but then...just sighs:

HANNAH

Just have your insurance company contact mine.

And with that she turns and stomps back toward her car where the troops have gathered. As she mutters to herself about all her bad choices, they WAVE at her and we:

SMASH TO:

TITLE CARD: **HANNAH ROYCE'S QUESTIONABLE CHOICES**

END OF COLD OPENING

ACT ONEFADE IN:INT. HANNAH'S HOUSE, KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM/ENTRYWAY - LATER

It's about 45 minutes later. We're in a big warm room with an open plan. Lewis is there chopping an onion for the dinner he's preparing. Carter is filling water glasses. Barry is hovering around, not helping, while Scarlett sets the big, beat-up table that's the centerpiece of the room.

BARRY

(to Lewis)

There's a much more efficient way to cut an onion.

LEWIS

Is that right?

BARRY

I teach it to my home ec students. You cut vertically, but not all the way through, then turn it and cut horizontally.

LEWIS

Barry, I spent most of my life being told "the right way" to do stuff. I don't listen anymore.

BARRY

It's an onion, Lewis. I'm not asking you take a girl to the prom.  
(then, noticing)  
Scarlett, forks on the left, water glasses on the right. You'll thank me someday.

SCARLETT

(under her breath)

I'll thank you by getting my nose pierced.

BARRY

I heard that and the joke'll be on you. Piercings are the leading cause of nose infections.

Just then, Hannah ENTERS with Jamie. She's finishing a phone call. Jamie crosses to the kitchen and grabs a drink.

JAMIE

Lewis, what's that smell?



LEWIS

Turmeric. I'm trying something new.

JAMIE

It smells like feet.

BARRY

Certain tribes in the Amazon consider feet a delicacy.

SCARLETT

That's not true.

BARRY

Look it up.

HANNAH

(into phone)

...well you are very understanding. There are crazy drivers out there and I am definitely not one of them... Well, let me know. I promise I won't miss the next one.

(hanging up, to everyone)

That was the admissions guy. He's gonna call when something opens up.

(then)

Hey, where are you going?

Carter, who was trying to slip out, stops.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Let's talk black eyes. What happened?

LEWIS

Hannah, I already --

HANNAH

Was someone picking on you for being small or for having a gay dad or a black brother or a mom who's a little too rock and roll, because they're just jealous and you gotta let that stuff roll off your back.

CARTER

I pushed a kid because he took the seat I wanted to sit in for lunch.

HANNAH

Oh. So you were just being a bully?

CARTER

He sat right as I was sitting down!

HANNAH

Could you at least pick fights with kids that are smaller than you?

J.L.

Size shouldn't be a factor.

J.L. has ENTERED. (It takes him a long time to get places on his moped.)

J.L. (CONT'D)

I've seen pygmies take down elephants.

BARRY

I've seen that, too.

HANNAH

Neither of you have seen that.

J.L.

Carve Magraw. It's a new self-defense technique I've been exposing my clients to at the gym. We focus on your opponent's center of gravity. I'd be happy to take you under my wing, Carter, get you ready for your next battle.

Lewis clears his throat from the kitchen.

LEWIS

Or you could focus on what's underneath your quote unquote opponent's hostility. Maybe he's being forced to live a life he doesn't feel in his heart.

CARTER

He's not gay, Dad.

BARRY

(to J.L.)

It's pronounced Krav Maga. And it's not new.

J.L.

I know how it's pronounced. And I know how old it is! I'm basically a master of it.

LEWIS

I'm just saying greet hostility  
with love.

J.L.

You could do that, but then it  
wouldn't be...  
(already forgot)  
...Carve...

BARRY

Krav Maga.

J.L.

I know!

Barry and Lewis share a smile as Hannah's phone BUZZES.

HANNAH

Shh! It's the admissions guy.  
(into phone)  
That was quick! Really? There's  
an opening? Yay!... Wait, tomorrow?  
Oh, no... I mean, No, I didn't...  
that's great. Tomorrow, 3:30 is  
perfect... Thanks.  
(hanging up, to herself)  
Dammit.

LEWIS

What's the matter?

HANNAH

You know that fellowship at the  
hospital -- the one that pays for  
med school while you work?

SCARLETT

Yes, we know it. It's all you talk  
about.

CARTER

(as Hannah)

Get ready to say, Have you met my  
mom, Dr. Hannah Royce.

HANNAH

Right, well get ready not to say  
that. The surgery test is  
tomorrow. But a parent needs to be  
with Jamie at the interview.

J.L.

I can take him. I just got gas for the moped. Half a tank.

HANNAH

No, I should really be there.

J.L.

I hope you're not saying that because you think I'm not reliable. Because I am reliable as a lion.

BARRY

Lions are actually one of the least reliable mammals. The most reliable mammal? This might surprise you: the jackal.

LEWIS

I would bet there are reliable lions and unreliable lions. Maybe instead of making sweeping generalizations, let's judge lions on a lion-by-lion basis.

HANNAH

It's not about being reliable, J.L. I just -- Maybe I can get my test rescheduled.

J.L.

I still don't know why Jamie needs to go to a school where you have to be interviewed anyway. Nobody interviewed me for my school.

HANNAH

Exactly. We've been over this. Our son is smarter than we are. He's already in all the most advanced groups and he's bored. He needs something more challenging. You said you'd do anything if it helped your son.

J.L.

I would fight a polar bear.

BARRY

You would lose quickly and decisively.

J.L.

I very much doubt that.

LEWIS

Again, it would depend on the specific polar bear.

HANNAH

Well, maybe I can get the test changed and we won't have to find out...you know, who would win in a fight between J.L. and a bear.

J.L./BARRY/LEWIS

Me./Wrong./I'd have to meet the bear.

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSPITAL, NURSES' STATION - NEXT DAY**

A nurse, VERONIQUE, 37, is there doing paperwork when Hannah walks up, bummed.

HANNAH

Dr. Morris said the surgery test has to be today, 1:30-4. So... Britney's gonna get the fellowship.

They look over in the direction of a young, perky blond nurse, BRITNEY.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Look at her. How is she always bouncing? Maybe she has special shoes.

VERONIQUE

Nope, she has special legs. 25 year old legs.

HANNAH

Look at her teeth. I bet she flosses every night.

VERONIQUE

I never floss.

HANNAH

Me, neither! And I have a ton of floss. But it just sits there.

(then)

I bet if she's feeling really naughty she has, like, seven Pringles. But that's where it stops. Never eight.

VERONIQUE

If I'm holding a tube of Pringles, you best say goodbye to it.

HANNAH

See how she's kissing up to Dr. Morris? Yup, she's definitely getting my fellowship.

VERONIQUE

I don't know why you want it so badly. You realize if you "win" it you gotta work your ass off for like five years and when it's over, you're a doctor? Why would you want to be a doctor?

HANNAH

Because I already do more than they do anyway -- better than they do, too. Why shouldn't I get the credit and money for it? Also there's only so much we're allowed to do as nurses. I know it sounds stupid, but I kinda wanna be able to help more...

They aren't usually this earnest. Hannah catches herself.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

But mostly the money. I want the money. Obviously.

VERONIQUE

Then why can't you just let Jamie's dad take him to the interview?

HANNAH

You've met J.L. For one thing, I don't think he owns any long pants.

VERONIQUE

He's his dad and he loves him. He could handle it.

Hannah thinks hard about this, then shakes her head:

HANNAH

I wanna let him do it, but I can't risk it.

Just then Britney walks up to them.

BRITNEY

Hi, guys. You look like you're having fun just kinda relaxin'.

(MORE)

BRITNEY (CONT'D)

Dr. Morris asked if I could come help with a trake procedure, kind of a big deal, and I'm wondering since you're just hangin', if you could change the bedpans in the gerry ward?

(WINKS as she EXITS)

Thanks.

As Britney bounces off, Hannah nods and turns to Veronique.

HANNAH

Did she just wink at us?

VERONIQUE

Yes, she did.

HANNAH

I'm calling J.L.

VERONIQUE

Damn right, you are.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

J.L. is walking out of a strip-mall GNC with a big tub of protein powder that he tries to tie onto the back of his moped. His phone buzzes.

J.L.

(into phone)

J.L. Lyons, fitness specialist.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSPITAL, NURSES' STATION**

Hannah is on the phone. Veronique watches her.

HANNAH

You have caller i.d. You know it's me.

J.L.

Force of habit. I'm never not working.

HANNAH

You never are working, actually.

J.L.

Did you call to insult me?

HANNAH

No, I'm sorry. I called to take you up on your offer. Can you really get Jamie to his interview?

J.L.

One hundred thousand percent.

HANNAH

(gulp)

That's too big a percentage.

(then)

Okay, I'll text you the address. Make sure he wears his helmet. And make sure his hair is combed. And make sure your hair's combed. It's at 3:30, but get there at three just to be safe.

J.L.

You can count on me, Hannah. I got this.

END INTERCUT:

**EXT. PARKING LOT**

Excited, J.L. hangs up and starts pedaling his moped, furiously trying to get it to start. He pushes it with his feet, but nothing's happening. He tries pedaling again, still nothing but now his tub of protein powder falls off the back. He stoops to get it, his bike tips.... He doesn't get this.

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSPITAL, NURSES' STATION - SAME TIME**

Hannah is clearly uncomfortable with this decision.

HANNAH

Shoot, I forgot to tell him not to wear sweats. He'll know, right?

VERONIQUE

Maybe he'll wear dress sweats.

(off her look)

Relax, it's gonna be great.

And as Hannah shakes her head, pretty sure it's not, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE



ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S, DOUBLE PATIENT ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Hannah comes into a room where two VERY OLD PATIENTS (ABE, 96, and JACK, 94) lie in two beds. She immediately gets down to the business of sponge-bathing them even as she chats with these two frequent flyers.

HANNAH

Guys, I think I just made the worst decision of my life, and that's saying something because I've made some pretty bad ones.

ABE

Come, sponge down my under-carriage and tell me all about it.

HANNAH

Abe, we talked about this. You can't be gross or I'm gonna make you bathe yourself.

ABE

Who said anything gross? What I'm imagining is very tasteful.

JACK

I'm imagining something very gross!

HANNAH

(smiles)  
Jack, watch it.

ABE

So what happened this time?

HANNAH

Uch. I sent my son Jamie to this very important interview with his dad, and...

JACK

Is Jamie the one with the gay dad?

ABE

No, that's Barry.

HANNAH

No, that's Lewis. You guys, I've told you this a thousand times.

JACK

In our defense, it's confusing.

ABE

And we're both like a hundred.

HANNAH

All right, pay attention, I'm not telling you this again: my first husband was Barry. We met in high school...

As she continues, we

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL, 1997 - FLASHBACK**

CHYRON: 1997

A younger Barry is walking down the hall with an entourage of stoners ....he sees a young Hannah and their eyes lock.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Even then he had this ridiculous self-confidence. He was smart and cocky and I just ate it up.

**INT. HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK**

Hannah's pushing a baby out as Barry sits, eating a sandwich.

HANNAH (V.O.)

The summer after high school, Scarlett came. She was perfect.

**INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Barry walks in with a box of his belongings. Hannah's holding the baby.

HANNAH (V.O.)

But outside of her, things were less than perfect. For one thing, Barry kept quitting jobs.

YOUNG HANNAH

What happened this time?

YOUNG BARRY

There was just a general unmellowness.

**INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Hannah ENTERS in scrubs to find a very bedraggled and unshaven Barry in front of the microwave talking to the baby who he's holding on his hip.

HANNAH (V.O.)

So while he waited for, like, NASA to call, I went to nursing school. He said he'd home-school Scarlett in the meantime.

YOUNG BARRY

(to the baby)

You're listening for a 'pop-pop-popping noise.' Not 'pop-pop-pop.' You hear the difference?

**EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Hannah, holding the now 2-year-old Scarlett, stands on the lawn as Barry puts the last of his stuff into his van.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Eventually, I told him he had to go. I thought not having someone taking care of him would be the kick in the pants he needed.

YOUNG BARRY

Your loss!

He jumps into the driver's seat and peels out. He only goes about three houses down, parks, gets out and starts unloading the van. An OLDER WOMAN comes out to help him.

HANNAH (V.O.)

So he moved in with his mom. And I still see him everyday.

**INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Water drips from the ceiling as Hannah talks with a contractor, YOUNG LEWIS.

HANNAH (V.O.)

After Barry left, I begged the landlord to send someone to fix the roof. He finally did. Lewis was the opposite of Barry. Soft-spoken, polite, let others speak...

**EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK**

Hannah holds a SECOND BABY as Scarlett runs around in the yard. On a ladder, Lewis repairs a storm gutter. The house looks way better. Apparently he's been working on it a lot.

HANNAH (V.O.)

But after our son Carter came,  
Lewis started working a lot and  
even when he wasn't at work, he was  
always doing repairs at home. It  
was like he was filling a void.

**INT. HANNAH'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK**

Hannah is lying in bed in a sexy nightgown while Lewis, fully dressed, is screwing a strike plate into the wall.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Meanwhile, other voids were not  
being filled.

We hear the OLD GUYS hoot and howl at this.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Thought you pervs would like that.

YOUNG LEWIS

Should I be putting a dimmer switch  
on this? Maybe I should. I'm gonna  
run out and get one.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Finally, I just put it out there.

YOUNG HANNAH

Why don't you wanna have sex? It's  
like you're gay or something.

And as Lewis looks up, realizing she's right.

**INT. KITCHEN - FLASHBACK**

Hannah's there with Lewis and they're talking and laughing.

HANNAH (V.O.)

Lewis moved to an apartment around  
the corner so he'd still be close to  
Carter. And we got along better than  
ever. He was still the same old  
Father-Knows-Best kind of dad, only  
now he was the father who wanted to  
know the best way to, well, do other  
stuff...

Lewis hands Hannah a banana, Hannah shakes her head, No.

**INT. J.L.'S GYM - FLASHBACK**

It's a small, slick work out space.

HANNAH (V.O.)

After that, I took a couple years off. But I'm a red-blooded American woman, and I have needs. I knew if I was gonna hit the dating scene, I needed to get back in shape...

**EXT. PARK - FLASHBACK**

The TRAINER is helping Hannah by putting his hands on her, and she is quite open to and grateful for the "assistance."

HANNAH (V.O.)

I found an inexpensive trainer. He was kind and patient and oh yes did I mention he was the most beautiful man I've ever seen?

As things get more intimate with Hannah and the TRAINER.

**INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK**

Hannah checks a pregnancy test. She shakes her head, Dammit.

HANNAH (V.O.)

We had sex one time...

**INT. PARK - FLASHBACK**

Hannah is doing a burpie and when she jumps up, the TRAINER gets down on one knee and opens a ring box for her.

HANNAH (V.O.)

So I told him he was off the hook, I'd raise the kid alone and there was no way I was getting married again. He didn't take it well...

**INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS/DONUT SHOPS - FLASHBACK**

The sad, handsome trainer sits down with a hamburger. We watch a MONTAGE as he goes from one fast food restaurant to the next, eating burgers and sniffing. As time passes his body MORPHS like in the "Black or White" video from a Tyson Beckford type to a Tracy Morgan type, i.e. the J.L. we know.

BACK TO PRESENT:

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S, DOUBLE PATIENT ROOM - A LITTLE LATER**

Done with her story now, the old guys look pleased. Finished with Abe's bath, Hannah moves over to Jack.

HANNAH

Anyway, our son Jamie's eight now and he's this incredible kid, and I'm trying to get him into this great, snooty school. But his interview happens to be at the same time as the biggest thing that's ever happened in my professional life. So...I'm letting J.L. take Jamie to his interview...

JACK

Can I say something?

HANNAH

Sure, but if it's, "Don't worry, it's gonna be fine," you should know that while J.L.'s a very sweet guy, his main mode of transportation is an old moped with an engine he "rebuilt" himself.

JACK

(beat, then)  
Never mind.

And as Hannah worries...

**EXT. MINI-MALL PARKING LOT - A LITTLE LATER**

J.L. has his moped flipped upside down as he tries to get it running. Barry pulls up in his driver's ed car. Jamie is in the back. Barry rolls down the window.

BARRY

Hi, I'm looking for a damsel in distress.

J.L.

I knew I shoulda called Lewis.

BARRY

Shh. Shh. You don't have to say anything else. Your knight in shining armor is here.

Furious, J.L. climbs in.

JAMIE

Hi, Dad!

J.L.

Hi, honey.

(then, off Barry turning)

Why are you going this way? I  
wazed it before you got here and it  
said it was that way.

BARRY

I don't use Waze. I've driven  
these roads since I was a baby.  
Although, obviously I didn't drive  
when I was a baby, because I comply  
with all driving rules.

J.L.

We're going the wrong way.

BARRY

Trust me.

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSPITAL, O.R. PREP STATION - LATER**

Hannah is outside the O.R. Other applicants for the  
fellowship, including Britney, are there. Veronique walks up.

VERONIQUE

You ready, almost-Dr. Royce?

HANNAH

I'm just trying not to think about  
what might be happening with J.L.  
and Jamie.

VERONIQUE

Would you stop? I promise you  
they're fine.

SFX: Cell phone buzzing.

HANNAH

Shoot. My cell. I already scrubbed  
in. Grab it out of my pocket?

Veronique does. She looks at the text.

VERONIQUE

It says...

(looking up)

...Nothing. It says "Nothing."

HANNAH

Veronique. Is it J.L.? Tell me.

VERONIQUE

Okay, I'm gonna tell you. But don't freak out. It's a group text from Barry. It says, 'I have J.L. and Jamie because J.L.'s bike broke...'

HANNAH

God! Okay, but wait. Barry has him? If Barry has him, maybe that's okay.

VERONIQUE

Yes.

(then)

Except he's lost and has a flat tire.

HANNAH

That's it. I gotta go.

SFX: CELL PHONE BUZZING

VERONIQUE

Hold on! It's Lewis. He says, 'Hannah, don't worry, I'll go pick them up in the truck.'

(showing her)

See? It really says that.

(then)

What? Lewis is reliable.

HANNAH

I'm not really worried about Lewis. I'm worried about the other two taking him off track.

Just then, Britney runs up.

BRITNEY

Hannah, I just heard we're the frontrunners! Isn't that exciting? Such a good story either way -- the young, bright-eyed, rookie... or the old, grizzled, veteran. I really don't know who I'm rooting for!

She bounces off.

VERONIQUE

Hannah. Come on. For all us grizzled veterans.



As Hannah nods, resolved.

**EXT. HIGHWAY/INT. LEWIS'S TRUCK - LATER**

Lewis PULLS UP to Barry's broken down car.

LEWIS

Let's go, guys.

Jamie jumps in first, then Barry, then J.L. There's a lot of bumping and trying to get comfortable, dropping stuff out the car, getting out and back in to retrieve it, until finally:

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Are we good?

BARRY

Yup!

(then)

I think I should pee.

J.L.

Me, too.

As they clamber out and Lewis and Jamie roll their eyes...

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSPITAL, O.R. - LATER**

The surgery is in full swing. Many people in scrubs and masks are bustling around. They're so covered up, you can't tell who anyone is.

DR. MORRIS

We're nearing the halfway point, people. This is when we find out about a little thing I like to call stamina. Suction!

Out of nowhere, a nurse appears with a vacuum and inserts it in the cavity.

DR. MORRIS (CONT'D)

Wow. Nice anticipation. Who is that?

HANNAH

Hannah Royce, Doctor.

DR. MORRIS

Again? Good work, Hannah. You've been right here all day. At least I think it's you. There's so many people in identical outfits and masks, I can't tell.

HANNAH  
(an idea, looking around)  
Huh. You can't, can you?

DR. MORRIS  
Scalpel.

Out of nowhere, another hand shoots in with a scalpel. As Dr. Morris takes it, the nurse who handed it to him says:

BRITNEY  
It's Britney, sir. In case you're wondering.

DR. MORRIS  
Thank you, Britney. I thought you were Royce again.

HANNAH  
Could have been. Might as well just assume, if someone does something good, it's me.

Dr. Morris LAUGHS.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Yeah, totally kidding, of course.

But now Hannah's thinking maybe she can have her cake and eat it, too. She begins to creep backwards toward the door. Just as she slips out, someone notices her leaving ... Britney!

**INT. LEWIS'S PICKUP - LATER**

They guys are racing along.

BARRY  
You know it's a common misconception that the hands should be at ten and two. In reality, we prefer three and nine.

LEWIS  
Strong driving instructions from someone who broke down 20 miles in the wrong direction.

BARRY  
It was a short-cut.

J.L.  
I don't think you understand that word.

SFX: Lewis's phone buzzing. He goes to look at it. Barry SNATCHES it out of his hand.

BARRY

Never text and drive. Geez.

(then, reading it)

Uh-oh, Hannah says she's meeting us there.

LEWIS

What? What about her test?

J.L.

Does she not trust us?

LEWIS

Yeah, I wonder why? All three of us on the job and Waze says we're gonna be there at 3:36.

BARRY

I know a shortcut.

As Lewis rolls his eyes and ACCELERATES...

**EXT. CHICAGO LATIN - LATER**

A car SKIDS to a stop, double-parked at an awkward angle. Hannah, who has changed in the car, JUMPS out of the car. She looks disheveled, with her purse hanging off her shoulder, as she RUNS into the fancy school. An old-fashioned clock says 3:25.

**INT. CHICAGO LATIN, HALLWAY/ADMISSIONS WAITING ROOM**

Hannah comes TEARING DOWN THE HALL, throws open the door to find that the room is...EMPTY. Oh, shit! She smiles at the PREPPY-LOOKING RECEPTIONIST then steps back outside and SILENTLY SCREAMS! Then she steps back inside and smiles even bigger:

HANNAH

Hi, I'm Hannah Royce.

And as she SITS DOWN nervously.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. CHICAGO LATIN ADMISSIONS - MOMENTS LATER

Hannah is pacing and worrying and checking the clock.

RECEPTIONIST

Think your husband'll be here soon?

HANNAH

(considers, then)

Sure.

RECEPTIONIST

Hope so. We have another appointment at four.

(then)

In the meantime, some free advice? Your tattoo's super-cool, but you might want to cover it up in the interview.

HANNAH

Really?

RECEPTIONIST

(sotto, like she's not)

This place is pretty conservative.

Just then, Jamie, Barry, J.L. and Lewis hurry in.

JAMIE

Mom!

Jamie runs over and hugs her.

BARRY

Guess who knows some short cuts, after all.

J.L.

Told you I'd get him here. With like eight seconds to spare.

LEWIS

What about your surgery test?

HANNAH

I figured out a way around it.

(to the receptionist)

Just so you know, none of these guys is my husband.

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
(then, sotto to the guys)  
You all have to go. Apparently  
this place is very --

ADMISSIONS GUY  
Hello, hello, hello.

An extremely conservatively dressed ADMISSIONS GUY has come out of the office. He shakes Jamie's hand.

ADMISSIONS GUY (CONT'D)  
You must be Jamie and...  
(looking around, confused)  
...I'm sorry, who are your parents?

There's a beat as Jamie considers this. Then, smiling:

JAMIE  
They all are.

The guys are all touched by this, but Hannah's CRUSHED...

**INT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE - LATER**

Now Hannah, who's awkwardly covering her tattoo, Lewis, Barry and J.L. are all squeezed into the Admission Guy's office which is not designed for so many people. J.L. is finishing up a little explanation. Hannah looks like she wants to die.

J.L.  
... and I am currently on the  
cabbage diet, but I'm discovering I  
do not like cabbage. Why was I  
telling you that?

BARRY  
I don't think any of us will ever  
know.

Beat.

ADMISSIONS GUY  
Let me just say again, it's a  
little unusual for me to have four  
people sitting across from me.

LEWIS  
Well, as you can see, ours is a bit  
of an unusual arrangement.

HANNAH  
And yet, in many ways, quite  
traditional... as well.

## ADMISSIONS GUY

Yes, well, here at Chicago Latin, we've done things the same way for many years. And it's stood us in good stead as two presidents, four admirals, 21 U.S. Senators walked these hallowed halls. So we've always had someone very specific in mind when we look to fill a spot, both in terms of the child and his family, but I'm afraid --

Hannah sees that all is lost but she's not going to go down without speaking her mind.

## HANNAH

Okay, I see where this is going and that's fine, but let me just say one thing before we leave. Maybe we aren't like the other families here and maybe...

(removing her hand)

...maybe I have a huge tattoo of a dragon on my shoulder slash upper arm that I regret getting - and maybe I have a lot of regrets, that would take too long to list right now - but one thing I don't regret is bringing Jamie into this world because he's an incredible kid and any school would be lucky to have him.

Beat.

## ADMISSIONS GUY

May I finish?

## HANNAH

(losing her nerve, soft)

Yes.

## ADMISSIONS GUY

I was going to say I'm afraid that our school has been one of the slowest to adapt but we are now becoming aware that the world is a much more diverse place than it was 100 years ago and our student body needs to reflect that diversity.

## HANNAH

So that was kind of a little head fake on your part, wasn't it?

## ADMISSIONS GUY

The decision to admit Jamie will come down to what kind of boy he is, and I'll talk to him in a moment and find out, but I'm sure, as you say, he's a special kid. That being said, if he needed a little edge, your arrangement, as you call it, would only help his cause.

Hannah lamely puts her arms around the guys to sell 'family.'

**INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HOSPITAL, NURSES' STATION - DAY**

It's Monday and Hannah is there with Veronique.

## HANNAH

Turns out, the receptionist had only been there a week and was basing that on her "observations." The guy said they have lots of different kinds of families, but none like ours.

## VERONIQUE

Never thought your crew would actually add value, huh?

## HANNAH

Right?

(then)

Oh, crap, it's Morris, look busy.

As Morris approaches, Veronique MOVES OFF TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM.

## DR. MORRIS

Nurse Royce, just wanted to tell you that you did well on Friday...

## HANNAH

(tentative)

Thank you.

## DR. MORRIS

...though it's generally frowned upon to leave a surgery two hours before it's over.

She looks across the room and sees Veronique talking to Britney who looks over and then looks away to avoid making eye contact. Hannah turns back to Dr. Morris.

HANNAH  
I'm sorry, Doctor.

Britney comes over.

BRITNEY  
Dr. Morris, Veronique said you have news for me.

DR. MORRIS  
Yes, the news is, I've decided to recommend two fellowships this year, and you and Royce here are the two I'm recommending.

BRITNEY  
What? Really? HANNAH

BRITNEY  
Didn't she leave a surgery with like two hours to go, sir?

DR. MORRIS  
You know she did, Britney, because you told me she did on Friday.

As Hannah glares at Britney and Britney looks away.

DR. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
But being a good doctor is about caring for other people more than yourself.  
(to Hannah)  
And a little bird told me you had a very good reason for leaving.

Hannah looks across the room and sees Veronique, her little bird, who smiles. Dr. Morris is still going...

DR. MORRIS (CONT'D)  
Anyway, it'll be nice to have each other to lean on in what's going to be a very challenging few years.

They both look bummed, but:

HANNAH  
Yeah, that sounds great. BRITNEY  
Awesome.

Dr. Morris walks off.



BRITNEY

Do you really think you can handle this, Hannah? I mean, with your age and your kids and ...your age?

HANNAH

See, a week ago I would have punched you in the face, but now I make better choices. Bye, Brit!

Hannah smiles and CROSSES to Veronique.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(smile)

You knew, you bitch?

VERONIQUE

Maybe.

As they hug and jump up and down...

**INT. HANNAH'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER**

Lewis is cooking, Barry lingering, J.L. checking his phone, kids doing homework - when Hannah comes rushing in, excited.

HANNAH

Notice anything different about me?

J.L.

Did you get your ears pierced?

HANNAH

I've had my ears pierced since I was eight.

J.L.

Then I give up.

HANNAH

You sure? I don't look a little...I don't know doctor-ly!

LEWIS

You got the fellowship?!

HANNAH

Can you believe it?!

SCARLETT

(under her breath)

I can't.

HANNAH  
Heard that.

CARTER  
Way to go, Mom!

HANNAH  
That's more like it.

JAMIE  
I knew you'd get it, Mommy.

HANNAH  
I didn't.

BARRY  
This is so great! Now I can get my  
medical marijuana card.

HANNAH  
Yes, Barry, that's why it's great.

Lewis hands her an envelope.

LEWIS  
I'm really proud of you, Hannah.  
And something tells me that's not  
all we're celebrating today.

HANNAH  
(reading)  
Chicago Latin! Jamie! Here it is!

Jamie smiles as Hannah rips open the letter.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
What?! You gotta be kidding me!

She storms away as she dials her phone.

J.L.  
Did he not get in? Or is she just  
really happy? I can't read signals.

**INT. CHICAGO LATIN, ADMISSIONS - SAME TIME**

The Admissions guy is drinking tea, reading a novel when his phone rings. He picks up but before he can get it to his ear we hear Hannah yelling -

HANNAH (V.O.)  
What the hell? Were you just lying  
to us?

## ADMISSIONS GUY

I assume this is Ms. Royce. No, as I said, Jamie is an ideal applicant but we have a pretty ironclad policy against admitting people who say that under no circumstances would they ever come here.

BACK TO:

**INT. HANNAH'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER**

Hannah hangs up as she re-enters and looks at Jamie who's avoiding her gaze as he draws at the kitchen table.

HANNAH

You told him you didn't want to go?

Jamie doesn't look up. She crosses to him.

JAMIE

Look what I drew.

HANNAH

No, no, no. You're not gonna distract me with...

(noticing picture)

...a very flattering portrait of me. God I wish my lips looked like that. But, no! I need you to tell me what happened.

J.L.

Yeah, son, why'd you tell him that?

JAMIE

Because six o'clock is my favorite time of day.

(off everyone's confusion)

That's when everyone's home from school, and Lewis is making some weird-smelling food -

LEWIS

Well, if you don't push your boundaries, culinary or otherwise, you never discover who you really are.

JAMIE

- and Barry's telling everyone what to do -

BARRY

I'm sorry I know a lot of stuff.  
It's more a burden on me than the  
rest of you, trust me -

JAMIE

- and my dad comes back from the  
gym and says he can't stay but he  
does anyway.

J.L.

I usually do have to go, but  
tonight I actually could probably  
stay...

JAMIE

- and Scarlett's mad about  
something -

SCARLETT

(furious)  
I'm not mad!

JAMIE

- and Carter's icing some bruise  
and you're borrowing his ice to put  
in your giant glass of white wine -

HANNAH

It just looks big because it has  
ice in it. And because it is big.

JAMIE

And then we all sit down for dinner  
and everyone does their 'highs' and  
'lows' of the day and I never say  
it 'cuz Carter would make fun of me  
but my 'high' is -- right now, when  
we're all here, together.

CARTER

That is so lame.

A beat as Hannah absorbs how much Jamie loves his family.

HANNAH

Hey, you'll still eat dinner with  
us. Do you think I'm a monster?

SCARLETT

Can I answer that?

JAMIE

That school's far away. What if I have too much homework or I make friends in the city or --

HANNAH

Okay, how 'bout I promise you'll be here every day by six. I'm gonna be busier at work, for sure, but between all of us, we'll happen. There's a lot of downsides to having four parents but one of the up sides is you can always get a ride.

Jamie considers this. Finally, he NODS.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(hugging him)

There we go. That's my guy.

(then noticing the picture)

By the way, you should be the official family portrait... drawing person. None of us have ever looked that good.

The CAMERA PANS to Jamie's picture. We see for the first time that it's THE WHOLE FAMILY. AS we PUSH INTO IT, and see among other things a very svelte J.L. we hear:

J.L. (O.S.)

Looks right to me.

And then a COOL SONG starts playing...

DISSOLVE TO:

**INT. HANNAH'S HOUSE, KITCHEN**

We PULL OUT OF THE PICTURE and now we see the same family Jamie drew, only they're gathered around the table. The clock says 6:30PM. They're all laughing and arguing MOS under the music, doing the stuff Jamie just described above. And as we gradually go tighter on Hannah, her face tells us that maybe she's just realized the truth of what Jamie was trying to tell her: maybe her choices aren't that terrible after all...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE