

IT'S A MAN'S WORLD

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EXT. A MOUNTAIN HIDEAWAY - DAY

An extremely well-rendered computer graphic of an old woman, Indonesian, sweeping the ground in front of a humble yurt.

There is a sound: the strange, beautiful hum of a singing bowl. Both magical and haunted. It is a warning.

The woman turns as six black ninjas jump out of the bushes. Her broomstick goes up and transforms itself into nun-chuck, which she wields with astonishing skill, at the same moment ripping off her outer robes to reveal a dazzling warrior's armor.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Emma, Ryan and Clive are watching. CLIVE, 39, smart, nice guy, grins, happy, enjoying the game.

CLIVE

This is awesome

RYAN is less immediately enthusiastic. He is in his late twenties, old enough to still be a comer, but the clock is ticking on that. He's no longer the shiniest new dime around there and it annoys him, so he's got a chip on his shoulder. He is a little aggressive, in short, which actually plays well at times. At this time it's not playing as well. He is whacking at the control device, trying to make it do what he wants. Emma laughs at his conundrum.

EMMA

Dude it's not made out of titanium.

RYAN

There's something wrong with the...

EMMA

No, that's right--here--

She leans in to show him the right move. EMMA is 34, a total game geek but passionate and smart. As ambitious as anyone, but her ambition is not particularly political. She just wants to build a great

The screen flashes: GAME GAME GAME

Ryan doesn't know what the screen is telling him but Emma and Clive laugh.

CLIVE

No way...

He gets it and likes it. Grabs the control, punches a few buttons and watches the world shift as radically as the characters were shifting a moment before. Emma, excited, explains to Clive, who is vastly more skilled with that controller.

EMMA

It's kind of a time travel thing. You get to a different level it's a whole different game space.

Clive is making the controller do magic, and it's great.

RYAN

It's old technology, isn't it?

EMMA

(one eye on the game)  
You think that but nobody's tried it since Kingdom Hearts which made 11 billion dollars and spawned two mangas and a board game.

RYAN

So this is a girl's game.

EMMA

Boys can play it if they're smart enough.

CLIVE

(laughing)  
I heard that. This is fantastic.

She leans in, geeking out and shows him a trick he didn't see coming. The whole screen shifts again. They both laugh at how awesome that was. GEOFFREY, 47, the owner of the company, sticks his head in the door. He is preoccupied with the presentation which is about to come.

GEOFFREY

You guys up to speed?

Emma, team leader, focuses immediately on reassuring the boss.

EMMA

Absolutely.

GEOFFREY

Great, because the client is here!

He turns to show in ROGER, early 40s, the client.

EMMA

Hey Roger.

ROGER

You ready for me?

He waves to the team. Geoffrey smiles, welcoming.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GAME - A DARKENED CASTLE

CLOSE ON the screen

A tall, noble soldier into a darkened space, separated by pillars and arches painted a dim candy cane design. The place is deserted, spooky. And then desert warriors begin to creep out and surround the soldier.

She takes off her visor and reveals that she is an eagle. The armor turns to feathers. Emma is taking them through it, manning the controls this time.

EMMA

So you can work the sword from the control OR--

The screen shifts radically to a soaring skyscape. At the conference table, near the front, Ryan is almost aggressively unimpressed. But ROGER, late thirties and a loose, casual guy, seems to be enjoying himself. He grins, because--

CLOSE ON the screen

The avatar has swooped to the ground, where he's been joined by a giant panther which is now bearing down on the warriors.

The hawk screams and then bears down on the rest of the room, appearing to burst through the screen and over the top of their heads. There is a group of about half a dozen gamers--programmers, writers, animators, who have been working on the prototype, watching as well. They're on the edge of their last nerves, hoping with Emma that this goes well.

And the hawk returns, transforming itself into a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN carrying a glowing staff. The avatar and the panther fight the still-plentiful warriors. Then, having vanquished them, she transforms herself into a wilding princess, throws her leg over the panther, and rides him off.

The lights come up. Geoffrey stands, goes to the front of the room.

GEOFFREY

So, that's the general idea.

There is a pause while they wait to hear what the client has to say. He searches for a moment, then comes up with it.

ROGER

I... love it.

Everyone is relieved. Emma grins while Roger continues.

ROGER (CONT'D)

The shape-shifting is so fluid.

His enthusiasm is contagious.

EMMA

I added a bunch of that in just the last two days.

GEOFFREY

(there's always a note)

I actually have a question about that panther. I think the transition is muddy.

EMMA

Oh. The backgrounds maybe didn't fully repixelate for some reason.

GEOFFREY

Figure out the reason.

She writes it down.

RYAN

I agree, there's something wrong with that transition, but my real issue is-- I'm still struggling with, like who's the avatar?

He says it like a brat trying to be nice, and it lands like a ton of bricks.

EMMA  
(startled)  
The avatar is the avatar.

RYAN  
I see that and it's really great that  
it's a girl, I get why that's important  
but...

GEOFFREY  
There's something a little non-specific  
about her. I agree.

EMMA  
Well...she's a shape-shifter. So I guess  
that might make her... non-specific.

They all kind of look at each other. She doesn't know  
what more to say. Roger lets her off the hook.

ROGER  
What can I say? I love it.  
They're all once again relieved.

CUT TO:

INT. KUDZU - ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Emma taking Roger to the elevators, Ryan and Clive along  
for the ride.

ROGER  
Listen, our PR department has reached out  
to GamePro magazine, they want to do a  
big feature on this and put you on the  
cover.

EMMA  
Really?

ROGER  
There's finally a game for girls that's  
not all pink hearts, it's a story. I just  
wanted to see how far along you all were,  
before I gave the green light.  
(then, to her, smiling)  
I'd say you're green-lit.

He steps into the elevator that has just arrived, waves  
goodbye. She looks at Clive and Ryan, grins. Clive gives  
her a fist bump. Ryan is not as thrilled.

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Emma is home with her brother BEN, her husband OSCAR, and her son JACK, 5. Oscar is a stay at home dad, and he's great at it and he loves it and he loves Emma.

EMMA

The client loved it.

OSCAR

It is a phenomenal game.

He kisses her.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

And I'm so proud of you, and I'm so, so glad I don't have to go to some stupid office and deal with all that bullshit. You're a hero. You're my avatar.

BEN, Emma's little brother, who is actually rather big, in terms of both physicality and emotional reactivity, shrugs, skeptical, as he pours himself a huge glass of red wine.

BEN

This is the game with all the shape shifting and the sword fights? Fuck yeah, that game is awesome.

Behind, at the kitchen counter, Emma's son Jack looks up. He is stricken.

JACK

(hushed, to his dad)  
Uncle Ben said fuck.

OSCAR

(firm)  
Language, please.

He hands Jack a bowl of cake batter to stir up. They are making cupcakes.

EMMA

The client loved it. And gaming is huge, and girls need better games because

Emma puts her hands over Jack's ears.

EMMA (CONT'D)

We're taking over the world.

She kisses Jack on the head and tickles him, to make up for the fact that she covered his ears.

OSCAR

You'll get no argument from me. Women should run things for a while. The patriarchy sucks.

JACK

What's pa...

BEN

It's when men are jerks especially to women. You know what? Some men were so ridiculous women are saying back off, no dates for you, pal.

JACK

(surprised)

Did they say that to you?

BEN

They say it to everyone. New rules in the workplace. No dating. Who am I supposed to date if I can't flirt with girls at work? I don't want to pick up someone in a bar. Talk about creepy. Tinder, horrible. Match.com, Pathetic. Fix ups? Oh yeah, they work.

(rueful)

It was so fun flirting with someone at the pop machine. Those were the days.

JACK

What's a pop machine?

CUT TO:

INT. KUDZU - OPEN OFFICE - NIGHT

It's after hours and the place is almost deserted. WILL, Geoffrey's 24 year old assistant, is diligently still at his desk. Behind him, Ryan slips by, hangs in Geoffrey's doorway. Geoffrey stands, turns off his computer.

RYAN

You're working late.

GEOFFREY

I just had a bunch of emails I had to polish off. That was a good presentation you guys made today.

RYAN  
(bright but peevish)  
Thank you! It's so nice to be  
acknowledged.

Geoffrey takes in Ryan's annoyance, clocks it. The two head toward the elevators. Behind, Will watches them go. That's not so great. He dials the phone.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emma, on her bed, with Jack. She is showing him her game, which plays on the television at the end of the bed. She has the controls and they are both watching, fascinated, as the avatar shape shifts.

EMMA  
(explaining)  
...and THEN she turns into an eagle.

JACK  
Whoa!

Oscar, watching from the door, only slightly disapproves.

OSCAR  
He should be in bed.

EMMA  
Okay wait he has to see the panther...

JACK  
WHOA.

For the panther has shown up. Emma grins.

EMMA  
I know, it's awesome right?

JACK  
(pleased)  
Yeah.

A little OCD she goes up to the screen and studies it.

EMMA  
(annoyed)  
The pixilation is fine.

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

In the dark of the kitchen, Emma's phone is blinking in the side of her bag. The call is coming from WILL.

INT. KUDZU - OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Will, on the phone.

WILL

Hey. Just wanted you to know. Ryan just left with Geoffrey. It's probably nothing. I'm paranoid. Congratulations, the game is fantastic. See you tomorrow.

He hangs up, bothered.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Ryan and Geoffrey, drinking scotch of course. Geoffrey is annoyed. Ryan, more so.

GEOFFREY

GamePro.

RYAN

The cover. You ever get a cover?

GEOFFREY

(annoyed)

Yes, I've had a cover.

RYAN

Well you should have this cover. It's your company, your idea, you hired her. It's your game.

GEOFFREY

What did he say?

RYAN

Honestly, it was more what she said. She was all, "sure, great, absolutely, a cover, fantastic." And she didn't come tell you anything about this?

GEOFFREY

(pissed)

No.

RYAN

Why am I not surprised? The whole idea to build the business model for this off of Kingdom Hearts, I've been talking about that for months. But the rest of us, we're just--erased. You put her on the cover of a magazine, I can't wait to see what happens next. She'll be off starting her own company. With your clients, starting with...

Geoffrey looks at him, sharp.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I'm just real upset.

GEOFFREY

I have this under control.

RYAN

I'm sure you do. I have total faith in you. I'm just offended on your behalf. To me this is an issue of loyalty.

He is cowed, humble. He concentrates on his drink while Geoffrey considers his situation.

GEOFFREY

You sleep with her?

RYAN

What? No!

GEOFFREY

Good, because I really don't want to get into that bullshit.

Geoffrey downs his drink. All of this is working on him, as toxic ideas tend to do.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - MORNING, THE NEXT DAY

Emma, in the elevator. This is going to be a great day.

The door dings, then opens. She steps out, smiling.

INT. KUDZU - OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Smiling, sure of herself, Emma heads through the open office space to her desk.

As she walks through the floor, she realizes that no one will talk to her—not only that; no one will look at her. It's unnerving, creepy.

As she passes Geoffrey's office, she waves to Will.

EMMA

Morning. Morning. Hey Will.

The bright front is good but there's no question this is getting weird. She gets to her desk and drops her purse alongside her computer. After a moment, Will passes by, pauses, and speaks quickly, sotto voce.

WILL

You get my message last night?

EMMA

Just this morning, you just said--

WILL

He wants to talk to you.

He turns and goes. Emma follows him, perplexed.

INT. GEOFFREY'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Emma enters, notices that the blinds are down. She smiles at Geoffrey, shuts the door behind her.

INT. KUDZU - OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The entire floor is watching the room that you now can't see.

Clive steps out of his office and watches, worried. Ryan passes him, stops, looks, sees the drawn blinds and grins, looks at Clive, conspiratorial.

RYAN

Ouch.

Clive doesn't like this but doesn't respond.

INT. GEOFFREY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emma is sitting across from Geoffrey, who is cheerful and cool. He sits.

GEOFFREY

The good news is the client loves the game.

EMMA

Yeah, I know, it was fantastic, how much he responded to--

GEOFFREY

(interrupting)

The bad news is, we're going in a different direction.

She looks at him. Did he just say that?

EMMA

Different...from what the client wants?

GEOFFREY

There's been some question about your leadership.

EMMA

Questions from who?

GEOFFREY

(stiffening)

From me.

EMMA

(startled)

What kind of questions?

GEOFFREY

This is an important project to us. The feeling is, it needs to be in more secure hands.

EMMA

Whose feeling?

That wasn't the right response either. She is struggling to keep up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

So wait. So wait. You're giving my game to someone else?

And the conversation starts to careen out of control.

GEOFFREY

It's not "your" game.

EMMA

It is my game.

GEOFFREY

A lot of people are working on that game; major ideas have come from everywhere. Ryan came up with the idea of using that Kingdom Heart model. That's going to be key.

EMMA

He

GEOFFREY

Ryan was there from start to finish

EMMA

He wasn't.

GEOFFREY

I'm not getting into a he said she said.

EMMA

Are you giving my game to Ryan? He can't do it, Geoffrey. Seriously, he's just not capable. Clive has been great. If you want me to work more closely with Clive, that might be a a a

GEOFFREY

You're not taking my meaning.

EMMA

Well, no, I'm not because it doesn't make sense to me, if the client likes what I've been doing--

GEOFFREY

I hired you for this. It was my idea. The whole thing is MY IDEA and it's MY COMPANY.

EMMA

(upset now)

Wait a minute. Are you firing me?

GEOFFREY

We need to restructure and I'm not sure where we would use you. Of course we'll pay off your contract.

He looks at her. Wow, is she slow.

CUT TO:

INT. KUDZU - OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Emma bolts out of his office and heads for her own. Everyone watches her.

She gets to her desk. There is a security guard there putting all her stuff in her desk.

EMMA

That's my stuff. Hey. That's my stuff.

She elbows him aside, protective of her stuff but also fast aware that everyone is staring at her.

SECURITY OFFICER

I'm going to need your cell phone.

EMMA

Of course you do.

She throws it at him and heads for the elevators. She actually threw it at him hard enough that he had to duck and it went clattering. The whole place is on alert. She heads for the elevators, passing Ryan, who smirks.

Clive follows her, trying to catch her.

CLIVE

What happened?

EMMA

He fired me.

CLIVE

He what?

INT. ELEVATOR BANK - CONTINUOUS

She hits the button. Of course it doesn't come right away.

EMMA

(loud)

Just for the record Wonderboy Ryan, who's an idiot, doesn't even know how to use the remote in the fucking conference room. Plus our creepy boss Geoffrey is FIRING ME but he won't call it that so I can't even go to HUMAN RESOURCES AND REGISTER A COMPLAINT because he's a coward in addition to being a passive aggressive fuckwad.

The elevator door closes on her face.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Emma is crying on the street, with her box of stuff on the ground in front of her. She is on the phone, crying.

EMMA

I got fired! My game is fantastic and they fired me for no reason I think except they want to STEAL it--okay okay--thanks--

She hangs up and hands the phone to a perfect stranger, a little old lady.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Thank you. They took my phone.

LITTLE OLD LADY

Those fuckers.

EMMA

I know!

INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Emma is sitting at a bar, with a glass of vodka, which is being topped off by a female bartender. Emma suddenly puts her head in her hands and yells.

BARTENDER

You okay?

DIANA, 35, a gorgeous trans-woman and Emma's best friend, dashes in, sees her, makes a beeline for her.

DIANA

Hey hey! Are you okay? Are you okay?

EMMA

I got FIRED.

Diana sits next to her, puts her arm around her.

DIANA

I talked to Oscar. He's worried about you.

EMMA

I don't want to go home. I feel like such a failure.

She is crying on Diana now.

DIANA  
You're not a failure. Your boss is a  
dick.

That gets Emma back to her anger.

EMMA  
He's a complete dick!

DIANA  
(to bartender)  
Maybe a little more vodka.

The bartender nods and pours. Diana indicates that she should pour even more than that.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Emma and Oscar watch Jack playing in a little playground on the edge of Prospect Park. He is climbing a jungle gym.

OSCAR  
I can get a job.

EMMA  
You hated working. I can't even remember  
what you did.

OSCAR  
I was an office manager for a--

EMMA  
I was kidding. I know what you did. You  
hated it.

OSCAR  
Jack! Jack honey--

EMMA  
Too high, Jack.

They watch, concerned, as Jack waves to them from the top of the jungle gym.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
You're a much better cook than me. We  
would starve if I stayed home.

OSCAR  
We'd eat a lot of cereal, for sure.

EMMA

Do you want to go back to work?

OSCAR

I think what's more to the point is that you do.

He kisses her head, puts his arm around her, comforting.

EMMA

I'll get another job.

OSCAR

(distracted now)

Jack! Honey!

He heads over to make sure the kid is safe. Alone, Emma takes a breath. This is scary as shit.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Emma sitting up in bed with a jolt. It's mortality hour, and she's having a panic attack. Oscar turns over, half asleep.

EMMA

I wasn't nice enough. I wasn't careful enough. I didn't suck up enough.

OSCAR

(sleepy)

You sucked up a lot.

She starts to cry.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Oh honey.

He reaches over and holds her hand. She holds onto his for dear life.

INT. WALLACE & WALLACE - COFFEE ROOM - DAY

Ben, getting himself a cup of coffee. He can't quite figure out the Keurig machine, he keeps hitting the button that makes the top open.

BEN

Why does it do that?

He tries again. NATALIE, 28, black, pretty, confident, friendly, comes up behind him.

NATALIE

You have to put the water in, then hit this...

She does it for him.

BEN

I'm an idiot around machines. My genius is all somewhere else, we haven't actually spotted it yet but thank you.

NATALIE

Natalie James. I'm over in legal.

BEN

Yes I've yes of course I know who you are. Ben Hill. Corporate development. Whatever that is. And um I'm in a band.

He is dazzled by her and so he sounds a bit like an idiot. She doesn't mind.

NATALIE

Yeah we met at that...

BEN

Yeah yeah I remember.

NATALIE

You flirted relentlessly.

BEN

I'm sorry I really apologize for that.

NATALIE

No I liked it

BEN

Well then the apology is retracted because I liked it too.

NATALIE

I would like to flirt again, sometime, if that's

BEN

(encouraged)

Would you? Because I--except--

He gestures around him.

BEN (CONT'D)

I wouldn't want--ahh--

NATALIE

I checked it out with HR.

BEN

You--told HR that I flirted with you?

That does not sound good to him, at all.

NATALIE

I told HR I wanted to ask you out.

BEN

Oh!

That one he didn't see coming.

NATALIE

Would you like to have dinner sometime?

Ben is floored but happy.

INT. HEADHUNTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Dressed really nicely, a picture of casual chic, Emma is showing a headhunter her portfolio. The headhunter is JENN RAPPAPORT, cool, confident, a salesman through and through.

EMMA

So I did all the backgrounds on these sequences--I started in the art department at Spotco as an intern, during college.

JENN

Beautiful.

EMMA

Yeah I went to Pratt and RISD, and in the summer I did my coding work at MIT.

JENN

You do your own coding? Wow.

EMMA

Some of it. It won't matter that I got fired? Because that wasn't my fault.

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

There wasn't really cause but they paid off my contract so I can't sue or anything. They seem to want me to just say we separated, something like that.

JENN

Yeah, they're right. Just move on.

EMMA

Okay.

JENN

So let's say you "separated" and go see what's out there.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A nice man showing her to the door.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A dude behind a desk looking up at her, smiling but grim.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Emma steps out of an elevator. A guy behind her pushes her aside.

EXT. LUNCH - DAY

Emma slouching in a chair. She doesn't feel so great. Unperturbed, Jenn eats her salad and checks her cell phone.

EMMA

How can these idiots not hire me? I'm smarter than all of them!

JENN

It's just a weird time. People want women in the workplace but everyone's feeling a little worried, there's a lot of reactivity out there and of course some curiosity about what happened at your last job.

EMMA

I thought I wasn't supposed to talk about that.

JENN

(firm)

It was a great experience. You learned a lot. You're humble, not cocky.

EMMA

Who said I was cocky?

JENN

Well, you are cocky.

EMMA

Why shouldn't I be cocky, I'm good.

JENN

I'm just saying a little charm never hurt anyone in an interview. And don't forget: These guys are guys. Even though they say it's about you, it's always about them. Always. Always.

Emma is seriously thinking about how to respond to that but Jenn has moved on, and is checking her iPhone.

JENN (CONT'D)

Here. This guy requested you.

She hands her cell phone to her.

EMMA

Eno Arts?

And a flash of a different kind of hunger shows up.

EMMA (CONT'D)

They're really good.

JENN

They want someone with experience. Plus they need a woman. You're perfect.

CUT TO:

INT. ENO ARTS - DAY

NICK, 34, easy, friendly, shakes her hand.

NICK

Emma Hill! I've heard a lot about you.

Emma's not sure what that means but she's trying like hell to be positive.

EMMA

All good I hope!

NICK

I'm friends with Dave Abbott, you guys knew each other in college I guess?

That's a relief. It's enough of a relief for her to relax a little.

EMMA

Oh my god, that was forever ago. Not forever ago--

NICK

Hey. We're all getting older.

Not by the looks of the open office. She glances around at the the pool of hipsters and millennials working in the trendy open office space. She looks around at the huge posters on the walls.

EMMA

You guys did Warzoniacs?

NICK

(with some pride)

Yeah, that was mine actually. And the Funny Bunnies, that was a big seller. So there's range here, we work in a range.

He turns into a doorway.

INT. ENO ARTS - NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Nick's office is comfortable, well-appointed and decorated with plushy versions of game characters, as well as a couple of macho dudes with giant automatic weapons. Funny bunnies and warzoniacs merchandizing.

NICK

So Dave called you the best gamer he ever saw. I was like, dude--

He gestures to himself, as if to say, "what about me?" She laughs at that. She is positive and warm.

EMMA

We spent a lot of time on Grim Fandango together. I mopped the floor with him.

Nick glances at her, then at his computer.

NICK

So you were at Kudzu for three years?

EMMA

Yeah three a little more than three. Jenn was supposed to send you some clips of my work, did you...

NICK

I haven't had a chance to look at it yet. So what happened over there?

He is clicking through the files on her, making notes.

EMMA

It was just time to move on.

NICK

I love what they turn out.

EMMA

Oh me too. It was a great experience working with those guys. I learned a lot.

NICK

How's Geoffrey? I heard he's tough.

EMMA

He's--so--brilliant. I loved working with him. Because of how much experience teaches you in gaming. It's so exciting to learn what the technology is capable of even while it's like changing all around you and honestly it's great to be a woman in this field because that's such an untapped audience so I always felt like there's a real place for me in this...

He looks at her. Is she going to finish that sentence?

EMMA (CONT'D)

Profession.

NICK

"Profession." Gaming?

EMMA

(startled)

Well...

NICK

No no I get it. I just never heard it called that before. So why'd you move on?

EMMA

They're just a little more traditional, which was so great as like a building block, but I'm curious about...

He is typing now, not fully listening. She leaps.

EMMA (CONT'D)

About what other shops are trying. Warzoniacs is one of my favorite games. So you worked on that.

NICK

I did.

EMMA

Tell me about it. Like, where'd the idea come from?

She is trying to sell her interest in him, not her, but it honestly sounds as little stilted, coming out of her mouth.

INT. EMMA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Ben is exhilarated. He's actually pacing a little. Oscar is cooking, and Jack is doing his coloring homework while he listens.

OSCAR

Excellent news. Where is she taking you?

BEN

She's not.

OSCAR

You turned her down? I thought you liked her!

BEN

I do like her, yes, but this is tricky territory. I just think we need a more public situation, to get to know each other. So I'm having a dinner party. I want you guys to come.

OSCAR

For protection.

BEN

Exactly.

OSCAR

You know, you kind of sound like a teenage girl.

BEN

I like teenage girls. Okay wait. That didn't come out right.

Emma moves into the room, on her cell phone. She is wearing sweats and her hair is shoved into a baseball cap.

EMMA

(upset)

I just, I'm sorry did you get any feedback at all?

(a beat)

Okay. Okay. We'll keep looking.

She hangs up, upset, and sets the phone down. Everybody looks at her.

EMMA (CONT'D)

The Eno Arts job. I didn't get it.

There is a sad pause.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm going to the gym.

She heads out the door. Behind, the three men in her life are stricken with worry for her.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - MOMENTS LATER

Emma heads out the door, with her gym bag and her head down. She is so upset she charges off the step and almost collides with a runner, a guy, who is heading up the block.

RUNNER

Dude! Careful, careful.

He keeps going. She looks up at his back, then glances to her left. There is a car parked right there. In the car window, she sees her reflection. There is a slight distortion. She does in fact look like a dude.

EXT. GYM - MOMENTS LATER

Emma prowls the sidewalk in front of the gym. She is on her cell.

INT. KUDZU - OPEN OFFICE - WILL'S DESK

Will's cell phone rings. He looks at it, looks around, making sure he's not seen, and picks it up.

WILL

Hey.

Ryan is right there. Will smiles at him, bright, and lies.

WILL (CONT'D)

It's my boyfriend.

He starts to walk away from his desk. The call cuts back and forth between them.

EMMA

Can you tell me what's going on?

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Will ducks into a private stairwell, looks up and down, makes sure no one can hear him.

WILL

Some phone calls have happened.

EMMA

To Eno Arts?

WILL

Them and some others.

EMMA

What was said on these phone calls.

WILL

Let's just say they weren't exactly gushing.

EMMA

Those FUCKERS.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - EVENING - SEVERAL DAYS LATER

Jack is setting the table under the supervision of Diana. In the open kitchen next to the dining room table, Ben is cooking. Diana drifts over to him.

DIANA

So who is this special lady?

BEN

I met her at work.

DIANA

You're dating someone from work? I thought that was off the table now. Me too, me too! You know I'd take that more seriously if it didn't sound so much like "pick me, pick me!"

She waves her hand, wanting to be picked.

BEN

I think that's maybe offensive.

DIANA

It's offensive if you do it but I'm a tranny, so it's funny if I do it.

BEN

That doesn't seem fair.

DIANA

Don't argue fair with a tranny.

She is at the table now, pouring herself more wine.

JACK

What's a tranny?

DIANA

It's me!

She tickles him.

EXT. DECK - LATER

Emma is out on Ben's tiny deck, drinking wine with Oscar, while the dinner prep continues behind her.

OSCAR

You're spying on them?

EMMA

I'd hardly call it spying.

OSCAR

What would you call it?

EMMA

Spying lite. I KNEW they were running around trashing me. I just couldn't believe it.

OSCAR

You just said you knew it.

EMMA

Sometimes you know things and you can't believe them anyway.

She looks out at the city, spread out beneath them. The doorbell rings. Oscar looks at her with love, puts his arm around her.

OSCAR

Come on, let's go meet Ben's date. I think he likes this one.

CUT TO:

INT. DINNER PARTY - LATER

They are deep in the meal now, trying to figure this out.

EMMA

I just don't get why it's still as bad as it is.

NATALIE

It's not better for black people, why should it be better for women?

EMMA

It's not a competition.

NATALIE

It is a competition. How many black people are working at your little gaming company?

EMMA

(getting testy)

Look can we, how can we ever figure out what is going on with gender and power in America if every time it comes up everyone screams we have to talk about race! Can we just talk about gender for a minute?

BEN

Does anyone want more wine?

OSCAR

Do you think that's a good idea?

DIANA

I think she has a point.

She points to Natalie while holding up her glass for more.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Everything's politics, baby. You got to figure out how to get yours, and then make it stick.

EMMA

My job isn't politics.

BEN

In corporate America, everyone's job is politics.

EMMA

You just say that because you don't make anything. "Corporate development" what is that?

BEN

Politics.

NATALIE

Privilege. The world is changing, but not in the way that you want.

EMMA

I just didn't want to lose my job for no reason.

NATALIE

There was a reason. They didn't like you.

EMMA

Because I was a woman they didn't like me. If I was a boy, I would have been fine. That's discrimination.

NATALIE

Don't talk to me about discrimination.

EMMA

Are you saying they don't discriminate against women?

NATALIE

I'm saying white women voted for Trump.

EMMA

I didn't vote for Trump!

BEN

(an aside to Natalie)

She didn't. She actually worked on Hilary's campaign.

NATALIE

But your tribe did vote for Trump, to preserve their privilege. But people of privilege are going to lose privilege. That's just going to happen.

EMMA

You suck.

BEN

Hey, Em, did I mention that this is my first date with Natalie?

NATALIE

You don't suck enough. By that I mean you don't suck up enough.

EMMA

So we're back to it's my fault.

NATALIE

You were in control of that situation.

EMMA

How was I in control?

NATALIE

You're good at your job. Everybody here seems to accept that.

(MORE)

NATALIE (CONT'D)

But they didn't like it that a woman showed them up, it made them feel shitty, and that created a structural problem in the workplace that you didn't solve. I'm just saying.

There is a dead silence at that one. Emma stands, finally.

EMMA

Excuse me. I need to check on Jack.

She goes. Diana smiles at the others.

DIANA

A lively and contentious debate is the heart and soul of every dinner party.

The others are not sure. But Natalie feels just fine.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Emma playing a computer game. It's one of those racer games, where they race each other.

EMMA

Whoooooa. Look out, look out!

She turns the steering wheel. Her car crashes. Jack keeps going, until he wins.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Yay, you won.

JACK

I came in six.

EMMA

You beat me.

JACK

You were going backwards.

EMMA

What else does Uncle Ben have?

She is looking through the games he has.

JACK

I like racing.

EMMA

Listen. You should have games that open  
your mind and your heart and your spirit.  
And take you somewhere you've never seen.

She is feeling really blue now. Jack only half  
understands it.

JACK

You'll win next time, Mom.

He is starting to reboot the racing game.

INT. BEN'S CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Emma, rooting through her brother's closet. She finds a  
box on the floor. Looks through it. There are a few old  
games--Zelda, World of Warcraft. And Grim Fandango. She  
snags it. Then she finds a pair of skinny jeans. She  
keeps digging. Finds some old shades.

CUT TO:

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Emma rooting through her brother's medical cabinet. She  
finds a roll of sports tape. She thinks about this.

Takes her shirt off, then her bra.

JACK (O.S.)

Mom?

EMMA

Just start without me honey.

She looks at herself in the mirror, thinks about her  
hair. Then she starts to wrap her chest.

INT. DINNER PARTY - MOMENTS LATER

Ben and Oscar are loading the dishwasher. Diana and  
Natalie are sitting at the table.

BEN

(quiet)

So, what'd you think?

OSCAR

The steak was great.

BEN  
I mean about Natalie.

Oscar thinks and then is about to tell him what he thinks but then he sees the look in Ben's eyes.

OSCAR  
You really like her?

BEN  
Are you kidding?

He's bedazzled. Oscar is not so sure what to say. And then, behind him, Emma makes her appearance. She is wearing Ben's skinny jeans and an old suit jacket and her hair is stuffed under a baseball cap. She swaggers like a dude.

OSCAR  
(seeing this first)  
Emma.

EMMA  
It's the new me. I'm a guy.

She starts to dance. It makes Oscar laugh.

DIANA  
Old school and profoundly unhip.

EMMA  
Why is this unhip. Everybody is cross dressing now. It's the hippest thing you can do!

DIANA  
If you're good at it. Turn please. Turn.

Emma does.

EMMA  
I'm not trying to make a statement. I just want to get a job and be invisible. So I can just--work.

BEN  
(laughing)  
I don't know, Em. You don't much look like a guy. You look more like a lesbian.

DIANA  
You got to lower your center of gravity down into the groin. Men are all about their junk. It's all they think about.

She shows her. Emma starts to think about her groin. Diana goes to her and shoves her hand into the middle of Emma's back.

DIANA (CONT'D)

And then the shoulders kind of come up.  
You take up more room. 'Cause that's in  
your heart. You're bigger. Be bigger.

EMMA

Men slouch.

BEN

Slouch bigger.

He shows her. Emma tries it. Diana shows her; she's better at it.

EMMA

Well of course she can do it, she used to  
be a man.

DIANA

Do not go down that road. I was always a  
woman in my heart. 'Cause I didn't have  
the sullen determination of a person with  
a Y chromosome nor the tragic centrism of  
the male ego. You look like a little  
boy, honestly.

EMMA

That's what they want! Instead of some  
old thirty kind of year old female hag.  
What, it's true!

She makes a butch shrug. Ben laughs.

BEN

Men don't do that.

He mimics the gesture.

EMMA

You do it.

She mimics it back.

BEN

No! It's more...

He mimics it back. They look like a couple of apes. They start pretending to be apes, cracking each other up.

NATALIE

So this is your answer? To become the oppressor?

EMMA

Yes!

NATALIE

(an amused shrug)

I like it.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Emma is looking at herself in the mirror. She turns her head right and left. She takes her hair, holds it up. Looks out the bathroom door, making sure she's not seen.

She digs in a drawer and finds a scissors. Oscar enters. She hides the scissors.

EMMA

You get him to bed?

OSCAR

Yeah.

He kisses her on the back of the neck.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You made a very cute boy.

EMMA

I wasn't trying to be a boy. I was trying to be a man.

OSCAR

Well, if you start contemplating surgery, let me know first. I'm not sure our insurance covers that.

EMMA

How much longer do we have insurance?

OSCAR

Don't think about it.

Yawning, he heads back to bed. She turns and looks at herself in the mirror.

She holds her hair up. Scissors come up as well.

And the longer she looks  
 The more her face starts to morph into  
 An old lady.

A hawk.

A panther.

A female warrior, looking straight at the camera with  
 utter determination. She holds a sword up in front of  
 her face. She lowers it. And then she takes her helmet  
 off.

Her face glows, her hair swirls. She is a wilding  
 princess

Until her face morphs again into

A boy's face. Twenty something. Cool, young, hip.  
 Determined. He puts sunglasses on, and he also puts on  
 the tragic centrism of the male ego. Oh, he also wears a  
 tiny little moustache.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Emma as a guy walking down the street. He's young, hip,  
 and his slouch is ultra cool.

He turns to look at himself in a window, and accidently  
 CLOCKS a passing assistant, who has to skid a little to  
 save the tray of coffees he's carrying.

IT'S WILL.

WILL

Dude! Watch where you're going!

EMMA

Sorry. Sorry.

WILL

Whatever.

(as he goes)

Asshole.

She stares after him. He didn't recognize her. She  
 heads down the street with a shred more arrogance than  
 she had even a moment ago.

CUT TO:

INT. NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Nick sits at his desk, reading a resume off his computer. Emma picks up one of the toy Warzoniacs, messes with it. She is now AZ CUMMINGS, a 25 year old gaming phenom.

NICK

It says here that someone from Jenn Rappaport's office reached out and said we should meet you. You know Jenn?

AZ

She does yoga with my mom.

NICK

(skeptical)

She does yoga with your mom.

AZ

Yeah, it's like the new networking for millennials.

Nick glances up. Then grins. The kid is amusing.

NICK

Well they sent along some clips of your work. It's impressive.

AZ

Oh you already looked at it.

NICK

The shape shifter stuff is good.

AZ

It's not good, it's great. What, you think I don't know how good it is?

Nick is taken aback by that but he's also intrigued.

NICK

Unfortunately, we're actually looking for someone with more experience.

AZ

Then why'd you call me in?

NICK

I was curious.

AZ

Aren't you curious about anything else? Don't you want to know if I play well with others?

NICK

I don't care if you play well with others.

AZ

Oh, I thought people cared about that. This whole corporate thing--that's all it is, right?

NICK

It's a little more complicated than that.

AZ

Not if you can build a game like I can. What? I know I'm good. I don't have time to pretend I'm not.

NICK

You're cocky, for sure. That's not a bad thing. But your resume is thin.

AZ

So take credit for discovering me. My resume is thin. Anything I pull off, you get the credit.

NICK

That's not how it works.

AZ

Yeah it is. Look. Jenn said she sent you some woman she thought you were going to hire, and she was real experienced. But you didn't hire that person.

NICK

That was a completely different situation.

AZ

She wasn't any good?

NICK

She had a reputation.

AZ

What kind of reputation.

NICK

Challenging.  
(then)  
Difficult.

AZ

So ultra-difficult. I hate women like that.

NICK

She was fine.

AZ

She was ultra-difficult, and this is my point. This woman, she had experience. So experience isn't really what you want. Good is what you want. That is what you want.

He points at the computer, confident.

AZ (CONT'D)

I am what you want.

NICK

All right all right all right.

He thinks for a moment, laughs at himself, then sticks his hand out.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'll see you here tomorrow morning, introduce you to the team.

AZ

Seriously? Cool.

CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

AZ sticks his/her head into the men's room. It's deserted. He/she steps inside, considers the line of urinals, and what to do next.

He/she turns to the mirror, considers the next move. Emma's excitement and terror are at war in her eyes. Every woman fantasizes about doing this. Who knew it would actually work?

FADE OUT.