

MAID

"Snaps"

Episode 110

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Inspired By
Maid: Low Wages, Hard Work, and a Mother's Will to Survive
By Stephanie Land

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1 **INT. ALEX'S JEEP / EXT. NEAR WALMART PARKING LOT - DAY (D1)** 1

CLOSE ON Alex, behind the wheel of her parked car, staring at the El Camino in the Walmart Parking Lot.

We're exactly where we left Alex in 109, except it's a couple days later. Alex is spying on Paula.

Alex watches her Mom emerge from the car, stuffing her pillow and blanket back into the plastic bin in the trunk. She switches into a pair of boots.

Alex watches her mom take a big hit from a vape.

Paula gets back into the car and STARTS the engine. After a moment, Paula PULLS out of the parking lot. We watch her go.

2 **INT. ALEX'S JEEP - DAY / EXT. PUBLIC PARK RESTROOM - DAY (D1)** 2

Still spying on her mother from her car, Alex stares at the gross public park bathroom.

After a moment, she watches Paula emerge, with her bag of toiletries and a hand towel. She has changed into fresh clothes and cleaned herself up.

She gets back into the car. OFF Alex...

3 **EXT. BENWICK PARK - BEACH / INT. ALEX'S JEEP - DAY (D1)** 3

Alex watches as Paula walks down to the water with a small cooler and a beach chair.

She sits down in her chair, warming her face in the sun, and pulls breakfast out of the cooler. Granola, milk.

OFF Alex, watching her mom, alone with the surf...

DENISE (PRE-LAP)
Morning. How is everyone today?

4 **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -DV SUPPORT GROUP -COMM. CENTER-DAY(D1)** 4

Alex sits with a HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS in a semi-circle, some chatting, some with coffee. We recognize BRANDI (from the boutique, in 109). Denise makes eye-contact with everyone.

DENISE
Kyla, thank you for making coffee.
Esther, thanks for doing chairs.

(CONTINUED)

KYLA (30s) and ESTHER (50s) nod. Denise lets everyone breathe first. These meetings are low-energy and tender.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Let's get started. I'm Denise. I'm a survivor of domestic violence.

ALL THE WOMEN

Hi, Denise.

DENISE

Does anyone want to share anything today, before we start with our special activity?

Nope.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Okay. Then I'll turn this over to Alex. Give her a warm welcome.

All the faces turn towards Alex, they SNAP their fingers in a muted but well-practiced gesture of welcome.

ALEX

Thanks. Hi. Think I've met most of you before. Couple of you, not yet. I'm Alex. I'm a survivor of domestic violence.

ALL THE WOMEN

Hi, Alex.

ALEX

I want to be very clear that I'm not qualified to "teach" you guys anything. I'm not a real writer.

DENISE

Yes she is. She just got a scholarship to college for writing.

ALEX

Still. When I asked Denise if I could do some volunteer work, I meant cleaning the toilets. But she said I should talk to the Group about writing, and I said no way, and she said yes so here we are.

DENISE

(laughs)

Show them your serial killer notebook.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

She says my writing looks like a
serial killer's...

Alex gets a notebook out of her bag, displays a few pages.

BRANDI

Damn. You wrote all that?

ALEX

Yeah. This is just since I got to
McMullen House. Some people jog,
some people crochet...I do this.

A beat. Alex SCANS the room. Many of them look like they're
still in the early stages of recovery.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Do any of you ever write for fun?

Brandi raises her hand.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Brandi. You don't have to raise
your hand.

BRANDI

I had a diary in fifth grade. Furry
and pink, had a little lock on it.

KYLA

Me, too. I had one of those.

ALEX

Okay great, so you know what I'm
talking about. Did you write a lot?

They both NOD.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Do you remember what you wrote
about?

BRANDI

Gossip. Lot about Kendrick Payne -
this fine-ass eighth grader.

KYLA

Mine was about Christy McDonald.

ALEX

Nice. Get it.

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Here's the hard question: who were you talking to? When you wrote.

BRANDI

Nobody. Just myself.

KYLA

Same.

Alex nods. She holds up her notebook.

ALEX

That's all this is. Me talking to myself. Writing is how I make sense of things. It's where I go to be honest about what I feel. Sometimes it's the only way for me to even know what I feel. I have to write to see what I'm gonna write, as crazy as that sounds. But I find it's a lot easier to write down the truth than it is to say it aloud.

(then)

Does anyone else have that?

A few nods, that tracks.

ALEX (CONT'D)

No one can take writing away from you. Nobody can tell you you're wrong or you're using the wrong words. You're not wrong. You're right. And the words are fucking right. You know why? *They're yours.*

(then)

I dunno. It helps me, to have something that's mine. Maybe it can help you. Maybe not. But either way, this will be fun, I promise.

A beat.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Let's get our pens and notebooks out.

BRANDI

(panicked)

Are we gonna read this aloud?

ALEX

Nope. Only if you want to.

Alex gets a kitchen timer and sheet out of her bag.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I brought some writing prompts.
They're legit, I stole them off the
internet from an actual professor.

BRANDI

Writing whats?

ALEX

Prompts. It's when you write about
a topic for a set amount of time.
No filter, no overthinking. Just:
writing to see what you're gonna
write. Getting your pen moving.
(re: timer)
We'll put ten minutes on the clock.

Alex sets the timer, doesn't start it yet.

ALEX (CONT'D)

And: here is our prompt. "Imagine
you get to witness a major
historical event, like the signing
of the Declaration of Independence.
Describe what you see in detail."

Record scratch. Everyone - Denise too - stares blankly.

ALEX (CONT'D)

...that's a weird one, sorry. Okay.
(tries again)
"Describe a day in your life that
you were happy. It can be a real
day- that actually happened - or an
imagined day, that you wish would
happen." You ready?

The women take that in. Some NOD. That one's interesting.

BRANDI

Okay if I sit on the floor?

ALEX

Absolutely. Get comfy. And: go.

The TIMER begins to TICK TICK TICK TICK.

OFF Alex and the semi-circle of women, all starting to write--

Denise and Alex head out, through the lobby, to the exit.

(CONTINUED)

DENISE

That was great, Alex. I'm looking forward to class tomorrow. A sentence I've never said before.

ALEX

Hey, do you have a second?

DENISE

'Course.

Denise and Alex step off to the side, for privacy.

ALEX

I think I know the answer to this...but I'm not allowed to have a guest at the shelter, am I?

DENISE

No. I'm sorry, babygirl. We can only have individual victims and their children in shelter, without exception. Why?

ALEX

I just found out my Mom's living in her car.

DENISE

Sorry to hear that.

ALEX

Yeah.

A beat.

DENISE

Is she a victim of DV?

ALEX

She's a chronic victim of DV. But she's also in complete denial and delusional and unmedicated, so.

Denise processes that. There's very little she can do, then.

DENISE

She over 55?

(Alex nods)

Well, you can take her to ADS then. "Aging and Disability Services."

ALEX

No way. She thinks she's fourteen.

(CONTINUED)

DENISE

They've got a program called SHARE
that puts homeless folks at senior
centers, but she has to enroll.

ALEX

She won't go to a government
office. She's already on the lam
from a psych ward.

DENISE

Sorry you have to deal with this,
days before you're supposed to
leave town. Isn't there anyone else
who can look after your mom?

ALEX

Nope. I've taken care of her since
I was six years old.

DENISE

What would happen if you didn't?

OFF Alex, considering that...

EXT. BENWICK PARK - BEACH / INT. ALEX'S JEEP - DAY (D1)

We are back with Alex in her parked car, at the same park she
was at this morning.

Paula is exactly where she left her, in a beach chair with
her cooler. She's been there all day.

Alex studies her. She's completely alone, but it looks like
she's talking to someone (she's gesticulating, etc).

Is she talking to herself? Or to the many birds?

OFF Alex, very torn about whether or not to go over...

EXT. BENWICK PARK - BEACH - PICNIC TABLE - SUNSET (D1)

Alex appears in the frame, behind Paula, faux-surprised:

ALEX

Mom?!

Paula turns, sees it's Alex coming towards her.

PAULA

Alex.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Hey! I thought that was you.

(points)

I was just driving by - on my way home from a clean. Saw your car.

PAULA

She's hard to miss.

Alex makes her way over.

ALEX

What are you up to out here?

PAULA

Look at this majesty. Spring has sprung. This is gonna be a cotton candy sunset, and I'm gonna watch every sugar-dipped moment of it.

Alex sits down next to/near/across from her.

ALEX

(carefully)

Seemed like you were talking to the birds when I pulled in? Were you?

PAULA

Ha. No. I was doing the dictation thing on my phone.

ALEX

(relieved)

Oh.

PAULA

Yeah I'm giving a lecture this evening on The Neolithic concept of the "solar barge," to the collective. That's the boat you always see the sun riding in, in pre-dynasty Egyptian mythology. I spoke on Ra and Horus, and they were riveted. So this is an encore lecture.

ALEX

You gave a lecture?

Pop to, from 109: Paula's car in the Walmart lot, with her in the front seat, alone. That's where she's been the past few nights.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

Yep. I'm dictating this one because
I can't write today. Stupid wrist's
acting up again.

Alex notices now, for the first time...

ALEX

Where's your cast?

Paula shrugs Alex off.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It was plastered to your wrist.
Where did it go?

PAULA

I had an itch. Micah sawed it off.

ALEX

What?

PAULA

It was pretty erotic, honestly.

ALEX

Mom. You're supposed to be in that
cast for six more weeks.

PAULA

It's fine.

ALEX

It's not fine. You're not gonna
heal now. You severed a tendon--

PAULA

If you're gonna ruin cotton candy,
just go.

Paula looks out at the sunset that's maybe gonna come soon.

ALEX

I'm glad I ran into you. I wanted
to run something by you.

PAULA

(watching sky)
Shhhh.

ALEX

I know you've got a great living situation in the loft right now, with the collective. But I told you I'm moving to Missoula, right?

Paula doesn't answer.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Next Monday. And I had this crazy idea: you should come.

PAULA

Why?

ALEX

I've got a place on campus. You could paint all day, go on walks. Watch your granddaughter start kindergarten. Watch me graduate.

PAULA

Nah, that's not for me.

A beat.

ALEX

Why not?

PAULA

Because I'm not boring. I've got a big life here, Alex. I can't be galloping off behind you, being a tagalong.

ALEX

I'm inviting you.

PAULA

My blood's here. My mom's buried here, her mom before that. The Langley women are all here.

ALEX

I'm a Langley woman and I'm going.

PAULA

Baby, that's your choice and I want you to go and I want you to do well, but I can't leave.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Then you're gonna need to go to
some appointments before I go. Like
a wrist doctor, for starters--

PAULA

Hard pass.

ALEX

I'm making an appointment tomorrow
and you're gonna meet me. Nod that
you hear me.

PAULA

(excited)

Here it comes.

ALEX

I don't want to worry about you
while I'm in Montana, Mom.

PAULA

(eyes closed)

Gonna be cotton candy.

OFF Alex, looking at her mom, lit by the sun--

INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - LATER (N1)

Alex has Maddy on her lap and a Road Atlas open on the table.
Maddy's in her wings.

CLOSE IN: On a map of the Northwestern United States. Alex's
finger traces the road from Washington State to Montana.

ALEX

We start here and we go through
these mountains...through these
mountains...through more
mountains...then through Spokane,
which is a big city, then...

Alex taps her finger on Missoula, Montana.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Missoula. That's where we're going.

(then)

Can you trace it with me?

Alex and Maddy traces the trip with her finger.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)
Mountains, mountains, mountains,
Spokane, Missoula.
(then)
Guess how many hours in the car.
This many.
(Alex holds up nine
fingers)
You can't count this high, can you.
It's: nine.

MADDY
Nine!?

ALEX
I know. It's a long trip but we
have to do it in one day because
hotels are expensive. But we'll
bring lots of coffee for Mommy and
LOTS of stickers for Maddy.

MADDY
Stickers!?

ALEX
Maybe some coloring books too? I
mean, if we're gonna get CRAZY.

MADDY
And SHOOP?

ALEX
Oh, we're gonna listen to the crap
outta shoop, my girl.

Maddy wants to trace the trip again.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Should we trace again? Mountains,
mountains...

MADDY
Mountains!

ALEX
GOOD. Spokane, Missoula!

OFF Maddy's face, Alex's UPBEAT MUSIC takes us to --

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF ALEX RUSHING:

(CONTINUED)

- Alex is sweaty and working hard, brushing mildew off the bathroom tiles. Lifting each of ten shampoos and conditioners and wiping under them. GOO and SCUM congealed underneath.
- Alex cleans the toilet, and the TODDLER toilet next to it.
- Alex replaces the toilet paper on the holder, folds the top sheet into a triangle, like a hotel.
- Alex putting crisp white towels into the bathroom shelves. Fanning crisp white wash-cloths across the sink.
- Alex grabs two bags of garbage and rushes out and into--

ONSCREEN: "\$45.00"

INT. DOG HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (D2)

Alex VACUUMS a dog-hair-covered couch with an attachment. A FAT DOG pants, watching her do this. It's arduous work.

The instant she's done, she steps back, satisfied. The dog immediately jumps back on the couch. Settles in for a snooze.

ONSCREEN: "~~\$45.00~~"

ONSCREEN: "\$90.00"

INT. GLITTER HOUSE - PLAYROOM - DAY(D2)

A SERIES OF SHOTS OF ALEX RUSHING:

- a demolished playroom. It's a PIG PEN. These kids are into crafts and have been making dollhouses and spring crafts. GLITTER everywhere. And I mean: everywhere.

- Alex, sweaty and rushing, VACUUMS glitter off the floor, the furniture, the curtains, the rug, under the rug.

- She picks up a chair. MORE GLITTER under there. Jesus.

- Her VACCUM cord knocks over an open thing of glitter, which ricochets and sprays glitter across the floor. God dammit.

- Alex scrubbing glitter GLUE off the table, aka cement.

- Alex rushes out with 2 bags of glittery garbage and into--

ONSCREEN: "~~\$90.00~~"

ONSCREEN: "\$135.00"

11 **INT. ALEX'S JEEP (PARKED) -STREET NEAR GLITTER HOUSE -DAY(D2)** 11

Alex climbs into her car, leaving a trail of glitter all over everything she touches. She looks at herself in the rearview mirror. Glitter in her hair. All over her clothes.

ALEX (PRE-LAP)
 (into the phone)
 Hi, I want to order the textbooks
 for ENG 102 Section 5, please.

ONSCREEN: "\$135.00"

ONSCREEN, IN RED: "\$-128.30"

ALEX (CONT'D)
 (into the phone)
 For books?!
 (then)
 Do you have any used copies?

ONSCREEN: ~~"\$135.00"~~

ONSCREEN: "\$1.35"

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Great, can you set them aside for
 me? I'll be there Tuesday. Thanks.

Alex gets a BEEP. Call waiting. It's "**Tara LAWYER calling.**"
 Alex clicks over to "**Tara.**"

ALEX (CONT'D)
 Hey, Tara.

INTERCUT TO:

12 **OMITTED(MERGED W SC.11)** 12

13 **EXT. STREET CORNER - NEAR COURTHOUSE - P.H. - DAY (D2)** 13

Tara comes down a bunch of steps (or around a corner). She's on the go, putting her sunglasses on. She clicks her AirPods.

TARA
 Oh good, Hi. Quick update for you.
 Just got out of the clerk's office.

ALEX
 Uh oh.

(CONTINUED)

13

Alex continues to pick glitter out of her hair.

TARA

No - it's good. He's objecting to the notice of relocation, as we already knew. But our motion for an ex parte emergency custody order has been filed and we also slapped him with a temporary No Contact Order, so that oughta make a point.

ALEX

So he can't contact me?

Tara hits the cross-walk button. Waits to cross the street.

TARA

Correct. A sheriff will be serving him with a restraining order this morning with the ex parte motion.

ALEX

What happens now?

TARA

We wait. See how he responds. I left word with his attorney, we'll know more soon.

ALEX

Thanks, Tara.

Tara CLICKS OFF. OFF Alex sitting in her truck, we cut to--

14

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -DV SUPPORT GROUP -COMM. CENTER-DAY(D2) 14

Class. Alex is back in her same seat in the semi-circle. Alex checks her phone one last time (for Tara updates, there are none) before putting it into her bag.

ALEX

Brandi. Think we left off with you. Please.

BRANDI

(nervous)

I don't know if this is my happiest day ever, but it's what came to mind during the ten minute thing.

ALEX

Great. Thank you for sharing.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone looks at Brandi, patiently.

BRANDI

Okay.

(reading off notebook)

I used to go on these walks with my dad as a kid. We'd go in June before the sticky late summer heat. I'd get one of those Flintstone orange popsicles from Seven-Eleven - the kind you have to use all your might to push up. We'd walk along the ocean until dark, looking at the Virgo constellations, since my birthday was four days before his. My dad would point to the sky and tell me he was the big dipper and I was the little dipper.

(emotional)

We stopped going on our walks when he got sick, but I went back recently with my son. Got him a Flintstone orange popsicle. They're much easier to push up now. I looked up at the night sky, and there it was, as if zero time had passed. The big and little dipper.

(then)

That's it.

The women all SNAP for Brandi, who smiles.

ALEX

Wow. Terrific. And thank you for going first, very brave.

(to group)

So what stood out? Again, no criticism. We want to tell Brandi what images are gonna stay with us.

ESTHER

"Sticky late summer heat."

ALEX

Yes.

DENISE

Popsicles are much easier now.

KYLA

"Zero time had passed."

(CONTINUED)

14

ALEX
"Big and little dipper." Nice.
(then)
Who else would like to share?

OFF Alex, in the CIRCLE --

15

EXT. MEDICAL CLINIC - PARKING LOT - DAY (D2)

15

Alex stands outside a medical office/clinic, looking annoyed.
She looks at the time on her phone. Her Mom's late.

She calls "Mom." It RINGS, goes to voicemail.

Alex hangs up. Texts her Mom: "At doctor's. Where r u?"

The little "dots" that Paula's replying comes up. Then they
go away. Paula does not respond.

Alex texts her: "15 minutes late"

Dots again. Then no response.

ALEX
Son of a bitch.

Alex heads back to her car.

16

EXT. BENWICK PARK - BEACH - DAY (D2)

16

Alex drives by the park, where her mom was yesterday. There's
no sign of the El Camino today. Alex pulls away.

17

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - DAY (D2)

17

On foot, Alex approaches the farmer's market - where, yes,
Paula is at the booth, back-lit by star-lanterns.

Alex makes her way over. Paula looks up as she approaches.

PAULA
(bright)
Oh hey honey.

ALEX
Don't hey honey me. Get your stuff,
cmon. We're going to the doctor.

PAULA
(laughs)
What doctor?

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

The one you just stood up. He can fit you in at four but we gotta go--

PAULA

I didn't agree to go to the doctor today. It's Thursday. We only get a booth on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturdays. I can't abandon Micah.

(to Micah)

Babe. Come meet my daughter.

We see: Micah has returned to the booth.

MICAH

(not interested)

We met the other day.

ALEX

You promised me you'd go to the doctor. You gave me your word.

PAULA

Why are you glittery? Did you go to a rave?

ALEX

No. I cleaned a playroom.

PAULA

(re: glitter)

The lice of the art room. Once you have it, there's no getting rid of it.

ALEX

C'mon, let's go.

PAULA

(cracking herself up)

You spread it wherever you go...

ALEX

Would you grow up?! We're late.

PAULA

You're the one covered in glitter.

ALEX

You are gonna get in my fucking car right now and go to the doctor.

(CONTINUED)

17

PAULA
Oooo, look at you. Scary Face!
(light)
Honey, it's my wrist. If it hurts
I'll take some CBD. Or I'll go to
the doctor. Or I'll cut it off, I
don't give a fuck, but it's up to
me. Just cuz you're on some time-
line 'cause you're leaving town
doesn't mean I am. I'm fabulous and
don't need fixing. Find something
else to do.

MICAH
Babe, customer.

PAULA
(to Alex)
If you'll excuse me, I am at work.

Paula dutifully steps away, turns her attention to a CUSTOMER
(female, 50s, in a large hat).

PAULA (CONT'D)
(to customer, bright)
Hey there! How ya doing today? I
like that goofy hat you got on.

After a moment, Alex walks off. Not sure what else to do.

Alex's phone RINGS. We see it's "**Tara**" calling. Again?

ALEX
Hello?

INTERCUT TO:

18 **EXT. P.H. STREET / PARKING LOT - FARMER'S MARKET - DAY (D2)** 18

Tara is in a rush and seems harried, looking for her car.

TARA
(something's wrong)
Hey. Change of plan. Can you meet
me downtown in an hour?

ALEX
Is something wrong?

TARA
(yes)
Nope.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

18

CONTINUED:

18

TARA (CONT'D)

We just have to go through some stuff together, might be better to do it in person.

Tara beeps her FOB. Where the hell's her car? It BEEPS a way off. She was walking in the wrong direction. She reverses.

ALEX

I'm gonna have to bring Maddy with me. She'll be outta daycare.

TARA

Fine. Let's meet in Darren Square.

Tara CLICKS off. OFF Alex, a not-good feeling in her stomach...

18A

OMITTED

18A

18B

OMITTED

18B

19

INT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DARREN SQUARE - DOWNTOWN - DAY (D2)

19

Tara's face tells us everything we need to know. She's the bearer of bad news.

TARA

So. Spoke to Sean's attorney. Not the news we were hoping for. They're moving to have your ex parte motion dismissed altogether, citing lack of evidence of domestic abuse. And Sean is unwilling to revise to the parenting plan or give up any custodial rights.

ALEX

Wait - what does this mean?

TARA

It means he says you're lying about being abused. So now there'll be an adequate cause hearing in 14 days to determine the validity of your claim and appropriate custody, and it will be what we call a win/loss case. If you lose, you can't take Maddy anywhere.

ALEX

Ever?

(CONTINUED)

Tara nods.

TARA

Washington makes it very hard on victims of DV. Particularly with emotional abuse because there's usually no physical proof, so--

ALEX

I know, Tara. I've already been dragged into court once, and I LOST because I didn't have bruises.

TARA

You won't lose this time. We have 14 days to build a rock-solid case. Someone must've seen this guy emotionally abuse you. There must be someone who can write a declaration for you, as a witness.

ALEX

In 14 days, I'll be gone. I'm leaving Monday.

TARA

(you're not)
Legally, you have to stay in town. Maddy, too. Until the hearing.

Alex swallows all this, tries to keep it together.

ALEX

What the fuck! I'm gonna lose my family housing in Missoula. I'm gonna lose my spot at school. I'm supposed to move out of the shelter this weekend -- to go where? Back into black mold housing? Do this whole *fucking* nightmare over again? No. I'm out. I got out!

TARA

We're going to fight this and we're going to get you there for Fall semester, for sure.

ALEX

Fall?

(then)

I just took out a *nine thousand dollar* student loan. You said this summer was a sure thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

I'm not rich like you and Regina. I
can't just re-pay that.

TARA

I'm afraid there's more.
(bad news)
He's demanding visitation with
Maddy.

ALEX

We have a restraining order.

TARA

The order only applies to you. Not
Maddy. The court approved him
having a four-hour visitation.

ALEX

When?

TARA

Tomorrow. They'll appoint a third-
party neutral supervisor, unless
you have a lay person you want to
use. A grandparent.

ALEX

They can come arrest me, I'm not
giving her to him. Not doing it.

TARA

If you don't comply, you'll be in
violation of your parenting plan,
which will *not* look good at the
hearing in 14 days.
(then)
I'm sorry, Alex. But this isn't
over. It's just a speed bump.

Alex turns away, stung, and looks at Maddy. The idea of
having to turn her over to Sean is more than she can handle.

INT. ALEX'S JEEP (MOVING) - NIGHT (N2)

In the backseat, Maddy sleeps. Alex drives.

We GO WIDE on her car, taking some turns along the water...

EXT. WALMART PARKING LOT - NIGHT (N2)

And we STAY WIDE on the car, until it pulls into Walmart and
pulls up directly next to Paula's El Camino.

(CONTINUED)

A beat. Alex watches her mom, sleeping in the front seat. She debates whether or not to knock on her window. Decides to.

Quietly, so as to not wake up Maddy, Alex gets out and makes her way to the driver's side door. She KNOCKS on the window.

Paula, who was sleeping under a blanket in the reclined front seat, JOLTS awake, scared.

PAULA

Jesus.

Alex says nothing. She just looks at her Mom.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Alex. You scared the shit out of me. What are you doing here?

ALEX

I need your help with something.
(then)
What are you doing here?

Paula rolls down the window, trying to shake the sleep off.

PAULA

Oh, I had a few too many margaritas, I guess. Must've pulled over here on my way home to sleep it off--

ALEX

(stop)
Mom.

PAULA

No, I know what this looks like, but I just come here to nap when the collective gets too loud--

ALEX

I know you sleep here. I know you spend all day at a park alone. I know there's no collective.

A beat. We see the truth of this on Paula's face. (She climbs out of the car by this point.)

PAULA

(staying bright)
Well "collective" isn't the right word maybe, but there's a really nice community of folks here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (CONT'D)

The Flores family right over there in the minivan. Billy & Anna over there in the 4Runner. We keep an eye on each other. It's like a big camp out at a drive-in movie theater. All we need is popcorn.

Alex fights TEARS. The disappointment of this night.

ALEX

Why can't you take care of yourself?

PAULA

What do you mean? Look at this, I got a cooler. Got vitamins. Got a really warm blanket, my good weed.

ALEX

You're living in a car.

PAULA

I love my car. Look at this cobalt bitch. She's like family to me.

ALEX

You're homeless.
(crying)
You're living in a car.

PAULA

Hey! Stop with that. *I happen to love my car.* I like sleeping here, under the stars. I like my independence. And it's not like I'm here every night. I go to Micah's whenever Alaina-May's not there.

ALEX

(laughs)
...who the fuck's Alaina-May?

PAULA

His wife. I told you this, they broke up but she still lives there because she's a feral dumpster fire, the point is: I like being a gypsy. I like being mobile. I like answering to nobody but my art. I'm scrappy, you know that.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

I can't help you, Mom. I can't afford to take you to a motel. I can't bring you to the shelter.

PAULA

Alexandra. I'm not your problem.

ALEX

You are...

PAULA

I'm *not*. I'm your mother.

ALEX

(laughs)
No you're not...

PAULA

I am. Now what do you need my help with? You said you needed something.

A beat.

ALEX

Can you supervise a playdate with Sean and Maddy tomorrow?
(difficult to say)
He gets a court-mandated visitation and a third party has to be there.

Paula finds her vape. But before she hits it, she looks up.

PAULA

Of course. What time?

ALEX

Twelve-thirty.

PAULA

No problem. I'll be there. I'll take care of your girl.

ALEX

And you need to go to the Doctor's.

PAULA

Over my dead fucking body--

ALEX

CAN YOU PLEASE JUST SAY YES?
Everything is a no right now.
Everything is shit.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (4)

21

ALEX (CONT'D)

Your wrist looks terrible, you need to go to the doctor. Can you please be a an adult for one fucking minute?

PAULA

(warmly, yes)

Do I get a lollipop?

A beat. Alex laughs. Hugs her mom.

OFF Alex and Paula, hugging in the Walmart parking lot.

22 **EXT. FISH & CHIPS SHOP - DAY (D3)**

22

Bright new morning. Alex sits alone at a table, with a water in front of her. She's waiting for someone.

After a moment, HANK approaches. He spots her immediately.

ALEX

Thank you for meeting me.

HANK

Of course. I've been worried about you, falling off the face of the earth like you did. You look okay.

ALEX

I am okay.

HANK

Good. I was glad you called.

A beat. Hank has a gift bag with him.

HANK (CONT'D)

Where's Maddy? I was hoping I'd get to see her.

ALEX

She's at the domestic violence shelter I'm living at. They have daycare there for the victims.

HANK

Oh.

(after a pause)

Well, you can give her this then, from me. It's a mister potato head.

Hank slides the gift bag over. An uncomfortable beat.

(CONTINUED)

HANK (CONT'D)

Did you order yet?

ALEX

It's my second time at an emergency shelter for abused women this year. Second time Sean sent me there.

Hank looks away, at anything but Alex. Doesn't engage.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Do you hear the words coming out of my mouth?

HANK

I hear 'em.

ALEX

And?

HANK

And I wish you reached out to me, instead of taking my granddaughter to a place like that. You have a place to live. I would've leapt to help you, to give you the shirt off my back, you know that. But instead, you let me worry. Let Sean worry. You had me checking the ferry station floor for you, Alex.

A beat.

ALEX

Well maybe you can help me now. That's why I asked you to meet me.

HANK

Okay.

ALEX

I filed for full custody of Maddy, to take her to Missoula with me, and Sean's objecting to it.

HANK

Sean told me.
(then)
He's not doing very good, you know.

ALEX

I don't care how he's doing. My lawyer is building a case to prove I was emotionally abused.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

(then)

I'm going to need to submit
evidence. Witness testimony from
people who've seen it.

A beat. Alex waits for him to volunteer. He does not.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Dad. Will you testify that you've
seen Sean emotionally abuse me?

HANK

...when would I have seen that?

ALEX

I saw you see it at the trailer.

HANK

I don't remember that...

ALEX

I saw you see it. You looked right
at me and you didn't do a goddamn
thing about it.

HANK

If I saw anything, I saw a young
couple having a rough patch.

(then)

Sean's struggling with his
sobriety. What he needs is your
empathy and time with his kid.
You're walking away from him at the
exact moment he needs you most.
You're doing exactly what your mom
did to me: up and out with my kid
when I was at my lowest low.

ALEX

I can't take responsibility for
Sean anymore. I have to do what's
best for Maddy.

HANK

He's an alcoholic, Alex. He has a
disease that makes him a monster.
Booze is the enemy, not him.

ALEX

Is that who hit my mom? Booze?

HANK

(getting up, done)
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

ALEX

Don't walk out on me.

HANK

What do you want me to say?

(stung)

You accuse me of these things...

ALEX

I want you to say: yes, I did hit her. You are right. I am sorry.

HANK

I don't remember doing that. I don't remember much before May 23rd 2009. Day I got sober.

ALEX

Alcohol doesn't erase the past. Just cuz you were drunk doesn't mean you weren't A SHITTY FATHER AND A WIFE BEATER.

Heads turn. Alex doesn't care if she's causing a scene.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You've never been there for me my entire life. I'm asking you to be.

HANK

I'm always here for you and Maddy.

ALEX

So long as I sit here and make small talk and not tell the truth?

HANK

That's not....

ALEX

Then do this for me. Stand up for me. Help me protect Maddy. Write a testimonial.

HANK

(after a pause)

...I can't do that for you.

ALEX

Then I guess we don't have much to say to each other.

They look at each other, for the last time (ever).

23

EXT. PUBLIC PLAYGROUND - PARKING LOT - DAY (D3)

23

Alex is on the playground with Maddy. Paula makes her way over to them, having parked the El Camino next to Alex's car.

Paula passes Alex's car --

PAULA
(getting a whiff)
Jesus Christ. What is that *smell*?
Like burnt terds in that car.

We see: Paula has a cast on her wrist.

ALEX
You went to the doctor. Thank you.

PAULA
Look, I can still use my finger.
(to Maddy)
Hey, pumpkie pie! You ready for a
playdate with me and your daddy?

MADDY
Yes yes!

ALEX
She's eaten lunch. There's a snack
in her bag, change of clothes.
(then)
Think she needs her rain boots?

PAULA
We got this.

ALEX
(wobbly)
I don't know if I got this.

PAULA
You got this. It's gonna be fine.

Behind them, Sean's Jeep pulls in. He parks a few spots down.

Alex watches him get out of the car. His face is grey, drawn.

SEAN
(to Alex)
I'll wait over here! 'Cause I have
to. Thanks for sending a cop to
serve me. VERY CLASSY.

Alex kisses Maddy's nose.

(CONTINUED)

23

ALEX

I'll see you in four hours, okay?
Grammy is gonna be with you the
whole time. And afterwards, we're
gonna go get an ice cream.

Paula takes Maddy's hand. They walk to Sean.

Alex watches Sean pick up Maddy, really happy to see her,
tons of kisses. Maddy seems happy to see him, too. Her arms
around his neck, squealing with delight.

Alex watches as Sean gives Paula a really warm hug, asks how
she's doing. Says he's missed her. She puts an arm around
him, empathetic. The three of them walk off, to the park.

OFF Alex, watching them disappear on the horizon...

24

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -DV SUPPORT GROUP -COMM. CENTER-DAY(D3) 24

Back in class. Alex in the circle, distraught. Heavy-hearted.

DENISE

(reading aloud)

My happiest day is the day my
daughter touched me for the first
time. I remember like it was
yesterday. She was nine weeks old.
She didn't know I was in hell,
terrorized day and night by her
father. To her, I was just the
warm, nice milk lady. But this one
morning, when she was nine weeks
old, we were napping on the floor
and I woke up because someone was
touching me. It was her. This tiny
baby hand was holding onto my arm.
She was looking at me, expressing
unfiltered affection for me...

(emotional)

...this look of trust on her face.
She saw me and loved me. It was the
happiest moment of my life. That I
could be that for someone.

SNAPS from everyone in the room.

ALEX

Denise...

(overwhelmed)

Sorry...that got me. Having a day.

(CONTINUED)

Alex can't help but have a moment. It's killing her, that Maddy is with Sean right now; Denise's monologue hits the nerve. She struggles to keep it together.

The class watches and waits, patiently. This is a place you can struggle to keep it together. Finally...

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sorry! Thank you for sharing that with us Denise. Beautiful.

(to the group)

Okay, what images stood out to you?

BRANDI

"Unfiltered affection."

KYLA

"Warm, nice milk lady."

ESTHER

"Terrorized day and night."

ALEX

"Tiny hand." Yes.

(then)

Does anyone else want to share?

A beat. Then TRINA (30s) raises her hand.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Trina. Great.

TRINA

Mine's about a girls night out. Is that weird? I didn't write about my kids, like you guys did.

ALEX

(laughs)

Your happy day is yours to define.

TRINA

(reading aloud)

I was at a bar with my usual wrecking crew: Liv, Amanda and Davina. We were slamming drinks, celebrating something. I can't remember what. But I'll admit it: I wasn't mad about how I was looking that night. This incredibly hot man came up--

(CONTINUED)

ALEX
(noticing)
Sorry, hold on --

Alex is up, standing, looking alarmed. We REVERSE to REVEAL what she's looking at: Paula is standing in the doorway of the classroom, with Maddy in her arms.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Uh. Sorry. I need to step out for a second. Keep reading, sorry.

Alex goes over to Paula and ushers her out of earshot --

ALEX (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS (D3)

They step out into the hallway, Alex taking Maddy, who is clutch-y and gripped onto Alex's neck.

PAULA
Nothing. She's fine. Everything's fine. We just got a little upset.

Alex takes Maddy in her arms.

ALEX
Oh no. Are you okay? What happened?

Maddy nods, Clutching tightly to Alex.

PAULA
She just had a little breakdown on the playground and we couldn't recover. Could we, munchkin?
(to Alex)
She missed her mommy, I think.

ALEX
(kisses)
Oh, Mad, I'm here. I'm right here.

PAULA
Sean dropped us off. He wants to talk to you.

ALEX
I can't - I'm doing class.

25

PAULA
I think you should go talk to him.
(re: playdate)
It didn't go very good.

ALEX
(to Maddy)
I'm gonna go talk to Daddy for a
second and be right back. Can you
have some fun here with Grammy for
two seconds? Then ice cream?

Maddy nods. Alex moves away, towards the door, to face Sean.

26

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER/PORT HAMPSTEAD STREET - DAY (D3) 26

Alex comes out and spots Sean, standing by his Jeep. Smoking.
His back is to us. Alex makes her way over to him.

He turns a bit when she arrives, hearing her get there.

ALEX
What happened?

We see his face closely now - he looks defeated.

SEAN
When I told Maddy it was time to
get off the swings, she threw a
massive tantrum. Screaming.

ALEX
She never wants to get off the
swings.

SEAN
I know, but I couldn't handle it. I
lost my temper and yelled at her.
(puts them in his pocket)
I haven't had a drink in 24 hours.
I wanted to be straight for when I
was with Maddy. But I'm irritable,
the sun hurts, my skin crawls; I'm
just rubbed raw.

Alex listens, nods. Eventually Sean meets her eye.

SEAN (CONT'D)
I was pushing her on the swing and
she kept saying *higher, daddy,*
higher daddy and she was
giggling...it was so nice.
(then)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SEAN (CONT'D)

But even then there was a part of my mind already planning on how to get my next drink. Calculating the time until I could get some relief. Then she had the tantrum...and I just knew that if Paula wasn't there, I woulda found a drink immediately. With Maddy in tow.

Alex listens, nods.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Like my mom and her pills. They always came first. I don't want to do that to Maddy.

(then)

I'm signing over full custody to you. I just called me lawyer.

ALEX

You did?

SEAN

You and Maddy should go to Montana. It's what's best for her.

Sean smiles at Alex. This is all very hard for him to say.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I'm a piece of shit.

ALEX

You're doing right by her.

SEAN

...Yeah.

(beat)

Come by whenever you want to get her stuff. I'll box it up for you.

ALEX

Thanks.

SEAN

Do I have the DT's, or are you sparkly?

ALEX

I'm sparkly.

Sean smirks at her. Then heads to his Jeep.

Alex stands there watching as he starts the car, pulls out, and disappears down the street.

(CONTINUED)

A beat.

She looks down at her phone. She's **"missed"** a call from **"Tara"** and a **call** from **"Regina."** Then the texts pour in.

Her phone PINGS. Text from **"Tara."** **"His lawyer called! Call me! [thumbs up emoji] [champagne emoji] [Confetti emoji]**

Text from **"Regina"** comes in. **"MONTANA! WOOP WOOP!"**

OFF Alex, a smile on her face --

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM -DV SUPPORT GROUP -COMM. CENTER-DAY(D3) 27

As Alex comes in, she sees an unexpected sight. Paula is sitting in her seat, as if she's a part of the class. Maddy's seated in an adult chair, her tablet and headphones on.

The women are all SNAPPING when Alex comes in. Esther has just read hers aloud. Alex makes her way over...

DENISE

Nice. Thanks for sharing.

TRINA

That was so awesome. "Fuck Murphy's Law." I liked that line.

BRANDI

"Punched him like I was a boxer."
That stood out to me.

KYLA

"The cracked night light."

DENISE

"Black, not blue."

PAULA

I loved the whole thing. You're a great writer, Edith.

DENISE

Esther.

PAULA

I'll go next!

ALEX

Mom, you haven't written anything.

PAULA

I'll recite it. I love oration.

(CONTINUED)

27

ALEX

You're not in the group. Let's go.

DENISE

You're welcome back anytime, Paula.

OFF Alex, escorting Paula out--

28

EXT. DALLAS ROAD PARK - BEACH - DAY (D3)

28

Maddy has (had) an ice cream. She's wearing her fairy wings, playing on the beach, with bubbles.

Alex and Paula sit next to each other. Paula pours a can of beer into two plastic cups.

PAULA

Cheers. To you getting outta dodge.

ALEX

Cheers.

They both drink.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Ugh. This is hot beer.

PAULA

Sean looked like hell. Your dad shook a lot like that.

Alex looks at Paula.

ALEX

Do you want to tell me your happiest day?

PAULA

Hm?

ALEX

What I was doing with the group. Do you have a day you remember, that you were really happy?

PAULA

Hands down. My first morning in Alaska.

Alex shakes her head, no.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (CONT'D)

We'd gotten into Anchorage in the middle of the night. You were freezing because of course I had forgotten your winter coat, we left your dad's in such a panic. We were in a completely unfurnished cabin, so I dumped out my suitcase, made a bed out of the clothes, that we slept in together.

(then)

The next morning while you were still sleeping, I tip-toed outside and immediately sank into the snow. I laid down and made a snow angel. Because your dad wasn't there to tell me I was crazy, or suddenly explode at me. It was just me, the snow, and the sun.

Alex SNAPS her fingers.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Whatever. I was back here in less than a year, broke as shit. Whole trip was dumb.

ALEX

It wasn't dumb. You never went back to dad. You got me away from him.

A beat.

PAULA

Am I still invited to Montana?

ALEX

Yes.

PAULA

Okay. Fuck it. I'll come.

ALEX

Really?

PAULA

Let's go. I'll help you with your writing, be a sort of creative Shaman. Get started on a mural business, find me a Mountain Man!

(excited)

And Maddy needs me in her life. She's an artist, you're not.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

28

PAULA (CONT'D)

She needs me to bend her towards
the light, make sure she keeps
seeing the colors, the textures.

ALEX

Can you be ready by Monday?

PAULA

I'm ready now. Nice thing about
living in your car. Packed.
(then)
Though, I don't think she'll make
it to Montana. I'll have to sell
her for parts and caravan with you.

PAULA (CONT'D)

HEY, MADDY! GUESS WHO'S COMING TO
MISSOULA WITH YOU?! GRAMMY!

Maddy comes running over, excited.

PAULA (CONT'D)

We're going on a ROAD TRIP.

OFF Alex, Paula and Maddy on the beach. MUSIC takes us to...

29 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - ALEX'S APARTMENT - DAY (D5)**

29

CLOSE ON: the woman on the beach, in the TJ Maxx painting.
Alex is looking at her. She's come to love her.

Alex turns her attention back to packing up their stuff
(mostly clothes, some art, some books, not much). It fits in
two boxes. She tapes the boxes shut, labels them.

She looks again at the woman on the beach, and smiles. MUSIC
continues to take us to...

30 **INT. MCMULLEN HOUSE - COURTYARD - DAY (D5)**

30

Denise, Alex, Cal and Maddy in the courtyard. A homemade cake
on the table. A single candle in it. "Congrats!"

Alex tries not to cry. Denise hands Maddy a balloon. MUSIC
continues to play, takes us to...

31 **INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - MADDY'S ROOM - DAY (D5)**

31

Alex grabs the last box from Maddy's now-empty room. Her
clothes, toys, bedding, everything on the walls, boxed up.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: 31

We follow Alex out, as MUSIC takes us to...

32 **INT. SEAN'S TRAILER - BEDROOM - DAY (D5)** 32

Alex in Sean's room, grabbing the last few boxes of her stuff, that Sean's boxed up for her. They're necessary items, but it's clear she's leaving a lot for Sean.

A moment: when she sees the MAID composition notebook on top of the final box.

33 **INT./ EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER - DAY (D5)** 33

We TRACK outside with Alex as she walks past the kitchen, and out to the driveway, where Sean is stuffing the last box in.

Alex closes the gate.

SEAN

That it?

ALEX

That's it.

(then)

You can come see her as much as you want, Sean.

SEAN

Yeah I'm gonna get myself together.
Come visit all the time.

They both know this is a lie.

SEAN (CONT'D)

I'm gonna miss her so much...

Alex takes his hand, not in a handshake, more of a quick squeeze and then a release. The end of a journey.

SEAN (CONT'D)

Good luck, Alaska.

34 **EXT. SEAN'S TRAILER / INT. ALEX'S JEEP - DAY (D5)** 34

Alex starts her car and puts it in reverse. Then she drives away from the trailer for the last time (ever).

MUSIC continues to take us to...

REGINA

Hey. I didn't know you were coming
by. Come in.

ALEX

I can't. Maddy's in the backseat,
we gotta get going. I just wanted
to give you this before I go.

Alex holds out Regina's cashmere sweater, that she wore home
at the end of 104.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I don't know if I stole this or
not. It just sorta happened.

REGINA

I saw you had it on. At
Thanksgiving, right? Can't blame a
girl for putting on some cashmere.

ALEX

Well, here. Sorry I had it.

REGINA

So: next stop Montana.

ALEX

(yes)

Picking up my Mom in Port Winslow,
then getting on I-90.

REGINA

I feel like you should clean my
house one last time, just for fun.

Alex gives Regina a hug.

ALEX

Thank you for being a good friend
to me.

REGINA

You, too. Stay in touch, bitch.
(giving it back)
And keep the sweater.

ALEX

No - I'll buy my own someday.

REGINA

(a joke)

It was fourteen hundred dollars.

(CONTINUED)

42

ALEX
(in that case)
I'm keeping it.

Alex takes it.

REGINA
Drive safe.

ALEX
Bye, Regina.

Alex heads back to her car and climbs in. She and Regina blow each other a kiss before she starts the car and pulls away.

43 **EXT. A LONELY STRETCH OF ROAD - PORT HAMPSTEAD - DAY (D5)** 43

Alex drives, looking for a house number. Not liking the looks of this area...

44 **EXT. MICAH'S HOUSE - DAY (D5)** 44

She pulls up to a dumpy house. Gloomy and depressing, super run-down. The driveway is littered with several junker motorcycles (or cars) in various states of decay.

Paula's El Camino is in the driveway. Alex notes this with disappointment, as she pulls in.

Micah and A BUDDY are around, working on a bike/car. They eye Alex suspiciously as she gets out.

Paula comes rushing over.

PAULA
(brightly)
Hi hi hi! Can you believe this light, through these trees? If there are fairies, they live in these pines. Are you so excited?

ALEX
I thought you were selling your car for parts.

PAULA
Oh I was. I am. But I have some incredible news, Alex.

ALEX
(already knows)
What.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

(lowering her voice)

Micah...kicked Alaina-May out. That feral bitch got kicked to the curb! For me. I stayed here last night, in his arms, in his bed, and let me tell you, there's good sex, and then there's what this was, which was a whole new level, even for me--

ALEX

Are you not coming?

A beat.

PAULA

Absolutely. I am, I am. But not today. It's just, too sudden. I need to stay in this place I'm in with Micah right now, this energy between us is powerful.

ALEX

I can't wait for you.

PAULA

No! Don't wait for me. This is your moment. You go! I'll catch up. Give me the address and I'll be right behind you.

ALEX

I don't want to leave you here.

PAULA

Why not? I'm surrounded by fairies!

ALEX

I saved a place for your stuff in the trunk. Maddy is so looking forward to you coming.

PAULA

It's funny how these things work out. But when Micah heard I was leaving, he was like BOOM, you know? Realized his feelings for me. He told Alaina-May about me and everything. Try to be happy for me.

ALEX

(very hard to say)

...I'm gonna go without you, Mom.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

Yes yes yes! Go go go! I don't want to poop on your rainbow. Go get settled and I'll catch up. Micah loves road trips. We'll be a few weeks behind you. Month max.

Alex looks at her. Knows she will not be catching up. Paula knows this too--and is maybe giving her a gift:

PAULA (CONT'D)

This is your adventure, not mine.

Paula hugs Alex. Alex's arms hang limply at her sides, the disappointment of this moment weighing heavy on her.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Cmon. Hug me back. You love me.

ALEX

I do love you.

Alex hugs her back.

INT. ALEX'S JEEP - MICAH'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER (D5)

Paula is leaning into the backseat finishing her good-byes with Maddy. Alex is in the driver's seat.

PAULA

I don't know what's worse in here. The smell or the glitter...

(to Maddy)

Hey you. Grammy loves you! I'll see you very soon, okay? Have a great drive with your Mommy. Mwah!

Paula closes the backseat door. She smiles at Alex.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You knock'em dead, kiddo.

ALEX

Take care of yourself.

Alex types an address into her phone.

ON SCREEN: "Missoula - 566.2 Miles"

She puts the car in gear and pulls away from the curb.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: 45

As she drives away, she takes one last look at Paula in the side-view mirror, knowing this will be the last time she'll see her for a very long time.

Then she turns her eyes firmly forward on the road ahead.

OFF Alex's driving, we cut to--

46 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - COMM. CENTER - FLASHBACK -DAY (D4) 46

Flashback, to Alex's last day of class, which happened off-screen, yesterday. The whole group is there, in the circle.

ALEX

Let's give the whole group SNAPS.
It's been an honor, doing this with
you guys this week.

Everyone SNAPS for each other.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Thanks for sharing. Thanks for
coming.

DENISE

Thank you, Alex.

INTERCUT TO:

47 INT. ALEX'S JEEP (MOVING) - HIGHWAY (D5) 47

Alex drives towards the highway, I-90. Puts her blinker on.

BRANDI (O.S.)

Wait. We didn't hear your happiest
day.

BACK TO:

48 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - COMM. CENTER - FLASHBACK -DAY (D4) 48

Alex looks out at class, surprised.

ALEX

You want to hear mine?
(the CLASS nods)
No one ever asks to hear mine.

Alex opens her notebook, starts reading to us:

(CONTINUED)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Okay.

(then)

My happiest day hasn't happened
yet. But it's about to.

BACK TO:

49 INT. ALEX'S JEEP (MOVING) - I-90 (D5) 49

Alex drives as she gets on the highway. Glances at Maddy in the backseat, playing. Her hair in the open-window breeze.

BACK TO:

50 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - COMM. CENTER - FLASHBACK -DAY (D4) 50

ALEX

(reading)

On that day, I'm going to get in my
glittery car that smells like old
tuna, which will be packed with all
my belongings and my amazing
daughter, and I'm gonna drive the
fuck outta this town.

51 INT. ALEX'S JEEP (MOVING) - I-90E - MONTANA - DAY (D5) 51

Alex drives. The sun shining, trees blurring in the rearview.
She looks ahead, eyes brimming with excitement.

ALEX (V.O.)

(reading)

I'm going to drive nine hours, 566
miles, to Missoula Montana, where
I'm going to spend the next four
years learning to be a writer.

Alex puts her blinker on and moves towards a FAMILIAR EXIT--

"Missoula"

BACK TO:

52 **INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - COMM. CENTER - FLASHBACK -DAY (D4)** 52

ALEX

(reading)

Hopefully, there will be a lot of happy days during that time. And I know there will be some hard ones.

We see: the women in class, listening. Caring.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Most people would bet against the single mom putting herself through college. But they don't know what it took to get here. 338 toilets cleaned. Seven types of government assistance. Nine separate moves. One night on the ferry station floor. The entire third year of my daughter's life.

BACK TO:

53 **EXT. CLIFF/ROAD WITH VIEW OF MISSOULA - MONTANA - DAY (D5)** 53

We go WIDE on the breathtaking horizon of Missoula, as Alex drives. The same scene we saw back in 106 Sc.3, Alex sees again now.

ALEX (V.O.)

But when we get to Missoula, I'm gonna take Maddy up Sentinel Mountain, which looks over the town, and show her our new home.

BACK TO:

54 **EXT. MOUNT SENTINEL - DAY (D6)** 54

Alex and Maddy start hiking the path to the M.

ALEX (V.O.)

I've been telling her all about the giant M, that's at the tippy top of the mountain.

The pause, panting, this is a tough hike.

ALEX (V.O.)

That the trail up there is long and zig-zaggy. The hike'll be hard.

(CONTINUED)

Alex and Maddy continuing to hike up Sentinel Mountain.

ALEX (PRE-LAP)
But we're gonna make it to the top.

55 **EXT. THE "M" - LATE AFTERNOON (D6)** 55

We go WIDE and see Alex and Maddy arrive at the "M," holding hands. They've been hiking for hours.

Exhausted but exalted, Maddy and Alex sit down on a flat rock near the M, and look out. Admire how far they have come.

ALEX
And when we do, I'm gonna tell her that the M stands for Maddy. That this whole new world is for her.

56 **EXT. THE "M" - LATE AFTERNOON (D6)** 56

We go WIDE and see Alex and Maddy screaming joyfully at the top of their lungs into the Sky, from the "M:"

ALEX & MADDY
WOOOOO HOOOOOOOOO.

OFF Alex and Maddy at the M...

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE