



UNIVERSAL CABLE PRODUCTIONS

TRUE FICTION

PILOT

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TEASER

CLOSE ON TWITTER FEED-

As these words are hastily typed:

These ppl R morans .

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - DAY

Oak beams and worn plaster cradle the inhabitants within the walls of this historic college.

CLEA TURNER (40's), sits surrounded by SIX STUDENTS. They are fiercely engaged in her writing workshop. Clea is mostly unaware of the effect her beauty and intelligence has on those around her. Mostly.

She also may or may not be going crazy.

CLEA

Nobody cares about a main character
achieving artistic satisfaction.
It's not a relatable concern.

At the moment, PARKER MORTENSON (20), is the center of attention and he's clearly won life's genetic lottery. He smashes out notes on laser-etched, MacBook Air.

PARKER

What does that even mean?

CLEA

Most people have jobs they hate.
They come home to defeated spouses,
over stimulated children, they're
exhausted and if by some miracle
they have time to read a book--
(hefting her iPad)
They don't want to read about a
painter who kills himself because
he didn't get into the Whitney
Biannual.

Parker sullenly retreats to his laptop. He's on Social Media and is the source of our mysterious opening text.

What R they gng 2 say when im on NYT best seler list?

SUSAN GUTIERREZ (21), a copper-skinned Latina, scowls at Parker through her ironic "80's Executive Lady" glasses.

SUSAN

Plus, your protagonist is -surprise-
a misogynist and emotionally
impotent.

PARKER

Let's be honest, Susan. You're
incapable of reacting objectively.

SUSAN

I can't be objective because I'm
still so broken up about our
relationship ending?

PARKER

Basically.

Clea looks past Parker to see a nun, SISTER WENDY, standing
in the doorway behind him.

CLEA

(shakes her head)
Okay-- This is not the place.

Just then, UHN-WHA, a Comic-Con nerdista, rushes into class -
dropping her books in the process. The only thing heavier
than her eyeliner is her emotional baggage.

UHN-WHA

Sorry I'm late.

The students turns towards the commotion. Sister Wendy is no
longer at the door. Clea motions for Uhn-Hwa to take a seat.

DWAYNE (26), ex-military, regrettable AK47 forearm tattoo,
chimes in.

DWAYNE

Susan's right. I hated this guy.
His problems are so first world.
Boo hoo.

PARKER

Zip it, Nickelback. I had to read
your lame sci-fi MILF stories all
year. We get it, you like a dusty
muffin.

Dwayne stands -- 225 pounds of pure muscle, fists clenched.

PARKER (CONT'D)

(shrinking)
Calm down, Sargent Tool.

Dwayne glares at Parker.

CLEA

Dwayne, sit. Parker, critique means listening -- with your ear holes.

LINDSAY (21), overweight and *who fucking cares*, offers Dwayne a sympathetic smile. Then:

LINDSAY

That relentlessly long section about him jerking off in his car in the gallery parking lot is boring and porno.

PARKER

Fat.

LINDSAY

What?

MATT (22), a scruffy gender rebel (a trans-man without bottom surgery), adds:

MATT

Dude, would it kill you to run spell check or create a title page?

PARKER

I don't have time for spell check and title pages "dude." That's what editors are for.

UHN-HWA

This is an undergraduate fiction program. None of us have editors.

CLEA

(back to Parker)

Do your characters speak to you?

Parker rolls his eyes.

CLEA (CONT'D)

What did you really want to say?
What's the moral of the story?

PARKER

(scoffs)

It's like you've never even read *The Road* or *No Country for Old Men*. There's no moral. That's the point.

(to everyone)

(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)
 Morals and meaning are a pre 9/11
 mind set. Am I right?

Clea pinches her temples, attempting to ward off a migraine.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

ESTABLISHING: A former Catholic school for girls, this
 distinctively East Coast institution (Jeffersonian in style)
 is nestled just outside of Baltimore.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - HALLWAY - DAY

STUDENTS hustle to classes -- faces buried in cell phones --
 oblivious to the history that surrounds them.

Clea walks. Parker follows.

PARKER
 Your book wasn't just a cult
 classic, it meant something to a
 lot of people in my generation. It
 meant something to me. I came here
 to work with you. I don't get why
 you don't get me.

CLEA
 Oh, I think I get you, Parker.

A DUDE-BRO interrupts and gives Parker a shake/hug combo.

DUDE-BRO
 Parks! "Campus Moose Knuckle" snaps
 are literally the only thing keeping
 me awake in Intro to Business
 Ethics.

Clea watches Dude-Bro depart.

CLEA
 To think, one day he'll probably be
 managing my pension.

Parker's engrossed in his phone.

PARKER
 Maybe if you hadn't quit writing to
 teach you'd be caught up to where
 modern literature is -- where I am.

He hits a button. Peels of laughter as SCORES OF STUDENTS
 read his latest electronic Bon-Mot. He smirks smugly.

Clea reels -- so much to process here.

CLEA
I write all the time.

PARKER
(looks up)
It's been six years since you've
had anything published.

CLEA
I had a story in the New Yorker.

PARKER
The New Yorker still counts?

They arrive at the WOMEN'S REST ROOM. Clea opens the door --

PARKER (CONT'D)
I want to do something different.
And, I'm sorry I don't have empathy
or whatever -- but I don't think
that's weird or I should apologize
because I don't feel things for
other people.

All the while, visible through the open door, we see Sister
Wendy throw a NOOSE over a water pipe.

CLEA
So... You're a sociopath?

PARKER
No, I'm how people are now.

Parker doesn't seem to notice the nun but Clea does. She
releases the door, purposefully obscuring his view.

CLEA
You know what? You're right. You
are how people are now.

PARKER
I Dropboxed my new story to you
this morning. I want you to show it
to your editor.

CLEA
Unlike your Bro-friend, I stayed
conscious during my ethics classes.
This is what's called a conflict of
interest.

(walks away)
(MORE)

CLEA (CONT'D)
 How many times do we have to have
 this conversation?

PARKER
 When they find out you've been
 acting as a gate keeper, preventing
 them from reading my genius,
 they're going to drop you.

Clea stops in her tracks. She's had it with him and his
 "genius." She fishes her phone from her purse.

CLEA
 Fine! Fine! You want me to send it?
 (searching)
 Here it is. Got it.

Clea thumb-types an email to her editor.

CLEA (CONT'D)
Arthur, you should read this.
 Attaching document and...sent.

SFX: WOOSH!

Parker grins. Another victory in a life filled with
 victories. He snaps a selfie with Clea.

PARKER
 Just Instagramming the moment our
 lives changed.

Clea shoves her phone back in her purse. As Parker swaggers
 away she calls to him --

CLEA
 I hope you're prepared for a life
 of professional rejection,
 heartbreak and disappointment.

Clea turns and enters the-

INT. WOMEN'S REST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sister Wendy has hung herself from the pipe- her body still
 slightly swinging.

Clea brushes past, jostling the body on the way to the stall.

She raises her chic Jill Sander skirt, sits and pees.

After a moment, she makes eye contact with Sister Wendy
 visibly hanging over the top of the stall.

One of Sister Wendy's nun shoes falls to the floor.

CLEA

Not today, Sister Wendy. Not today.

Clea looks off. After a beat, she turns back: Sister Wendy is gone. Clea sighs.

See, she may be crazy.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Bookshelves line hunter green walls. On them are forty different titles by *Richard McGill*.

CLEA

Why are the worst students also the most prolific? He's written nine stories this term already.

RICHARD MCGILL (70's), Fiction Department Head, a bespoke British gentleman, peruses Parker's pages.

RICHARD

Because he doesn't lack merely talent, he also lacks shame.

Clea sits opposite him, swallowed up by his leather couch, loving every minute in his company and every sip of the prohibited on-campus martinis they now share.

CLEA

He's so sure he's good I question my own judgement. They are terrible, right?

RICHARD

They are indeed. He has the confidence and ego of the preposterously attractive.

CLEA

He has eight hundred thousand followers on Twitter alone.

RICHARD

Intellect may have been the currency of the twentieth century, but popularity is the currency of the twenty-first.

CLEA

I never thought about murdering anyone until I met Parker.

A TAPPING at Richard's door frame. They discretely hide their cocktails as DAN SLAVIN (40's), the potbellied Vice Dean of Academic Affairs, enters.

DAN
 Sorry to interrupt, Richard, but I
 need those semester grades.

RICHARD
 You have them.

DAN
 They need to be computed into the
 new INSPIRE system.

RICHARD
 I am a hopeless Luddite.

DAN
 But I need them in the computer --

CLEA
 Dan, we're in the middle of a very
 important literary analysis. I'll
 help Richard get his paperwork
 entered into INSPIRE. Okay?

She takes the pages. With a huff, Dan shuffles off.

RICHARD
 (conspiratorial)
 How this institution dearly loves a
 bureaucrat. What do you suppose
 they pay him a year?

CLEA
 He drives a Hyundai -- so forty?

RICHARD
 I suspect they pay him more but he
 squirrels it away for an annual sex
 tourism trip to Thailand.

Richard takes a sip of his martini and carefully broaches the
 subject no one wants to discuss in a writing program.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 How's it going with the novel about
 our suicidal nun?

CLEA
 I've been afire with inspiration.

RICHARD
 You're still blocked.
 (off her look)
 (MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Whatever happened to that bright
 young thing full of hope and
 promise I hired at great expense
 all those years ago?

CLEA
 I want to write, I really do.

RICHARD
 You've lost your confidence.

CLEA
 Six rejected novels, Richard. Six.

RICHARD
 You should follow Parker's advice
 and mentally award yourself a
 MacArthur Genius Grant every time
 you sit down to write.

Richard looks to her pointedly.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
 Not writing whilst resting on one's
 past laurels is very comfortable.
 But for writers it leads to
 madness. I know of what I speak.
 (gently)
 Additionally, your tenure here
 requires regular publication. As
 much as I adore you, I can't write
 another letter on your behalf.
 (a beat)
 Terry's nurse leaves at seven and I
 need to be there to relieve her.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Clea's 2004 Land Rover exits through a security gate. A light
 rain falls.

INT. CLEA'S CAR - NIGHT

Clea drives the streets of Baltimore, wipers wiping, NPR
 rambling. She is lost in thought, her tenure in the balance.

She looks at other DRIVERS inching along, many ON THEIR
 PHONES, texting, taking selfies, updating statuses...

Clea looks up to see a HOMELESS GUY crossing the street in
 front of her. She slams on the BRAKES, missing him by inches.

He pounds on her hood.

HOMELESS MAN

You crazy cow! You're gonna kill someone!

EXT. KRISTINA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clea pulls into the driveway of an impressive, 19th century mansion in the tony Roland Park neighborhood.

She shields herself from the rain as she makes her way to the pumpkin colored front door.

INT. KRISTINA'S HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Clea's sister, KRISTINA MASON (40's), preppy and beautiful, welcomes her inside.

KRISTINA

It's my cheat day and I've got a bottle of Chablis open already!

INT. KRISTINA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A tasteful restoration honoring period details, the interiors reek of all the waspy trappings Kristina has bought into.

Kristina places a box of expensive designer clothes on the floor in front of Clea.

CLEA

Hand-me-downs!

Clea pulls out a pair of Dries Van Nooten shoes.

KRISTINA

For your premiere thingy in New York.

Clea takes off her shoe and slips on one of the Van Nooten's.

CLEA

I don't know if I can stomach seeing another Nicholas Sparks novel adapted into a major motion picture.

KRISTINA

You're going. People are starting to forget who you are.

(MORE)

KRISTINA (CONT'D)

I don't even bother telling people you're my famous sister anymore.

CLEA

Ouch.

KRISTINA

You need to get out there and network a little. It'll be good to be seen hobnobbing with your successful contemporaries.

CLEA

(horrified)

Nicholas Sparks is not my contemporary.

KRISTINA

Besides, why else would your editor have invited you?

Clea rummages deeper in the box.

CLEA

So he can fire me in person.

She pulls out a "TEAM X-TREME CROSSFIT" hoodie and sweats emblazoned with bulldogs straining against chains.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Oh.

KRISTINA

Surprise! I want you to do Crossfit with me!

CLEA

How are you my sister?

KRISTINA

I flipped a 500 pound tire yesterday.

CLEA

A skill I will never need in my life.

KRISTINA

Between my apartment buildings and my retail spaces, Mason Property Group is an eighty hour a week job. This is how I de-stress. Plus, Harry can't keep his hands off me.

Clea folds the hoodie and tosses it on the top of the box.

CLEA
Where is Harry?

KRISTINA
In Shanghai. He's negotiating a huge investment package with the Chinese.

CLEA
All 1.3 Billion of them?

Kristina's two "photo-ready" twins, PETER and THOMAS (7), barge in.

THOMAS
Aunt Clea!

CLEA
Peter! Thomas!

PETER
Mommy had to leave Whole Foods 'cause she was crying so loud at the cous-cous station.

Clea shoots Kristina a concerned look.

KRISTINA
(to Clea)
I'm fine. Just a little pre-menopausal shout out from my ovaries.
(to kids)
Go watch your cartoons on Netflix!
(shouts to another room)
Mutoni, S'il vous plaît.

Kristina's Rwandan Nanny, MUTONI (50's), enters.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
(to Mutoni)
Cela vous dérangerait de prendre les garçons dans le salon?

Mutoni nods, shuffles the boys out. Kristina leans to Clea.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
I'm actually glad Harry's away. Let someone else listen to him drone on and on about how important his photography is to his authentic self.
(a beat)
(MORE)

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
 No offence to those of us in the
 room who are employed by the arts.

CLEA
 Barely. I'm blocked.

Off Clea's guilty look, Kristina gestures off screen.

KRISTINA
 (hushed)
 Mutoni had her whole family killed
 in front of her in war-torn Rwanda.

Kristina tops off Clea's glass.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
 Prolonged writer's block seems
 pretty insignificant compared to
 seeing your grandmother get her
 head whacked off by a Hutu death
 squad.
 (convinced)
 Perspective.

Clea takes this in. Kristina ceases the moment.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
 Don't say no right away, but my Spa
 Envy franchises are doing really
 well. I want to give you one. So you
 can run it and earn your own money.

Clea swallows her wine.

CLEA
 Gee, thanks, but I'm not ready to
 give up on my dreams just yet.

KRISTINA
 Uh oh, every time you say that it
 costs me.

EXT. CLEA'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - LATER

Clea's car is parked in front of classic "Painted Lady" row
 house in Hampden -- the Silverlake of Baltimore.

She struggles with box of hand-me-downs as she climbs the
 front stairs.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clea snaps a photograph of Kristina's check with her phone and deposits it into her account. A sigh of relief. She distractedly thumbs through Instagram-

INSERT: the selfie Parker took with Clea captioned: "#Geniouses." She scoffs as her phone buzzes.

Caller ID reveals: EDITOR -- 212 area code. She fumbles with the phone -- She sends the call to voicemail.

Her phone bings: New voicemail. She plays it back.

ASSISTANT (V.O.)

Hi Clea, this is Arthur's assistant Josh. I'm calling to confirm you'll be at the Sparks premiere. Arthur wants really wants you there.

Dread settles over Clea's face.

INT. WOMEN'S REST ROOM - NIGHT

Lindsay, who we also met in workshop, emerges from a stall in a work uniform. She makes eye contact with Susan.

SUSAN

Parker's out there.

LINDSAY

That sucks.

(a beat)

Why did you go out with him?

SUSAN

He was really nice to me for two weeks. I was stupid. It was like dating cancer or ISIS.

Susan isn't really listening as she's checking her phone.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Parker will probably be a huge success. The worst people always win at life.

LINDSAY

I don't know. He'll most likely die in a car crash before then. Like while he's masturbating and driving top down in his Mini Cooper -- putting on a free peep show.

SUSAN
You know about that?

LINDSAY
Pulled up alongside him in my truck
once after partying. It was late.

Lindsay buttons up her work shirt.

SUSAN
(regarding her uniform)
Why are you dressed like that?

LINDSAY
My aunt got me a night shift at
Tyson. It's how I pay for school.

SUSAN
Thank you.

LINDSAY
For what?

SUSAN
(genuinely moved)
For one split second, I didn't hate
my life so much.

INT. CLEA'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The vibrant jewel-tones of the room are muted by darkness. A candle burns on the table next to a glass of wine. A fire burns in the fireplace -- the perfect place to write.

Clea opens her laptop and looks over her manuscript.

CLEA
(trying for confidence)
I'd like to thank the MacArthur
Foundation for this honor...

She types. But just as quickly stops. It's not working. Disgusted, she snaps the laptop shut and snuffs the candle.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Top of the Lake plays on Clea's iPad. She's all cozy in bed.

She checks the time: 9:45 PM. She taps an Ambien out of a prescription bottle. Snaps it in half and downs it with wine.

On second thought, she takes the other half as well.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The sky FLICKERS WITH LIGHT as a storm approaches.

A "RESERVED FOR FACULTY" placard marks the space where Parker has flagrantly parked his Mini Cooper.

INT. PARKER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Parker sits in his car, laptop open to AMATEUR VIDEO OF HIM AND SUSAN HAVING SEX. He masturbates- looking around, hoping to be seen.

We push in on the ornate laser etched design on Parker's laptop, as he comes to a noisy climax.

He cleans up, zips up, snaps the laptop shut.

Parker starts up the car, backs out of the space --

THUD, THUMP!

PARKER
What the shit!?

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

With the car idling, Parker gets out to investigate.

Did he hit something? No. There's nothing... Just the rain.

THWACK!

A huge ass TREE BRANCH bludgeons him in the back of the head.

Parker, stunned, disoriented turns toward his ATTACKER.

PARKER
Wait...

A FIGURE, silhouetted by a flash of LIGHTNING, brings the BRANCH down on Parker's beautiful face again and again.

A final gasp escapes from Parker's bloodied mouth. He's dead -
- never to fuck with anyone ever again.

INT. PARKER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Figure leans inside to shut off the ignition. Gloved hands reach for the MacBook Air.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - DAY

The sun rises and Dan, Vice Dean of Academic Affairs, pulls into a parking space. Hung over and wobbly, he curses himself in the rearview mirror.

DAN

Lard ass. Pathetic. Garbage.

A Pine Tree air freshener with a cartoon face smiles at him.

Dan pulls out a bottle of vodka and discretely pours it into a Diet Coke. He takes a swig, notices Parker's open car door.

Dan exits his car and sees Parker's body. His Diet Coke hits the asphalt. Overcome, he falls to his knees.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh, no! No!

INT. CLEA'S CAR - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Clea pulls up to the security gate. The Chief of Security, BART (60's), instructs her.

CLEA

What's going on, Bart?

Bart looks about, whispers conspiratorially.

BART

There's been an incident on campus.
A murder.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - DAY

POLICE OFFICERS wave Clea toward a parking spot.

CRIME SCENE tape cordons off the area around Parker's car. Parker's body has been removed.

DETECTIVE TOM WILSON (30's), clipped from the pages of a Timberland Catalog, takes photos of the scene.

Clea carefully makes her way toward Detective Wilson. He sneaks photos of STUDENTS who have gathered at the edge of the police tape.

Clea and Detective Wilson lock eyes. He takes a photo of her.

Susan darts up behind her, way too happy.

SUSAN

Parker's dead! Isn't it awful?
Someone bashed his face in.

Detective Wilson picks through Parker's backpack, careful to preserve the evidence. He finds the laptop cord but no laptop. He turns to a POLICE OFFICER.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Macbook power cord, no laptop.

OFFICER

(holding Parker's wallet)
Detective, I found something.

Clea squeezes through the crowd to the edge of the tape.

As Detective Wilson reaches for the wallet, he fumbles... The wind picks up and CASH FLIES EVERYWHERE. There's a rush, STUDENTS grab at the bills.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Jesus, hell!

CLEA

Hey -- leave it! Leave it! Dwayne!

DWAYNE

He owed me seventy bucks.

DETECTIVE WILSON

(exploding)
That's evidence! Hand it over right
now or you're under arrest!

Everyone, Wilson included, is stunned by his sudden volume.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Clea hands a few bills to Detective Wilson.

CLEA

I think this is all of it.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Thanks. You're Clea Turner, the
writer?

How does he know this?

CLEA
I am.

DETECTIVE WILSON
I read your book. It was utterly
devastating.

CLEA
Oh thank you...

DETECTIVE WILSON
One of your colleagues mentioned you
wanted to kill Parker Mortenson?
(off her look)
Don't leave campus, I need to
interrogate you.

Clea's eyes widen.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - AUDITORIUM - DAY

The Dean, EILEEN CHUNG (50's), on stage, microphone in hand.

FACULTY, STAFF and STUDENTS of Atlantic College listen.

MS. CHUNG

Words fail me.

Behind Ms. Chung an AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE TRANSLATOR signs.

MS. CHUNG (CONT'D)

I know you'll do everything you can
to cooperate with the detectives.

Clea WHISPERS to Richard (the department head).

CLEA

Dan fingered me!

RICHARD

I'm sure I don't want to know --

CLEA

No -- he told the detective --

Seated a few rows in front of them, Dan turns and shushes her. Clea glares at him.

MS. CHUNG

Friday we'll hold a memorial
service for Parker. Check your
email for details.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - LIBRARY - DAY

Dwayne stalks away. He's clearly annoyed having just finished his interrogation. Clea passes him.

CLEA

Dwayne?

He exits, not answering her. Clea enters the reading room. Oak clad walls and ceiling high bookshelves dominate this old world temple to the printed word. It's almost haunting.

Clea spots Detective Wilson waiting in one of two wing back chairs in the corner, lit by banker's lamps.

Clea sits opposite Detective Wilson as he takes notes.

CLEA (CONT'D)
I was joking about Parker.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Do you often joke about killing
your students?

CLEA
No never.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Do you have any psychological
issues?

CLEA
(too quick)
No.

Detective Wilson gives her a look, scribbles in his notebook.

DETECTIVE WILSON
You married?

CLEA
That didn't really work out for me.

DETECTIVE WILSON
How long have you been divorced?

CLEA
Mmm. Seven years now.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Can someone vouch for your
whereabouts around ten last night?

CLEA
No. I was in bed watching TV. Do I
need a lawyer?

DETECTIVE WILSON
Only if you're guilty. What show?

CLEA
Top of the Lake.

Detective Wilson smiles for the first time and it's electric.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Holly Hunter's amazing.

CLEA
I know, right?

DETECTIVE WILSON
 (back to business)
 Tell me about your student, Dwayne Toole. Any signs of PTSD or anything?

CLEA
 I don't think so. Unless keeping to yourself is a sign. I'm not an expert.

DETECTIVE WILSON
 Any run ins with Parker?

CLEA
 He insulted Dwayne in workshop but that was pretty standard fare.

DETECTIVE WILSON
 Standard fare?

CLEA
 Parker was mean, egotistical, lacking in humanity. There was always a lot of drama around him. Unfortunately none of it was on the page.

DETECTIVE WILSON
 How do you mean?

CLEA
 His criticisms in workshop were cruel, personal sniping. He was a bully on social media.
 (a beat)
 I don't know the details but he'd broken up with his girlfriend about three months ago. He said her lack of talent made her repulsive, in my class, in front of everyone.

She notices Buddhist prayer beads around his wrist as he flips a page in his notebook.

DETECTIVE WILSON
 Susan Gutierrez?

CLEA
 Yeah. I don't want to get on the whole "kid's these days" rant -- because I don't believe in that.
 (MORE)

CLEA (CONT'D)

It's just that he is -- was -- a whole new kind of asshole that only this particular moment in time could produce.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Do you think Susan could have killed him?

CLEA

Only verbally. She's a much better writer than him.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Most likely it was a robbery gone wrong. A tweaker who wanted his laptop. However, I may need to bring you in for more questioning.

He writes his mobile number on the back of his business card.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

If you think of anything call me.

CLEA

(taking the card)

Who else are you interviewing?

DETECTIVE WILSON

Let's just say there's a growing list of people we need to talk to.

They stand.

CLEA

So we're good here?

DETECTIVE WILSON

I actually just finished "Sunshine State." It was sad and funny at the same time. Those two poor girls growing up in Florida. It just put everything in perspective. How did you come up with all that stuff?

CLEA

(it was autobiographical)

Oh you know... Imagination.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Are you working on anything new?

CLEA
 Are you here to interrogate me
 about that, too?

Off his look she exits, a little shocked her exasperation has gotten the best of her.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - RICHARD'S OFFICE - LATER

Bart, Clea, Richard and Ms. Chung gather around Richard's desk. An ornate mantle clock ticks from an Eames console.

BART
 Seems like the storm caused some
 electrical interference. The video
 files are corrupted.

MS. CHUNG
 Our Fall enrollment is screwed.
 Who's going to pay \$45,000 a year
 to send their precious miracle baby
 off to some Murder College?

Ms. Chung looks at Clea.

MS. CHUNG (CONT'D)
 I want you to write Parker's
 memorial. You worked with him.

CLEA
 Oh no. That's a terrible idea.

MS. CHUNG
 His parents are coming Thursday.

CLEA
 I'm up against a massive deadline.

RICHARD
 Please Clea. As a personal favor.

CLEA
 (trying)
 And, I mean, I am a suspect.

MS. CHUNG
 Everyone on campus is a suspect! I
 wanted to kill him. Richard -- fix
 me a martini.

RICHARD
 I'm sorry? I'm sure you're aware
 alcohol is prohibited--

MS. CHUNG

Please. I know everything that goes on at this campus.

Richard slides open the console and begins fixing a martini.

MS. CHUNG (CONT'D)

The fact is, we owe him, his parents and the students some eloquent words of respect. Can I count on you, Clea?

CLEA

(fuck no)
Of course.

EXT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Richard says good night to ROSIE, their Healthcare Worker.

ROSIE

I'm sorry, Mr. Terry's very confused tonight.

RICHARD

It's okay. Good night Rosie.

She gives him a sympathetic look before heading to her car.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Richard looks at his husband TERRY (70's), who is slumped down in a lounge chair watching *Entertainment Tonight*.

TERRY

Vodka tonic. Do you work here?

Richard kisses Terry on the forehead.

RICHARD

I'm Richard.

Terry looks at him, struggling to remember.

TERRY

Okay, Richard.

Richard disappears. Returns with Terry's drink.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(points to the TV)
Where's Mary Hart?

RICHARD

There's a new Mary Hart now.

Terry comes out of his fog -- his eyes focus on Richard.

TERRY

Where were you last night? Are you still sleeping with that student?

RICHARD

I was home with you, darling.

Was he? A haze rolls back over Terry.

TERRY

This hotel is the worst. I've been here three hours and no one's come by to refresh my drink.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Clea and Kristina do walking lunges through a wooded park. The black branches scratch at the night sky - menacing.

KRISTINA

You murdered him, right? I'll visit you in prison.

CLEA

Detective Wilson thinks I'm innocent -- so there. He even said he liked my book.

Kristina appraises the hint of a smile on Clea's face.

KRISTINA

It's time you got back in the game.

CLEA

What? No -- I don't like who I am when I'm in a relationship. Being open to rejection makes me erratic.

KRISTINA

I'm merely suggesting you invite him to a luncheon in your lady garden.

CLEA

No thanks. I saw Buddhist prayer beads around his wrist. He's into new age bullshit like you.

KRISTINA

Make fun all you want but you've been living forever in that one-hundred-year-old house Harry moved heaven and earth to finance for you and you still haven't smudged it with sage.

Clea stops to catch her breath.

CLEA

You can't be serious.

Kristina runs ahead leaving Clea behind.

KRISTINA

Let's hustle. You're going to need to get tough for prison life.

I/E. DETECTIVE WILSON'S HOUSE - STOOP - NIGHT

A cobblestone street runs in front of Detective Wilson's townhouse in the Mt. Vernon neighborhood.

Detective Wilson shepherds his daughters ALICE (6) and PEARL (9) out the door and into the waiting arms of their mother SYBIL (30's). A DREAM CATCHER hangs over his fireplace.

Sybil's extra attentive as she helps them get ready to leave.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Be good! Love you.

PEARL

Bye, daddy -- see you next week.

He watches as the girls roll their pink suitcases down the walkway toward the double parked car. It's heartbreaking.

With the girls out of earshot Sybil addresses Wilson.

SYBIL

You're spying on me? I can't believe it.

DETECTIVE WILSON

No-- It was a background check.

SYBIL

Why?

DETECTIVE WILSON

Ali Ben Salem. Your new boyfriend?
You know about his check fraud
arrest?

SYBIL

He made a mistake. He was twenty.
(meaning him)
I made a worse mistake at that age.

DETECTIVE WILSON

He's around my girls --

SYBIL

This isn't about Ali or the girls.

She backs up, accidentally rattling a Zen wind chime.

SYBIL (CONT'D)

A couple of spiritual knickknacks
and a meditation class doesn't mean
you've changed.

DETECTIVE WILSON

The path to enlightenment begins
with a single step.

SYBIL

Stay out of my business or I'll
report you.

He closes the door and picks up an engraved RIVER ROCK:

Serenity

He HURLS it at his old television in the corner. SMASH!

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - NIGHT

VOTIVE CANDLES flicker by the parking space where Parker was
killed. An impromptu memorial has formed. A few notes and
photographs blow in the breeze.

Vice Dean Dan reaches down and picks up a photo of Parker. He
slips the photo in his jacket pocket. Exiting he accidentally
knocks over a candle, igniting the memorial on fire.

Dan panics, makes sure he wasn't spotted and darts off.

Parker's memorial goes up -- lighting the night sky with
ominous flames.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Clea sits at her table, laptop open. She's a bit drunk.

She gazes at Parker's Facebook. He looks like a model in his profile picture.

She clicks through his photos: duck facing at a douche bar -- sarcastic selfie taken next to a HOBO -- smoking a joint in a trashy apartment -- from his emo phase, making out with another EMO GUY.

She clicks over to her MEMORIAL document.

CLEA (V.O.)

(typing)

Parker Mortenson wasn't just a student, not just a writer, he was so much more. For example; he was a proud bisexual.

She stops writing.

CLEA

I can't even write a memorial.

She clicks through another album, "Asses of Atlantic College." -- "Susan's bubble." -- "Lindsay's chili-ass at the food truck." -- "Clea's tasty orbs at the dry erase board."

CLEA (CONT'D)

Oh, Parker, your douchery continues to torture even from beyond the grave.

She clicks over to his TWITTER FEED -- it ends abruptly the night he died. Eight hundred thousand followers.

She clicks back to the MEMORIAL document.

CLEA (V.O.)

(typing)

Parker Mortenson was cruel, vain and stupid. I resented him for accelerating the end of culture and literacy. He made Kim Kardashian look like a poet laureate.

As she types the overhead chandelier flickers.

CLEA (V.O.)

If only everything he represented
could have died with him because he
so perfectly gave voice to the
vacuousness of the modern era.

She raises her glass and toasts her efforts. The lights go
out completely. Clea sits at the table lit by her laptop.

PARKER (O.S.)

Fat Naturalz 1993.

Clea whirls around. There's no one there.

BLOOD drips on her face from above.

She slowly looks up toward the CEILING.

Where she sees PARKER MORTENSON staring back at her with his
bashed in face. It's as if gravity has flipped. Blood pools
around him.

PARKER (CONT'D)

YOLO.

Clea scrambles backwards away from the table.

The lights flicker on and Clea is freaking out.

CLEA

Parker?

Parker is nowhere to be seen. Clea backs into the living
room, turning on every light in the house.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As the lights come on she finds PARKER standing in front of
her bookshelf, examining the titles.

PARKER

Fat Naturalz 1993.

He looks right at her, blood staining his shirt.

CLEA

GO AWAY!

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clea runs into her bedroom, flips on the lights, rifles
through her en-suite medicine cabinet.

She ignores PARKER who is sitting on the edge of her bed.

She searches through her collection of anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications. She dry swallows a Xanax.

PARKER
Fat Naturalz 1993.

She closes her eyes, softly counts to herself. She adds --

CLEA
Not him, not that asshole.

After a few deep breaths she dares to open her eyes. She looks around the room. Parker is gone.

CLEA (CONT'D)
Get a hold of yourself.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - HALLWAY - DAY

Clea walks down the hallway toward Parker. He's silhouetted looking out a window watching the rain falling on campus.

She reaches toward him, scared of what she'll discover. He turns to her, his face restored. Tears rolls down his cheeks.

PARKER

I didn't deserve to die this way.

It's true, Parker didn't deserve to die that way. It's an emotional moment. She looks out the window, into the parking lot to see THE CRIME SCENE. Parker's body in a pool of blood.

CLEA

I'm sorry.

PARKER

(through tears)

Has your Editor read my story yet?

Ruined.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Burritoed in her comforter, Clea wakes to her phone alarm. She silences it, shakes her head.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - CLASSROOM - DAY

Clea's workshop group sits around the table. Parker's seat is conspicuously empty.

CLEA

I was thinking we could all go around the table and say one good thing about Parker.

Clea leans in, ready to plagiarize anything for her memorial. Susan, Lindsay, Dwayne, Uhn-Hwa and Matt look at each other.

UHN-HWA

He was really good looking.

Susan sighs loudly.

DWAYNE

Uhm. Pass.

LINDSAY

I envied how he could just generate content even though it sucked.

CLEA

Really? No one has any nice anecdotes to share? Nothing?

UHN-HWA

He loaned me a dollar for a Coke Zero once?

SUSAN

I know you're trying to help us grieve or have closure, and that's very sweet. I mean, you look like you're really upset about it.

Clea's getting nothing for her eulogy.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

It's like when Bin-Laden was killed. Everyone's cool with it.

CLEA

Oh, I don't know. That's really harsh and... Temptingly true.

LINDSAY

I want to bake cookies for his murderer.

MATT

Some people just need to die.

The students nod. It's better now.

UHN-HWA

Now that he's gone I feel like I'm free to express myself without all his emotional molestation.

MATT

I feel the same way.

The others nod in agreement.

CLEA

Wow. Okay.

SUSAN

I actually finished a story last night.

She hands copies everyone.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

It's about a girl who discovers that her boyfriend got her fifteen-year-old sister pregnant but refuses to pay for the abortion even though he is totally rich.

Off Clea's look.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - CLEA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Clea looks over Susan's pages. Snippets of text pop out: *I wanted him to die but not without pain. Rage, pushed me on.*

Clea thinks, pulls out Detective Wilson's card and dials.

CLEA

(on phone)

Detective Wilson, Susan Gutierrez had a pretty compelling motive to kill Parker Mortenson.

(a beat)

It's Clea. Clea Turner.

INT. UNI MENSA DINER - MOMENTS LATER

A German themed diner on the edge of the campus. A taxidermy Jackalope peers from a bookshelf. It's very Alpine.

Detective Wilson reads a copy of Susan's story. Clea watches.

CLEA

Parker got Susan's fifteen-year-old sister pregnant. Susan couldn't tell her parents and Parker stuck her with the bill for the abortion.

DETECTIVE WILSON

But this is fiction. It isn't a confession.

CLEA

Oh, please. Fiction is always a confession.

DETECTIVE WILSON

So you're Franny then? From Sunshine State? All that horrible shit that happened in your book happened to you?

CLEA

You're missing the point! This wasn't a robbery. They didn't steal the cash in his wallet.

(off his look)

I'm right, right? I read on the Internet that personal conflicts are the number one cause of murder.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Settle down Dana Scully --

He smiles, charmed by her enthusiasm. He takes a look around to make sure they're not being overheard.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

(sotto)

We're not investigating this as a robbery. It's actively a homicide case. In situations like this we prefer to let the perp think that they're not under suspicion.

Clea leans forward -- this is getting good.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

The cash wasn't the big clue. His car. They left that, too.

CLEA

Oh right, the car, duh!

DETECTIVE WILSON

I need you to keep this to yourself.

CLEA

Promise.

There's an awkward pause. Neither wants to leave.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Am I still a suspect? I mean, I don't have a motive, plus I'm helping by giving you clues.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Maybe you're giving me clues to throw me off.

CLEA

I hadn't considered it that way.

DETECTIVE WILSON

I'll tell you what, have a drink with me tomorrow night and you can tell me more about why you're innocent.

CLEA

(caught off guard)

Oh. I have to go to New York tomorrow night.

Detective Wilson instantly regrets this move.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Sorry, you don't-- inappropriate.

(a beat)

I have Bikram in half an hour. I should get going.

Clea brightens. It's been a while and he is very cute.

CLEA

No, uh. It's cool. When I get back.

Detective Wilson smiles.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Okay, then.

Clea takes this in - maybe she is due for a garden party after all?

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Clea, a little giddy from being asked out, grabs a Kit-Kat from a vending machine. She stares at the set of GOTHIC DOORS with worn lettering: "IMMACULATE HEART CHAPEL."

She turns and runs into Bart, the Chief of Security.

CLEA

Hey Bart. God you scared me.

(a beat)

You were here when this was a Catholic girls school?

BART

Been here forty five years.

CLEA

That nun who hanged herself in the rest room, did you know her?

BART
Sister Wendy.

CLEA
I've been writing about her.
(off his look)
Why did she do it?

Bart pauses to remember.

BART
Her note said it was because they
asked her to stop wearing her habit.

CLEA
Seriously?

BART
Didn't know who she was without it.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - CLEA'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Clea returns to her office, determined to get some work done.
She opens her manuscript. Chapter 7. She starts to type...

CLEA (V.O.)
*Sister Wendy was good at being a
nun. But lately the Nun business
had changed. Gone were the rules,
the structure, the habits -- all
replaced by a wave of reformation
that left her feeling irrelevant.*

Clea stops, stares at her REFLECTION in the monitor.

PARKER (O.S.)
Fatnaturalz 1993.

Clea freezes. She doesn't dare look behind her.

PARKER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You're not crazy.

Clea turns in her chair. Parker sits on her window sill --
each time we see him, he's a little less bloodied as he is
physically being restored.

CLEA
One, two, three, four --

She continues to count her breaths, a practiced ritual.

PARKER
I can prove to you that I'm here.

CLEA
-- eight, nine, ten --

PARKER
I'll tell you something only I
know, something you can test.

CLEA
(muttering)
Go away, go away, go away.

PARKER
Sign into my Twitter. My password
is fatnaturalz1993 with a Z. Tweet
out, "I know who killed me."

Clea tenses.

CLEA
Do you?

PARKER
No, I was too busy getting my head
bashed in to get a good look. This
will keep people talking about me
another day.

Clea shuts her eyes, trying to force him away.

PARKER (CONT'D)
That's all I want you to do, then
I'll leave you alone.

CLEA
Promise?

She opens her eyes. Parker is gone.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Clea looks around, makes sure she's not being watched. She
bee-lines for a bank of computers in the library.

She sits down, logs onto Twitter: fatnaturalz1993.

Boom! Just like that, she's in.

CLEA
(realizing)
I'm not going crazy.

She focuses on the task at hand; She reads Parker's last tweet, the night of his death: "*Amatures sit and wait 4 inspiration. The rest of us get up and go 2 work.*"

CLEA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Misspelled 'amateurs.' Quotes
Stephen King without attribution.

She types: *I KNOW HOW KILLED ME*. She starts to correct "HOW."
Thinks better of it. Hits POST.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - LAWN - DUSK

Clea wanders outside. SPOOKED STUDENTS frantically compare their smartphones. A murmur of excitement and confusion.

Vice Dean Dan, more shocked than drunk, steadies himself against a lamppost as he re-reads the tweet on his phone.

Clea spots Susan slamming her CAR DOOR and peeling out of the lot.

Clea looks at the scene unfolding before her. Stunned. The Tweet heard round the world -- or at least Atlantic College.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. NEW YORK THEATER - RED CARPET - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT of a movie premiere, New York City.

Flashbulbs explode as CAITLYN JENNER enters the THEATER.

CLEA

Please don't make me follow her.

JOSH, Arthur's assistant, practically pushes Clea onto the carpet. The flashbulbs abruptly STOP. A few PAPARAZZI shout:

PAPARAZZI 1

Clea Turner! Is that you?

PAPARAZZI 2

When's your next book coming out?

Clea tries to exit -- her scowl captured in a FLASH!

INT. THEATER - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Josh guides Clea through the CROWD.

JOSH

All of Arthur's clients are here.

(pointing)

E.L. James. Dan Brown. Patricia
Cornwell.

Clea grabs a champagne from a passing waiter and downs it.

CLEA

A regular who's who of the
Algonquian round table.

BRETT EASTON ELLIS beelines towards her.

BRETT

Wow, they've trotted everyone out
for this one.

He hands his phone to Josh.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I want a picture - my Twitter
followers are going to love this.

CLEA

Brett. No. Really.

BRETT

What? Some of them think you're dead.

Josh snaps the photo. Brett gleefully exits.

ARTHUR (O.S.)

Clea! Clea Turner!

Clea turns as her distinguished editor, ARTHUR, approaches.

CLEA

(smiling)

Arthur!

(under her breath)

Shit.

Arthur takes her arm and leads her to a quiet corner.

ARTHUR

Your new story.

CLEA

(braces)

I can explain. You weren't--

ARTHUR

--It's one of the most vital things I've read in years. It has a youthful, noisy, vibrance. Even the sarcastic typos -- inspired!

(savoring the moment)

We have a publishing deal.

CLEA

What!?

ARTHUR

The New Yorker. They said, "this is how people are now."

CLEA

I don't understand.

ARTHUR

Your story represents a real change in your voice and it's brilliant.

Clea takes it all in -- the mind-blowing possibility of Parker's talent.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

It's going in their next issue. And then I want to talk to you about your new book deal with Gawker media.

CLEA

I have a book deal?

ARTHUR

Yes, about anything you like. Just not that "Nun" thing you've been working on.

CLEA

I thought you were going to fire me as a client.

ARTHUR

I will never understand your crushing lack of self-confidence--

CLEA

--But this... This is much worse.

ARTHUR

(ignorning)

I'm emailing you the contract.

Arthur spots someone across the room.

ARTHUR (CONT'D)

There's Justice Scalia. I must go talk to him about his cookbook. His drunken parsnip strudel is sublime. Sign the contract by tomorrow, Clea.

Josh turns to her.

JOSH

Congratulations!!!

CLEA

I'm, I'm gonna need to get some air.

JOSH

But the movie is about to start!

Clea waves him off as she exits.

INT. CAB - DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

As they pull away from the curb, Clea addresses the DRIVER.

CLEA
Penn Station.

Clea silences the video screen welcome from Swoosie Kurtz.

EXT. ACELA EXPRESS TRAIN - NIGHT

The train is practically empty. Clea looks down at her Dries Van Nooten shoes.

PARKER (O.S.)
Holy Shit! This changes everything!

Clea's eyes widen. She turns as Parker leans in behind her.

PARKER (CONT'D)
A book deal! With Gawker media!

Clea looks around to make sure no one is looking.

CLEA
(whispering)
I Tweeted. You're supposed to go
now -- to your final rest!

PARKER
My story in the New Yorker!

CLEA
I'm not letting him publish that!

PARKER
This is what I worked for my whole
life! He said it was vibrant!

CLEA
Vibrant is code for moronic. I
didn't write that. I don't want my
name on it.

PARKER
I've done you a huge favor. I gave
you my genius story then was
conveniently murdered so you could
get credit and you don't have the
decency to accept my generosity?!

CLEA

I'm free to say this now because you can't petition the dean or launch an online campaign against me to get me fired -- you were my worst student. Ever.

Parker is stunned.

PARKER

What!? Fuck off.

CLEA

Everyone hated your guts. There are a million suspects. This case will never be solved.

PARKER

First of all, I was your best student. You're just too filled with resentment to recognize it. Secondly, I literally have hundreds of thousands of friends.

CLEA

No one has ever spoken to you frankly in your whole privileged life. The only thing you were good at was getting 'likes' and 'followers.'

PARKER

Where did all your talent get you? A stalled out career and a dead end teaching gig. Too afraid of another rejection to do what a writer does. Too filled with self doubt to shout your truth into the world.

A TRAIN CONDUCTOR enters the car.

CLEA

"Shout my truth into the world?"
You're worse than John Grisham.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR

Ticket?

Clea looks around. Parker is gone.

EXT. CLEA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Clea exits a cab and walks towards her house. It's dark and windy.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Clea cautiously enter. She turns to flick on a light. She turns to see Parker standing in front of her. She jumps.

CLEA
Jesus! Go away!

PARKER
I know what our book can be about!
A true fiction account of my story,
ending with you finding my killer!

CLEA
No.

PARKER
Come on! It will be like, *Serial*,
except not lame because we'll
actually solve my murder.

CLEA
Serial was a podcast not a novel.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Clea searches her spice rack. She pulls out little \$7 jars of Rosemary and Oregano. She finds what she's looking for: Sage.

PARKER
What are you doing?

She gets out a piece of tinfoil, heats some sage in it and blows the smoke at him.

CLEA
I'm sage-ing you away. Go into the
light! Cross over to the other
side.

It's not working. And if anything, he looks less dead.

PARKER
(dismissing)
I'm like seventy percent sure it
was Susan.

(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)

After we broke up, she sent me ten million emails threatening me.

CLEA

Maybe because you cheated on her with her sister?

(off his look)

She wrote about it in workshop.

PARKER

She's only writing a story about me so she can glom on to my fame and success by proxy.

CLEA

How can you be so disgusting?

PARKER

I didn't get a good look at who it was beating my face in, but I could smell her cologne. Susan wears men's Vetiver.

Clea takes this in.

PARKER (CONT'D)

Break into her apartment. I'll bet you you'll find my laptop there.

CLEA

Sure, just break into her apartment. Why can't you do it, Casper?

PARKER

I don't have a body. I can't write the book for you. But I can haunt the shit out of you until you do.

CLEA

No!

PARKER

Oh yes, don't think I won't. I've got nothing but time.

Parker smirks at her.

PARKER (CONT'D)

We're gonna be bigger than Fifty Shades of Grey!

And just like that, he winks out of existence.

CLEA
(to the air)
I didn't say I was going to do
this, Parker!

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

An exhausted Clea takes in Parker's upper-middle class parents, MR. & MRS. MORTENSON (50's), seated across from Richard and Ms. Chung.

MRS. MORTENSON
The police are saying most likely
his murderer sent the Tweet?

MS. CHUNG
They think he didn't log out the
last time he was online. If they
can trace the IP address it brings
us closer to finding who is
responsible. I want you to know,
we'll do everything to help the
detectives solve this crime.

MR. MORTENSON
He loved it here.

MRS. MORTENSON
His writing had gotten really good.
He sent us a chapter of something
he was working on.

MR. MORTENSON
It was so unlike anything he'd
written before. Emotional, you
know? And mature. It was about an
elderly gay couple. One of the two
men had Alzheimers...

Clea shoots Richard a look.

MRS. MORTENSON
He was practically in tears.

MR. MORTENSON
No I wasn't.

Mrs. Mortenson touches Mr. Mortenson's hand.

MRS. MORTENSON
Yes you were, bunny.

RICHARD

I'm so sorry. I can't imagine how hard this must be for you.

MRS. MORTENSON

Parker's sister was abducted when they were at the playground. He was seven. She was never found. Growing up, Parker felt responsible. He really struggled with that.

MR. MORTENSON

And now they're both gone.

Clea reels. This is a part of Parker's life he never wrote about.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - LAWN - DAY

STUDENTS watch as WORKERS dig a hole for the memorial tree.

Clea and Richard eat lunch under a mature Oak as they mull over what they've heard.

CLEA

Parker was writing about you and Terry. How flattering for you.

RICHARD

This is the first I've heard of it.
(sarcastic)
The world has been grievously deprived of a literary masterpiece given his work was on that stolen laptop.

CLEA

He used Dropbox.

RICHARD

Drop what?

CLEA

He stored all his files in the cloud. His novel is still there.

RICHARD

Can you access it?

CLEA

I could ask him for his password.

Richard shoots her a look. She laughs it off.

RICHARD

If Dropbox existed in John Kennedy
Toole's day *Confederacy of Dunces*
would have been lost to the cloud.

CLEA

(offers him a bite)
Care for some Drunken Parsnip
Strudel?

RICHARD

Revolting.

Clea wraps up her left-overs.

CLEA

I still have no idea what to say
for the boy genius's memorial.

RICHARD

Use poetry as filler.

CLEA

Ugh. Poetry. It's like a doily made
of words.

RICHARD

Well, I'm sure we have a book of
Anne Brontë's verse in the library.

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - LIBRARY - LATER

Afternoon light streams through the art-glass windows. Clea
whispers to Kristina on her phone as she searches the
shelves.

CLEA

I'm onto you, Kristina. You have
ulterior motives.

KRISTINA

It's just a massage. On me!

CLEA

(surrendering)
Fine. I'll see you in a couple of
hours.

Clea hangs up and opens a volume of Anne Brontë's poems. She
finds an ancient POLAROID of a HAIRY ASS tucked into the
pages.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Ew, god!

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - BASEMENT - LATER

Clea heads to the vending machine. She notices a door to the old chapel is slightly ajar.

She spots a subtle sweep of greenish light under the door.

CLEA

Parker? Is that you?

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Clea lights her way with her phone.

CLEA

What's your Dropbox password?

She stops at life-size Virgin Mary -- eyes upward, crystallin tears.

SUDDENLY A FIGURE LOOMS NEXT TO HER!

Stumbling, thumping -- a box of transcripts falls over.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Ahh!

Vice Dean Dan steps into the light. He looks woozy -- like maybe he's had a few cocktails.

DAN

What is wrong with you?

Clea notices a copier propped open revealing the green glow from its scanner. A box of SHREDED DOCUMENTS sits nearby.

CLEA

There's a copier in here?

DAN

It's for administrative use only.
If you don't mind, I have some
urgent work to finish down here.

Dan blocks her from getting a look at the transcripts on the copier. She can see he is copying PARKER MORTENSON'S FILE.

CLEA

Thanks for telling Detective Wilson that I wanted to kill Parker.

DAN

He asked me directly if I'd heard anyone threaten --

CLEA

Oh come on, I was being hyperbolic.

DAN

I only know what I heard.

CLEA

What is it that you actually do Dan? I've been here nine years and I'm still not sure what a Vice Dean of Academic Affairs is.

Dan gives her a look and moves in close.

DAN

Well Clea, I'm responsible for tracking the faculty at Atlantic College to make sure they meet the requirements of this school.

Dan is inches from Clea.

DAN (CONT'D)

Like regular publication.

(a beat)

Once a faculty member has exhausted all deadlines, extensions and sad, personal pleas from their department chairs, it's my job to see they are promptly and properly dismissed from their position.

Dan smiles.

DAN (CONT'D)

As a matter of fact, I've had your paperwork prepared for months.

CLEA

Why do you hate me so much? What did I ever do to you?

DAN

I read your novel. You got lucky once and have been dining out on it ever since.

Clea thinks, then-

CLEA
I got a book deal.

DAN
Really?
(suspicious)
It would have to be verifiable and
with a major publishing house, of
course.

Off Clea's look - what has she gotten herself into?

INT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - CLEA'S OFFICE - DAY

Clea takes a deep breath, speaks into her phone.

CLEA
Hi Arthur. I'm sending you the
signed contract now. I'll have a
book proposal for you next week.

Clea hangs up, hits SEND on an email to her editor Arthur.

CLEA (CONT'D)
Okay Parker, you win. I'll break
into Susan's apartment.

She searches through the student database and finds Susan's
schedule. It's 2:00PM and Susan has classes until 5:00PM.

She looks up Susan's address: **2311 N.E. Thompson Street. #10.**

I/E - CLEA'S CAR / APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Clea pulls up to 2311 N.E. Thomsson Street.

SIRI
*You have arrived at your
destination.*

Clea looks around. This neighborhood looks like a location
from *The Wire*.

CLEA
Cripes.

She reaches into her backseat and grabs the CROSSFIT HOODIE
her sister gave her and regretfully puts it on.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Clea stands in front of the run down apartment building. She flips up the hood on her hoodie, daring herself to go inside.

A DRUG DEALER in Baltimore Ravens gear calls out to her from the trash cans.

DRUG DEALER

Hey white lady. You looking for Tina?

CLEA

No, thank you.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Televisions at full volume, mysterious carpet stains, slamming doors -- and best of all, screaming babies. Clea slips down the hall toward Susan's apartment. She knocks, darts around the corner and watches. No answer.

Her heart races. She has no idea what she's doing but she's doing it.

Filled with adrenaline, she slinks back and looks under the mat then feels along the top of the door frame -- nothing.

She looks: there's a window leading to a fire escape.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Clea cautiously makes her way out onto the fire escape and peeks into Susan's apartment.

She tries the window -- it's painted shut.

But then it gives. Then a little more. One last shove and BAM! The window flies open and Clea falls through and into the darkened room.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. SUSAN'S STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Clea searches the small studio for any sign of the laptop. She checks drawers, under the dresser, between the mattress. Opens a drawer in the bed side table, finds only condoms.

Clea turns to the desk, looks under piles of papers. She bumps the mouse and Susan's desktop computer springs to life.

Susan hasn't signed out of Gmail. Clea considers this.

Clea searches Susan's email for "Parker Mortenson." There's a ton of communication, obviously.

She looks around Susan's desk and spots a FLASH DRIVE shaped like an octopus tentacle. She inserts the drive and exports the emails into the wriggling tentacle drive.

She hears a clicking at the door. Fuck!

Looking about frantically she dives under the bed just as the front door swings open.

She hears footsteps. From under the bed she can see a MAN'S LEGS walking toward the closet.

The legs move toward the bathroom.

Clea notices a pair of SMALL BEADY EYES staring at her -- right next to her face! She stifles a gasp.

It's a LARGE PET TORTOISE who has hidden under the bed. The tortoise stares at her.

SUDDENLY the mattress flips away!

It's Detective Wilson. He has his gun trained on her.

DETECTIVE WILSON

Are you crazy?

CLEA

Susan's on campus right now. I scheduled an appointment with her so while she was out I could break in and look for the missing laptop.

DETECTIVE WILSON

You thought that was a good idea?

(off her silence)

Did you find Parker's laptop?

CLEA
No. I was looking at her email --
seeing if there was anything
threatening...

They pause to watch the tortoise drag himself toward a carrot
laying on the floor.

He holsters his gun, pulls her up and pats her down.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Do you have a lawyer?

CLEA
I have a publishing attorney.

Detective Wilson scoffs. He looks around the apartment --
moves to the computer.

He types something into the search bar.

CLEA (CONT'D)
Isn't it illegal for you to be in
here without a search warrant?

DETECTIVE WILSON
No. I was stopping a crime.
Breaking and entering. Anything I
find now can be used as evidence
for Parker's case.

Detective Wilson has his back to her as he scrolls through
Susan's emails. Clea considers making a run for it.

CLEA
You saw me come in here?

DETECTIVE WILSON
Yeah, Susan's my primary suspect. I
have her under surveillance.
Clearly you're not a mystery writer
or you'd have figured that out.

CLEA
I don't really do genre. Unless you
consider modern anxiety a genre.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Why are you trying to investigate
this? It's not like you're really a
suspect. Or at least you weren't.

He's found what he's looking for in the emails.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

Here we go...

Clea peeks over his shoulder at the screen:

"im not paying for lucys aborton. prolly som other dudes anyway."

CLEA

It's just like her short story.

(a beat)

God, look at those typos.

He scrolls down to Susan's reply:

"Parker, you really think I'm going to let you get away with this? You're going to pay. One way or another."

He ejects the tentacle flash drive and pockets it.

He takes out HANDCUFFS. Clea freaks out a little.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Oh no, no, no. Really? Look I'm not a flight risk or whatever. You asked me out for a drink -- not because you think I'm guilty.

He thinks for a moment.

DETECTIVE WILSON

That was before all this -- now I don't know what to think.

She stares at him intensely. A little scared, kinda' sexy.

In an frenzy they're at each other, kissing, urgent. He peels off her coat. Clea kicks off her shoes.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

This is not a very enlightened choice.

CLEA

The worst.

They fall back on Susan's bed, kissing as they shed clothes.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Wait!

Clea reaches for Susan's bed side table, grabs at a condom and tosses it to him. He tears open the wrapping.

They stare into each other's eyes, going at it like two wounded animals.

Clea's eyes glaze -- it's been ages. She looks over Detective Wilson's thrusting shoulder. Parker watches, smiles.

Clea shuts her eyes as she and Detective Wilson climax and collapse in a heap.

LATER:

Clea's arm hangs off the bed lazily stroking the tortoise.

She and Detective Wilson snuggle under Susan's comforter.

DETECTIVE WILSON

You are on this path now.

He rolls over, fishes his phone out of his jacket pocket. He scrolls through some photos, shows her one.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

This is what happened to Parker.

Clea takes the phone. We get a flash of a GRUESOME CRIME SCENE PHOTO. Hair -- blood -- Parker's beauty even in death.

DETECTIVE WILSON (CONT'D)

The person who did this is still out there. If they think you're on to them, they might do the same to you. I need you to remember it's life and death now.

Yeah, Parker was a piece of shit but -- this is mortality. It's all so real for her in this moment. Clea begins to cry.

CLEA

It all just kind of hit me at once.
I've been having an intense week.

The flood gates are open. Detective Wilson scrutinizes her reaction. He grabs a tissue from the bedside table.

Gradually Clea pulls herself together. Blows her nose.

DETECTIVE WILSON

We better get out of here before Susan gets back.

(a beat)

She probably would be weirded out to find us in her bed.

INT. SPA ENVY - NIGHT

Kristina, face peering through the doughnut of a massage table, moans in ecstasy.

KRISTINA
That's perfect. Right there.

We rise up to reveal hands on her back, working a knot.

KRISTINA (CONT'D)
I wanted you to meet my sister, but
now I'm glad she flaked.

The hands are attached to arms featuring a familiar AK47, forearm tattoo.

DWAYNE (O.S.)
Let me know if you want me to go
harder, Kristina.

Kristina flips over, her towel slipping off. She faces Dwayne in his tight Spa-Envy Tee.

KRISTINA
I definitely want you to go harder.

As they kiss we track over to Dwayne's gym bag -- through the open zipper and inside the darkness to reveal a distinctive laser-etched, MacBook Air. PARKER'S MAC BOOK AIR.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - LAWN - DUSK

A SAPLING, roots in burlap, stands -- waiting to be planted.

STUDENTS have gathered on the lawn. Parker's Family sits on folding chairs.

Clea speaks from the podium. She can see Detective Wilson at the back of the gathering, observing.

CLEA
...I'm reminded today of the words
of the poet Anne Brontë: *Nothing is
lost that Thou didst give, Nothing
destroyed that Thou hast done.*

Clea stops with her prepared eulogy.

CLEA (CONT'D)

(a beat)

The fact is, while I taught Parker,
I didn't really know him.

Richard peers at her over the top of his sunglasses. Ms. Chung's high heels sink into the soil as she shifts.

CLEA (CONT'D)

And, now all we have are his words.
His many, many words.

A few chuckles from the audience. Uhn Hwa arrives and takes a seat next to Matt. She whispers something in his ear then gently intertwines her fingers with his.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Which tell us quite a bit if we had
bothered to look closely. His
writing was confident in a way that
was maddening.

(a beat)

And, enviable.

Clea clocks Dan edging his way closer to the OPEN BAR, hands trembling. Detective Wilson also takes note of this.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Parker's characters displayed no
fear or shame -- so much so that
the absence spoke volumes.

Clea connects with her students as she speaks.

CLEA (CONT'D)

Like everyone else who writes,
intentional or not...

(eyes Susan)

His words were a confession. A
glimpse behind the mask. Who he
really was. What he believed. And,
even what he was capable of.

Clea and Susan hold eye contact for an uncomfortable moment.

CLEA (CONT'D)

So, wherever you are Parker, you
had the courage to face the blank
page and shout your truth to the
world... By any means necessary.

EXT. ATLANTIC COLLEGE - FICTION BUILDING - NIGHT

Clea stands at the top of the steps, looking out over the campus. The memorial tree glows in the light of a single spotlight on the now deserted lawn.

Detective Wilson steps out of the shadows.

DETECTIVE WILSON
Hey. Nice job.

CLEA
Most of it was true-- well, true-ish.

DETECTIVE WILSON
I need you to do something for me.

CLEA
Sure-

DETECTIVE WILSON
Parker never graduated from high school so I don't exactly understand how he got into college. I need you to get me his transcripts. The ones he used with his application.

Clea thinks, smiles.

CLEA
Dan. Dan let him in. Yeah, I can get that for you.

They share an awkward moment, like they might kiss.

CLEA (CONT'D)
I'm not going to tell anyone anything about us. And I'm not going to stalk you, Detective Wilson.

DETECTIVE WILSON
I wasn't worried.
(adding)
I try to grasp all things lightly and detach from expectations.
(as he walks away)
And, you can call me Tom. I mean, we have had "relations" already.

Clea looks around to make sure no one has heard. She grins.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clea throws her boxed wine in the trash. She opens up a pricey Barolo.

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clea flips open her laptop.

CLEA
Okay, let's do this.

Her fingers begin racing across the keyboard.

CLEA (V.O.)
Parker Mortenson was the kind of student who makes a teacher reconsider whether or not they can stomach the whole underpaid endeavor for another academic year.

Clea adjusts her glasses, continues.

CLEA (V.O.)
I learn something from all my students. Oddly, I learn more from the bad ones than I do the good.

We arc around her to reveal Parker looking over her shoulder.

CLEA (V.O.)
Parker, for all his faults, is teaching me to discover my necessary, inner ego-maniac. Or put more humbly, self-confidence.

PARKER
Oh my God, you're writing again.
(leaning in)
And, you're writing about me?
Awesome! See, I told you I am your favorite.

CLEA
Shut up, Parker.

PARKER
You're totally going to become super famous because of me. I'm flattered and jealous!

Parker looks over her shoulder.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 Endeavor has an "A."

Clea turns, looks at him, incredulous.

CLEA
 So now that you're dead you know
 how to spell?

PARKER
 I knew it! You want it all back. A
 Vanity Fair profile, a book tour, a
 movie deal. Hey, Channing Tatum
 could play me and... and Judy Dench
 could play you!

Clea guffaws.

PARKER (CONT'D)
 It's all happening!
 (realizing)
 Oohh! You can use my Twitter feed
 to generate publicity for the book!

CLEA
 How about you take a break from
 ghosting me for the night, Parker.
 (placating)
 Writer to writer, you're disrupting
 my flow.

Parker gets it. Nods and falls back into the shadows as we
 pull back from Clea typing away.

INT. RICHARD'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Richard kisses Terry good night, turns and takes his glasses
 off and rests them on the night stand in front of a black and
 white PHOTO of a baby in the arms of a nun- a nun who wears
 the same habit as Sister Wendy.

There's a connection there, but what?

INT. DETECTIVE WILSON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Incense burning, Detective Wilson sits at his desk browsing
 for new television on Amazon.com. His cell phone rings.

DETECTIVE WILSON
 Detective Wilson.

CALLER (V.O.)

Tom, I think you need to come down to the lab. We found something odd concerning Parker Mortenson's car.

DETECTIVE WILSON

I'll be right there.

Detective Wilson grabs his jacket and exits.

INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Wearing pajamas, Susan sits in front of her desktop ominously deleting all the emails between her and Parker.

SUSAN

Goodbye, asshole.

She turns off the computer and slides into bed.

Suddenly, she reaches down to the bottom of her sheets and pulls out an open condom packet. What the hell?

INT. CLEA'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

It's nearly three in the morning. Exhausted, Clea closes her laptop. It's been a long time since she's written into the wee hours. Maybe a little murder was just what she needed?

INT. CLEA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Clea opens her medicine cabinet, takes out an Ambien bottle and starts to take off the cap. She reconsiders and returns it to the shelf.

Clea exits the bathroom, leaving the medicine cabinet open. We slowly push in on a bottle of expensive cologne on the shelf -- men's Vetiver.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE