

CYDNEY

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&

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Based on, and featuring the poem "Naive"  
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Draft 5 (Revised)  
10/27/20

META 2020

CYDNEY

\*

1 INT. CAFE - DAY

1

CU. CYDNEY WHITE (twenties). Vigorously marking on printed words. She's proofreading an essay like it's for the President.

\*

BEN (O.S.)

Done?

She looks up to BEN (also twenties), the kind of college kid who's failing college and knows it too.

\*

CYDNEY

Sorry, yeah. Almost.

\*

BEN

Nah it's cool. You can just email that me when you're done. How much do I owe you?

\*

\*

\*

CYDNEY

Ah... forty... right, we said forty?

\*

\*

BEN

Thought we said thirty?

\*

Beat. Cydney gives in (She's too nice not to).

CYDNEY

Thirty's fine.

Ben searches his wallet. Pulls out a twenty.

BEN

This is all I got. Sorry.

CYDNEY

You can give me the extra ten later.

BEN

Yeah ah you'll probably have to remind me. Sorry. I never paid my ex back either for half the shit she bought me.

\*

\*

CYDNEY

...It's okay.

\*

\*

(CONTINUED)

1

CONTINUED:

1

Cydney goes back to editing the essay. Ben looks off.  
 Passes his time. Cydney glances at him. Checks him out.

CYDNEY

I um... I like your... um...

Ben looks at her weird.

CYDNEY

Your... hair.

BEN

My hair...?

CYDNEY

Well no I didn't mean it like... I  
 just thought I'd... I like your...  
 shirt. That's what I meant.  
 Shirt...

Cydney smiles it off.

BEN

Oh my shirt -- I gotcha.  
 Yeah no I was like hair --  
 I didn't even fully do my  
 hair today -- what are you  
 talking about --

CYDNEY

Yeah no sorry that just  
 came out wrong I totally  
 meant shirt --

BEN

Hey I gotta bounce here in a sec,  
 so ah... you sure this will get an  
 A?

CYDNEY

Oh. Um... yeah. Yeah, no totally I  
 mean if not, I can-I can just redo  
 it, it's fine.

BEN

Alright, cool. Thanks. See you....  
 when I see you.

Ben leaves immediately. Cydney sits there. Defeated.

**TITLE CARD: C Y D N E Y**

2

EXT. MASS STREET - LAWRENCE - DAY

2

VARIOUS CUTS of Cydney rushing down Mass Street. Waiting  
 at stoplights, crossing streets, walking passed shops.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

Cautiously taking selfies on her phone. Stalking Ben on Instagram. \*

She gets a call from her mom. She lets it ring. \*

She's quiet every bit as smart, and innocent as much as beautiful... just nobody's bothered to notice.

3 INT. KITCHEN - THE HOUSE - DAY 3

Cydney walks in to see her two roommates ALEXIS and MARY KATE (both twenties, sassy) arguing. They ignore Cydney. \*

ALEXIS \*

PLEASE. You're not his type.

MARY KATE

Wanna bet?

ALEXIS \*

He got the whole Tau Omega house kicked out last semester. Wanna bet?

MARY KATE

(counts her fingers,)

He's liked five of my posts, AND \*

he asked me if I'll be at the Bull tonight. Oh, and the last five girls he's been with? All blondes. \*

WANNA BET? \*

ALEXIS \*

You are SO into yourself.

MARY KATE

And you're SUCH a complainer. No \*

wonder the last one dropped you. \*

ALEXIS MARY KATE

Fine, I'll find a rebound (mocking,)

tonight. Oh I'll find a rebound \*

tonight

They break into laughter. And then they see Cydney...

ALEXIS \*

What?

CYDNEY

Nothing. Hi.

(CONTINUED)

MARY KATE

You need something?

CYDNEY

Um... no. No, I just...

ALEXIS

Oh. Cydney, I Venmo-ed you this month's rent. It's only half, but if you can cover me this month, I'll get you next month? Promise.

CYDNEY

Ah...

ALEXIS

What?

CYDNEY

No... it's just... I mean it's cool and all but -- I paid half yours last month too.

ALEXIS

I know. I'm sorry. I had to cut down at work because of school. Plus, I go out a lot so... like... shit adds up.

MARY KATE

Hey Cyd. Mind cleaning up the kitchen tonight too? We're kinda busy. Plus, the inspection's tomorrow.

Beat. Cydney can't say anything but:

CYDNEY

Um... Yeah I could probably do that.

MARY KATE

Thanks. Oh, and we're out of milk and eggs... also thank you!

CYDNEY

Oh... okay.

ALEXIS

Alright we need to get ready for tonight.

CYDNEY

Where are you guys going?

MARY KATE

The D-Chi's are having a party.

CYDNEY

Oh. Can I... um... can I come?

Beat. Mary Kate and Alexis exchange looks. \*

CYDNEY

I mean -- like -- if that's okay. \*

ALEXIS \*

Ah... I don't know... \*

MARY KATE

Yeeeeeaaahh I don't know if you would know anybody there.

CYDNEY

I know you guys.

MARY KATE

I don't know, 'cause like we're not really in Greek Life, so... it would just be weird if we...

ALEXIS \*

Yeah, sorry. I don't think it's open invite.

CYDNEY

No worries. Have fun.

Cydney heads down the hallway of the house. Mary Kate and Alexis start whispering: \*

MARY KATE

Did she really just ask that?

EMMA

Like we ever were gonna take her...

MARY KATE

She doesn't even drink

ALEXIS \*

Or smoke

MARY KATE

It just -- it'd be so awkward having her there --

(CONTINUED)

- 3 CONTINUED: (3) 3
- Their whispers continue. PAN OVER to the corner of the hallway to see CYDNEY behind the wall. Listening in. She's hurt, but she covers it up well, and chugs along to -- \*
- 4 INT. CYDNEY'S ROOM - THE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUED 4
- Cydney comes into her room. Throws her purse on her bed. And then there's a knock at the door. \*
- MARY KATE (O.S.)  
Hey Cyd since you're home can you drive us tonight?
- CUT TO
- 5 EXT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT 5
- CYDNEY'S CAR pulls up to a ROWDY FRAT HOUSE.
- 6 INT. CYDNEY'S CAR - NIGHT 6
- Cydney parks. Mary Kate and Alexis get ready to leave. \*
- ALEXIS  
Thanks so much Cyd! \*
- MARY KATE  
Thanks, we'll call you if we need a ride back!
- Before Cydney can answer, they both are out the door. She looks off. CUT TO
- 7 INT. CYDNEY'S ROOM - THE HOUSE - NIGHT 7
- Cydney is at her desk, studying on her laptop. She gets a text from her mom: **Call me ASAP. I'm seeing too much spending on your account.** \*
- Cydney is annoyed by the text. Beat. She shuts her laptop. CUT TO \*
- INSERT CUTS: Cydney grabs a top. Puts it on. Brushes make-up on her. Grabs lipgloss and paints it on her lips. Straightens her hair, and finally... \*

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

She checks herself in the mirror. And even though she may not believe it a hundred percent... She looks pretty fucking gorgeous.

INT. THE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cydney goes for the door. She sees a JUUL on the side table. The initials say A.G. on it. She grabs it. She leaves.

\*

\*

8 EXT. THE BULL - NIGHT

8

Cydney shows up to The Bull. She sees the long line of people ahead of her. She waits for a beat. Not knowing how to go about this.

\*

And now she sees it. A long line of people. All in groups -- probably all friends with each other too. She stands there solitarily. Reconsiders.

\*

9 EXT. MASS STREET - LAWRENCE - NIGHT

9

MONTAGE. Cydney walks down Mass. Alone. She passes by various spots -- THE GRANADA, BURGER STAND, LIBERTY HALL, and so much more.

\*

Cydney continues her stroll down the street. Coming up on her left, she sees a GUY sitting on a bench. She stops in front of him, recognizing him, but she can't be sure.

\*

CYDNEY

Vin?

The guy looks up from his phone. Instantly recognizing her.

VIN

Cydney?

\*

CYDNEY

What are you doing here?

VIN

I got stood up.

(beat)

You meant why am I here like as in... right. I transferred. Last semester.

(CONTINUED)



CYDNEY

Small world.

VIN

That's Lawrence though, right?

Beat.

VIN

Sit.

Cydney proceeds to sit beside him. A long beat follows.

VIN

Hi.

CYDNEY

Hey.

They laugh the awkwardness off. Beat.

CYDNEY

Still an English major?

VIN

(nods)

Mhm. Focusing on poetry though now.

CYDNEY

Oh, how could I forget.

(then)

Why'd you transfer?

VIN

Better program. Plus... mom passed away in January. Dad needed somebody close by, so you know...

\*

CYDNEY

I heard. I'm sorry.

(then)

I'm really sorry. I didn't know.

VIN

How would you? You disappeared.

\*

CYDNEY

I moved.

\*

\*

VIN

Did you move your friends away too?

\*

\*

\*

9

CONTINUED: (2)

9

Beat. Cydney doesn't know what to say. She knows he's right.

\*

\*

VIN

\*

You go back home a lot?

CYDNEY

(shrugs)

For breaks and stuff, yeah, but not all the time.

\*

(beat)

Just with my parents and all... couldn't really do it anymore. Feel like... I just needed to get away.

\*

\*

Beat.

VIN

Everything okay?

\*

CYDNEY

...Yeah. Why?

VIN

Nothing.

\*

(beat)

You look really pretty tonight

Cyd is too shy to say thanks. She only nods along.

\*

VIN

So what are you up to?

\*

CYDNEY

Huh?

VIN

Out here on Mass all alone... Are you waiting on any friends or..?

\*

\*

Beat.

CYDNEY

No. I... don't really have any.

Vin nods. A bit surprised. But also not.

CYDNEY

What's wrong?

(CONTINUED)

VIN

Nothing. You just seem different now. More quiet. More kept.

CYDNEY

(shrugs)

Everybody changes... I guess.

\*

Beat. And now Cydney gathers herself.

CYDNEY

Hey I should um... I should get going. It was nice seeing you, Vin.

\*

VIN

You too. Take care.

Cydney rises to leave. Begins to walk away. She then stops. then turns back --

CYDNEY

Vin?

VIN

(rises)

Yeah?

CYDNEY

I'm sorry I left.

And now slowly, but *super* spontaneously, She heads back over to him and hugs him, completely desperate on her part, but he understands it in all measures.

\*

\*

Vin softly releases and holds a look with her. They are inches apart.

\*

VIN

It's okay Cyd...

\*

He slips a folded up piece of paper into her pocket, to which she does not notice.

He backs away from her. Grabs his backpack off the bench and then walks the opposite way, retreating down the street...

INT. VIN'S CAR - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Vin and Cydney (younger, in their high school years) are sitting across from one another.

\*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIN

Okay, catch this. "Life is but  
meandering, we keep... enduring"  
There.

\*

CYDNEY

Okay Rob Frost, chill out.

VIN

What? It has MEANING.

CYDNEY

Yep. Sure does.

VIN

I'm going to write you  
something spectacular  
someday. Just wait.

CYDNEY

Ah-huh. No, yeah I'll be  
right there.

\*

Beat.

VIN

So... you going to homecoming with  
Jack?

CYDNEY

I mean, it's not really for sure  
yet, but yeah -- I guess he's  
planning on asking me.

VIN

And you're cool with that?

CYDNEY

Yeah. Why?

\*

VIN

Nothing.

CYDNEY

Why, did you wanna go with me?

\*

VIN

Who? Me? Asking YOU? What  
are you talking about? Who  
would even say that?

CYDNEY

Oh wow okay you're SO funny  
--

\*

CYDNEY

So what? You think I'm just going  
with Jack because I'm the shy geek  
who'll say yes to anyone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VIN

No. I'm afraid that's what he  
thinks, though.

\*  
\*

CYDNEY

Your point..?

Beat.

VIN

I'm just saying never sell  
yourself short. Because you're  
pretty great.

\*

HOLD ON CYDNEY...

CUT TO

10 INT. THE HAWK - NIGHT 10

LOUD PARTYING. Music blaring. Cydney pushes her way  
through strangers and claustrophobia.. Both scared and  
determined. She stops. Looks around.

\*

11 INT. BOOM-BOOM ROOM - THE HAWK - NIGHT 11

Cydney walks around the boom-boom. Lights flash over her  
face. She's lost. It's like she doesn't belong here. At  
all. CUT TO

\*

She takes a few shots. Forces herself to swallow each  
one. HARD CUT TO

12 EXT. TENNESEE STREET - NIGHT 12

Cydney is on her knees, puking on the street. Ben comes  
up to her.

\*

BEN

Hey -- Hey Cydney you okay?

Cydney rises to see Ben. Her eyes widen. *Oh shit!*

CYDNEY

Ben --

BEN

You good?

CYDNEY

What --

(CONTINUED)

12

CONTINUED:

12

BEN

I said are you good? You need a  
ride home or something? --

\*  
\*

CYDNEY

No! No I....

She stops. Dips down. Pukes again. Ben looks off.

CYDNEY

I'm fine. I promise. I just gotta  
get home.

\*

BEN

You sure you don't need a ride, I  
can --

CYDNEY

Ben. Tell you what, keep the extra  
ten for that essay, Just don't  
tell anyone you saw me here. Okay?  
Cool. Thanks. Bye!

\*

Cydney dashes off. Ben is so confused.

BEN

Wha -- hold up -- Cydney!

\*

He stands there. Looks down at her puke. Chuckles.  
Then...

He sees something. He bends down. We're CLOSE ON The JUUL  
she left behind. He picks it up. And then looks ahead to  
see Cydney running off, and disappearing into the  
blackness of the night. BLACK. OUT

\*

13

INT. CYDNEY'S ROOM - THE HOUSE - MORNING

13

Cydney wakes up. She checks her phone. Sees a text from  
her Mom that reads:

\*

**MOM: Call me when you're up. Checked grades this morning.  
You got 91/100 on biochem test. You can do better!**

\*

Cydney tosses her phone aside.

14

INT. THE HOUSE - DAY

14

Cydney is washing the dishes. Mary Kate is on her phone.

\*

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED:

14

There's a knock on the door. Alexis answers. It's Ben.  
She looks at him, annoyed.

ALEXIS

What the fuck.

Ben barges in passed Alexis.

BEN

(barges in,)

I know. I almost didn't come.

Ben looks to Cydney. She shuts the sink nozzle. Puts the dishes down.

CYDNEY

What are you doing here?

Ben holds up the Juul. Cyd looks off.

ALEXIS

Wow seriously -- so what else did you keep from when we were dating?

BEN

(to Cydney,)

You left it last night.

ALEXIS

WHAT THE FU-- Cydney did you sleep with my EX?!?

MARY KATE

FUUUUUUUCCKK.

BEN

(Yo, chill)

I was paying her to write my ethics essay.

Cydney hates everything that is going on right now.

ALEXIS

You don't even smoke why the hell would you steal my Juul?

Beat. Ben offers the juul to over to Cydney.

BEN

Go for it.

ON CYDNEY. Somehow, with whatever faith she has left, she takes the Juul and INHALES. Beat. HOLD. And then...

(CONTINUED)

14

CONTINUED: (2)

14

She coughs. HARD. It's kinda gross.

Mary Kate and Alexis can't help but laugh pitifully. Ben smirks and looks off.

BEN

(mouths)

Wow...

Ben now turns and leaves.

MARY KATE

(cracking up)

Absolute classic.

ALEXIS

You can keep that now, by the way.

Cydney's pissed. She chucks the vape behind her and exits the house --

15

EXT. DRIVEWAY - THE HOUSE - MORNING

15

Cydney comes out after Ben --

CYDNEY

What was that all about?

Ben turns.

BEN

What was what --

CYDNEY

What do you mean "what" you made me look like a fucking joke in there.

Beat. Ben comes toward her.

BEN

Hey you knew I was dating her, right..? I mean... you had to have known.

Beat. Cydney struggles to admit...

CYDNEY

Yeah. I did.

Beat. Ben studies her.



15

CONTINUED:

15

CYDNEY

What?

\*

\*

BEN

Nothing.

\*

CYDNEY

So what did you just show up so I  
can cough in your face and you get  
to laugh at me?

BEN

Hold up. I laughed..? Or they did?

\*

Cydney doesn't answer.

BEN

That's what I thought.

\*

(then)

\*

Bye Cydney.

\*

Ben leaves. Cydney stands there. She gets another text  
from her mom: **I need you to stop ignoring me. Come home  
NOW.**

\*

\*

\*

16

INT. CYDNEY'S BATHROOM - THE HOUSE - DAY

16

Cydney comes in and shuts the door. She stands against  
the wall. She cries. Breaking down.

\*

Beat. She gathers herself.

She now feels something in her pocket. She pulls out the  
folded paper that Vin gave her. Unfolds it. Reads it.

It's a poem titled "Naive."

And now Cydney looks directly into us. Something arising  
within her. A feeling. A change, moreover.

ANGLE IN - Cydney turns to herself in the mirror. As she  
speaks, she grows more CONFIDENT... more RUTHLESS.

(CONTINUED)

16

CONTINUED:

16

CYDNEY

*I'm just one of the rest of them,  
 A cog in the machine,  
 The only difference is I know I  
 don't belong,  
 I know everything is how it seems,  
 I ponder existence more than  
 ordinary teens,  
 I wonder why we do what we do,  
 Why do we exist in facades,  
 And then cry at the collapse of  
 our rather poorly constructed  
 mirage and still do it over again.  
 We don't learn from our mistakes,  
 Are we mistakes?*

This altered version of Cydney in the mirror smiles coldly. It's both scary and riveting.

She immediately snaps and looks away from the mirror. Unsure of where any of that just came from, but a bit frightened by what she's just experienced....

...BUT SHE SMILES. She chuckles at herself. She liked it.

17

INT. KITCHEN - THE HOUSE - MORNING

17

Cydney comes into the kitchen, on her way to the door. \*  
 Mary Kate and Alexis are standing around the counter. \*

MARY KATE

(coughs)

Slut. \*

ALEXIS

Tell me about it... \*

Cydney stops. She turns around. \*

CYDNEY

You know what? I didn't sleep with Ben. But man, I wish I did. \*  
 Would've made the PERFECT story post -- maybe something like "Yooo pray for me, my roommate's ex who I write papers for just hit me up. Might fuck around!

(laughs)

I mean c'mon -- people on the gram would LOVE it.

(CONTINUED)

ALEXIS

Get a life, Cydney.

\*

CYDNEY

Oh I have one. Which -- Hey you know what I also have? A HOUSE. Guess it's gonna be great when I call the landlord telling him guess who can't pay all their rent this month...

\*

(then)

Yikes.

\*

MARY KATE

You're unreal.

CYDNEY

Oh and don't let me exclude you. So like wanna know something funny? I heard you rushed both years and got cut.

MARY KATE

No you didn't.

CYDNEY

Oh yes I did. Wanna know who told me?

MARY KATE

No one told --

CYDNEY

Yeah, let's try GRACE -- you know GRACE WILSON -- from my anthro lecture who just so happened to be working recruitment when she had to stalk the ONE AND ONLY MARY KATE DOWNEY for rush week? Wonder how they wanted to break it to you -- "Oh so sorry MK we can't accept you this year because you're fake just like your FUCKING FACE.

\*

\*

\*

\*

MARY KATE

Fuck you, Cydney.

CYDNEY

You too, girlie. I mean, who else would do it for you?

\*

CUT TO Cydney leaves. The door shuts. It's dead silent.

17 CONTINUED: (2) 17

ALEXIS \*

I wanna cry. Is that bad? I think  
I need to cry.

Alexis is stunned. Mary Kate rushes over to the sink and  
pukes hideously. \*

19 INT. CYDNEY'S CAR - LATER 19\*

Cydney is driving in the country. \*

20 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - LAWRENCE - DAY 20\*

Cydney parks her car. Exits. She stands there. Looking at  
the endless road ahead of her leading to who knows where. \*  
Beat. She breathes in the moment. And now she feels \*  
something... something instinctual. She starts to jog... \*  
and then run... and she keeps running. "Guts" by \*  
Augustine plays.

We're running alongside Cydney as she goes swiftly down \*  
the road, letting whatever that's happening to her \*  
overtake her. We're not sure what, but it makes her \*  
smile, and FILLS her with joy.

She continues to run. We go CLOSE ON her eyes. They are \*  
awakened. They are happy. They are FREE... AND SO IS SHE. \*

**CUT TO BLACK**

THE END