

EXT. HP CAFE - BRICK WALL - DAY

SMITH slams BRUCEY against the wall. Heavy breaths escape his throat. Brucey throws his hands up immediately.

MAX, in her usual chef's outfit - slacks, apron, et al - steps out of a door to the back area of her cafe.

She takes in the scene more with exhaustion than concern.

MAX
Hey. Hey hey hey.

She strolls over. Smith doesn't do anything except keep Brucey pinned against the wall.

Max puts a hand on his shoulder.

MAX
Nope.

Smith offers her an injured look. She shakes her head. He lets Brucey go and storms into the door she came out of.

Brucey and Max avoid looking at each other until he's gone.

BRUCEY
Fuck.

MAX
Wuddup that nonsense?

BRUCEY
It's on me. For sure.

She looks at him without blinking. It compels him into a nervous chatter.

BRUCEY
Totally on me. I wasn't thinking.
Such an ass. I forgot who I was
shooting the shit with for a sec and
mentioned how brutal it is to have
lunch with Sasha these days and I --

Max's eyes open like a jolt of electric anger passed through her. She keeps her lips pressed tightly closed.

She whips him with a dish towel. Brucey looks at the ground.

BRUCEY
I know, I know. Shit.

MAX

Yeah. Shit.

They do everything they can to avoid eye contact. Max whips the dish towel over her shoulder. But stays where she is.

They take, hold, and exhale deep, long breaths. Brucey shakes off the moment.

BRUCEY

You gonna call your sister or what?

Max moves her eyes to his without moving her head. Her lips purse closed again. Brucey looks away first.

INT. POSH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Thin lines of sunlight find a way to creep through cracks in the closed curtains. The light has an underwater quality.

A layer of disarray covers the room. A few blankets hang off different parts of the couch. Glasses cover a few surfaces.

The door CREAKS open. Max pokes her head in.

MAX

Hey. Yello?

She lets herself all the way in. A brown paper bag from her cafe hangs from her hand.

MAX

Sash?

A previously motionless lump of blankets and pillows rustles on the couch. Max forces herself not to jolt.

A hand emerges and knocks the blankets apart. SASHA'S face emerges, half asleep. Her eyes remain closed.

SASHA

(Barely audible)

Did I lose the key again?

Max freezes her body completely. Sasha's face emerges more and more from the blankets.

MAX

Are you sleeping? I can leave the bag in the kitchen.

Sasha's eyes open. It takes what feels like hours. There's clearly a lot of effort involved for her.

As soon as they're open all the way, they're completely alert. She pushes herself upright.

SASHA

Jeez. Max. I thought we were having lunch. Right?

MAX

Yeah. Um.

She holds up the bag.

SASHA

It's massively lunch time, isn't it?

Some of the tension leaves Max's body.

MAX

Massively.

She steps further into the room. Sasha looks down at her pajamas and fuzzy socks.

SASHA

Farts. Wait here. I'll be right back.

She gets up and pads out of the room, trailing a blanket behind her. Max exhales the rest of her tension.

EXT. POSH APARTMENT - DECK - DAY

Sasha takes a huge bite of food. She chews with relish. Every move of her jaw is slow and deliberate.

She fucking loves it. They sit on a deck with an insane view of Highland Park. She wears a well loved dress.

Hole in the armpit. Missing button. That kind of thing. She chews some more. Her eyes shoot to Max's. Max watches.

Sasha's done chewing. An apologetic look crosses her face. She lifts a bowl to her lips and spits out the chewed food.

It's a familiar, dainty move. No food gets on her chin or spills on the table. She touches a napkin to her lips.

Her mouth opens and she gulps down some much needed air.

SASHA
Fuck that tastes good.

The table is full of boxes from Max's cafe. To the brim. It looks like she brought the whole menu.

MAX
Brand new. Not even on the menu yet.

SASHA
But it will be, right? It has to be. Really. I'm afraid I have to insist.

MAX
Yeah, it'll be on there. You didn't have to get spruced up, by the way.

She looks down at Sasha's dress. Sasha shrugs and opens another box. Her eyes light up.

Before she reaches for the food inside she glances at the bowl. Then at Max.

SASHA
You don't have to sit here for this part. I know how nasty it is.

Max doesn't bat an eyelash.

MAX
Pffft. Do you know how nasty food is before you turn it into a meal? You ever seen a days worth of raw chicken? It's foul.

Sasha smiles.

SASHA
Tell me you didn't just call a bunch of raw chicken "fowl."

MAX
What? Oh. Right. Sheesh.

SASHA
It really doesn't bother you?

She indicates the bowl.

MAX
Nah.

Sasha takes about a second and a half to believe her. She bites into the next item tootsweet.

Max watches as she enjoys the bite and spits it out. She wasn't lying. It doesn't phase her at all.

MAX

It doesn't drive your brain nuts to chew and not swallow like that?

Sasha shrugs.

SASHA

Other things drive me nuttier these days. Obvi.

MAX

Right. Sorry.

Sasha shoots her a look.

SASHA

Oh. No, not like death and junk. I meant things like not being able to use keys because my fingertips hurt. Or this asshole right here.

She pulls her dress aside. There's a round plastic cap with tubes coming out of it embedded in her chest.

It's a HICKMAN LINE for peripheral nutrition.

MAX

Rough. Does it itch?

SASHA

No, but I never don't feel it, you know? It's always just...there.

She zones out. Max lets her. Sasha touches the skin directly around the Hickman, careful not to touch the line itself.

SASHA

(Softly)

Stupid shit.

She looks at Max with a far away smile.

SASHA

Let's get out of here. I feel all jittery and weird.

MAX

Uh...

SASHA

Two seconds.

She hurries out. Max rubs the bridge of her nose. She closes the boxes and grabs the bowl of chewed up food.

She carries the lot in to the apartment.

EXT. FIGUEROA AVENUE - DAY

The two walk at a leisurely pace. Sasha wears a dopey oversized Christmas sweater. And still looks cold.

They stroll past the shops without a second glance. The HP Cafe looms in the distance in front of them.

MAX

So you dug the food?

SASHA

Oh my god, yes. The flavor profile was insane. You're like a wizard.

MAX

Not according to Yelp these days.

SASHA

Fuck Yelp. All anyone ever gripes about is the wait. And not understanding counter service, for some reason. Like it's some mysterious ritual you invented to confuse them.

She stops in front of a vintage clothing store.

SASHA

Come on.

She links her arm in Max's and steers her into the store.

INT. VINTAGE CLOTHING STORE - CHANGING AREA

Sasha stands in a small area with an open curtain. She has a stack of dresses piled at her feet.

She tries them on over her clothes. Rapid fire, one after another, with but a quick glance at herself in the mirror.

SASHA

How dumb is it that spending money I don't have on shit I don't need is one of the only things that makes me feel human these days?

Max flips through work emails on her phone. She's terrific at splitting her attention.

MAX

Makes sense to me.

Sasha shows off a yellow dress. She lifts a green one for Max to hold. Max looks down at it.

MAX

Not your color.

SASHA

Poo, you say.

She studies the dress for a moment longer than the others and snatches it back. She tosses it in one of two piles.

SASHA

How's Smith?

MAX

OK. He flew off the handle at Bruce this morning. Bruce was cool with it.

Sasha steps out in her own clothes.

SASHA

My poor little idiot. He's having a harder time with the cancer than I am. Which is adorable.

MAX

And kind of fucked.

SASHA

Come on. He's been amazing and you know it.

She tries on a different dress.

SASHA

He also told me about a little somethin' somethin' you had going for a minute with some hot little vixen. A first camera assistant, perhaps?

Max reflexively buries her face in her phone, embarrassed.

MAX

Nope. Nope, nope, nope.

SASHA

He said the next day you were more relaxed than he'd ever seen you before. Ev. Er. She must have been great with her hands.

MAX

And moving on...

Sasha grabs a pile of dresses.

SASHA

OK. Talked to Ellie yet?

Max tenses up. She's pissed but doesn't want to show a friend with cancer that she's pissed.

SASHA

What? She's awesome too.

Max walks away with naught but a clenched jaw.

SASHA

You're both awesome!

EXT. POSH APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Max escorts a sagging Sasha to the front door. A pile of boxes sits with a signed slip taped to the top.

Sasha is a few steps behind Max. She doesn't see the boxes.

MAX

OK. You good?

Sasha leans on the railing to catch her breath.

SASHA

Yeah. Just. You'll hang out with me a bit, right? At least until I fall asleep? Penny's on set until late and I won't bring up your sister or one night stands. Promise.

Max reaches to help her up the last couple steps.

MAX
I'll hang for a few.

Sasha makes it to the landing and see's the boxes.

SASHA
Ooo. Soups on.

INT. POSH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Max leans on the arm of the couch. Sasha opens and unloads the boxes. It takes it out of her.

The first box contains medical supplies. Bandages, syringes, things of that nature.

The second box contains a cooler. Sasha manages to get the tape off and slumps back without removing whats inside.

It's IV bags full of a white fluid - Total Parenteral Nutrition (TPN.)

MAX
That's your grub?

Sasha nods. Her cheeks are red. She's winded.

MAX
It goes in the fridge?

Sasha nods. Her body is stiff and awkward. Like she's forcing it to be still. Her lips are pressed closed.

Max makes an efficient pile of all the boxes and the TPN and carries them in to the kitchen.

The second she's out of sight Sasha spits out a breath. Her whole body trembles. Her teeth chatter.

A sad expression crosses her face. She's been through this before. She tries to will her body to stop shaking.

She can't. She grabs the heaviest blanket and cocoons herself in it until only her face is visible.

Her teeth chatter on. Her eyes shoot to her phone. She knows she's going to have to use it. But she doesn't want to.

She looks at the bag of clothes. Then over at the kitchen.

INT. POSH APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Max puts the TPN in the fridge. While she's in there she does some rearranging. She can't help herself.

She closes the door and looks at the pictures on the fridge. Sasha smiles in all of them, even the ones where she's sick.

A METALLIC CLATTER sounds. She walks into the -

INT. POSH APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

- where Sasha tries to pick up a lipstick she dropped on the floor. She's shaking too badly to manage it.

Max takes in her state and freezes. Sasha shoots her a knowing look. Her lips are blue.

She pauses after every "OK" to let Max absorb what she's explaining to her - so Max doesn't lose it.

SASHA

Don't freak out. OK? I have a fever. It's happened before. I already called 911, so it's totally fine. OK? Just. Wait with me until the ambulance comes. OK? And give me a hand with this.

She motions at a makeup bag on the coffee table.

MAX

(Shaky)

You're. You're putting on makeup for the paramedics?

SASHA

Duh. Some of those boys are super fit. For real.

She offers a weak, clattering smile. Max doesn't react.

SASHA

Just help me, OK?

Max nods but stays where she is. Sasha makes a grand gesture of being unable to reach the makeup.

Even though she really can't reach the makeup. Max snaps in to action. She perches on the coffee table.

She picks up the lipstick. Her hand shakes something terrible when she holds it in front of Sasha's mouth.

SASHA

Jeez. Do you have a fever too?

Max looks down and takes a huge breath. She doesn't exhale it. Her hand stops moving.

SASHA

Breathe, dummy.

Max exhales. Her still hand applies the lipstick.

SASHA

And for the record, I get spruced up for myself. Because it's something I liked doing before...before-before.

Max looks her in the eyes. Sasha's teeth clatter more and more. Her eyes are alert and expressive. Max nods.

She puts makeup on Sasha. SIRENS breach the silence. They're still off in the distance.

Max continues. Sasha snakes a hand out of the blanket and grabs Max's wrist.

SASHA

I'm not going to die, you know.

They look at each other, both knowing that if they start crying they'll never stop. Max puts the makeup down.

MAX

I know.

The SIRENS get closer and closer.

CUT TO BLACK: