

KATE ALLEN IS GETTING A LIFE

by

Linda Stuart

Never give up your dreams...

KATE (V.O.)

My name is Kate Allen, and I'm a writer.
One of the world's next great novelists.

OPENING TITLES MONTAGE SET TO JENNY ORENSTEIN'S SONG "ASTROTURF"

INT. - RESTAURANT - DAY

Kate is at the take-out counter on her cell phone.

KATE

Hi, Miss Arden? This is Kate Allen
in Los Angeles and I sent you my
book, DEATH METROPOLITAN STYLE, a few
weeks ago. I was hoping we could...
What? It's not for your list? Well,
I was hoping that we could at least talk
about it because... I see. No, I
understand. Thanks for taking a look.
Ok. Bye.

Disappointed, Kate ends the call, and throws the cell phone in
her purse.

INT. GAP STORE - DAY

Kate is looking at clothes while talking on her cell phone.

KATE

Hey, Suzanne. How was my meeting?
I'll tell you how my meeting went.
This editor called my book snarky.
He said it has a certain snarky
insouciance. No, that's not good!
Well, maybe in someone else's life
Anyway, I gotta go.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Kate is walking down the street talking on her cell phone.

KATE

Simon and Schuster? Yes, will you transfer me to Alan Finston in hardcover fiction? Well, I don't know him personally, but... No, I don't have a literary agent right now, but I... What do you mean you don't accept unsolicited material? That is so... Hello?! Hello?!

END OPENING TITLES.

INT. LITERARY OFFICE - DAY

Kate is meeting with PIPPA (50s), a stylish literary editor.

PIPPA

Call me Pippa.

KATE

Okay...Pippa. What I'm saying is that you're absolutely right. My book *isn't* easy to categorize, but that's what makes it so unique.

PIPPA

Well, that may be, but it's very... what is the word... unusual.

KATE

What's wrong with that?

PIPPA

I put unusual on the map in this business.

KATE

True. And that's exactly why-

PIPPA

I set the literary world on fire with unusual.

KATE

That's precisely what my book is. Unusual.

PIPPA

I'm sick of unusual.

KATE

What?

PIPPA

What I want is a big, fat slab of usual. For the masses.

KATE

The masses.

PIPPA

The stressed-out soccer mom who throws her husband down the stairs.

KATE

Pippa-

PIPPA

The college football coach who runs buck naked across the field, screaming obscenities.

KATE

Okay, but-

PIPPA

Good, solid Americana. Bring me some of that and we'll talk. But you're good. Keep writing.

KATE

Yeah. Keep writing.

Kate walks out.

EXT. KATE'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

From lights that seem to sprout from the ivy, a greenish glow is cast on a woodsy Hollywood Hills bungalow, a 1940s relic from which the sound of typing is heard through an open window.

INT. KATE'S BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

An artsy space with wood floors and vintage, mismatched furniture. Kate Allen types on an old black Smith Corona typewriter.

KATE (V.O.)

She enviously recalled Hubbell Gardner, the Robert Redford character in *The Way We Were*. "Everything came too easily to him." How opposite this was from her own life.

Kate types furiously while gripping an unlit cigarette between her teeth. Crumpled balls of paper are everywhere.

JOE (O.S)

Kate. Kate. Kate!

KATE (V.O.)

And though he was only a cinematic fabrication of utter perfection, she wanted to rip his pretty little head off. Death. Metropolitan Style.

Kate looks up to find JOE KINBERG (20s-early 30s), her handsome, gay roommate looking sleepy in his T-shirt and sweatpants.

JOE

Must you type incessantly? I know that's a rhetorical question.

KATE

(theatrical British accent)
Yes, I must type, Joseph, you incorrigible cad.

JOE

And you're smoking again?

Kate pulls the cigarette out of her mouth to show it's unlit.

KATE

Joe, I'm in character.

(British accent)

Harriet P. Winstead. A lovely British socialite. Smokes like a chimney.

JOE

It's four in the morning. Use my laptop. It's quieter.

KATE

Dorothy Parker didn't use a laptop. Nor will I.

JOE

Yeah, well, I'm on no sleep. No sleep. And if Rip doesn't get his 7 hours, he's like a zombie bumping into walls.

KATE

Rip's staying over again? He should start paying rent.

JOE

That reminds me. The rent's going up again. \$100 bucks.

KATE

Again?! They can't do that!

JOE

They're doin' it.

KATE

I'm calling the board of landlords... or what ever it is.

JOE

It's a cruel world, my friend. A cruel world.

Kate looks worried as Joe heads back to his room.

EXT. BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Establish the bookstore on the 3rd Street Promenade in Santa Monica.

INT. BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSTORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Kate is behind the information desk on the telephone.

KATE

No, "Tales of The City" is by
Armistead Maupin. You're thinking
of "A Tale of Two Cities." Dickens.

(reciting from memory)

"It was the best of times, it was
the worst of times, it was the age
of wisdom..." Yes, I'll put it on
hold.

SUZANNE (O.S.)

Hey.

Kate hangs up the phone and turns to find her best friend/co-
worker SUZANNE PARKER (20s), a cool, pretty drummer in a rock
band.

KATE

Oh my god, she makes an appearance.

They hug.

SUZANNE

Man, the gig went great last night.
(she drums on the counter)
Someone said a record industry dude
was there. Yeah!

Kate masks her jealousy.

KATE

Cool.

SUZANNE

Stacks?

INT. BOOK STACKS - CONTINUOUS

Kate and Suzanne are shelving books from a cart.

KATE

Oh, and my rent's going up again. Now I have to ask my parents for money.

SUZANNE

You can move in with me.

KATE

Suzanne, you practically live in a closet. And we should not live together.

SUZANNE

Why not?

KATE

Because we'd end up hating each other, and then I'd lose my best friend.

Beat.

SUZANNE

Agreed.

Suzanne drums on a coffee table book as MR. STERLING (50s), the stuffy manager, approaches.

STERLING

You're tardy, Miss Parker, and that is a book, not a bongo drum.

SUZANNE

Yes, Mr. Sterling.

STERLING

Now, you know our motto, ladies. Shelve! Shelve!

He looks accusingly at Kate.

STERLING (CONT'D)

Miss Allen, where is your name tag?

KATE

You know, I've been thinking about that Mr. Sterling, and as the assistant manager I-

STERLING

Yes, as the assistant manager, it is your duty to proudly display that moniker on your tag.

KATE

But with all due respect, Mr. Sterling, I view a name tag as a blatant display of conformity and an ironic loss of identity.

STERLING

You're skating on thin ice, Miss Allen. Thin ice, indeed. Now go to the front desk and get a tag.

KATE

Okay.

Mr. Sterling walks away as Kate and Suzanne share a smile.

Walking toward them is TRACY REDSTONE (20s-early 30s). Beautiful. Blonde. Bitchy.

TRACY

Why, if it isn't Kate Allen!
Hi! How are you?!

KATE

And if it isn't Tracy Redstone!

Phony kisses in the air.

TRACY

Well, I'm about to be Mrs. Tom Caine.

(shows engagement ring)

He's a neurosurgeon resident at Cedars-Sinai. My little Snookie.

KATE
Your Snookie? What the--

KATE
The ring looks fake.

TRACY
Shut up.

KATE
You shut up!

TRACY
You shut up!

TRACY (CONT'D)
You're just jealous, Kate.

KATE
Yeah, right.

TRACY (CONT'D)
You've always wanted what I have
since second grade.

KATE
Get real.

TRACY
Then you lost for homecoming queen
and I took home the crown. Poor
Kate. You tried so hard.

KATE
No, I didn't.

TRACY
You ran yourself ragged! Oh, but
who cares about that now? So!
Are coming to the reunion?

KATE
What reunion?

TRACY

The Beverly Hills High School "*What Are We Doing With Our Lives?*" reunion. Isn't that cute? I'm chairing the alumni committee. I'm sure I sent you invitations.

KATE

Why would I go to a reunion with people I literally hide from when I see them on the street?

TRACY

Because it's part of our high school history. A part of our lives we'll cherish forever. You have to be there.

KATE

I don't know. Maybe.

TRACY

Poor Kate. Still struggling. Working in a bookstore.

KATE

I'm practically running the store.

TRACY

This is like an after-school job. You haven't even evolved since high school.

That stings Kate. HARD.

KATE

Why, what're you...

TRACY

I run my own interior design firm. We just did Gwyneth Paltrow's house. So beautiful. I cried.

KATE

(insecure)

Oh.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Look at you, Kate. How pathetic.
No wonder you won't come to the
reunion.

KATE

You bet I'm going to the reunion.
Be afraid, Redstone! Be very afraid!

Tracy starts walking away.

TRACY

You're a loser, Kate. A failure!

KATE

Oh, yeah?! Well, you're...! You're...!

Tracy sneers and walks away. She takes one look back at Kate,
and turns away in a huff.

KATE

(to herself)

Right.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

Kate is having lunch with her AUNT BUNNY (50s), a stylishly
handsome, flamboyant woman who gives Kate an envelope.

AUNT BUNNY

Don't tell your mother.

KATE

Thanks, Aunt Bunny.

AUNT BUNNY

My fashion line is worth millions.
What else am I going to do with the
money? Give it to Diane von
Furstenberg?

KATE

You're the best.

AUNT BUNNY

I was going to mail the check, but I wanted to speak with you in person.

Kate knows what's coming.

KATE

Oh, here we go.

AUNT BUNNY

I'm worried about you, dear. In the prime of your life, and not a romantic prospect in sight.

KATE

I've told you. I don't want a boyfriend.

AUNT BUNNY

You should be out in the world, darling! Meeting men! Dating! Thinking about marriage!

KATE

Marriage?! I barely even like people.

AUNT BUNNY

(sing-song)

Okay, if that's the way you want it!

She slips the check out of Kate's hand.

KATE

What're you doing?

AUNT BUNNY

You may have the check on one condition.

KATE

Don't tell me.

AUNT BUNNY

I met a man at a fundraiser I think you'll adore.

KATE

Of course.

AUNT BUNNY

Divorced but eligible. Great looking.
Brilliant. Considerate.

KATE

Oh, perfect. A Boy Scout. What's
his name?

AUNT BUNNY

Michael.

KATE

Michael who?

AUNT BUNNY

(barely audible)

Hosebaum.

KATE

What?

AUNT BUNNY

Hosebaum.

Kate bursts out laughing.

KATE

Hosebaum? Michael Hosebaum?
What kind of name is that?!

AUNT BUNNY

He's gorgeous corporate finance
executive.

KATE

Corporate finance?!

AUNT BUNNY

Trust me, will you? I know what I'm
doing.

KATE

What about the last guy you set me up
with? He started weeping at dinner.
Literally weeping.

AUNT BUNNY

Kate, his parakeet flew out the window into the path of an oncoming train.

KATE

The paramedics took him out on a stretcher.

AUNT BUNNY

Well, I just refuse to stand idly by and let my niece become an old maid.

KATE

Alright. I'll go.

AUNT BUNNY

Thank you.

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

An emotional mess, Kate is watching SCHINDLER'S LIST on television while eating from a bag of doughnuts. Then she picks up the phone and makes a call.

KATE

Suze? I'm in trouble.

EXT. KATE'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Suzanne drives up in her black Mini to find a tearful Kate waiting outside.

SUZANNE

Geez, you look like a poster child.

Kate smiles faintly and gets in the car.

CUT TO:

Kate and Suzanne talk in the car.

SUZANNE

So what if you're struggling? That's the beauty of being an artist. Look at me.

KATE

But I'm failing at everything.

SUZANNE

You are not.

KATE

You're just saying that to keep me from killing myself.

SUZANNE

Cut the suicide crap. You always use that as a manipulative tool.

KATE

And you don't have sympathy for anything I'm going through.

SUZANNE

Would you stop?

They sit in silence for a time, Kate deep in thought.

Then something changes. You can see it Kate's eyes. Her face. Her posture.

KATE

Suzanne?

SUZANNE

Yeah?

KATE

I've made a decision. A monumental decision.

SUZANNE

You're joining a Hare Krishna cult?

KATE

Now don't freak out when I tell you this.

SUZANNE

You're getting a sex change?

KATE

Brace yourself.

Suzanne buckles her seat belt.

KATE

My life's a mess. I'm broke, and I have no career.

SUZANNE

You say that like it's a bad thing.

KATE

I have decided that I, Kate Allen.... right this very moment...

SUZANNE

Tell me!

KATE

Am officially turning corporate!

Dead silence as Suzanne takes this in.

KATE

Suze?

SUZANNE

AAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!

MUSIC UP! NATALIE MERCHANT'S "WONDER"

Kate tries on business outfits in her bedroom.

Stuck in traffic, Kate applies mascara and lipstick in her car's rearview mirror.

Various shots of tall office buildings. BUSINESS PEOPLE in suits with briefcases, talking on cell phones.

Kate walks on Wilshire Boulevard in a business suit, looking every bit the successful young executive.

But looks are deceiving as Kate meets with a succession of EXECUTIVE RECRUITERS.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

MALE EXECUTIVE

No.

ANOTHER OFFICE

FEMALE EXECUTIVE

I'm sorry.

ANOTHER OFFICE

MALE EXECUTIVE

Get out.

ANOTHER OFFICE

FEMALE EXECUTIVE

No.

KATE

But-

FEMALE EXECUTIVE

I'm calling security.

Kate bursts out of an office building as the heel breaks on her shoe. She kicks off both shoes, slams them in the trash, and charges away in her bare feet.

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

A depressed Kate and spirited Aunt Bunny are having lunch.

KATE

My life is over.

AUNT BUNNY

I could have gotten you into that executive training program. Too bad the company has gone kaput.

KATE

Well, I'll find something.

AUNT BUNNY

In the meantime, I spoke with Michael Hosebaum.

KATE

That was a disaster.

AUNT BUNNY

Kate, he just needs time.

KATE

I'm not interested.

AUNT BUNNY

I suggested you two meet for drinks.

KATE

NO.

AUNT BUNNY

I want to help you, darling.

KATE

Well, that's not helping.

AUNT BUNNY

I'm only trying to-

KATE

Aunt Bunny, I told you. I don't want to date, and I'm one step from having to move back home!

AUNT BUNNY

Then at least let your old aunt enjoy giving you a little shove up the corporate ladder.

Kate sighs. Aunt Bunny is determined.

KATE

Okay. You can help me with the job thing.

AUNT BUNNY

Oh, thank you, dear! You won't be sorry!

Kate's not too sure about that.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER - DAY - ESTABLISH

A magnificently-designed monolith in Century City. On the roof in giant letters: SMITH/COBERLY WORLDWIDE.

BUSINESS PEOPLE enter and exit through a glass revolving door. Among them is Kate, who pushes through the crowd and enters the building.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY WORLDWIDE LOBBY - DAY

A huge, modern lobby with expensive artwork and a steel escalator.

BOBBY (think Hector Elizondo in "Pretty Woman"), a corporate security concierge in a black suit and cap, stands near a long marble desk featuring a row of pretty YOUNG RECEPTIONISTS. On the wall behind them is the company name in big, steel letters.

The lobby bristles with energy this morning as an attractively professional Kate approaches the reception desk.

RECEPTIONIST #1

(into phone)

Smith/Coberly Worldwide.

KATE

Excuse me, I-

RECEPTIONIST #2

(into phone)

Smith/Coberly Worldwide.

KATE

I have an appoint-

RECEPTIONIST #3
(into phone)
Smith/Coberly Worldwide.

KATE
I'm-

RECEPTIONIST #4
(into phone)
Smith/Coberly Worldwide.

KATE
Hellooooo!

RECEPTIONIST #5
(into phone)
Smith/Coberly-

Kate charges away from the desk as-

RECEPTIONIST #1
(O.S.)
Miss! Oh, Miss!

Kate turns back.

RECEPTIONIST #1
May I help you?

KATE
I was standing there for-

RECEPTIONIST #1
Yes, we're terribly busy this morning.
How many I help you?

KATE
I have a meeting with Walter Coberly.

RECEPTIONIST #1
Name?

KATE
Kate Allen.

RECEPTIONIST #1

(consulting a list)

Yes. I'll tell Mr. Coberly's secretary
you're here.

KATE

Thank you.

Kate crosses to a puffy white couch and flips through a magazine. She then adjusts one of her earrings which falls between the couch cushions.

KATE

Shit.

Kate is digging for her earring as the receptionist points her out to MISS BILLINGSLEY (late 50s), Walter Coberly's staunch, matriarchal secretary. With a disapproving glare, Miss Billingsley approaches Kate who is now on her hands and knees, removing the couch cushions to find her earring.

KATE

Where is it?

MISS BILLINGSLEY

Miss Allen.

Kate is flat on the floor, trying to look under the couch.

MISS BILLINGSLEY

Miss Allen.

KATE

Here it is!

MISS BILLINGSLEY

Miss Allen!

KATE

Yes!

Kate shoots up from the floor, putting her earring back on.

KATE

I was just getting my... Well, my earring
fell in the...

MISS BILLINGSLEY
I'm Miss Billingsley, Walter Coberly's
secretary. Follow me to the penthouse.

Kate follows Miss Billingsley to the escalator which seems to stretch a mile long.

KATE
Shouldn't we just take the elevator?

MISS BILLINGSLEY
There are no elevators. Mr. Coberly
doesn't believe in them.

As they ride up the escalator, Kate marvels at the building's stunning architecture, notably a glass ceiling that seems to touch the sky.

INT. PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A sprawling executive suite with amazing views of the city.

MISS BILLINGSLEY
Have a seat and leave the couch intact.
I'll let Mr. Coberly know you're here.

Kate manages a smile.

COBERLY (V.O./INTERCOM)
Miss Billingsley! Miss Billingsley, are
you there?!

MISS BILLINGSLEY
(into intercom)
Yes, sir.

COBERLY (V.O./INTERCOM)
Come in and bring your pad.

MISS BILLINGSLEY
Mr. Coberly, your 9 o'clock is here.
A Miss Allen.

COBERLY (V.O./INTERCOM)
I don't have a 9 o'clock appointment.

MISS BILLINGSLEY

Yes you do, sir. I wrote it in your book.

COBERLY (V.O./INTERCOM)

Then what in heaven's name are you waiting for? Send her in!

MISS BILLINGSLEY

(to Kate)

He's all yours.

They share a look, and Kate enters Coberly's office.

INT. COBERLY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A grand office befitting the founder and CEO of a multibillion-dollar corporation. Behind an impressive desk sits WALTER COBERLY (60s), tough, handsome, robust.

COBERLY

Well, don't just stand there like a deer in headlights! Who are you?

KATE

Kate Allen.

COBERLY

(thinking)

Allen... Allen...

KATE

My aunt, Bunny Evans-

COBERLY

Of course! You're Bun Bun's niece!

KATE

Bun Bun?

COBERLY

Sweet Bun Bun. I kick myself for not marrying her when I had the chance. Well, sit down! Sit down! Now what brings your pretty face here today?

Kate bristles a bit at his apparent chauvinism.

KATE

Didn't my aunt tell you? I'm... here for a job.

COBERLY

Of course she did. I'm not an idiot, Miss Allen. I was testing you.

Kate's a bit put off.

KATE

Oh, well... here's my resume.

She puts her resume on his desk.

COBERLY

Now. What makes you think you're qualified for a job at Smith/Coberly Worldwide?

KATE

Well, I-

COBERLY

Don't answer that yet. Listen! Listening is the key to learning, young lady. Now what is Smith/Coberly Worldwide? With offices from Los Angeles to Japan and a multibillion-dollar operating budget, we're one of the largest, most successful corporations in the world. Computers, toys, hotels, movie theatres, TV and radio stations, advertising...

KATE

(hopeful)

My aunt said you have a publishing division.

COBERLY

Darn right. I started this whole operation from scratch. 25 bucks in my pocket, and enough raw ambition to fill the state of Ohio. My partner, Bernard Smith, God rest his soul... Well, he dreamed big enough for the both of us. (beat) So, you want a job.

KATE

That's right.

COBERLY

Now why should I hire *you*? What can *you* do?

KATE

Well, I know books and I know writers. And if I may be blunt, Mr. Coberly...

COBERLY

No, you may not.

KATE

With all due respect, sir- Yes, I can.

COBERLY

No, you can't.

KATE

Yes, I can.

They're nose to nose across his desk.

COBERLY

No. You. Can't.

KATE

Yes. I. Can.

COBERLY

Who do you think you're talking to?

KATE

This interview is over.

Kate storms to the door when-

COBERLY

You've got balls, young lady.

Kate turns to face Coberly.

KATE

Yes.

COBERLY

Big, steel balls.

They stare each other down.

COBERLY

By God, I love that in a woman!

Kate smiles.

Coberly paces a few times, deep in thought. Kate is hopeful.

COBERLY

All right. Here it is. I'm going to make you my special corporate assistant. I'll show you the ropes of Smith/Coberly Worldwide and work your darn tail off! But it'll be worth it. Play your cards right, and I'll move you to publishing. What do you say to that?

KATE

Well, I'd say that- I want to be the best thing that's ever happened to this company.

It's been years since Coberly has seen this much fire.

COBERLY

You're like me when I was young. Ready to tear the world apart.

Kate smiles.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Now there aren't many rules at Smith/Coberly. You can challenge me on any point. You can tell me to go to hell and I'll respect you for it. But don't ever lie to me, and don't use my company to fatten your wallet on the side. Deal?

KATE

Deal.

COBERLY

Welcome to the team, Allen. I've got a feeling about you.

They shake hands, sharing a smile.

EXT. SMITH/COBERLY WORLDWIDE BUILDING - MORNING - ESTABLISH

Looking terrific in a business suit, Kate pushes her way through throngs of other employees and enters through a revolving door.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY WORLDWIDE LOBBY

One of the receptionists stops Kate as she heads for the escalator.

RECEPTIONIST

Excuse me! Miss?! May I help you?

KATE

I'm Kate Allen. I- work here.

RECEPTIONIST

(checking a list)

Oh, yes. Of course. I'm sorry.
You're in Mr. Broadstreet's old office
on the 23rd floor. That's 2309.

The receptionist turns to BOBBY (30s-40s), the security concierge wearing a black suit and tie.

RECEPTIONIST

Bobby, this is Miss Allen. Would you give her the key to 2309?

BOBBY

Sure will.

Bobby extends his hand to Kate.

BOBBY

I'm Bobby. Welcome to Smith/Coberly Worldwide.

KATE

Thank you, Bobby.

He gives her the key, and she looks up at the multi-flight escalator.

KATE

I have to take the escalator 23 flights?

BOBBY

(smiling)

Better get started.

Kate steps onto the crowded escalator.

BOBBY

Good luck, Miss Allen.

He tips his cap to Kate as she rides up, up, up through the beautiful glass building with views all around.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY 23rd FLOOR OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Many offices with rows of secretarial desks. A lot of busy employees including MAIL BOYS with wheel carts. An abundance of hustle-bustle energy.

Kate walks down a long office corridor, checking numbers as she goes. Coming to 2309, she excitedly opens the door and is shocked.

KATE

Am I on Mars?

It's a tiny, windowless room with a plain desk and chair.

KATE

Who can work in here?

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate sits on the chair, tumbling backwards as Coberly enters.

COBERLY

Allen? Allen! Where are you?

KATE

Down here!

Coberly looks to find Kate on the floor.

COBERLY

What in God's name are you doing on the floor? Get up! We've got a full day ahead of us!

Kate pulls herself up.

KATE

Right.

COBERLY

How do you like your new office?

KATE

It's... Well, it's...

COBERLY

I wouldn't leave my cat in here to be honest with you, but this is all part of your training. Training! That's what it's all about. Starting at the bottom, and then clawing your way up.

KATE

But I can't work like this. I need... windows. And a new chair.

COBERLY

No, you don't. I started with nothing but an old card table and a telephone in my father's garage.

KATE

But-

COBERLY

I have high hopes for you, Allen, but stop the whining. I can't stand it.

Kate grabs a legal pad, and follows Coberly out the door.

KATE (O.S.)

At least give me a new chair.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY ESCALATOR - DAY

Kate and Coberly ride up the escalator with the sun beaming through the expansive glass building.

KATE

Why don't you believe in elevators?

COBERLY

It's not enough to move up in this world. I want to see where I'm going.

KATE

Me, too.

They share a smile.

INT. 32nd FLOOR FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Kate and Coberly step off the escalator, crossing an expansive foyer to the conference room door.

COBERLY

And here it all begins.

He opens the door.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A large gathering of EXECUTIVES mingling loudly, drinking coffee, talking on their cell phones, texting on their Blackberries.

COBERLY

Settle in everyone. We've got a full plate this morning.

They all take their seats.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Now you've all been memoed on this. This is Kate Allen, my new corporate assistant. (to Kate) At the end there is Bill Davenport, Senior Vice President, Smith/Coberly Worldwide

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Computers. Next to him is Nancy Milner,
Senior V.P. of Smith/Coberly Worldwide
Toys. Next is...

LIZA (O.S.)

Liar! Who is she?

MICHAEL (O.S.)

You're paranoid!

LIZA (O.S.)

You promised not to date anyone for
six months!

All the executives get a kick out of this except Coberly.

COBERLY

What in God's name-

MICHAEL (O.S.)

I'm not dating! It was one evening!

LIZA (O.S.)

Ha! It's all you've been talking about!
Who is she?!

Coberly hurls the door open to reveal Michael Hosebaum and his
ex-wife LIZA BACKLER, a striking, highly neurotic corporate
barracuda.

Stunned to see Michael, Kate purposely drops her pen on the
floor and dives under the conference table.

COBERLY

Hosebaum! Backler! What is the
meaning of this?!

Michael and Liza quickly take their seats at the table.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

You work out your problems in divorce
court! Not here!

MICHAEL

(whispers to Liza)
We're through.

LIZA
(whispers)
You enjoy hurting me, don't you?

COBERLY
Enough! Now for our two late
arrivals, this is-
(re: Kate's empty seat)
Now where-

Kate gets up from the floor, holding up her pen.

KATE
I, uh, dropped my-

COBERLY
Kate Allen, my special corporate
assistant.

Kate and Michael lock eyes, then look away. This doesn't go
unnoticed by Liza.

COBERLY
Kate, meet Michael Hosebaum, Executive
Vice President of Smith/Coberly
Worldwide Finance.

KATE/MICHAEL
Hi.

Liza looks suspiciously at both of them.

COBERLY
And Liza Backler, Vice-President of
Smith/Coberly Worldwide Publishing, who
has just returned from a brief, uh-
retreat. I trust you're feeling better?

LIZA
Yes, sir. Much better, thank you.

Liza's right eye twitches. Coberly gives her a strange look.

COBERLY

Good. Let's get down to business. Now I'm happy to report that we've increased overseas production by \$25 billion, and of the \$75 billion in overall sales projected for this year, at least 25% will be generated by new product.

Polite applause from the executives.

COBERLY

Which brings us to this. Smith/Coberly is about to acquire Gotham Publishing.

Murmurs from the executives.

KATE

Gotham Publishing?!

All eyes on Kate, who sinks down in her seat.

KATE

Sorry, I-

COBERLY

Never apologize for unbridled enthusiasm. I take it you're familiar with Gotham?

KATE

Yes, it's-

YOUNG MALE EXECUTIVE

If I may say so, sir, Tagahachi Electronics is ripe for a takeover and looks to be a far superior acquisition to-

This is DAGGETT (20s), a wannabe with bad skin.

COBERLY

Don't tell me my business, Daggett! I've been acquiring companies before your voice changed!

DAGGETT

I'm sure you have, sir, but I've been researching Tagahachi and-

COBERLY

Enough with Tagahachi! If you had read the *Journal* this morning you'd realize that Tagahachi is no longer in play and and Gotham is... Allen?

KATE

The hottest boutique publishing house in New York.

COBERLY

You're darn right it is!

Impressed, Michael smiles at Kate as Liza glares at both of them.

DAGGETT

I- I didn't know.

COBERLY

What kind of operation do you think I'm running here, Daggett? A beanbag factory? Is something in the air this morning? Can anyone tell me?

(to Kate)

Allen, take this down. Debate to dock Daggett.

Daggett looks ill as he runs out of the room.

LIZA

(whispers to Michael)

I saw the way you looked at her.

MICHAEL

(whispering)

I did nothing of the kind.

COBERLY

That's it, I'm separating you. Hosebaum! Get over here and take Daggett's seat!

Michael gathers his legal pad and briefcase and moves into Daggett's seat- right next to Kate. They try to act nonchalant.

COBERLY

May we continue?

Seeing Michael sit next to Kate, Liza's right eye and a corner of her mouth start twitching. Coberly gives her a curious look.

COBERLY

Now let us all join hands.

The executives let out a collective groan, but Kate is unfamiliar with this staff meeting ritual.

COBERLY

Come on. You know the drill.

Like kids in camp, the executives are forced to hold hands around the conference table. When Kate and Michael hold hands, the magic is back immediately, but they avoid each other's eyes.

COBERLY

Let me hear it.

EXECUTIVES

(drearily)

Smith/Coberly Worldwide. Where work-

COBERLY

Come on! Where's your company morale?!

EXECUTIVES

Smith/Coberly Worldwide. Where work is-

COBERLY

I can't hear you!

EXECUTIVES

Smith/Coberly Worldwide! Where work is not a four-letter word!

COBERLY

Excellent! That's our company motto, Allen. I learned it from my father when I was six years-old, chopping tree trunks in the backyard. He said, "Son! Work is not a four-letter word." I've never forgotten it. All right, everyone, back to work. This meeting is adjourned.

The executives start filing out.

COBERLY

Allen! My office! 3.5 minutes!

KATE

Right.

Coberly exits as some executives sneer at Kate.

EXECUTIVE AD-LIBS

Who is she? Where did she come from?
I see her as a threat, don't you?

Kate is about to exit when-

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Kate!

Kate turns and approaches Michael.

KATE

Look, I had no idea you worked here.

MICHAEL

Don't worry. Your aunt told me.

Liza peers in through the door from the hall.

KATE

She always does things like this.

MICHAEL

But I love that you're working here.

KATE

It's ridiculous.

LIZA (O.S.)

I must speak with you, Michael. Now.

Liza comes between Michael and Kate, giving her an icy look.

MICHAEL

Have you two met? Liza Backler, Kate Allen. Kate, this is my ex-wife, Liza.

Liza's eye starts twitching furiously. Michael and Kate look at her strangely.

LIZA

(to Kate)

What are you looking at?

KATE

Nothing.

Smirking, Kate looks away.

MICHAEL

Liza, what's wrong with your eye?

LIZA

(twitching)

Why do you say that?

MICHAEL

Are you all right, Liza? What happened at... Happy Farm?

LIZA

I found inner peace! That's what happened at Happy Farm!

Liza pushes Kate aside and storms out the door.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry you had to see that.

COBERLY (O.S.)

Allen!

Kate jumps.

KATE

I gotta go.

She exits, Michael watching her leave.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Kate runs to the escalator as Liza pops out of a corner.

LIZA

Stay away from my ex-husband.

KATE

What is your problem?

Kate gets on the escalator as Liza screams up to her.

LIZA

Your days are numbered here!
Numbered!

As Liza sees Coberly exit a nearby office...

LIZA

I... I mean lumber! We must go shopping
for lumber!

(to Coberly)

Good morning, sir.

Coberly gives her a bizarre look, and steps onto the escalator.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - DAY

A big corner office with a spectacular view. Michael's at his desk on the phone.

MICHAEL

I don't care. This is a \$30 million-
dollar deal and I'm not going to blow it.

Liza enters, clearly upset. Michael motions for her to have a seat, but she nervously paces.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I'm in New York next week. We'll talk
on Friday and break open the bubbly.
See you then.

Michael hangs up as Liza walks behind his desk, trying to sit in
the chair with him.

MICHAEL

Liza-

LIZA

I want us to start over. Tear up the
divorce papers.

MICHAEL

That is not going to happen.

LIZA

You never consider my feelings.

MICHAEL

What?! I've done nothing *but* consider
your feelings! And what do you do?
Divorce me for Raoul the pool man.

LIZA

I wasn't thinking clearly. I was
emotionally fragile.

MICHAEL

Not fragile enough that you didn't
leave me for a guy who cleans pools
in a leopard-skin thong!

LIZA

Michael.

MICHAEL

How many men promise their ex-wives
not to date for six months?! I refused
to even *look* at another woman, and what
has it gotten me? An alimony suit that
my attorney actually called evil. That's
what he said.

Liza puts her arms around Michael, who squeezes out of her grasp.

LIZA

Oh, Michael, let's not fight.

MICHAEL

Liza, you left me, and I've started to grow a backbone. Now I'm going to say this very clearly and calmly. It's over.

It's all Liza can do to control her mass of facial tics.

LIZA

You can't mean that.

MICHAEL

What's wrong with your face?

LIZA

I don't know what you're talking about.

Michael looks at Liza like she's gone off the deep end.

MICHAEL

Well, going forward, we are strictly business colleagues. Now if you'll excuse me, I have work to do.

Michael gets back to work at his desk, and Liza storms out.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY LOBBY - EVENING

Kate and many other employees are crossing the lobby to the revolving door that exits to the street. Night has fallen, the moon visible through the glass walls.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Kate! Kate!

Kate turns to see Michael jogging up to her.

MICHAEL

Hi.

KATE

Hi.

MICHAEL

I uh- I'm sorry about the other night.

KATE

Forget it.

Kate exits through the revolving door, and Michael follows her onto-

THE SIDEWALK

Kate walks fast with Michael trying to catch up.

MICHAEL

Kate!

KATE

I gotta go.

She keeps walking.

MICHAEL

Kate!

She stops and turns.

MICHAEL

Do you drink beer?

On Kate's smile...

INT. BAR - NIGHT

An upscale watering hole where executives hang out after work. Kate and Michael share a table on bar stools, drinking beer. They're a bit tipsy with their guards down. Flirty.

MICHAEL

Your aunt was right.

KATE

What did she say?

MICHAEL

She said, "There's a girl I want you
to meet I think you'll adore."

Kate smiles

KATE

She said the same thing to me.
Well, you know- About a guy.

MICHAEL

Kate, I blew it with you that first
night, but you knew there was a spark.
(pulls her close)
There still is.

They kiss, but Kate stops, fixing her hair.

KATE

I don't think we should do this.

MICHAEL

I think we should.

He tries to kiss her again.

KATE

I just got that job.

MICHAEL

We'll keep it between us.

KATE

And this is so not my life.

MICHAEL

What isn't?

KATE

Being liked. It's Pavlovian
conditioning. I'm actually
used to rejection.

MICHAEL

Okay, I'll reject and denigrate
you, then take you to dinner.

KATE

Aw. You would do that for me?

They kiss again.

KATE

Michael- I have history of making bad decisions.

MICHAEL

Join the club.

Kate looks at her watch, looks at Michael - torn.

KATE

I- I better not.

She gets up from the table.

MICHAEL

Kate.

KATE

Sorry. I'll see you at the office.

Michael can't quite figure her out as Kate exits the bar.

INT. KATE'S CAR - NIGHT

Kate's driving while talking on her cell phone to Suzanne.

SPLIT SCREEN: Kate in her car/Suzanne in her TINY APARTMENT KITCHEN

Suzanne is cradling the phone on her shoulder while making dinner.

KATE

I mean, what am I doing kissing him in a bar?

SUZANNE

The jerk dumps you before, and then he's coming onto you? What is that?

KATE

I know.

SUZANNE

Hey, want to come over?

KATE

I can't. I have to get up at dawn.

SUZANNE

Dawn?! What're you, on drugs?

KATE

I'm up at dawn every morning now.

SUZANNE

Who *is* this?

KATE

The new Kate Allen.

MUSIC UP: NATALIE MERCHANT'S "WONDER" - MONTAGE

Kate strides with Coberly down an office corridor, taking notes on a legal pad.

Kate's on the phone in her office, typing on a computer.

Kate gives a presentation at an executive meeting. She stands at an easel, pointing to an item on a big poster board. Coberly is impressed, and Liza glares.

Kate speed-walks on the beach.

Kate lunches with Coberly and some MALE EXECUTIVES. She speaks animatedly, throwing her head back in laughter.

Kate gets a splashy new office with a city view.

Kate moves out of her Hollywood bungalow with boxes, hugging Joe goodbye.

Kate moves into a nice, modern apartment with a DOORMAN on the Wilshire Corridor in Westwood.

Kate drives a black BMW convertible down Pacific Coast Highway, her hair blowing.

Kate enters Smith/Coberly Worldwide through the revolving door, her shoulder bag loaded down with papers.

Kate breezes past the security concierge toward the escalator.

KATE

Hi, Bobby.

BOBBY

Miss Allen, don't you ever rest?

KATE

Not if I can help it!

Bobby smiles, shaking his head.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate is working at her desk when Coberly enters.

COBERLY

Okay, here it is. Straight out of the shoot. I'm giving you Gotham Acquisitions.

KATE

You're kid-

COBERLY

Now you'll report to Liza Backler.

Kate bristles at that.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

But I want you in the thick of it. Bringing strong, marketable books into the publishing division.

Kate is floored.

KATE
I'll do a great job.

COBERLY
I know you will.

KATE
Wow.

COBERLY
Now let's get cracking. My office.
7.6 minutes.

KATE
I was going to suggest 7.2. You
know- get a jump on the day.

COBERLY
I like your style, Allen.

Coberly exits, and Kate beams.

INT. COBERLY'S OFFICE SUITE - DAY

Miss Billingsley is typing at her desk as Liza storms past her,
bursting into Coberly's office.

COBERLY
Backler! What is the meaning of this?

LIZA
Why is Kate Allen handling the Simon
manuscript?

COBERLY
Because I assigned it.

LIZA
To me.

COBERLY
I need you on the Matthau project.
That's more important.

LIZA
But I brought in the Simon manuscript.

COBERLY

Don't bother me with this, Backler.
I won't have it.

LIZA

But she's butchered it! She's
hindering the department!

COBERLY

Allen works her darn tail off 16
hours a day!

LIZA

That qualifies her for a promotion?
And I have to wonder why you're
giving this much responsibility
to a first-year editor.

COBERLY

Don't tell me how much responsibility
to delegate in my own company!

LIZA

She's a neophyte.

COBERLY

She knows books like the back of her
hand. She's driven. Hell, she's-
You saw what she did with the Needham
manuscript. Brilliant.

LIZA

She's nowhere near managerial caliber.
You're clearly favoring her, Walter.

COBERLY

And I favored you when I took you into
the Smith/Coberly fold.

LIZA

That was different. You-

COBERLY

Enough! Stop obsessing over
Kate Allen! What you need to do is
bring in a damn good book I can publish.

LIZA

I'm trying.

COBERLY

That's not good enough. DO IT.

LIZA

I will.

COBERLY

Your last book tanked.

Liza's eye and mouth start twitching.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

I want the old Liza Backler. The one who spotted a hit before anyone else. Who schmoozed every lit agent from here to London. Who'd crawl on glass to snag a hot book over the competition. What the hell happened to that Liza Backler?

LIZA

(twitching)

I- I don't know.

COBERLY

Well, get her back! 'Cause I don't know who the hell this Liza Backler is, and quite frankly I have no use for her.

LIZA

What- what are you saying?

COBERLY

I'm saying find me a strong book that Smith/Coberly Publishing can get out in the marketplace. Or... Or I may have to let you go.

LIZA

Please, Walter.

COBERLY

GET. IT. DONE.

LIZA

Y... yes, sir. I'll get it done.

COBERLY

And stop twitching, for godsake!
Go see a doctor!

Liza walks out.

INT. SMITH-COBERLY OFFICE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Liza sprints to her harried secretary PEGGY (50s), who's carrying a big stack of papers.

LIZA

Peggy! Peggy, call my doctor right away!

PEGGY

Which one?

LIZA

Just go down the list. I need a Valium within the hour.

PEGGY

But I put a fresh bottle in the-

LIZA

Just call him, Peggy. Now!

PEGGY

Y...yes, Miss Backler.

Peggy runs frantically down the corridor, spilling papers on the floor.

LIZA

Run, Peggy! Run like the wind!

Teary and desperate, Liza twitches manically.

INT. ROGER'S SECRETARIAL AREA - DAY

Manning the secretarial desk outside Kate's office is ROGER (20s), an endearingly bespectacled, sincere, hardworking klutz. The phone rings, and Roger answers it.

ROGER

Kate Allen's office. Yes, I have it right here.

(reading from a paper)

She is manager of acquisitions, Gotham Publishing Worldwide. You're welcome.

Roger hangs up, and resumes stapling several stacks of paper until the stapler gets stuck.

ROGER

Not again.

He opens the stapler and gets jammed in the finger.

ROGER

Ow!

Roger flings the stapler which crashes through a window. Other SECRETARIES are busy at their desks, ignoring the breaking glass.

KATE (O.S.)

Roger! Can you come in here?!

ROGER

Right away!

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Roger rushes in, trips and falls.

ROGER

I'm sorry, Miss Allen, there was a...a bump in the carpet.

Roger puts his glasses back on, and one of his eyes looks distorted behind a cracked lens.

KATE

Roger, calm down. It's only your first day.

ROGER

Thank you, Miss Allen.

KATE

What I need is... Just a minute.

A fax is coming through.

TO: Kate Allen

FROM: Michael Hosebaum

RE: Dinner tonight?

Kate reads it and smiles. Her phone buzzes, and she picks it up. She can see who's calling on the phone display.

KATE

What do you want, Hosebaum? Alright, I'll meet you there.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kate and Michael share a booth in a cozy French bistro.

MICHAEL

Then I joined the Peace Corps, hopped on a plane, and the next thing I know- I'm cutting sugar cane in the jungles of New Guinea.

KATE

The Peace Corps. You?

MICHAEL

Don't be so surprised.

They move closer.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I'll have you know that I personally roughed the high seas on a Greenpeace inflatable boat to combat whale hunters.

KATE

I don't believe it.

MICHAEL

Savages. Granted, that was at least 12 years ago, and now I admittedly derive intense pleasure from the intricacies of financial mergers, but I have definitely done my share of international altruism.

KATE

Well, I find that very commendable.

Intense - their faces close.

MICHAEL

And the polar bears. Oh, the poor polar bears. Clinging to what's left of the ice caps.

KATE

What is this world coming to?

MICHAEL

I have no idea.

They kiss passionately.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEACH HOUSE - LATER

A modern house with a spiral staircase that leads to a loft.

Kate and Michael are kissing on a big living room couch in front of a patio with an ocean view.

MICHAEL

You're adorable.

KATE

Yeah, right.

MICHAEL

You are.

KATE

You know- I've always had to try so hard... for anything good.

MICHAEL

Well, you can stop trying.

(beat)

Kate, you can have it all. It's right in front of you. Take it.

Another hot kiss.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A large bedroom overlooking the ocean. Kate's asleep, and Michael's already dressed in a business suit as he taps her shoulder.

MICHAEL

Kate. Kate.

She wakes up.

KATE

Hi.

He kisses her.

MICHAEL

Hi. I've got to run.

KATE

Where are you going?

MICHAEL

I have a meeting downtown.

KATE

Now? It's Saturday.

Michael throws files into his briefcase and snaps it closed.

MICHAEL

The Stanton merger's about to fall
apart.

KATE

I'll go with you.

Kate gets out of bed wearing panties and one of Michael's
undershirts.

MICHAEL

My God, you're sexy. But, no.
This I do alone.

KATE

Why?

MICHAEL

Why? Because I don't want you to be
my business sidekick, that's why.

KATE

So I can't go with you?

MICHAEL

No.

KATE

I think you probably need therapy.

MICHAEL

Because I don't want you holding my
hand in a business deal that I courted
for a year? And is now being ripped to
shreds by the worst kind of narcissistic...

KATE

Fine. Go. I shouldn't even be here
anyway.

MICHAEL

Kate—

KATE

What? You think I don't work on Saturdays? Yeah. I work on Saturdays.

MICHAEL

Kate, you're...

KATE

Don't tell me I'm overreacting. I think you have some serious interpersonal issues.

MICHAEL

Me?

KATE

All you do is work! You have no concept of...

Michael's cell phone rings.

MICHAEL

(into phone)

Michael Hosebaum. Well, who told you to give it to the Chinese?! Okay, I'll see you downtown.

Michael snaps his phone shut, and heads for the door with his briefcase.

MICHAEL

Kate, I'll call you.

KATE

Call your therapist! That's who you should be calling!

Michael shoots Kate a look, and exits.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY LOBBY - NIGHT

Weighed down with a shoulder bag stuffed with manuscripts, Kate crosses the lobby and calls out to Bobby, the security concierge.

KATE

'Night, Bobby!

BOBBY

Working late again?

KATE

Yep.

BOBBY

You're going to run this company
some day.

KATE

And the first thing I'll do is
give you a big, fat raise!

Kate is about to walk through the revolving door when she
suddenly remembers...

KATE

Suzanne!

EXT. WHISKY A GO GO ON SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

The marquee reads: THE PROUD WEIRDOS.

INT. WHISKY A GO GO - NIGHT

A rockin' club with a hip crowd. Onstage is an ALL-GIRL BAND
with Suzanne as the drummer.

CLOSE ON SUZANNE

Fiercely playing drums with sweat dripping down her face. She
keeps looking around- for Kate.

INT. KATE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Kate speeds in her black BMW, trying to make it to The Whisky. A
car slows in front of her. Kate honks, banging the steering
wheel.

KATE

Come on! Go!

EXT. WHISKY A GO GO - CONTINUOUS

Kate screeches to a red curb, gets out of her car, and races into the club.

INT. WHISKY A GO GO - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne's band has already finished their set. Looking for Suzanne in the dark, crowded club, Kate approaches a young male CLUB WORKER.

KATE

Excuse me, when did the show end?

CLUB WORKER

About 45 minutes ago.

KATE

Shit. How'd it go?

CLUB WORKER

The Proud Weirdos. They killed, man.

KATE

How was the drummer?

CLUB WORKER

Why? You know her?

KATE

Yeah. Yeah, I do.

Suzanne approaches Kate with an icy glare.

SUZANNE

You missed it.

KATE

Suzanne, I am so sorry.

SUZANNE

We totally rocked. Where were you?

KATE

I had to work. I'm sorry.

SUZANNE

An A&R scout from Geffen was here.
I needed you- cheerin' from the seats.

KATE

I said I'm sorry.

An uncomfortable silence.

SUZANNE

Listen, can we take a walk or
something?

KATE

Uh- sure.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - NIGHT

Kate and Suzanne walk down the busy Sunset Strip.

KATE

I haven't blown you off. I work
like 16 hours a day.

SUZANNE

So that's your whole life? Sitting
behind a desk?

KATE

No. And you're the one who's
chilled out. I invited you to a
party last week. Did you come?

SUZANNE

I'm not going to a yupster party.

KATE

Who cares what kind of party it was?
You could have come.

SUZANNE

What's happening to you?

KATE

Nothing. What's with you?

SUZANNE

Alright, fine. You know what's driving me crazy? I want to know how you can possibly be happy editing other people's writing.

KATE

You just can't stand that I'm growing.

SUZANNE

No, I hate what you're becoming. Because I know it's not you.

KATE

You know what's wrong with you? You have this idealistic version of the artistic struggle. I'm succeeding for the first time in my life.

SUZANNE

You're driving a Beemer with a car phone and a fax machine!

KATE

Oh, so I should keep driving a broken-down car as some sort of statement?

SUZANNE

Look at us. We can't even talk anymore.

KATE

Yes, we can. Can't you just be happy for me?

SUZANNE

Honestly? No. Not like this.

KATE

Very nice.

SUZANNE

You want me to lie? I won't do it.

(beat)

See ya.

Kate is tearful as Suzanne walks away.

INT. ROGER'S SECRETARIAL AREA - NIGHT

As Roger is bent over a filing cabinet, Kate enters in the same clothes from the Whisky.

KATE

You're still here, Roger? It's almost midnight.

ROGER

I was just finishing some filing.

Roger walks with his BACK SEVERELY HUNCHED OVER, looking at the ground.

KATE

Your back's not any better?

ROGER

No, but I'm getting used to it. There's a whole world down here. Oh, look! A dime!

KATE

Thanks for all your hard work.

ROGER

Sure.

Still looking at the ground, Roger bashes his head into the filing cabinet.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY LOBBY - NIGHT

Roger crosses the lobby in a severely hunched position, and passes another SECRETARY.

SECRETARY

Night, Roger.

Roger can't lift his head.

She expects Michael to come after her, but he continues his business call.

MICHAEL (O.S)

No, we are not altering the deal!

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate storms back into his office.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Sid, they're vulnerable to an unsolicited bid.

Kate grabs the phone out of his hand.

KATE

(into phone)

He'll call you back.

Kate slams the phone down.

MICHAEL

Kate! I was in the middle of a deal!

KATE

I haven't heard from you for three days.

MICHAEL

I took the Red Eye to New York, we got snowed in.

KATE

You could have called.

MICHAEL

I'm working!

Stunned silence. Kate is about to storm out when-

MICHAEL

Wait. Please!

KATE

I'm listening.

MICHAEL

Kate, you have to understand. My work is...
It's everything to me.

KATE

That says it all right there.

MICHAEL

I didn't mean it like that.

KATE

I'm outta here.

Kate exits, slamming the door.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Coberly is at the conference table with Kate, Liza, and about 20
other PUBLISHING EXECUTIVES and EDITORS.

COBERLY

Now I've called this publishing
meeting because we have a problem.
We've fallen behind Random House,
Simon & Schuster, Knopf, Doubleday...
all the major houses. That's

COBERLY (CONT'D)

unacceptable. I want a damn salable
book to top our list.

A young male executive, RILEY (20s), offers a suggestion.

RILEY

I gave you that excellent book on dog
grooming.

COBERLY

Dog grooming? What do you do all
day, Riley? I'm talking about a
novel, for godsake!

Riley dejectedly looks down at the table.

COBERLY

Now I'm not necessarily asking for a literary masterpiece. I'm talking salable. Marketable. I want an author we can capitalize on. Someone we can send on tour. Book on talk shows.

LIZA

I'll call Janklow and Nesbit.

COBERLY

Good, Backler.

Another young male executive, THOMPSON, chimes in.

THOMPSON

Excuse me, sir. Janklow and what?

COBERLY

It's a literary agency! Top in the business! Why don't you know that?!

THOMPSON

I... I...

COBERLY

What're you- working at a gas station? No wonder we're behind.

(beat)

Now what about you, Allen?

KATE

I'm having lunch with Tina Blodgett.

COBERLY

Great. Do you know who that is, Thompson?

THOMPSON

Well, I...

COBERLY

Her book, GIRL FABULOUS, is number one on the New York Times' Best Seller list! It's being made into a movie! I can't take it anymore. Go wait in my office.

Nearly in tears, Thompson walks out

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Now here's what I'm offering. A ten-thousand-dollar bonus and senior VP stripes to the editor who brings me a book that Smith/Coberly Worldwide Publishing can use to beat back the competition. I want you to put a fire under this. Get it done. GET. IT. DONE.

The executives just sit there.

COBERLY

NOW!

The executives run out.

IN THE HALL OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE ROOM

Liza menacingly approaches Kate.

LIZA

I'm going to crush you.

KATE

You're insane.

Bubbling with rage, Liza becomes a mass of facial tics.

LIZA

Don't you ever call me that.

KATE

Insane.

Kate walks away as Liza tails her.

LIZA

You better watch your back, Kate.

Kate stops dead.

KATE

Are you threatening me?

LIZA

Somehow you have Walter Coberly wrapped around your finger, and you've entranced my ex-husband. But I'm going to get that bonus, land that promotion, and-

KATE

You'll be selling paperbacks on the street.

Liza sips from a bottle of Perrier, literally frothing at the mouth.

LIZA

I know what Coberly likes. He trusts my taste.

KATE

You watch. I'm going to bring in the book of the year.

Kate walks away.

LIZA

You wouldn't know a good book if it was stuffed down your throat.

Liza exhibits some sort of spasm like Jekyll and Hyde.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate walks into her office to find a bouquet of flowers with a card: "My apology. Michael." Kate rolls her eyes, is about to throw the card in the trash, but puts it on her desk.

INT. ROGER'S SECRETARIAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Michael approaches Roger who's typing with his ARMS STRICK-STRAIGHT. HIS ENTIRE UPPER BODY IS IN A PLASTER CAST.

MICHAEL

Is she in?

Roger holds up a sign that reads "YES."

MICHAEL

What's the matter? Can't you speak?

Roger holds up a card: "NO."

MICHAEL

Why not?

Roger holds up another card: "MY JAWS ARE WIRED SHUT."

MICHAEL

Your jaws are wired shut? I won't even ask.

Michael shakes his head, knocks on Kate's door, and opens it.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate looks up from her desk to find Michael in the doorway.

MICHAEL

I behaved abominably.

KATE

Michael, I really have work to do.

She smiles and shakes her head, sounding just like Michael.

MICHAEL

I always seem to be asking you for second chances.

KATE

I don't want to have this conversation.

MICHAEL

Okay, I admit it. I'm consumed with business.

KATE

Oh, well, that's big news. Michael Hosebaum can't stop working for five minutes and behave like a normal human being. You hide behind your work.

MICHAEL

I want to change.

KATE

Do it. Just don't include me.

MICHAEL

But I want to recapture by inner...
bohemia.

KATE

Michael, you have your socks
ironed.

MICHAEL

And that's going to change.

(beat)

You know, I've been doing a lot of
thinking about our relationship.

KATE

What relationship?

Michael closes the door, leans over Kate, and starts kissing
her.

KATE

Michael don't.

MICHAEL

Let's go away this weekend. No phones.
No work.

KATE

No phone? You'd have to be strapped
down.

MICHAEL

Try me.

He gives Kate a sweet kiss, making her smile. She melts a
little.

KATE

I don't know. I'm on deadline.

MICHAEL

We'll drive up to Napa... stay
at a charming little inn.

He strokes her hair. They lock eyes. He's damn irresistible.

KATE

Well, maybe. I'll see.

Michael heads for the door.

MICHAEL

Think about it. I'll call you.

Kate watches Michael leave, as if studying him.

EXT. THE IVY RESTAURANT - DAY

Kate and TINA BLODGETT (19), a pretty, stylish, confident
author, are lunching on the patio at The Ivy on Robertson.

KATE

So, Tina, as I told you on the phone,
we're looking to add a new book to our
list. Something fresh, imaginative...

TINA

Well, I *am* number one on the New York
Times Best Seller list. GIRL FABULOUS!
Number 1!

KATE

I'm certainly aware of that.

(beat)

And you're what- twenty two?

TINA

Nineteen.

KATE

Nineteen?! How did you-

TINA

I've always been able to write. I'm like a writing machine. I wrote my first poem when I was six, and the teacher put it up on the board for everyone to see.

Kate hates this girl immediately.

KATE.

Cute.

TINA

I write every single day, and just, like- pour my creativity onto the page.

If Kate could strangle her and get away with it, she would.

KATE

Well, that's, like- fabulous.

TINA

My dream is to win the Pulitzer before I'm 25. I'm also going to Radcliffe so I'm, like- totally busy.

KATE

Very sweet.

Kate repeatedly stabs her salad - hard.

TINA

Anyway, I have offers everywhere for my new book, and I wanted to meet with you before making my final decision.

Kate violently twists her napkin - like trying to rip the head off a doll.

KATE

I appreciate that, Tina, and I- I'm sure we can... work out a deal.

TINA

Oh, that would be super! I'll have
my agent call you.

Kate twists her napkin until she snaps it in half, her hand knocking over a glass of water. Tina jumps as water spills all over the table, and there's Kate - her face plastered with a tense, fake smile.

EXT. KATE'S HIGH-RISE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Kate drives up in her black BMW and leaves the car with the valet, lugging her heavy shoulder bag filled with manuscripts and paperwork.

INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Kate enters her sleek, modern apartment, drops her shoulder bag on the floor, and doesn't turn on the light. A big window glitters from street lamps and adjacent high-rises.

Sitting down on the edge of her couch, as if she's a guest in her own home, Kate looks out the window like a sad little girl.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY LOBBY - MORNING

Kate enters through the revolving door, walks across the busy lobby, and approaches Bobby.

KATE

Bobby, can I talk to you?

BOBBY

Sure, Miss Allen.

They go off to the side.

KATE

Bobby- what would you do if you wanted something very much, but then it wasn't what you thought it would be?

BOBBY

Well, I suppose I would think about why I wanted it in the first place.

KATE

And what if getting that something meant you had to give up a part of yourself?

BOBBY

Miss Allen- I notice you don't smile much anymore.

KATE

I don't?

BOBBY

Now I'm just a concierge around here, but I do know one thing. You can have all the money in the world, drive a fancy car... But what good is it if you're not happy?

They share a look.

KATE

Thanks, Bobby.

BOBBY

Any time.

Bobby tips his cap to Kate with a smile.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - DAY

Kate is at her desk. She picks up the phone and makes a call.

KATE

Suzanne, it's me. If you're there, pick up. (beat) I need you.

INT. SUZANNE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne is in her tiny kitchen, listening to Kate's message on an old answering machine.

KATE (O.S.)

There's so much I want to tell you.
I'll come by the store. Call me.

Kate hangs up. Smiling a little, Suzanne is about to call back, but hangs up.

INT. ROGER'S SECRETARIAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Kate exits her office to find Roger typing. There's a large brace around his neck.

KATE

Roger. I'm going out for awhile.
You'll hold down the fort?

ROGER

You got it.

KATE

Thanks.

As Kate exits, Roger opens one of his desk drawers and takes out a pen. Closing the drawer, he accidentally slams it on his hand.

ROGER

OWWW!!!

INT. BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Kate walks into the store and sees Mr. Sterling, who is oddly friendly with a beatific smile.

STERLING

Why, Miss Allen!

KATE

Mr. Sterling. Hello.

STERLING

Well, what brings you back to the trenches?

KATE

I'm looking for Suz-

STERLING

You certainly do look well. I understand you're an executive now.

KATE

That's right.

(beat)

Mr. Sterling, you seem... different.

STERLING

I've learned to love people. Call it a... a spiritual lobotomy of sorts.

KATE

Spiritual lobotomy?

STERLING

I look for love now. Love and joy in every nook and cranny. I observe nature- be it a goat chewing its cud, or a little bunny scampering on a lawn.

Kate starts backing away.

KATE

Well, that's very-

STERLING

Care to join me for a cup of pear nectar? Perhaps some tofu?

KATE

I don't think so.

STERLING

Oh, I took your advice and rented "Invasion of the Body Snatchers." Very enlightening.

KATE

That- that's great. I've, uh- I've gotta go.

STERLING

Of course. Enjoy the store.

Kate is stunned as Mr. Sterling walks away, patting a little BOY on the head.

INT. BARNES & NOBLE MUSIC SECTION - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne is shelving books as Kate tentatively approaches.

KATE

Excuse me, do you have a book on
on the Talking Heads?

Suzanne turns to find Kate. A profound moment as they smile at each other, close to tears.

SUZANNE

I got your message.

KATE

I'm sorry.

SUZANNE

No, I am.

They hug.

KATE

Let's get outta here. Can you take
a break?

EXT. 3RD STREET PROMENADE - DAY

Kate and Suzanne happily walk on the promenade in Santa Monica.

KATE

So what's with Sterling?

SUZANNE

Who knows. It's like working
with Gandhi.

Kate laughs.

SUZANNE

And get this. Me and the band
landed a deal at Geffen.

KATE

No way!

SUZANNE

Well, it's just a demo, but it's
a start.

KATE

It's better than a start! Suzanne!

They hug.

EXT. STARBUCKS - DAY

Kate and Suzanne drink coffee at a patio table on the 3rd Street
Promenade.

KATE

I've become the most disgusting
corporate sellout.

SUZANNE

You have not.

KATE

Yes, I have.

SUZANNE

Alright, you have.

KATE

I keep getting promotions I don't
even want, but if I quit, I'll
be back where I was and have
nothing.

SUZANNE

You know the answer, Kate. Write.

KATE

But I'm creatively paralyzed.

SUZANNE

No, you're not. Start writing.

KATE

And I'm probably making a deal with this 19-year-old author who makes me feel like I'm 90.

SUZANNE

If you don't start writing, I'll have to kill you.

KATE

And unless I do something fast...

SUZANNE

Write!

As if what Kate is about to say is the worst thing in the world...

KATE (CONT'D)

I'm going to be made a senior vice-president!

INT. SMITH/COBERLY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A celebratory meeting for Tina Blodgett, the 19-year-old best-selling author. A mock cover of her new book, *She's So Cool*, is on display with a big photo of Tina. She has the rapt attention of 20 publishing executives as they mingle, laugh, and enjoy some refreshments.

Kate is trying to look happy, but is dying inside. Liza is trying to behave normally.

COBERLY

Okay, everyone. Let's take our seats. I've called this meeting to introduce our newest literary star, Tina Blodgett, a 19-year-old writing sensation whose book, *Totally Laura Ashley*, is #1 on the New York Times Best Seller List. I'm proud to announce that the Gotham Publishing imprint of Smith/Coberly Worldwide is launching Tina's

COBERLY (CONT'D)
new book, *She's So Cool*. Here's the cover
copy: "A brilliantly witty sojourn into the life
of a society debutante in the Hamptons."

Polite applause from the executives as Tina smiles.

COBERLY (CONT'D)
And we have our own Kate Allen to thank
for bringing Tina Blodgett and her
wonderful new book into the Smith/Coberly
Worldwide family.

More polite applause.

COBERLY (CONT'D)
I also want to announce that Kate Allen
is our new senior vice-president of
acquisitions for both Smith/Coberly and
Gotham Publishing. Congratulations.

More applause as Kate forces a smile. Liza viciously chews on
her pen as her right eye twitches.

INT. COBERLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Coberly is at his desk when Kate knocks on the open door.

KATE
Can we talk?

COBERLY
Can we talk. Get in here, Miss
Senior Vice-President! I'm very
proud of you.

KATE
That's actually what I-

COBERLY
Now I can spot talent, but you-
You've come through far beyond my
expectations. And with Backler
on her way out-

KATE

She's leaving?

COBERLY

Well, I'll give her another month, but between you and me, Backler's getting the boot if she doesn't start producing.

(beat)

Now what's on your mind?

KATE

Well, actually, Mr. Coberly, I've- I've come across this other book I think you should read.

COBERLY

Oh? What is it?

KATE

Well, it's from a... a very talented new author who's, uh- Well, she's, um- She's fresh on the literary scene, and, um-

COBERLY

Out with it, Allen! What the hell is wrong with you?! Whose book is it?!

KATE

Well, it's... It's mine.

COBERLY

Yours? I don't understand.

KATE

I never told you this, but...I've always been a writer. I just lost faith in myself.

Coberly closes the door.

COBERLY

Allen. What is the meaning of this?

KATE

I came to Smith/Coberly because I wanted to succeed- and I have. But I'm also a writer. A good one. And at the risk of my job... I want to submit my own book to Gotham Publishing.

Coberly mulls this over for a moment.

COBERLY

No.

KATE

No?

COBERLY

Not just no. Hell no!

KATE

Well, that's not really the answer I-

COBERLY

What do you take me for, Allen? A bumbling idiot?!

KATE

No, I-

COBERLY

I've invested in you, Allen. Big time. I took you under my wing.

KATE

I know, but-

COBERLY

You want to write? Do it on your own time! Or you can clear out of here right now. But if you want to be an executive, then damn well act like one!

KATE

Yes, sir.

Kate exits Coberly's office into-

THE HALL

Kate stands there, wondering if she should cry or smash her fist into a wall. It looks like she's about to cry, but then she pulls herself together, and walks forcefully down the hall.

INT. KATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kate is furiously typing on a computer when the phone rings.

KATE

Hello?

SUZANNE (O.S)

Hey, what're you doing?

KATE

Rewriting.

SUZANNE (O.S)

You're back?

KATE

I'm back.

SUZANNE

YEAH!

MUSIC UP! TRACY CHAPMAN'S "FAST CAR" - MONTAGE

Kate types through the night.

Kate types with a pen in her mouth.

Kate checks some notes on a pad, then starts typing again.

Kate yawns as she types.

Kate keeps typing until dawn, the sun rising through her apartment window.

Drinking coffee in front of her computer, her knees pulled to her chest, Kate reads the final lines of her rewritten novel.

KATE

For *Death Metropolitan Style*, in its own morbidly fashionable way, was actually a new beginning. As she walked up Fifth Avenue, leaving her dead husband splayed out in the foyer of Bergdorf's, she knew then that her life would undergo a profoundly irreversible change.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY LOBBY - DAY

Refreshed and determined, Kate enters through the revolving door, strides across the lobby, and passes Bobby.

BOBBY

How goes it, Miss Allen?

KATE

It's going, Bobby!

INT. LIZA'S OFFICE - DAY

Liza is at her desk when Kate enters, holding a manuscript. Kate takes a deep breath, then-

KATE

Liza? Can I talk to you?

LIZA

What could you possibly want?
Permission to screw my
ex-husband?

KATE

Heh. That's funny. No, actually
I came here to-

LIZA

Rub my nose in your success? With your
precious little Tina Blodgett book?

KATE

You still haven't found a book, have you?

Liza's eye starts twitching.

LIZA

Oh, I'll find a book, don't you worry.
And I'll relish the day that you're
thrown out of this company like
yesterday's trash.

KATE

That's very charming, but actually
I came to ask you a favor.

LIZA

Sweetheart, I wouldn't give you
water if your skin was falling
off in the desert. I wouldn't-

KATE

I found another book.

Liza perks up.

KATE (CONT'D)

And I'd like you to read it. I
want your opinion.

LIZA

(suspicious)

Why?

KATE

Liza, we work in the same
department. We're co-workers.

LIZA

And I hate you with every fiber
of my being. Why would you want my
opinion?

KATE

Well, if you don't want to read it...

LIZA

No, no! I... let me see it.

Kate gives her the manuscript, and Liza looks at the title page.

LIZA (CONT'D)

Death Metropolitan Style by Ann Mills.
Never heard of her. Where'd you get
this?

KATE

It was slipped to me. Listen, I'm
not sure about this book, so just
read it and let me know what you
think, okay? I'm late.

Kate exits.

KATE (O.S.)

Let me know!

Liza curiously opens the manuscript and starts to read.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY OFFICE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Kate is walking down the corridor as Michael approaches.

MICHAEL

Kate! Just who I wanted to see.
Have lunch with me.

KATE

Can't. I'm busy.

MICHAEL

Let's go.

Michael grabs Kate by the hand, leading her down the corridor.

KATE

Michael!

EXT. RESTAURANT PATIO - DAY

Kate and Michael are having lunch on a stylish restaurant patio.
Near the table is an elaborate water fountain.

MICHAEL

I think I've always stifled myself.
Even as a kid, my mother had to force
me out to play.

KATE

So you've always been abnormal?

MICHAEL

Yes, I have.

Kate smiles.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

So I'm consumed with my career.
Doesn't mean I'm a bad person.

KATE

I just don't think you're capable
of having a relationship.

MICHAEL

Is that so? I told you I'm not
answering my phone this entire
lunch.

Michael's cell phone is on the table.

KATE

It's constantly ringing.

Ring. Ring.

KATE (CONT'D)

See?

MICHAEL

I just won't answer it.

KATE

You couldn't do that for five minutes.

Ring. Ring. Ring. Michael starts hyperventilating.

KATE

Michael, you're going to have an aneurysm.

MICHAEL

I'm fine.

The phone stops ringing, and then starts again. Sweaty and tormented, Michael tries to make casual conversation.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

So! Want to catch a movie later?

Gasping for breath...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I can't stand it!

Michael desperately reaches for his phone, but Kate grabs it.

KATE

Michael-

MICHAEL

Kate, give me the phone.

KATE

We agreed that-

MICHAEL

The agreement's off. Give me the phone.

KATE

Your neck veins are bulging.

MICHAEL

Because I'm having a stroke. Now give me the phone!

The phone stops ringing. Michael is apoplectic.

KATE

Fine! Take your stupid phone!

Michael grabs the phone with such force that it flies into the fountain.

MICHAEL

Now look what you've done!

KATE

Me?!

Michael dives into the fountain, pulling his wet, broken phone out of the water with wires exposed.

MICHAEL

A fine piece of electronics! Look at it!

KATE

You're nuts! No wonder Liza left you.

That cuts Michael to the core.

MICHAEL

I'll never forgive you for that.

Kate storms off. Michael shakes his cell phone, trying read the display as the phone drops back in the water.

EXT. SMITH/COBERLY BUILDING - NIGHT

Atop the building is a huge Christmas tree made from lights, shining bright against the night sky.

Outside the lobby is SANTA CLAUS with his REINDEER. Santa greets festively-dressed GUESTS as they arrive for the Smith/Coberly Worldwide Christmas party.

SANTA

Ho! Ho! Ho! Meeeerrrry Christmas!

INT. SMITH/COBERLY BALLROOM - NIGHT

A grand, festive ballroom with an outpouring of food and drink. People are happily twirling on the dance floor to live big-band

jazz. Party guests flow in from the escalator as Kate arrives. Liza quickly approaches.

LIZA

I'll make this quick. I am poised to make the literary coup of the season.

KATE

You liked it?

LIZA

Death Metropolitan Style. That book is going to resurrect my career.

Kate masks her excitement.

KATE

Liza, I only gave you that book to-

LIZA

I knew if you didn't like it that I should champion it. Now who's this Ann Mills? How do I get in touch with her?

Beat.

KATE

Liza, I only gave you the book for your opinion.

LIZA

I've already given it to Coberly.

KATE

You what?! You had no right to do that!

LIZA

I'll do whatever I want. Look, you gave me that book, and I'm going to run with it. Now how do I get in touch with the author?

KATE

I can't tell you.

LIZA

What do you mean you can't tell me?

KATE

I just can't. I want to, but I can't.

LIZA

You're trying to sabotage me, aren't you?

KATE

No, it's just that-

LIZA

That's exactly what you're doing. You know Coberly wants to get rid of me, and you're toying with my mind.

KATE

Liza-

LIZA

I've clawed my way to success at this company. Then you waltz in here like some pseudo intellectual piece of--

KATE

Liza, it's not what you think.

Liza has a full emotional breakdown with her paranoia on high.

LIZA

I need that book! Please, Kate! I hate your guts, but I need your help! Coberly wants to fire me! Please Kate! I'm begging you! Please!

KATE

I can't believe this.

LIZA

If you have any ounce of compassion...
Give me that book! Who's the author?!
Who's Ann Mills?! Please, Kate! Please!

KATE

Alright!

(beat)

Ann Mills is... Well, she's... She's...
me.

LIZA

What?

KATE

She's me. Ann Mills is me.

LIZA

Bullshit.

KATE

It's true. I wrote *Death
Metropolitan Style*.

LIZA

Who do you think you're kidding?

KATE

I'm not kidding. And as much as you
need that book...I need it more. Now
I'm the one who's begging. Please,
Liza. You need that book, and so do I.

LIZA

Coberly loves you and hates me.
Why would I ever help you?

KATE

Liza, you can help both of us.

LIZA

This is some kind of mind game, isn't
it? You're trying to manipulate me
into helping you when you're sitting
on top of the world at this company?
Bullshit.

KATE

No, I-

LIZA

Yes, you are.

Liza slaps Kate across the face, knocking her down as they engage in the ultimate clawing, biting, scratching catfight.

Coberly is as shocked as everyone to see Kate and Liza rolling on the ground.

COBERLY

Allen! Backler! What the hell are you doing?!

KATE

Get off me! AHFFFH!!!!

LIZA

Die! Die!

As Liza about to jump on Kate like a Sumo wrestler...

INT. COBERLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Coberly is at his desk when Liza barges in with black sunglasses on.

LIZA

Walter-

COBERLY

Backler! What was that charade last night?! And why are you wearing sunglasses?

Liza pulls down her sunglasses, revealing a black eye.

LIZA

I should have her locked up. And that book I gave you- *Death Metropolitan Style...* by Ann Mills?

COBERLY

I read it.

A beat, then he smiles.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

About time you brought me something good.

LIZA

I should have never given you that book.

COBERLY

Why? What-

LIZA

Guess who wrote it?

A beat as Coberly realizes-

COBERLY

I smell a rat.

LIZA

She's a liar. A manipulative liar.

COBERLY

I'll take care of it. Conference room, 3.2 minutes. We have a staff meeting.

Coberly walks out as Liza smiles, satisfied that Kate will be finished at this company.

INT. SMITH/COBERLY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A packed, end-of-year executive staff meeting that includes Kate, Michael, and Liza. There's some pre-meeting mingling as Coberly enters, holding a manuscript. He goes directly to Kate, who has a mean-looking scratch on her forehead.

COBERLY

You have some explaining to do.

Kate looks nervous as the meeting comes to order. Liza glares at Kate, who looks away.

COBERLY

All right, let's settle in. I trust you all enjoyed yourselves at the party last night?

EXEC AD LIBS

Great. Wonderful, etc.

COBERLY

Now as we rapidly approach the end of the year, I want to announce that our own Michael Hosebaum has successfully orchestrated the Stanton merger to the tune of \$50 million dollars.

Polite applause as Michael takes a little bow. Kate glares at Michael, who glares back.

COBERLY

And thanks to Kate Allen, Gotham Publishing has added the new Tina Blodgett book to our list for next spring.

More polite applause as Kate gives a little wave, smiling nervously.

COBERLY

And speaking of Kate Allen...

(to Kate)

I don't tolerate deception at this company. I told you that from day one.

The executives murmur as Kate fidgets in her seat. Liza smiles, and Michael looks curiously at Kate.

LIZA

She's a lying, conniving...

COBERLY

I said let me handle it!

(to Kate)

Allen. You gave Liza Backler a book.

Coberly reads from the manuscript he's holding.

COBERLY (CONT'D)
Death Metropolitan Style by Ann Mills.
Allen- did you write this book?

All eyes are on Kate.

COBERLY (CONT'D)
Allen! What do you have to say for
yourself?!

KATE
Well...

COBERLY
I want the truth! You gave Backler a
book by Ann Mills, which I actually
liked by the way, but-

KATE
You did?!

COBERLY
That's beside the point! Now I want
to know and I want to know it now.
Who the hell is Ann Mills?

The tension is tremendous.

KATE
Okay, I admit it. Ann Mills... is me.

The conference room erupts.

COBERLY
Quiet!

Kate tries to sneak out when-

COBERLY (CONT'D)
Allen! Get back here!

Kate sits back down.

COBERLY
Now what do you have to say?
I specifically told you not to-

KATE

I know, but I can explain.

COBERLY

There *is* no explanation! You not only used Smith/Coberly Worldwide for your personal gain, but you deceived me.

KATE

I know, but-

COBERLY

You're fired.

Liza beams.

LIZA

Yes.

KATE

Okay, but I have something to say. Then if you still want me to go... I'll go.

LIZA

Walter, she's a liar.

COBERLY

Backler! Enough!

(beat)

Alright, Allen. You have 6.8 minutes.

Kate walks to the front of the crowded conference room, spilling her life story before dozens of executives.

KATE

I'm a writer. I always have been. But before I came to work here, my life was- Well, it sucked to be perfectly honest with you.

A bit of laughter from some executives.

KATE (CONT'D)

So I decided to join the business world-
become an executive. And I surprised
myself that- as Walter Coberly would
say- I've been damn good at it.

Liza rolls her eyes.

LIZA

Liar!

COBERLY

Pipe down!

KATE

But now I realize that- I gave up
my dream. And if you give up your
dream- that's not a life.

Beat.

KATE (CONT'D)

If there's one thing I've learned
from Walter Coberly- It's that
you have to be true to yourself.

Coberly studies Kate.

LIZA

Throw her out, Walter.

KATE

Shut up, Liza!

Stunned silence. Liza pops a pill, her face twitching.

COBERLY

(to Kate)

Go on.

KATE

I've also learned about taking risks.
I stayed up all night rewriting that
book. I had to prove to myself that
it's strong enough to publish. I know
it is. (to Coberly) You know it is.

Beat.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sometimes you have to wait for success.
But when it finally comes, it's the best
feeling in the world. I had to risk
everything to find it.

(to Coberly)

But I think you would have done the same
thing.

Coberly can't help but be impressed.

COBERLY

I don't know about that, but by God
you've got guts.

Everyone awaits Coberly's response as he walks around the
conference table, thinking.

EXECUTIVE AD LIBS

Come on, chief. Give her a break.

Liza repeatedly bangs her head on the legal pad in front of her,
losing the last vestiges of her sanity.

COBERLY

Quiet!

Again, dead silence.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Allen, I should toss you right out on
your duff, but God knows I'm not perfect
myself. Hell, my first job out of college,
I lied to get out of the mailroom. I'm
not proud of it, but that's what I did.

Coberly smiles at the memory.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Now I'm not advocating dishonesty, but
you've made me realize what I'd forgotten
long ago. Sometimes you have to break
the rules to succeed.

Kate smiles. Liza bangs her head on the table.

COBERLY (CONT'D)

Backler! You're going to bash your skull in!

(to Kate)

Now if I agree to publish your book, you are no longer an employee of this company.

KATE

I understand.

COBERLY

And you'd have to make due with a small advance- plus the ten-thousand for bringing in the Blodgett book.

LIZA

No. Please.

COBERLY

You drive a hard bargain, Allen.

(beat)

But you've got yourself a deal.

Kate smiles through her tears as Liza is in the throes of a grand mal seizure. She falls off her chair, banging her head on the floor.

LIZA

NOOOOO!!!

MALE EXECUTIVE

She's having a grand mal seizure!

Screaming, Liza runs out of the room as Kate shakes hands with Coberly.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - DAY

Bobby is helping Kate put the last of her belongings in boxes.

BOBBY

Well, that's the last of it.

KATE

Thanks, Bobby. You're one of the nicest people I've met here.

Kate gives Bobby a hug as Roger enters. ONE OF HIS HANDS IS WRAPPED WITH A BANDAGE THE SIZE OF A GLOBE.

ROGER

You need any help taking things down to the car?

KATE

Maybe that big box over there. Thanks. Oh, and I put in a good word for you with Bigley in advertising.

ROGER

Thank you, Miss Allen, but I'm going to take some time off. You know-- regroup.

KATE

Good idea. Take care, Roger. I'm going upstairs.

Kate exits as Roger lifts a big box with minimal effort, only to drop it on his foot.

INT. COBERLY'S OFFICE - DAY

Coberly's working at his desk when-

KATE (O.S.)

Can I come in?

Coberly looks up to see Kate in the doorway.

COBERLY

Sit down.

(beat)

You know, Allen, I've been thinking. With Backler gone to the funny farm-- What would you say if I asked you to stay on as a publishing consultant?

KATE

But--

COBERLY

In addition to the writing, I need someone smart in that department who's... not in a straitjacket.

EXT. HAPPY FARM SANITARIUM - DAY

A serene country setting that looks more like a farm than a facility for the mentally challenged. A sign on a wooden fence reads WELCOME TO HAPPY FARM SANITARIUM. A couple of NURSES walk by. A MAN does cartwheels in the dirt. A WOMAN stands on a haystack singing opera. Another MAN is barking like a dog.

INT. LIZA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A simple room with a bed, table, and television. Liza is in a straitjacket. The only part of her body that isn't wrapped is her head as she watches a rerun of the TV show DYNASTY.

ON TELEVISION - ALEXIS CARRINGTON COLBY and KRYSTLE CARRINGTON face off in a luxury designer dress showroom.

KRYSTLE

How dare you, Alexis. That brooch meant a lot to me. It was very special to me. Aren't you woman enough to understand that?

ALEXIS

Oh, I'm very much a woman, Krystle. Next time you see Blake, just ask him about our early years together. Or has he had a slip of the tongue occasionally and let a few choice tidbits slip out? Is that what's bugging you?

KRYSTLE

No, that's not what's bugging me. It's you.

Krystle viciously slaps Alexis across the face, leading to a knock-down, drag-out catfight. As Alexis and Krystle claw at each other on the floor...

LIZA
You'll get yours, Kate Allen. Mark
my words. You'll get yours.

On Liza's maniacal laugh...

INT. COBERLY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COBERLY
(smiling)
Welcome back.

Coberly extends his hand to Kate, who turns that into a hug.

EXT. FAIRMONT MIRAMAR HOTEL - DAY

Standing outside the hotel with Suzanne, a smiling Kate is proudly holding her newly-published book, DEATH METROPOLITAN STYLE by Kate Allen. Kate's picture is on the back cover.

KATE
Our high school reunion. Can
you believe it?

SUZANNE
It's surreal.

KATE
(re: book)
Wait'll Redstone sees this.

SUZANNE
It'll kill her.

AUNT BUNNY (O.S.)
Yoo-hoo! Kate!

Kate turns to see Aunt Bunny with Kate's father, Harold.

KATE
Aunt Bunny. Dad.

HAROLD

I just wanted to say again how proud I am of you, Katie.

KATE

Thanks, daddy.

They hug.

HAROLD

Suzanne.

SUZANNE

Hi, Mr. Allen.

HAROLD

My daughter the author. I've given copies to everyone I know.

AUNT BUNNY

Congratulations, dear. You look wonderful.

KATE

Thanks, Aunt Bunny.

They hug.

KATE (CONT'D)

Where's mom?

HAROLD

Well, she said she'd be here, but with the divorce, you know...

KATE

Yeah, I know.

HAROLD

Her face is pulled so tight she can barely breathe.

KATE

(laughs)

I saw.

HAROLD

Detestable shrew. She's probably traipsing off to Fiji for a sexathon with her latest adolescent stud.

AUNT BUNNY

Just sickening.

HAROLD

I always hated that woman. If I could've killed her, I would have.

KATE

Me, too.

They hug.

AUNT BUNNY

Have fun at the reunion, darling

KATE

Thanks, Aunt Bunny.

HAROLD

Bye, sweetheart.

Kate waves as her dad and Aunt Bunny walk away.

TRACY (O.S.)

Why if isn't Kate Allen.

Kate turns to find Tracy Redstone, as bitchy as ever.

TRACY

I can't believe it. You made it.

KATE

Damn right.

Kate shows the cover of her book to Tracy, who opens her mouth in shock.

KATE (CONT'D)

See you at the reunion, Redstone!

TRACY.

The book looks fake.

KATE
Shut up, you bitch!

TRACY
You're a bitch!

KATE
You are!

TRACY
I hate you, Kate!

KATE
Die, Redstone!

SUZANNE
You guys?!

Kate and Tracy proceed to have a major, clawing, tearing, screaming catfight, rolling on the sidewalk.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)
Kate! Tracy! Stop! You'll kill
each other!

Kate and Tracy keep fighting until they fall on the sidewalk. Their hair is a mess, and they struggle to breathe. They lie there for several seconds, stunned by their killer rage. Then... something changes. They share a smile, and a look of mutual respect.

KATE
(hyperventilating)
How do you feel, Redstone?

TRACY
(hyperventilating)
Like I've been hit with a bulldozer.
You?

Kate picks up her book, gets up from the ground, and realizes with a grin...

KATE
The best I've ever been.

Kate offers her hand to Tracy, pulling her up from the ground. They share an intense look and suddenly come together in a passionate kiss, each with a hand behind the other's neck.

SUZANNE

Woh. I'll pretend I didn't see that.

Kate and Tracy smile at each other.

KATE

That was... incredible.

TRACY

I know. Right?

A beat as they share an intense look.

KATE

Come on. Let's go in.

Kate offers her arm to Tracy, who takes it.

SUZANNE

Yeah, can we just go in already?

A beat as Kate, holding tight to her book, revels in this extraordinary moment.

KATE

Let's get in there.

Kate and Tracy do a double-take at each other as Suzanne takes Kate's other arm. With that, they all share a smile and walk proudly toward their reunion. FREEZE FRAME.

MUSIC UP! END TITLES SET TO MARTINA McBRIDE'S "THIS ONE'S FOR THE GIRLS."

THE END