

ALL THE PALM TREES IN LA ARE DYING

"Pilot"

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INT. DRESDEN ROOM BAR - NIGHT - THE PAST

TESS (27, writer) steps into an Old Hollywood style bar (leather booths, cavernous but cozy) and is immediately kissed by VI (26, director's assistant).

TESS

Vi!! I haven't even told you the news!

VI

I'm just proud of you!

Vi grabs Tess's hand and drags her to a booth where JOY (27, aspiring actor), PRIYA (27, sales) and TONY (26, comedian) wait for her. Vi shoves a glass of champagne in Tess's hand.

Vi kisses her again and the friends cheer.

TESS

Everybody's sooo confident.

TONY

There's been a leak.

JOY

I heard from an assistant friend.

TESS

Well then you do it.

JOY

Tess is the newest client of Anonymous Talent!

There's a big cheer.

PRIYA

Any comment?

TESS

I can't believe it. I'm starting to think it might really happen for me.

Tess leans her head on Vi's shoulder. Vi whispers in her ear:

VI

Might? Baby it's already happening.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - PRESENT

Super: THREE YEARS LATER

A perfectly banal grocery store. A happy birthday balloon bobs above the aisles as we hear Tess muttering to herself.

TESS
 (under her breath)
 I just know you well enough to know
 that you'd freak out if I treated
 you the way you treated me.

She tries again.

TESS (CONT'D)
 I just know you well enough to know
 that if the roles were reversed...

PRESENT DAY TESS (now 30, preoccupied) picks random things off the shelf and chucks them in her cart.

TESS (CONT'D)
 I think if you were being honest
 about yourself...with yourself...
 about your actions...

Her watch beeps. She checks: it's noon.

TESS (CONT'D)
 I just think that you think that
 you're the main character of my
 life.

TESS (CONT'D)
 I just think that...

Tess looks down at her cart. There's, like, a lot of yogurt in there.

TESS (CONT'D)
 This is so much Yo-Crunch.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

An open kitchen in a moderately big living room. Tess, covered in flour, chaotically bakes a cake. The balloon has been tied to a stool.

DOUG
 You having a birthday?

Tess jumps. Apparently she missed her roommate DOUG (protein powder, magic mushrooms) enter the room.

TESS

Oh, it's not MY birthday. We had to move it here - sorry. I thought I warned you.

DOUG

Maybe. You did.

The conversation's over. He's not leaving.

DOUG (CONT'D)

You've been baking a lot.

TESS

I guess so.

DOUG

That's...

(beat)

Huh. That's. That's *really* interesting.

Doug thinks he's understanding Tess on a level she could never access herself.

TESS

Okay.

He wanders off. Tess looks at the clock. Fuck.

INT. TESS'S ROOM - DAY

Tess dashes into her room, opens her laptop, takes a peek at what her camera sees, and tosses the random shit piled on her dresser onto her bed.

On the top of her screen a notification says *Event Tomorrow: High Noon*. She doesn't need the reminder: it's the only thing she can think about. She opens Zoom.

TESS

Hey, sorry, I had another student and we went a little over.

A very monotone TEENAGE BOY does not care...at all.

TEENAGE BOY

All good.

Tess stalls while trying to pull up the boy's file from their last session.

TESS
Cool. So. How are we feeling about
the SAT today?

TEENAGE BOY
ACT?

TESS
Yes. Sorry! Although how do you
feel about the SAT?

A feeble attempt at a joke. The boy does not laugh.

INT. TESS'S KITCHEN - LATER

Tess puts the cake in the oven. She's on the phone with her
manager CHRIS.

CHRIS (V.O.)
We've been sending The Honda
Odyssey around again and we still
haven't gotten any bites.

TESS
Okay.

CHRIS (V.O.)
People like the *idea* of an
adaptation of the Odyssey that
takes place entirely in a Honda
Odyssey but...

Tess nods. People *should* like that.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...there was that other Odyssey
project.

TESS
Right.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Tess, you know I personally love
it, but the market is saying no.

TESS
Okay.

CHRIS (V.O.)
Have you put any more thought into
writing a Channing Tatum action
comedy?

TESS

Yeah... for sure.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Listen - most managers would just ghost you at this point. It's just hard because you don't have *anything else*.

TESS

(defensive)

Well Honda Odyssey was my baby... I thought it was going to... I wish I could come up with "Austin Butler in Heated Rivalry But It's Straight" ideas but I just can't right now.

CHRIS (V.O.)

Okay - what do you have ideas about? Like what are you thinking about right now?

Whatever's happening at noon tomorrow has taken over her entire life.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'm gonna write down "Austin Butler Straight Heated Rivalry" - and you are going to write something. Okay?

TESS

Okay. You know what? Fuck it. I'm gonna start outlining right now.

INT. TESS'S ROOM - LATER

Tess is on Google Maps on her computer, mapping how long it'll take to walk to the Griffith Observatory from the lower parking lot. After a bit:

TESS

Okay time's up. What did you get for 1?

TEENAGE GIRL

Uhh...B.

TESS

Okay we'll come back to that one. Question two?

TEENAGE GIRL

Yeah I also put B.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Tess opens her front door to find Priya (now overworked product manager) carrying a cat carrier and a big pot of chili.

TESS

Hi hi, come in.

Priya puts the carrier down as Tess closes the door.

PRIYA

Sorry I'm late--

TESS

You're early.

PRIYA

I was at the office and got caught up with J and then I forgot I totally had to make these changes to the deck and then I realized that I had to bring Artie's insulin or we'd have to leave in the middle of her birthday party--

TESS

Happy Birthday Artie. How you doing, buddy?

A little gray cat named ARTEMIS pokes her head out. Priya walks into the kitchen.

PRIYA

I took her blood sugar this morning which involves covering her with a towel and extracting a droplet of blood from her paw while she squirms and makes the worst noise you've ever heard. Can I put this in the fridge by the way? And oh my god you bought a balloon I told you not to do anything!!

TESS

I just got the one balloon! I love birthdays.

Artie chirps and runs over to Tess.

TESS (CONT'D)
How you doing honey bunny?

PRIYA
She's fine. I'm... I'm also fine.

Priya goes to the fridge. Tess sneaks a glance at her watch.

PRIYA (CONT'D)
Did you bake something??

TESS
I just got the one balloon and
baked a cake.

Beat.

TESS (CONT'D)
And got snacks.

PRIYA
Do the snacks go with chili?

Tess thinks.

TESS
No.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Priya, HANNAH (was the guy in the flashback scene, now transfem, podcaster/comedian), and Joy (still an aspiring actor) pick at a very themeless cheese board as they assemble it. Tess shucks oysters.

JOY
And this chick - I mean you know
how they are -

PRIYA
Please don't start saying chick.

JOY
It's cool when I do it. This chick
- who has a beautiful mind and full
personality - invites me to her
parents' house in Ojai and I'm like
fuck yes pool.

HANNAH
Oh god.

JOY

So I get there and the parents...
are there.

PRIYA

No!

JOY

And she has a full fiancé she has
yet to mention.

HANNAH

Wait so what did you do?

JOY

What do you think I did? I did
both of them! And left in the
middle of the night.

HANNAH

So what are we supposed to take
from this about "how chicks are?"

JOY

You know how they are!!!

HANNAH

We do polyamory so differently.

JOY

You're poly. I'm a slut.

Tess puts some lemon on an oyster.

TESS

Who's next?

HANNAH

So. Oysters and chili?

Priya exchanges a look with Tess and jumps in to defend her
snack choices.

PRIYA

These are both foods the birthday
girl can't have. So that's kind of
a theme.

Priya shoots an oyster.

PRIYA (CONT'D)

Surf and turf.

Something ceramic falls and shatters.

JOY

Oops!

TESS

Oh shit!

JOY

Fuck, Tess, I'm so sorry.

A plant in a smashed pot on the floor sits at Joy's feet. Tess gathers herself quickly.

TESS

(overcompensating)

Oh it's fine. It's fine.

Everyone starts cleaning. Tess gingerly picks up the plant.

HANNAH

Do you have like a big mixing bowl that we could put it in?

TESS

Yeah, it's right under you.

JOY

Seriously I am so sorry. I will Venmo you for this pot.

TESS

It's really fine it's not even my plant.

Joy puts two and two together.

JOY

Oh my god. It's tomorrow, right?

All eyes turn to Tess.

HANNAH

What's tomorrow?

EXT. TESS'S PORCH - LATER

Everyone eats at an outdoor table under string lights.

TESS

So you know how at the end they've had this really romantic night and they agree to meet up six months later?

HANNAH
I've never seen it.

JOY
So that's what happens.

PRIYA
So that's what happens.

Beat.

HANNAH
Okay so that's what happens in
Before Sunrise.

TESS
Me and Vi agreed to do that but,
like, reversed.

HANNAH
So you're meeting up six months
after your breakup to...have a
really romantic night?

JOY
That's not what's happening.

TESS
You know how when you have the big
argument and the breakup, like,
later you're like "oh this is what
I wish I would have said?" We just
decided to find a time and place to
say those things. Six months after
the breakup.

PRIYA
Oh wow. Do you know what you're
gonna say?

TESS
Yeah. Of course.

They wait to hear if she'll tell them. She doesn't.

HANNAH
Where are you meeting?

TESS
Griffith Observatory. At noon. *High*
noon.

HANNAH
How are you going to get there?

TESS
I'm going to walk.

Everybody starts talking over each other.

HANNAH
From *here*?

PRIYA
You're going to *walk*?! Sorry.

TESS
No, like, park at the bottom and walk up.

HANNAH
Okay - that's worse. You know that's worse, right?

JOY
That's what I'm saying! You're already in the car. Just drive to the top.

TESS
I don't want to pay for parking at the top!

HANNAH
It's gonna be like 85 degrees.

PRIYA
I know! Soooo sweaty.

HANNAH
You're gonna have this conversation in front of like, a school field trip. There's gonna be like thirty fourth graders right around you.

Tess is getting upset.

PRIYA
What are you--what if you don't make it all the way up before you--

TESS
Okay, sorry, yeah, I mean, I-

TESS (CONT'D)
YEAH there's just, like, yeah. A lot of shit happened that was not cool and the context like maybe isn't...cool.

(to Priya and Hannah)
And I know you guys are still friends with her which is *totally fine* and I wouldn't expect you to like--

(to everyone)
But I have to talk to her. So that's, like, *the plan*.

The tone shifts.

HANNAH

Are you okay?

TESS

I'm not like... Yeah I'm over it.
I'm not like staring at the ceiling
thinking about it every night. I
just think this is the right thing
for us. For me.

A really awkward silence that extends too long. Someone's gotta say something.

HANNAH

(looking to the sky)

Did y'all hear all of the palm
trees in LA are dying?

Hannah, Priya and Joy turn to look at the giant palm tree in Tess's yard. Tess avoids looking at it.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

It's like - the life cycle of a
palm tree is about 100 years and
we're approaching the time when
they're all going to die. Cause
they were all planted at the same
time. Like artificially.

JOY

For the Olympics in the 30s.

PRIYA

There's not gonna be, like, more?

JOY

They're non-native.

PRIYA

Oh.

JOY

They provide zero shade, they use
tons of water. It's like a made up
symbol of Hollywood.

PRIYA

(looking up at the tree)

Wow. The only made up symbol in all
of Los Angeles.

HANNAH

Knowing this city they're probably
gonna replant all of them.

TESS

LA wouldn't be LA without palm
trees.

JOY

Yeah, but does it need them to keep
being LA?

TESS

Like...yeah.

Beat.

INT. TESS'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Artemis watches a National Geographic livestream of birds.
The friends stand around her holding a lit birthday cake.
It's frosted pretty poorly.

EVERYONE

(singing)

*Happy birthday dear Artemis
Happy birthday to you.*

Priya blows out the candle.

HANNAH

(making a show of it)

Okay a toast! A toast! Everybody
shut up.

(sincere)

Artie - since I met you via Priya's
Slack profile picture, you have
been a benevolent and loyal
goddess. May you live for another
thousand years.

JOY

Artemis, what we share transcends
Slack. To a kind soul and loyal
friend.

The girls wait a beat to see if Tess is gonna play along, but
she's too busy picking out tomorrow's outfit in her head to
notice.

Artemis continues watching TV. The other girls cheer. Tess
and the cat look up at the same time.

TESS
 (oh right)
 Cheers!

PRIYA
 Okay. Dinner!

JOY
 Does she get to eat anything
 special for her birthday?

PRIYA
 Call me a tyrant but no. Cat food
 is kind of chili consistency
 though, so...

HANNAH
 Thank you for waiting to say that
 until after we ate.

PRIYA
 You're welcome.

They all watch for kind of a while as the cat eats dinner.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Hannah and Priya walk to their cars.

HANNAH
 Jeez.

They look back at the house.

PRIYA
 Did you hear about this showdown
 before tonight?

HANNAH
 Nope.

PRIYA
 Maybe they're trying to avoid us
 being middlewomen?

HANNAH
 I think they're trying to avoid
 saying this dumbass plan out loud.

PRIYA
 I didn't realize Tess was still so
 fucked up about the whole thing.

Hannah considers this for a second.

HANNAH

That's the house they were supposed to move into together and now she's got Doug.

Too much to think about.

PRIYA

Doug is so hot.

HANNAH

Priya, no.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Joy gets up from the couch.

JOY

Heyyy. Sorry about...I didn't mean for the plant thing to become this big...thing.

TESS

Oh! It's fine.

(beat)

It's just weird to talk about it with them, but it's also weird to specifically not talk about it with them.

Tess shrugs. Joy studies her.

JOY

I'm team burn Vi at the stake. I know you know how I feel.

TESS

Right.

JOY

But, um...

Tess doesn't notice the slight longing in this pause.

JOY (CONT'D)

I kind of think closure is a myth, you know? And...and...and the way to get over this chick is other chicks!

TESS
Can we talk about this after?

JOY
Fine. Love you. You're gonna kill
it tomorrow.

Joy goes in for a hug.

JOY (CONT'D)
You call me if you need anything.

TESS
I will. Love you.

JOY
Okay?

TESS
Okay.

Joy leaves. Tess's smile drops. She looks around her empty house.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tess squats in front of the plant, now in a mixing bowl.

TESS
(under her breath)
I just feel like you always assume
you automatically get the moral
high ground, and it allows you to
do some really shitty shit.

She finds a picture on her phone of the plant in its original pot and zooms in to study the pot.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tess lies on her bed in the dark. We see her outfit for tomorrow laid out.

She stares at the ceiling - just like she said she wouldn't.

Frustrated, she picks her iPad up off the floor. She looks at Vi's Instagram. She scrolls far enough to find a photo of the two of them together. She unlikes the photo.

She feels kind of satisfied, then dumb, then disgusted. She tosses her iPad on the rug.

She gets a vibrator out of her bedside table drawer. She looks at it. She turns it on, considers it, then turns it off and puts it away.

She stares at the ceiling, then throws a pillow on her face.

EXT. TESS'S DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Tess, didn't sleep, coffee in hand, walks out to her car.

TESS
(rehearsing)
I just think... It's not... Like--

Shit. Doug's parked behind her. She looks at her watch and turns back to the house.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Tess opens a box, fishes through some rubber bands and batteries, and grabs a set of car keys.

TESS
(rehearsing)
Nobody's gonna...there's no, like,
outside referee on this. Let's
just...

INT. DOUG'S CAR - MORNING

Tess backs Doug's car, crystals dangling from the rearview mirror, out of the driveway. She pulls onto the street, throws it in park, and puts on the hazards.

INT. TESS'S CAR - MORNING

Tess backs her own car, a 2000s Volvo, out of the driveway. Street. Park. Hazards.

TESS
(rehearsing)
Nobody's gonna come down from the
heavens and...appoint a winner and
a loser here, so you can just talk
to me like a person.

INT. DOUG'S CAR - MORNING

Tess returns Doug's car to the driveway.

EXT. PLANT STORE - DAY

Tess stands outside the plant store. She checks her watch. 9:59. The sign says it opens at ten.

She removes a shard of the broken pot from her pocket.

10:00. She peers in the window and sees two employees flirting by some potting soil.

10:01. She knocks on the window.

INT. PLANT STORE - DAY

She walks down an aisle with some pots. She's checking the shard against them - none of them match.

EXT. SECOND PLANT STORE - DAY

Tess walks past a row of potted young palm trees. A YOUNG COUPLE studies them.

YOUNG MAN

Aren't they all dying?

YOUNG WOMAN

No that's just the ones that the city planted. Not like all palm trees all over the globe.

YOUNG MAN

You're so smart and hot and I love you so much.

Tess puts her AirPods in and heads to the pots.

INT. THIRD PLANT STORE - DAY

Tess looks up at a row of pots... not there. She's on the phone now.

TESS

It feels like my brain is full of popcorn.

JOY (V.O.)

My brain is full of happy thoughts and a positive outlook.

TESS

Sounds cool, man.

Beat.

JOY (V.O.)
Butterfly or mushroom?

TESS
What?

JOY (V.O.)
There's two types of popcorn.
Mushroom's the really round one
they use to make cheesy popcorn and
butterfly's the one for kettle corn
or making at home.

TESS
How do you--

JOY (V.O.)
I looked up popcorn factories on
YouTube once because I wanted to
know how they popped so much
popcorn in bulk.

EXT. FOURTH PLANT STORE - DAY

Somehow it's 11:05. She's still on the phone with Joy. She
still hasn't found the pot.

JOY (V.O.)
Wouldn't you have heard from her?

TESS
We agreed no contact.

JOY (V.O.)
But... even still.

TESS
I'm thinking I'm not gonna go.

JOY (V.O.)
Oh! I think that's a really good
decision.

TESS
Well I think Shane's pot breaking
is a sign.

JOY (V.O.)
The plant has a name?

TESS
It does.

JOY (V.O.)
And that name is Shane...as in...

TESS
As in Shane from the L Word.

JOY (V.O.)
Right.

TESS
It's not my plant!

Beat.

JOY (V.O.)
Are you really thinking of not going?

She holds up a replacement pot. It's dead on.

TESS
Yeah. I'm not going to go.

JOY (V.O.)
Tess!! I'm so happy we can just be done with this.

Tess grabs the pot and dashes to the register.

EXT. TESS'S PORCH - DAY

Tess, despite her huge rush, slowly and carefully repots the plant.

TESS
This whole thing was your idea. And now we're here surrounded by...a fourth grade field trip.

INT. TESS'S ROOM - DAY

Tess throws on the outfit she laid out for herself. She tucks her hair behind her ears, then untucks it.

EXT. TESS'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Tess runs the freshly repotted plant to her car. Doug's car is behind her, blocking her in. She checks her watch: 11:25.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tess goes to the box. Doug's keys aren't there.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tess knocks on Doug's door. No answer. She knocks again.

INT. UBER - DAY

Tess sits in the back of an Uber with the plant in her lap.
An UBER DRIVER drones on:

UBER DRIVER (O.S.)

And I live across the street from
someone who was on Prison Break--
you remember that--so once I meet
him and get him on board, then like
financing or whatever, that'll work
itself out. What's this dude's name
anyway?

Pause.

TESS

Huh?

UBER DRIVER

Your ex. What's his name?

Tess considers coming out to this stranger.

TESS

Kyle.

A little something in Tess died when she said that.

UBER DRIVER

Sick.

She checks her watch: 11:41.

TESS

Can you just let me out here?

UBER DRIVER

Oh. You sure?

TESS

Yeah. I could use the exercise.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK FERN DELL - DAY

People mill about at the base of the trail to the observatory.

Tess, with tote bag and pot, begins to walk up the path. Finally, it's Time for High Noon. Western music begins to pick up.

EXT. GRIFFITH TRAIL - DAY

Tess makes her way up the steep path, plant in hand. Her phone buzzes. Vi?? No. Chris. Probably calling about the outline. She silences her phone and puts it in her pocket.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - DAY

Tess downs some water. She's out of breath, but she's made it. She checks her watch: 11:58.

She looks around at all the characters her friends described. No Vi yet.

She sets out a picnic blanket and navigates how much of it to take up. Half? All? She settles on all.

She gives the plant some water from her bottle.

She looks back at where the trail ends. Nothing. She looks down towards the buses. Nothing. The music fades out.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - MOMENTS LATER

12:00. Her watch alarm goes off. She silences it and looks out. 12:01.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - DAY

12:15. Still no Vi. Some Griffith hubbub filters in:

PASSERBY 1
Isn't James Dean like, buried here?

PASSERBY 2
This is where they filmed La La Land!

PASSERBY 3
What's with her plant?

PASSERBY 4
He drew the King of Pentacles which was kind of intense because it was only an 11th date, you know?

PASSERBY 5
¡No le pegues a tu hermano!

PASSERBY 6
Dude. The AMC popcorn pass
changed my entire life.

PASSERBY 7
Excuse me do you mind taking
a picture of us with the
sign? Can you get the palm
tree in it?

PASSERBY 3
She looks kind of... do you
think it's a date?

PASSERBY 8
STOP hitting your brother.

PASSERBY 9
So fun fact about the
Hollywood sign it used to say
Hollywoodland actually.

She looks around. All these people and Vi isn't one of them.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - DAY

12:45. She sits there for a little longer and begins to
collect her stuff.

Tess walks off. The plant is still on the lawn, leaves
rustling in the breeze.

EXT. FERN DELL - DAY

Tess flops down on a bench and opens her phone.

PASSERBY 10
My sister's friend told her agent
about me and they signed me within
like a week. It was insane. I'm so
lucky.

She scrolls over to Vi's number and thinks about calling her.
She drops her phone on the ground.

PASSERBY 11
Hey lady you dropped your phone.

TESS
Thanks.

EXT. LOS FELIZ BLVD - DAY

Tess aimlessly walks down an empty sidewalk on a busy street-
-LA, baby! Her phone buzzes. She grabs at it. It's Joy. She
doesn't feel like answering.

EXT. LA RIVER - DAY

Tess finishes up a conversation with a fruit cart vendor. A palm tree looms in the background.

TESS

I pretty much want everything but honeydew. Oh! And coconut.

VENDOR (O.C.)

Okay sounds good. Tajinchamoylimon?

TESS

Ummm yeah. Thanks.

He starts chopping fruit. She's mesmerized.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tess does the dishes from last night's dinner.

She goes to put something in the silverware drawer. All the spoons, big and little, have been put unsorted in the same organizer slot. Suddenly, finally, she's crying.

She starts sorting spoons through tears. Doug walks in.

DOUG

Do you talk to your friends about what's going on in the news?

TESS

(trying to pull it together)

I mean. We...yeah of course we talk about it. I think it's like...it's kind of difficult you know cuz it's so bleak.

Beat. Doug's oblivious to Tess's emotional state.

TESS (CONT'D)

(still teary)

How about you, Doug?

DOUG

All the time. Every minute. Every second.

Tess nods.

INT. APARTMENT BEDROOM - EVENING

Tess lies in bed. Wallowing. She looks over at her closet.

EXT. TESS'S PORCH - NIGHT

Tess, a little dressed up, peers into the driveway.

TESS
(yelling into the house)
Hey, Doug? Can you move your car?

DOUG (O.S.)
No...yes.

She stands on the porch waiting for him.

INT. DRESDEN ROOM - NIGHT

Tess walks in the back entrance. Music drifts in from the bar area. She makes eye contact with the host, who nods her in.

Tess spots Priya, Hannah, and Joy in the same booth as the opening scene. They wave her over and she mouths that she's gonna get a drink.

She leans against the bar and sees the *Swingers* poster of Vince Vaughn on the wall. Vince holds a dirty martini.

INT. DRESDEN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tess walks her dirty martini to her friends, who scotch. A band plays jazz standards.

HANNAH
(whispering)
How was it?

TESS
(whispering)
It was fine.

She looks at Joy.

TESS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
I didn't go.

PRIYA
(whispering)
Thank god.

Tess takes a sip of her martini and smiles at her friends.

INT. DRESDEN ROOM - LATER

Tess and Joy at the bar. Tess rests her head on Joy's shoulder.

JOY
The Vi era is over.

TESS
It really is.

Joy turns towards Tess.

JOY
What's next?

Tess takes a sip of her drink.

TESS
Who knows.

Joy's got that slight longing look again. This time Tess notices but misinterprets it.

TESS (CONT'D)
No dating apps. NO dyke soccer.

EXT. TESS'S PORCH - NIGHT

Tess sits on her deck smoking a joint. For the first time since she heard about its impending doom, she looks up at her palm tree. Well, it had a good run. Maybe it's time for a shade tree.

We see her physically let go of something. Her shoulders de-tense, she sinks into her chair. She exhales. It's not like she moved to LA to be Vi's girlfriend. She has other, older dreams.

She opens her phone and listens to the voicemail her manager left:

CHRIS (V.O.)
Hey Tess - I told my bosses about that idea yesterday and they really liked it - no but seriously. I'm calling because against all odds I heard back from Archibald about Honda Odyssey.

At the word Archibald, Tess looks away from the tree.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I guess they're looking to
reestablish their indie cred and
want to meet. I told them you were
free all week - no offense.

INT. ARCHIBALD OFFICE - DAY

Tess enters a standard modern conference room, walked in by
an EXEC. A few other people sit in the room, including Vi(!).

EXEC 1

Thanks for coming all the way to
the west side - hope it wasn't too
much traffic.

TESS

Oh, I've got a few great podcasts
in the rotation. On rotation.

Tess is trying as hard as possible to keep it together.

EXEC 2

I'm Miranda. I run features here.
Loved your script. This is Dan, our
head of development, and this is
Victoria - until recently she was
my assistant.

Vi stands.

EXEC 2 (CONT'D)

Now she's heading up our first time
filmmaker slate. So you two would
be working closely together.

VI

Hi Tess.

Vi extends her hand and Tess takes it, trying to get a read.
Vi is giving her pure, impersonal professionalism.

TESS

Hello Victoria.

Tess lets go of Vi's hand and turns to greet the next person.

TESS (CONT'D)

Hi Dan.

CUT TO BLACK.