

THE S.O.S. MARQUEE

Written by

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INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

SLOANE O'SULLIVAN, early 20's with wild orange hair and bandages over her left hand's fingers, is crammed in a corner of the living room, paper pressing against the wall, wielding a fountain pen.

XAVIER O'SULLIVAN, Sloane's dad, fiddles with the broken CRT Television.

Sloane catches one of her stuffed animals pointed at her. There's a radioactive sound from its glare. She turns it around. Then she turns them all around.

SONNY O'SULLIVAN, Sloane's mom, enters the room and rummages through a pile next to Sloane.

SONNY

Think I left an earring.

Sonny looks under Sloane's stuffed animals.

Sloane adds a final word to the poem then takes a vial of water from her pocket. With the eyedropper, she blots out the page.

Sonny shakes her head.

SONNY (CONT'D)

One of these days you'll let me
read one. Kind of hard to when I'm
looking over your shoulder

Sloane heads for the hallway.

SONNY (CONT'D)

(mumbling)
While acting like I'm looking for
an earring.

XAVIER

That wasn't your homework, was it?
I thought I took away your vial.

Xavier extends his hand. Sloane gives up the water vial.

SLOANE

It wasn't. Think I'm supposed to
analyze a blog post.

Sloane crawls to the table and logs into her laptop. She rubs her eyes from the bright light. Sloane searches "blog" and clicks the first result.

XAVIER

Damn TV.

Xavier starts walking to where Sonny exited.

Sloane clicks the "blog posts" tab on "The Franchesckaar" blog. The top post is a snapshot of a fountain-penned poem: "Your eyes play a game of eenie meanie. Call me delinquent, you do it sweetly. Crimson waves flying, turn your head but not your eyes, keep on staring, powder blue hypnotize."

Sloane freezes.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

You finally got one of your poems published?

The view count ticks up menacingly.

INT. BEDROOM 1 - DAY

STUDENT 1's eyes read Franchesckaar's blog.

INT. BEDROOM 2 - DAY

STUDENT 2's eyes read Franchesckaar's blog.

INT. BEDROOM 3 - DAY

STUDENT 3's eyes read Franchesckaar's blog.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sloane attempts a breathing exercise.

XAVIER

The Franchesckaar? Wow, that's a lot of views.

Sloane hits "Report" on the web page. Her hands shake as she tries typing in the box for "Reason for Reporting." The number ticks up.

SLOANE

How do you get rid of it?

Xavier slams the laptop.

XAVIER

There. I got rid of it.

Xavier walks with the laptop towards Sonny's bedroom with Sloane at his heels.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Xavier closes the door behind him. He sets the laptop on a bookshelf.

At a vanity, Sonny's face is lathered in lotion.

Xavier points a camcorder at her.

Sonny snaps her neck, smiles at his camera.

XAVIER
You look like a ghost.

Sonny puffs her hair.

SONNY
Still captured on film I hope.

Xavier sets down the camera.

XAVIER
I thought they had a dressing room there.

SONNY
Oh hun, you need to get ready to get ready.

XAVIER
That Marquee Theater.

Xavier points the camera at her again.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
You could quit. Become a full time star in my productions.

SONNY
You mean your home movies? What kind of number you got for an audience?

XAVIER
Sloane, how many stuffed animals do you have?

INT. SLOANE'S HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane backs away from the door.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Xavier hugs Sonny from behind, kissing her head.

XAVIER
Let me know how the show goes.

SONNY
I'll probably be home late.

Xavier's grasp loosens.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

In front of the vanity, HERB UNDERWOOD creeps up behind Sonny.

HERB
I'm sure you'll knock 'em dead.
Definitely knocked me down last
night.

Herb pushes a HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL into Sonny's bra.

HELENA, Marqueen's director, shoots Sonny a thumbs up.

HERB (CONT'D)
See you after the show.

Sonny and Helena head towards the stage.

SONNY
(to Helena)
I can't see him tonight.

INT. THE MARQUEEN HALLWAY - DAY

HELENA
I understand. But you know how
important it is to--

INT. STAGE - DAY

SONNY
I know.

Helena pulls the bill out of Sonny's bra.

HELENA
He's the sole reason we have enough
money to light up the place.

Helena fixes Sonny's hair.

HELENA (CONT'D)
And you're the sole reason he does
it.

ASTER
Hey, Helena...

Helena stares blankly.

ASTER (CONT'D)
I set up the harness. Was there
anything else you needed?

HELENA
Oh right, you're the intern.

Helena puts the bill into her own bra.

HELENA (CONT'D)
Just make sure Herb is happy. Get
him popcorn or something.

Aster leaves as Sonny attempts putting on the harness.

SONNY
Or actually, I could use some help-

HELENA
You've got this. Just remember.
Back middle. Keep your gaze on the
back middle.

The curtains race open.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Herb sits in the back middle.

Aster offers a carton of popcorn. Herb takes one kernel at a
time, licking his fingers.

INT. STAGE - DAY

Sonny is strapped to a lit-up star.

SONNY
(sings)
All eyes are on you, lashes lift
you up.

The star rises.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Aster studies the script in one hand, raising the popcorn
like the star rising.

SONNY
All eyes are on you

ASTER
(mumbling)
All eyes are on you

INT. STAGE - DAY

SONNY
(sings)
-staring at the stars and the moon.
(belts)
All eyes are on you

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

SONNY
until the

ASTER
until the... hush

INT. STAGE - DAY

SONNY
(hushes)
night falls. You're lit up but
their eyes slowly shut. You're lit
up but the lashes
fall

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

SONNY (V.O.)
one by one. You're lit up

Aster glances between page and stage, nodding.

INT. STAGE - DAY

SONNY
but you're a comet when their eyes
are shut. When their lashes fall...
I...

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Aster drops popcorn to turn page. Herb glances at the mess
on him but goes back to mesmerized-by-Sonny.

INT. STAGE - DAY

SONNY
do...

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Herb's stare holds anticipation. Aster looks up from the
page, matching his expression.

INT. STAGE - DAY

SONNY

too!

Sonny falls high speed. Thud.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1 gasps. AUDIENCE MEMBER 2 shrieks.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Aster flips through the pages.

ASTER

Wait, that wasn't in...

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

HELENA

Shit!

Helena squints at Herb.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Herb claps. He takes a handful of popcorn from his lap.

Aster runs backstage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

ASTER

Should I call an ambulance?

Helena lights a cigarette.

HELENA

Call my retirement fund.

ASTER

What?

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Audience members crowd the edge of the stage.

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

HELENA

Take care of the body before those
zombies get to it.

Aster draws the curtains.

INT. STAGE - DAY

Aster rushes to Sonny's body, taking her pulse.

ASTER

Sonny?

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

Helena's cigarette lights a rope. Aster rushes in, spraying with a fire extinguisher.

HELENA

We're ruined.

ASTER

I can't believe he thought it was part of the show.

HELENA

Who?

ASTER

The guy you keep telling me to serve.

HELENA

Herb thinks Sonny's still alive?

ASTER

Seemed like it. Unless he wanted her dead. He was clapping.

HELENA

Oh... This might work.

ASTER

What might work?

HELENA

He likes the back row. How well can you see from back there?

Helena walks out towards the crowd.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

HELENA (CONT'D)

Hope to see you all for next Saturday's show.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1
Is she alright?

HELENA
Who?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1
Sonny O'Sullivan.

HELENA
Oh, of course! No, that was just.
(whispers)
We had an increase in budget.
Thought we'd really get those
special effects going.

HERB
Helena!

HELENA
Herb!

HERB
What a wonderful show tonight. You
know I love it when you make her
the star.

HELENA
I sure do.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1
You might want to give a warning
next time. Think of the children.

Audience Member 1 leaves.

HELENA
Herb, actually, I was meaning to
mention. That 3,000's due next
Saturday.

HERB
Oh, don't worry. Next time I see
Sonny.

HELENA
Right...

Helena turns to walk backstage. Aster puppies along.

ASTER
So, at her funeral?

HELENA

Hmm?

INT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

ASTER

That's the next time he'll see
Sonny.

Helena opens closet labeled PROPS. She hands a shovel to Aster.

HELENA

No it's not.

EXT. THE MARQUEEN'S BACK LOT - DAY

Aster drags a body bag along the gravel back lot. She jostles the body bag into the trunk of her car.

INT. ASTER'S CAR - DAY

Aster drives through a neighborhood past the O'Sullivan's house.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Xavier unscrews a side panel on a black-screen CRT Television.

Sloane lays on her stuffed animals. Her eyes are closed as she hums, wearing headphones.

EXT. RADIO TOWER - DAY

Sloane's humming continues.

Aster stops the car beside a Radio Tower. Opening the trunk, she pulls the body bag out and along the dirt. She wields the shovel from the backseat and starts digging beneath the tower.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The CRT Television now has static. Xavier continues fiddling with the panel.

EXT. RADIO TOWER - DAY

Aster packs the dirt down. She returns to the car, throwing the shovel in the trunk. She finally looks around.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The static stops. Xavier drops his screwdriver.

XAVIER
Hey, hey, Sloane, look.

Sloane's humming stops. She opens her eyes and pulls off her headphones.

SLOANE
What?

XAVIER
I got it working!

The CRT Television plays a home video of Sonny.

SLOANE
If you wanted to watch her so bad,
could've just gone down to the
show.

XAVIER
(hesitates)
She doesn't like mixing work life
and home life.

SLOANE
Right. It'd be hard to keep her
boyfriends straight then.

XAVIER
Hey. To your room.

SLOANE
I'm 22.

XAVIER
(sarcastic)
Oh really? And you still live at
home?

SLOANE
Fine.

As Sloane leaves the room, a hologram hand comes out of the CRT Television.

INT. HELENA'S OFFICE - DAY

Aster approaches the desk.

ASTER
I took care of the body.

HELENA
Excellent.

Helena types away at the computer.

ASTER
So...

HELENA
Now we just need to find a replacement.

ASTER
A replacement body?

HELENA
Someone that looks and sounds enough like Sonny so Herb doesn't notice.

Helena inputs Sonny's headshot into a program on the computer. It loads. Photos of Sonny lookalikes populate the page. Helena clicks on the first result.

HELENA (CONT'D)
Toni McCarley.

Helena's eyes search the screen.

HELENA (CONT'D)
Wait...

Helena pulls open a file on Aster Yarosh, seeing "Tenebris College".

ASTER
(excited)
You have a file on me?

HELENA
She's a professor at your college! This is perfect. Find her Monday at school, okay? Send me a recording of her voice.

ASTER
I graduated last semester.

Helena stares at Aster blankly.

INT. ENGLISH BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Aster grips her backpack straps as students pass her.

INT. SLOANE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane pries herself out of bed. She feels for her gray sweatshirt off her closet door and stumbles to the door.

INT. SLOANE'S HALLWAY - DAY

She rubs her eyes.

SLOANE
Oh, my laptop.

She leans against a door.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Mom, I'm coming in.

Opening the door, she flicks on the light. The bed is empty.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Should've known.

Sloane trudges to the dresser. She stares at a headshot of Sonny. Glancing around the room, every picture frame is a photo of Sonny. Sloane slides a drawer open. The clothes are white and sparkly, reflecting in her squinting eyes. She slams it shut. She turns around.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
There.

Sloane approaches the bookshelf, sliding the laptop off the shelf. Underneath she notices a filled-out form. "Name: Sloane O'Sullivan," "MARQUEEN THEATRE PERFORMING ARTS STUDENT WORKSHOP," and Sloane O'Sullivan's signature at the bottom.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
She forged my signature?

She evaluates the form. "Workshop's date: September 21."

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Tomorrow?

She crumples it. Takes one last look at the room and marches out the door.

EXT. ENGLISH BUILDING - DAY

Sloane strolls toward the college building, headphones on. A bus arrives behind her, and a swarm of students surround her. She maneuvers rigidly out of the crowd towards a side entrance. She catches her breath, then pulls open the door.

INT. ENGLISH BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane rushes through the hallway, but voices carry.

KNEELING GUY 1
Your eyes play a game of eenie
meanie. Call me delinquent, you do
it sweetly.

She peeks around the corner to find FRANCHESKAAR UNDERWOOD surrounded by KNEELING GUYS reciting the poem. She turns away. Thud. Sloane runs into Aster.

Aster reaches for a dropped poem.

ASTER
You write this?

Sloane rips the poem from her hands.

ASTER (CONT'D)
Woah, okay.

Aster looks over at the crowd. Francheskaar is holding a poem with the same fountain penned handwriting. Aster raises an eyebrow at Sloane.

KNEELING GUY 2
Crimson waves flying, turn your
head but not your eyes, keep on
staring, powder blue hypnotize.

ASTER
So, why aren't you on your knee?

Sloane peeks an eye around the corner.

SLOANE
Is she really auditioning people to
be the writer?...

Sloane presses her face against the wall.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
'Oh, it's just a coincidence that
the hottest guy here wrote it.'

ASTER
I can't believe you wrote a
serenade for that girl.

Sloane bunches up her hair.

SLOANE
I didn't!

ASTER
You didn't write that?

SLOANE
Well. Not for her.

ASTER
Then who was it for?

Sloane shrugs.

ASTER (CONT'D)
Are there really that many people
around here with crimson waves and
powder blue eyes? Maybe I wouldn't
know. It's my first day.

Sloane turns her head to reveal her face.

SLOANE
Oh! (whisper) Welcome to the
shadows.

Aster looks up, blinded by an overhead light.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
The English Building. Umbra is
latin for shadow.

ASTER
How did I never realize that?!

SLOANE
It's your first day.

ASTER
Right... not like I was here for 4
years already... I- uh, should get
to class.

SLOANE
Good luck.

Aster walks to class.

INT. WRITING CLASS - DAY

Aster sets her things at the professor's spot.

Francheskaar sits down at a desk. She posts a blog post. A notification pops up: "New Comment from HUH1277."

FRANCHESKAAR

Oh, dad's actually reading this?

She clicks it, and it brings her to the comment. "HUH1277" wrote "You really need to start writing something more respected than blog posts, sweetie." She highlights it, right clicks, copies, and pastes it into a new blog post.

Aster adjusts her coat on the back of the swivel chair. She sneaks a voice recorder out of her coat pocket. She watches TONI MCCARLEY, the professor, writing on the board. Aster hits record.

TONI MCCARLEY

(sqwaukily)

And the clock doesn't lie. Time to shut your lips and listen.

Aster grimaces at her voice and turns off the recorder.

TONI MCCARLEY (CONT'D)

This next week we'll be focusing on longform writing. The kind of stuff to get a book deal for.

FRANCHESKAAR

My dad would love you.

TONI MCCARLEY

Is he single?

Francheskaar sinks in her seat.

TONI MCCARLEY (CONT'D)

Everyday this week we'll be hosting one-on-one meetings to help guide you along. Everyone welcome our new TA which just halved my workload.

ASTER

Actually, I--

Aster points at the door.

ASTER (CONT'D)

Hi, I'm Aster.

TONI MCCARLEY

So whenever you're ready, head on over to one of us for your first meeting.

Francheskaar heads over to Aster, showing her The Francheskaar blog.

FRANCHESKAAR

Could I just string all these posts together and that'd count?

Aster looks back and forth between 'The Francheskaar' and the attendance list.

ASTER

F-R-A-N... Hmmm I can't find you on the attendance list.

FRANCHESKAAR

Oh, yeah, I just spell it like this. It's Francesca on there.

Francheskaar points at "Francesca" on the list.

ASTER

But you go by "Francheskaarrrr?"

FRANCHESKAAR

Adds a bit of flare.

Aster scrolls through the blog.

ASTER

Yeah, I don't think this is going to work. Your main character wouldn't be interesting enough.

FRANCHESKAAR

You mean me?

ASTER

Do you just write about your day each day?

FRANCHESKAAR

Yeah.

ASTER

You really don't have anyone to talk to?

FRANCHESKAAR

Excuse me?

ASTER
Only person interested in your day
is supposed to be your mom after
school.

Franchesckaar takes the laptop.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Here. This post isn't about me.

ASTER
It's like 2 sentences.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Then what am I supposed to do?

ASTER
Well, it's all in picking a muse.
Some muses will just write
themselves.

TONI MCCARLEY
And the clock doesn't lie.

The sqwauky voice startles Aster.

TONI MCCARLEY (CONT'D)
That's it for today. Come tomorrow
with a list of possible topics for
your longform writing.

Aster packs up then leaves.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Thud. Aster runs into Sloane. Another poem falls.

ASTER
Maybe I can read your whole
discography if we keep up with this
body slam thing.

Aster hands over the poem.

SLOANE
I guess I need to hold things
closer to my chest.

ASTER
(to self)
I could be one of those things.

SLOANE
What?

ASTER
I said do you know where the
Henderson dorm building is?

Sloane points but notices the hallway start to fill with
more students.

SLOANE
C'mon.

Aster follows Sloane out the door.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Aster and Sloane walk towards the dorms.

ASTER
So, what is your thought on 80
horny guys reciting your poem by
heart?

SLOANE
Stop describing my nightmares.

ASTER
It sounds kind of cool. Hard to get
people to want to read your work.

Sloane shakes her head spastically.

ASTER (CONT'D)
You have the opposite
problem? People want to read your
work?

SLOANE
They're just being polite and shit.

ASTER
Well. Wish my boss was more
"polite". She won't even pretend to
read my script proposals. I switch
them last minute though and she
doesn't even notice. Think it's
because mine's better so she likes
she gets the credit for it. But all
that's going to be on my actual
résumé is getting popcorn for some
perv.

Concern creeps onto Aster's face.

ASTER (CONT'D)
And... some other... but that
wouldn't be on the résumé either.
Heh.

SLOANE
Here's Henderson.

ASTER
Oh, thanks.

They stand.

ASTER (CONT'D)
Want to show me where room 31B is?

SLOANE
Sure.

INT. ASTER'S DORM - DAY

One half of the room is cluttered, Aster's half of the room
is bare.

ASTER
This is my side.

SLOANE
Love...

Sloane uses her fingers to frame her view.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
what you've done...

ASTER
I like, just moved in, okay?
(mutters)
Just.

Aster starts unboxing. Sloane points at a picture frame.

SLOANE
You look a lot like her.

ASTER
Guess that's how genetics work.

SLOANE
(laughs)
You're not close with her?

ASTER

Oh, no, I was. I just haven't seen
her or my family for 5 years now.
They're still in my home country.

SLOANE

Wow. 5 years away from your mom.

Sloane lays back onto the mattress.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

How'd you score that deal.

Aster picks up the acceptance letter from The Marquee
Theater, then shifts it further in the box. She grabs a
white bed sheet.

ASTER

Care to help me make the bed?

SLOANE

Trying to get free room service?

Aster fans it over the mattress.

Sloane breathes strangely.

Aster inspects. Sloane jumps up, covered with the white
sheet.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Boo!

ASTER

Oh my god.

SLOANE

OooOoOoOoh!

ASTER

Who's under there? Time for curtain
call!

Aster rips the sheet off and tackles Sloane down to the
mattress.

ASTER (CONT'D)

I guess why make the bed if...
we're just going to mess it up?

ASTER'S ROOMMATE barges in.

ASTER (CONT'D)

Oh hey.

Aster's Roommate waves.

Aster pulls the recorder out of her pocket.

ASTER (CONT'D)
Can you say something?

ASTER'S ROOMMATE
(huskily)
What?

ASTER
Thanks.

Sloane looks at Aster, confused.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S ENTRYWAY - DAY

Francheskaar swings the door open.

FRANCHESKAAR
Guess what I did today. Dad?

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Francheskaar flops onto the couch. On her laptop, she starts a new blog post. But then she shuts the laptop and takes out her planner. There's a 9/20 To-Do list. "Read Emma", "Pick a muse(?) for LONGFORM WRITING(???)", "Practice the Shakespeare lines".

Francheskaar takes out the Emma book and starts reading the first page.

FRANCHESKAAR
Isn't this based off of Clueless?
Why can't I just watch that
instead?

Francheskaar picks up the remote.

EXT. SLOANE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sloane heaves up the front steps with her headphones on.

INT. SLOANE'S ENTRYWAY - DAY

Sloane walks past oddly placed headshots of Sonny.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM

Xavier is slumped in the couch, eyes glued to the TV.

XAVIER
Thought I saw something.

SLOANE
Hmm?

Sloane takes off her headphones and looks around.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Why are mom's headshots everywhere?

Xavier looks around.

XAVIER
Oh. I don't know.

INT. SLOANE'S HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane walks down the hallway.

SLOANE
Love it when she redecorates.

Sloane stops at an upside down Sonny portrait, finally showing concern.

XAVIER
HYEAR!

Sloane turns on her heel, sprinting into the living room.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

SLOANE
Are you okay?

Xavier points shakily at the TV.

XAVIER
She-- she--

Sloane perches beside Xavier on the couch.

The TV shows a home video of Sonny.

SLOANE
I thought you stopped drinking.

Xavier pulls out his camcorder from under a couch cushion.

The TV starts vibrating.

Sloane leans closer.

A spark. Sonny's ghost starts emerging from the screen.

Sloane sprints out of the room.

INT. SLOANE'S HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane runs through a mazing hallway.

INT. SLOANE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane slams the door behind her. She starts pulling her dresser to cover the door, but winces at her bandaged left fingers. She moves to the other side of the dresser and uses her back to push.

Glancing around the room, she sees an old TV. She stares. The TV is blank. She stares. The TV powers on. She darts for the window. Sloane's left leg dangles out, trying to reach for the garden fence.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Francheskaar gets up from being upside down on the couch. She brings the Emma book and her planner.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S KITCHEN - DAY

She looks through a cupboard.

FRANCHESKAAR

Did Dad use all the popcorn? Aha!

Francheskaar puts a popcorn bag in the microwave. The microwave counts down from 1:00 to 0:59 to 0:58. Francheskaar groans. Looking at her planner, she finger-underlines the next to-do item.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)

Pick a muse.

SLOANE(O.S.)

HYEAH--AHH

Francheskaar looks out the window, where across the yard, Sloane is dangling from her own window.

EXT. SLOANE'S HOUSE - DAY

Francheskaar moves the garden gate closer to Sloane.

Sloane climbs down as far as she can.

SLOANE

Move. Move so I can jump.

FRANCHESCKAAR
You're not jumping. Let me help.

SLOANE
Fine.

Sloane places her barefoot on the top of Franchesckaar's head.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Wait, that's my--

Sloane steps down, but they both topple over. Sloane gets up and runs toward the street.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sloane stands at the edge of her lawn. She looks back at the house. Changing light from the living room window indicates the TV is still on. Sloane leans her foot into the street.

Franchesckaar approaches from behind, rubbing her head.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Think you chopped off some of my
hair with those toenails.

Sloane looks at the window.

SLOANE
Dead?

FRANCHESCKAAR
What?

SLOANE
Wasn't home this morning...

FRANCHESCKAAR
Who wasn't?

SLOANE
I have to see if she's still there.

Franchesckaar peers at Sloane's house.

Sloane takes off barefooted down the street.

EXT. THE MARQUEEN - NIGHT

The Marqueen's sign: "MAR".

The Marqueen's sign: "QUEEN".

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sloane shuts her eyes.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A GRANDPARENT looks concerned.

Xavier records with his camcorder.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sloane shakes her head.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A STUDENT in a cap and gown gasps.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Sloane stops walking, holding her head. She lowers to the pavement and pulls out paper and her fountain pen.

Sloane writes: "When I came home from school one day, Mom didn't let me with the other kids play, she said its theater a new kind of play, on the stage that staged her death today."

Francheskaar comes up from behind, reading over her shoulder. Sloane notices and starts using her eyedropper to blot out the page.

FRANCHESKAAR
What are you doing?

SLOANE
Not for reading.

Francheskaar grabs the poem while Sloane hangs on.

FRANCHESKAAR
Then why'd you write it?

SLOANE
Can't get it out of my head until I
do.

Francheskaar flies back, taking half the poem with her. Sloane blots out her half.

FRANCHESKAAR
You're so weird.

Sloane gets up and walks away.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ASTER'S DORM - NIGHT

Sloane knocks on 31B.

Aster opens the door.

SLOANE
Okay if I stay here tonight?

ASTER
Uh, yeah! Come in.

INT. ASTER'S DORM - NIGHT

Aster's Roommate watches from her desk. Earbuds are in, but her eyes follow Sloane. Sloane freezes up.

ASTER
Here.

Aster tacks up the white sheet to the bedposts, then crawls in.

INT. ASTER'S BED FORT - NIGHT

Sloane crawls in.

ASTER
Curtain's drawn. Was there something you wanted to talk about or?

SLOANE
If you see a ghost of someone, does that mean they're dead?

ASTER
Oh. I believe that is how it would work. You believe in ghosts?

Sloane turns face-down.

SLOANE
I don't know.

ASTER
In my home country there's a lot of ghost hunters. My friends were big into that scene.

Sloane looks at Aster.

ASTER (CONT'D)
They really wanted to catch a ghost
on film. Always a camcorder in
hand.

Sloane turns her back to Aster.

SLOANE
Dead or alive, I don't want that
thing pointed at me.

ASTER
(laughs)
You say it like it's a gun.

SLOANE
Has the same potential. End your
whole career.

Aster's phone starts ringing.

HELENA (V.O.)
How's the mission? Toni McCarley
sing like an angel?

Aster sneaks out of the fort.

INT. ASTER'S DORM - NIGHT

ASTER
Absolutely not. Even her talking
voice was like. A vulcher.

INT. HELENA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Helena types at her computer.

HELENA
Aw. Well, tomorrow's that workshop.
So theoretically a bunch of people
who are good at singing are coming
by. Just gotta find one that looks
enough like Sonny.

INT. ASTER'S DORM - NIGHT

ASTER
Right. I'll, uh, head over after
school.

HELENA
Oh, no, Toni McCarley was a deadend
you said. You don't have to stay
there.

INT. ASTER'S DORM - NIGHT

ASTER

It's--

Aster looks at the fort.

ASTER (CONT'D)

nice here.

HELENA

Suit yourself.

INT. ASTER'S BED FORT - NIGHT

Aster crawls back in, but notices Sloane is already asleep.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S BEDROOM - DAY

Francheskaar pulls off her sleep mask.

Francheskaar changes into different outfits, having a short attention span for each outfit.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S KITCHEN - DAY

Francheskaar spoons Lucky Charms into her mouth.

Her laptop starts ringing. A video call from Joanne Underwood.

FRANCHESKAAR

Mom!

JOANNE

Hey Francesca.

FRANCHESKAAR

Francheskaar.

JOANNE

How could I forget? That you're a drama queen.

FRANCHESKAAR

Shut up.

JOANNE

Just calling from my new yacht.

Joanne points the phone camera around to show off the boat.

FRANCHESCKAAR

How could I forget? You're a self-absorbed piece of shit.

JOANNE

Zip it. Hey, you're dad isn't there, is he?

FRANCHESCKAAR

Rarely is.

Franchesckaar tries balancing the spoon on her nose.

JOANNE

Good. Otherwise I'd have to lie and say I want to talk to him.

FRANCHESCKAAR

Who's that guy in the background?

JOANNE

(whisper)

Told you to duck down.

Joanne moves her phone to make BACKGROUND GUY out of the frame.

JOANNE (CONT'D)

That's just my book publisher, sweetie.

FRANCHESCKAAR

Ew. That's how you got the book deal?

JOANNE

Shut up. He's the one I told you about. If you send him some of your work, I'm sure he could help you out.

FRANCHESCKAAR

Would I have to sleep with him too?

JOANNE

It's about actually *writing*, honey. Not sleeping you're way to the top... Think you've been studying wrong.

Franchesckaar slams the laptop shut.

INT. ASTER'S BED FORT - MORNING

Aster watches as Sloane rolls over, talking in her sleep.

SLOANE
No. Don't make me. THE LIGHT BURNS.

ASTER
Hey, hey, you alright?

Sloane looks around.

ASTER (CONT'D)
It's the sun.

Sloane holds her hand up, blocking the sunlight that was spotlighting on her.

ASTER (CONT'D)
It's just sunny.

SLOANE
(gritting her teeth)
She's everywhere.

Sloane slips out of the fort.

Aster crawls out from her side.

INT. WRITING CLASS - DAY

Aster takes her spot at the professor desk. Toni McCarley writes on the board.

TONI MCCARLEY
Alright, folks. Today Ms. Yarosh and I will be doing check-ins with each of you to make sure you have your topics chosen.

Francheskaar comes in late.

TONI MCCARLEY (CONT'D)
We'll be calling you off one by one, so just listen for your name.

Francheskaar takes a seat and pulls out her laptop. She "x"s out of a frozen frame from her mom's video call. Opening a new blog post, she writes, "Get this: Mom finally".

ASTER
Francheskaar Underwood!

Francheskaar opens up a blank Word document and heads toward the front. She sets the laptop on the professor desk and sits beside Aster.

ASTER (CONT'D)
So what topic did you choose?

FRANCHESKAAR
Hm?

ASTER
For the longform writing
assignment. Remember I said

Aster waves her hands around in a mystic fashion.

ASTER (CONT'D)
"It's all in picking a muse"

FRANCHESKAAR
Right. Yes. I completely. Decided.
On a muse.

Francheskaar digs through her coat pocket and pulls out the half poem Sloane wrote in the street.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)
Uh, see! Already gathering
evidence.

Aster looks at the wet, crumpled paper scrap.

ASTER
So what's your topic?

FRANCHESKAAR
The neighbor girl. She's weird.

ASTER
Sounds like a good pick.

FRANCHESKAAR
Except she doesn't really talk.

ASTER
That could be harder.

FRANCHESKAAR
I mean she talks a little. But it's
like "Badada". But she writes. So
theoretically, if she writes a lot,
I can just keep using those
excerpts and fill up the book
faster.

ASTER
Well, that sounds like plagiarism.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Nn-no?

ASTER
Instead of stealing all her work,
you could actually write about her?
Just, try to get to know her
better.

FRANCHESCKAAR
How many points is this assignment
worth?

ASTER
Uh.

Aster looks over at Toni McCarley.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Would I fail the class if I didn't
do it?

ASTER
It's not that bad of an assignment.

FRANCHESCKAAR
But I feel like my parents would be
too happy I did it, you know what I
mean?

ASTER
Kind of sounds like you're spoiled.

FRANCHESCKAAR
What?

ASTER
If your parents being *too happy* is
your worst case scenario.

FRANCHESCKAAR
It's just. This is their
masterplan, y'know? I was into
astronomy as a kid. So they wanted
me to be an astronomer. But that
would ruin it. I started a blog, so
they told me to be an English major
and to get a book deal. Now I hate
writing.

ASTER
I think you're just spoiled.

Franchesckaar leans towards Aster in a drunken manner.

FRANCHESCKAAR
I just don't want to be part of
somebody else's master plan.

ASTER
Mmhmm. Well, meeting adjourned. I
can see you're off to a great
start.

Aster nods towards Franchesckaar's blank document.

INT. ENGLISH BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane trudges through the empty hallway, looking behind her
every now and then.

She stops outside of a room labeled "AV Room". Sloane takes
a deep breath, then heads in.

INT. AV ROOM - DAY

Among the cramped room of computers, VCRs, CRT Televisions,
there are 4 AV Dorks: GEORGIE, PATRICK, EZEKIEL, and IRWIN.

SLOANE
Which one of you AV Dorks is going
to help me?

Georgie, Patrick, Ezekiel, and Irwin glance at each other,
then each raise their hand.

Sloane looks between each of them-- their gazes too focused
on her. Georgie's excited eyes.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Georgie's excited eyes.

INT. AV ROOM - DAY

Sloane hits the light switch.

SLOANE
Don't look at me.

Patrick nudges Georgie.

PATRICK

Yeah, it's a girl. Don't look at her.

Georgie veers his head away.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

What can we help you with?

SLOANE

Do you have any experience with...

Sloane taps one of the CRT Televisions.

SLOANE (CONT'D)

Uh. Holograms. Out of these things.

GEORGIE

Oh, that'd be sick-- Sorry, I'm not looking.

IRWIN

What do you mean by holograms?

SLOANE

Like. You're watching an old home movie. Then your mom comes out of the screen.

EZEKIEL

Oh my god. Is your mom The Ring girl?

Patrick nudges Ezekiel.

PATRICK

She's not saying that actually happened, doofus.

(whispering)

She's one of those English freaks. Probably just writing it for a story.

SLOANE

Yeah, I'm just. Writing it. How believable would it be?

Georgie gets up, his hands blocking his view of Sloane. He walks over to a taken-apart CRT Television.

GEORGIE

So, back here makes up an electron gun. Then there's the deflection system.

(MORE)

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

But it's electron beams that are shooting out towards the fluorescent screen, so, I mean... Electrons in an atom? Maybe some, strange means of hooking up the body's electrical pulses to this electron gun?

SLOANE

So she could still be alive?

GEORGIE

Your mo- The mom in your story?

SLOANE

Yeah.

GEORGIE

I mean definitely if it's a sci-fi book. I'd buy into it.

SLOANE

Thanks.

GEORGIE

Don't mention it.

SLOANE

I won't.

Sloane leaves.

GEORGIE

It's, it's just a saying. You can mention it!

Georgie sits next to Patrick.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

I can't believe a girl was in here.

EXT. SLOANE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sloane stays rigid at the front door. She raises her fist for a knock, then gets out her key.

INT. SLOANE'S ENTRYWAY - DAY

Sloane enters: Sonny's headshots dangling, rapid light changes coming from the living room.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

There's a trail of vodka, and bottle, leading from the couch to the hallway.

Sloane inspects the TV. It's the end of the VHS tape. Sloane takes a breath, then hits rewind. The TV starts to vibrate as it rewinds. As it gets to the beginning, it stops, then plays.

The video shows Xavier and Sonny laughing. They're outside of The Marqueen.

SONNY

Oh, but don't I look like her?

Sonny tries to match the pose of the girl on the show's poster.

XAVIER

Go in there and audition.

SONNY

What, Xav, it's an actual performance tonight. I can't just get up on stage and audition in the middle of it.

XAVIER

That's a great idea. Wait, wait, c'mon.

SONNY

Nooo.

XAVIER

They'd have to hire you. You're gorgeous.

Sonny raises an eyebrow.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

And talented. And talented.

SONNY

Yeah, yeah, why's it always the looks first.

Xavier kisses Sonny.

XAVIER

Wait. I've got to get this shot.

Xavier backs up for a wider shot.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Sonny O'Sullivan at The Marque-e-e-
e-e-e

The tape glitches when the words "The Marqueen" is in shot.
Sloane shakes her head.

SLOANE
I'm not.

The tape glitches on a shorter loop, seeming more sped up.
Sloane stops shaking her head.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Going there.

It rewinds on its own.

XAVIER
Sonny O'Sullivan at The Marque-e-e-
e-e-e

SLOANE
Fine.

Sloane follows the vodka trail.

INT. XAVIER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane peeks into the dark, littered room.

SLOANE
Dad, can you give me a ride?

Sloane looks around the room. Finally Xavier gets up from under a pile of stuff.

XAVIER
Sure, sport.

Sloane watches him walk out, his gaze locked forward.

INT. XAVIER'S CAR - DAY

XAVIER
Are you buckled up?

SLOANE
You aren't.

Xavier slowly looks down.

XAVIER

Oh. What do you know?

He pulls out of the driveway, only looking forward.

Sloane looks back for him.

INT. ART MUSEUM - DAY

Herb saunters from portrait to portrait, checking his phone. Sonny hasn't responded to any of his recent texts.

A painting catches his eye. He glides his thumb across the paint.

SECURITY GUARD

You can't touch the art, sir.

HERB

There was just a... loose fuzz.

Herb continues his saunter until reaching an abstract mermaid portrait. His eyes glisten, a faucet of forehead sweat turned on. He looks over his shoulder: the security guard is helping another visitor. Herb stashes the portrait down his shirt and heads toward the exit.

INT. HERB'S CAR - DAY

Herb lays back in his seat. He breathes out with satisfaction, then pulls the portrait out of his shirt-- it's unrecognizable, paint all smeared. He starts the car.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Francheskaar eats a bowl of Corn Pops, staring at the blank document on her laptop.

She reaches to type then retracts her hands. She reaches for her phone.

FRANCHESKAAR

What's even her insta?

She scrolls through her feed.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)

I don't even know her name.

She looks around.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)

Dad! Do you know the neighbor's name?

No response. Franchesckaar gets up and heads toward the door.

EXT. FRANCHESCKAAR'S HOUSE - DAY

Franchesckaar curves around the sidewalk towards Sloane's house. As she passes the mailbox, she looks at it once more. Popping open the lid, she takes out the top envelope. *Sloane O'Sullivan*.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Alright then.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Xavier's car drives onto the sidewalk.

INT. XAVIER'S CAR - DAY

SLOANE
W-wait, uh, this is good. Stop.

Sloane puts it into park.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
This is where I wanted to get
dropped off, thanks.

Xavier slowly turns his head to see the shop they're in front of: Paulie's Piercings.

XAVIER
You're getting a piercing?

SLOANE
Yep!

Xavier nods, then freezes mid-nod.

Sloane gets out.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

As Sloane rounds the corner, she spots the marquee. Her left foot stops. She tries to drag it like its leaded down. The bandages on her left hand start seeping in red blood. She glances at The Marquee once more, vision blurry. Ripping a strip of cloth from her shirt, she ties it around her head as a blindfold. Deep breath in. She extends her left foot, and her pace continues.

SLOANE
Just. Going for a walk.

She extends her hand to feel the building for reference. As she glides her hand along the door of The Marqueen, she finds the door handle.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Okay.

Sloane pulls the door open.

INT. THE MARQUEEN ENTRYWAY - DAY

Sloane stops in place, a Sonny headshot in front of her. It's eerily still. Sloane twitches under her blindfold.

Voices drift from the auditorium, and Sloane follows.

INT. THE MARQUEEN HALLWAY - DAY

She crouches, putting an ear to the door.

As she talks to herself, she fights with part of her body trying to leave.

SLOANE
I just need to know she's here.
Then I can leave. I just need to
listen for her voice.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

A banner on the stage says "STUDENT WORKSHOP."

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS are gathered on the stage.

HELENA
Welcome everybody! The Marqueen is
so excited every year to be able to
hold this event, where we invite
the community to come in and try a
hand at performing. And if nothing
else, give you a chance to-

INT. THE MARQUEEN HALLWAY - DAY

HELENA (O.S.)
stand up on that stage, because who
doesn't dream of being up there?

Sloane shivers.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

HELENA (CONT'D)

To start out, I'll have you each spar with an invisible monster. And usually I'd have my intern come around and give you individual pointers, but she's nowhere to be seen.... She's my invisible monster!

Helena chokes an invisible person.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Sparring with her right now.

The workshop participants start their invisible sparring.

INT. ASTER'S CAR - DAY

Aster itches her head. With her other hand, she honks the horn. She looks to the neighboring car, where a DRIVER is looking over.

ASTER

Ope, slip of the hand. Sorry.

She itches her head more aggressively. She gets out of the car.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Aster walks up past the stopped traffic, checking her watch.

ASTER

Not sure who decided to cast moron drivers into today's plan.

Aster stops next to Xavier's car window, knocking on the glass.

He slowly turns his head. He rolls down the window.

XAVIER

Oh, hello miss.

ASTER

You're blocking traffic.

XAVIER

Oh, I'm sorry about that. I'm sorry to cause the inconvenience. Where are you heading?

ASTER

Where am I heading? This isn't the time for small talk, guy. Where the fuck are you heading? Straight into that stop sign?

XAVIER

Oh. I'm sorry.

ASTER

Listen. If I'm even later than I already am, my boss at The Marqueen? She'll kill me.

XAVIER

The boss at The Marqueen killed my wife.

Aster freezes.

ASTER

And, uh, how do you know that?

Xavier starts sobbing.

ASTER (CONT'D)

Did you uh, like, find her body, or?

DRIVER

Hey cut the small talk and get out of the road!

Aster attempts pushing on the side of the car. She pushes with her back and it nudges.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Helena mazes through the workshop participants. She stops at Participant 1.

HELENA

More uumph in that knock-out. Make me believe you're full of hate.

Helena turns to Participant 2, inspecting her face, then glancing back and forth between a Sonny O'Sullivan headshot on the wall. Helena pulls back the participant's hair.

HELENA (CONT'D)

No.

Aster comes in from the back of the auditorium. Helena meets her, sitting in the back row, while Aster stands behind.

HELENA (CONT'D)
He likes this seat.

Helena squints at the participants.

HELENA (CONT'D)
What's his vision? 20/20? 20/60?

ASTER
I don't know.

HELENA
You're not proving very useful.

ASTER
He knows she's dead.

HELENA
Herb knows?!

ASTER
No, Sonny's husband.

HELENA
Oh, no, he's not one of the
funders. You had me scared for a
second..... he *knows* she's dead or
thinks?

ASTER
Well, thinks.

HELENA
There's a difference.

ASTER
But if he thinks she's dead and
he's right, isn't that the same as
knowing she's dead?

HELENA
What about that one?

Helena stands.

HELENA (CONT'D)
Great job everyone! I can really
see the coordination and the
feeling behind it.

ASTER
You can?

HELENA

Next up, let's move to voice! This is just a warmup, so no pressure. But I'm going to have one of you on the stage at a time and you go first.

PARTICIPANT 3

Me?

HELENA

(evil)

Yes.

Herb enters.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Herb!

Helena runs over to him.

HELENA (CONT'D)

I was just keeping your seat warm-
What are you doing here?

HERB

Sonny didn't come by Saturday night.

INT. THE MARQUEEN HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane perks up.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Helena guides Herb back out the door he came in.

HELENA

We had extra rehearsals that night. I thought she would've let you know. The show this Saturday is just so....

As soon as Herb is through the door, Helena blocks the doorway with her arm.

HELENA (CONT'D)

extravagant, we needed to double down on practice.

HERB

Oh, well that's exciting to hear.

HELENA

Yes!

HERB

Where is she now? Can I see her?

Helena drops her arm. She gestures at the stage.

HELENA

She's right over there.

Herb leans in, eyes searching.

INT. THE MARQUEEN HALLWAY - DAY

SLOANE

Where?

Sloane pulls down the blindfold and fumbles to open the door.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Sloane stares at the stage. Participant 3 stares back.

Herb points at Sloane. Helena follows his gaze.

HERB

Why's Sonny tied up?

Helena pushes him and closes the door behind them.

EXT. THE MARQUEEN - DAY

HELENA

Part of the script! It's actually going to be an 18+ show this week.

HERB

Oh. Better bring my ID.

HELENA

But no more spoilers. Don't want to ruin the show for you.

Herb leans forward as if he can see through the door.

HERB

I wouldn't mind more spoilers.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Sloane looks from the stage to the audience. Her gaze stops on each seated participant-- each of their deadpan glares giving a radioactive sound.

When her gaze stops on Participant 4, lights go out except a spotlight on the participant. The light swings to Sloane, blinding her vision. She blocks the light with her hand. There's glowing eyes from the audience. The ringing gets louder.

Sloane falls face-first.

INT. HELENA'S OFFICE - DAY

A blurry Helena and Aster come into view, but Sloane passes out again. Helena inspects Sloane while Aster backs up.

HELENA

I mean, she looks just like her.
Don't you think?

ASTER

I mean, I guess.

Aster leans against the window.

HELENA

Herb thought it was her! I'm
telling you, she's the one... if
only we could keep her locked up
here 'til Saturday.

ASTER

We're not actually gonna--

HELENA

Well I can't find any ID on her.
How are we supposed to make sure
she comes back in time for the
show?

ASTER

I'll. Make sure.

Helena leans against her desk.

HELENA

Okay. But if we don't get that
2,000 from Herb, not much I can do
to help you out.

ASTER

Help me?

Helena twists to sort through some papers on her desk.

HELENA

Yeah, I was looking through your files. I guess that foreign exchange program was only good for undergrad.

ASTER

What?

HELENA

I filed the internship in time so it's linked and everything, but if they find out The Marqueen shut down, I'm sure your papers would look pretty suspicious.

ASTER

So. Basically. If we don't find a fake Sonny by Saturday...

HELENA

But she's right there.

Aster nods.

INT. ENGLISH BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane clambers down the hallway, hood up. She catches up to Aster, caressing her.

SLOANE

Hey.

ASTER

Uh-- hi!

SLOANE

How was your-- what's that thing people say? How was your day?

ASTER

Yesterday? Okay. How was-- yours?

Sloane rubs her eyes.

SLOANE

Fine. Once I--

(MORE)

SLOANE (CONT'D)
(giggles)
Once I found one of my mom's
prescriptions.

ASTER
Are you on drugs?

Aster grabs Sloane's shoulders and inspects her face. A faint ringing starts. Sloane buckles under her stare.

SLOANE
Do NOT look at me like that.

ASTER
Okay, sorry.

Sloane pulls her hood down further.

SLOANE
If we could have like. A system.
Where you just never look at me. We
might work.

ASTER
We?

Sloane shrugs and giggles.

ASTER (CONT'D)
What are you doing this Saturday?

SLOANE
Why?

ASTER
'Cause. 'Cause I'm asking you out.

Sloane just stands there under her hood while students pass.

ASTER (CONT'D)
We could. See a play.

SLOANE
No.

ASTER
Oh okay. I just thought-

SLOANE
I'm not going anywhere near one of
those... theaters.

ASTER
Is it a yes if it's not at a
theater?

SLOANE
I guess.

ASTER
I'll pick you up at... 5?

SLOANE
Cool.

ASTER
Cool.

INT. WRITING CLASS - DAY

Aster walks to the professor desk, but finds Franchesckaar
already set up for their meeting.

FRANCHESCKAAR
What do I do if my topic is barely
even existent on instagram?

ASTER
What was your topic again?

FRANCHESCKAAR
Her.

On Franchesckaar's phone, a smiling school photo posted by
"indigrovehighschool." Caption: "Congratulations to Sloane,
who placed first in the Round Robin Writing Contest-- look
forward to hearing her way with words this Saturday, as
she'll now be giving a speech at our Graduation Ceremony! Go
Iguanas!"

ASTER
(reads)
Sloane?
(upset)
She's your topic?

FRANCHESCKAAR
You said it was a good choice?

ASTER
When did I say that?

FRANCHESCKAAR
Weird's better than boring.

ASTER
Oh, your neighbor?... Neighbor.
Perfect.

Aster turns fully towards Francheskaar.

ASTER (CONT'D)
You like makeovers right?

FRANCHESKAAR
...Sure?

ASTER
I think. A super cool plot idea for
your book. I can see it now. You're
slowly subtly transforming her into
Sonny O'Sullivan.

FRANCHESKAAR
Who?

ASTER
You don't know Sonny O'Sullivan?
She's the big star at The Marqueen.

FRANCHESKAAR
Oh, that cute theater next to the
coffee shop?

ASTER
Yeah!

FRANCHESKAAR
Show's are kinda long there.

ASTER
Like an hour and a half.

FRANCHESKAAR
Yeah.

ASTER
She has an instagram if that helps.

FRANCHESKAAR
Ooh, finally.
(scrolling on her phone)
God, it was bringing me back to
middle school when they made us
write all those research papers on
dead people.

ASTER
Heh.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Oh she's pretty!

INT. SHAKESPEARE CLASS - DAY

Sloane slumps in her seat, hood up. Franchesckaar saunters in. As she notices Sloane, she switches destinations.

Slinking in behind Sloane, she sets her table with note cards and colored markers.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
Hiya, folks. I hope you read Act 3 last night. We'll start out with a worksheet then move into some class performances.

Sloane passes the stack of worksheets over her head.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
Oh, and you can work with a buddy!

Franchesckaar passes the pile, not taking one.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Wanna be buddies?

Just having finished writing "Sloane" with her fountain pen, Sloane adds "Franchesckaar."

Franchesckaar leans over Sloane's shoulder.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
Oh, the first one's easy. Ophelia.

Sloane writes "Ophelia".

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
I actually read all the cliff notes this time, so... Oh the second one- "To be or not to be"

SLOANE
An idiot.

FRANCHESCKAAR
What?

SLOANE
Just finishing your sentence.

Franchesckaar checks her phone- the Sonny photos. She switches to the seat in front of Sloane, now being able to see her face.

Sloane bites her lip, trying to ignore the glare.

Francheskaar raises her hand animatedly.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
Yes, Francheskaar?

FRANCHESKAAR
We finished the worksheet.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
Great, wait for me to come by and
check it off.

FRANCHESKAAR
Wait until after he comes by to do
your weird water thing.

SLOANE
I wasn't...

FRANCHESKAAR
Do you always wear that sweatshirt?

Francheskaar leans closer for a second.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)
I'm surprised you don't smell more.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
Alright girls, let me see how you
did.

Professor Higgenbottom leans over Sloane to read the
worksheet; she slouches lower.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
Very good. Now you can move onto
reading out the script. Each of you
can pick a part.

FRANCHESKAAR
Alright, who do you want to be?

SLOANE
Lysander.

Francheskaar skims through the book.

FRANCHESKAAR
I don't think that's even a
character. How about Hamlet? You've
got the whole fake tortured thing
down.

Sloane looks repulsed.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
And I better hear you reading,
Sloane. Gotta get those
participation points up.

SLOANE
To be, or not to be – that is the
question.

Professor Higgenbottom tiptoes over to another group.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to
suffer the slings-

Francheskaar rests her head on her fist, smiling.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
And arrows of outrageous fortune,
or to take arms against a sea-

Francheskaar's ADHD has already kicked in.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
Of troubles and, by opposing-

Francheskaar flips the worksheet to face her, reading it
over to pass the time.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
End them. To die, to sleep, no
more.

Francheskaar wakes from a mini nap.

SLOANE (CONT'D)
And by a sleep, to say we end the
heartache and the thousand natural
shocks-

Francheskaar opens her folder- inside is the poem she had
posted on her blog. Francheskaar glances from the worksheet
to the poem, realizing the match in handwriting, she perks
up.

FRANCHESKAAR
My lord, I have remembrances of
yours that I have longed long to
redeliver. I pray you now receive
them.

SLOANE

No, no, I never gave you aught.

FRANCHESCKAAR

My honored lord, you know right
well you did.

Franchesckaar pulls the poem out of the folder. Sloane's
eyes widen.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)

And with them words of so sweet
breath composed as made these
things more rich.

Franchesckaar smells Sloane again.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)

Their perfume left-

Franchesckaar pushes the poem towards Sloane.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)

Take these again, for to the noble
mind rich gifts wax poor when
givers prove unkind. There, my
lord.

SLOANE

I can explain-

FRANCHESCKAAR

Just read your lines.

SLOANE

Ha, ha! Are you honest?

FRANCHESCKAAR

My lord?

SLOANE

Are you fair?

FRANCHESCKAAR

What means your lordship?

SLOANE

The power of beauty will sooner
transform honesty from what it is
to a bawd than the force of honesty
can translate beauty into his
likeness. This was sometime a
paradox, but now the time gives it
proof - I.

FRANCHESCKAAR

Read it.

Sloane just stares at the book's page. Professor Higgenbottom passes by.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM

(to Franchesckaar)

How's she doing?

FRANCHESCKAAR

She stopped reading, right in the middle of the sentence.

SLOANE

Did love you once.

A silence mulls.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM

I'll just let you be.

FRANCHESCKAAR

It's a cool poem though.

She slips the Hamlet book into her bag and gets up.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

SLOANE

Anywhere but here?

Franchesckaar's hand bolts up.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM

Yes, Franchesckaar?

FRANCHESCKAAR

We'd like to perform ours.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM

Oh very well, come up here to the front!

Sloane looks around alert, as students' gazes trickle to her.

FRANCHESCKAAR

C'mon.

Franchesckaar grabs Sloane's hand and pulls her to the front.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
So, I know how Shakespeare stuff
can be all cool when the actors do
a modern spin on it.

Franchesckaar puts the poem up on the whiteboard with a magnet.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
So we're doing it about the love
letter Sloane wrote me.

SLOANE
Are you really this full of
yourself?

Sloane pushes up against Franchesckaar so their noses touch.

FRANCHESCKAAR
Professor Higgenbottom was talking
about underlying context the other
day, so I figured this was
relevant.

SLOANE
But you don't get subtext, do you?

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
And pause right there. Multiple
choice test, everyone.

As the professor speaks, Sloane's eyes search the room of
watching students.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM (CONT'D)
Is the subtext of this exchange A)
Franchesckaar thinks everything is
about her B) Sloane can't admit to
having human feelings C) Sloane is
pressing her face to
Franchesckaar's to instigate
mindreading or D) it's to instigate
a kiss.

Sloane jumps back.

FRANCHESCKAAR
I'm voting B,C, and D.

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
(chuckles)
Sorry, a little bit of fun. You can
start your scene now.

Franchesckaar opens her book. Sloane stands paralyzed.

FRANCHESCKAAR
(to Sloane)
To be or not... to be.

Sloane stares at the back wall.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
Are you breathing?

PROFESSOR HIGGENBOTTOM
Looking kind of purplish there,
Sloane?

FRANCHESCKAAR
You okay?

Sloane falls face-first.

INT. FRANCHESCKAAR'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sloane wakes up on a couch. Franchesckaar looks back and forth between Sloane and her laptop, typing constantly.

SLOANE
What am I doing here?

FRANCHESCKAAR
Nurse said you're fine. She didn't
want you taking up the bed there.

Sloane sits up, then holds her head.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
Eat some cereal. That might help.

Sloane picks up the bowl from the coffee table. She inspects the dripping spoonful with disgust.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
Probably shouldn't have poured the
milk 3 hours before you were going
to have it.

Sloane stands.

FRANCHESCKAAR (CONT'D)
The nurse claims this is the
eleventh time? That someone's
brought you in for fainting.

Sloane shrugs.

SLOANE
Low blood sugar.

FRANCHESKAAR
If that's the case, eat the cereal.

Sloane lifts the bowl. Her mouth stays closed as she lifts the spoon.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)
That's not the cause though, is it?

Sloane opens her mouth.

FRANCHESKAAR (CONT'D)
I did some research. You gave a
speech at your high school
graduation ceremony?

The cereal bowl slips from Sloane's hand and shatters.

Sloane runs for the door with the spoon.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane slides the hangers in the closet, revealing a graduation gown.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Sloane in her graduation gown.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane pulls the graduation gown from the hanger and onto the floor. She crawls to the bed, pulling a shoebox from underneath. From inside, she pulls out a letter. It's signed by Principal Baldwin. It's addressed to Mr. and Mrs. O'Sullivan. "We're sorry to have to bother you past this point, usually after graduation we wouldn't be reaching out any further. But we are reluctant to say that you or your daughter must cover the fines for the damage on the night of graduation. We're terribly sorry to inconvenience you, but if we don't receive the payment by the 20th of June, we'll be forced to take legal measures."

INT. INDIGROVE HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sloane walks through a hallway, passing PRINCIPAL BALDWIN.

PRINCIPAL BALDWIN
There's our Round Robin winner.
Can't wait to hear your speech this
Saturday.

SLOANE
Actually, I was thinking of
switching it up.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane tries to keep tears back.

SLOANE (V.O.)
My mom has some dancer friends.

INT. INDIGROVE HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

SLOANE
And I came up with this cool melody
and rhyming scheme. Consider
yourself warned. I might be some
big competition for your speech,
principal, sir.

PRINCIPAL BALDWIN
(chuckles)
I expect nothing less, O'Sullivan.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Principal Baldwin shocked.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane pries herself off the floor, pulling open a drawer
from the dresser. There's a shiny white leotard.

INT. STAGE - NIGHT

Sonny and BACKUP DANCERS dance in a line. Sloane center
stage, speaking into the microphone, is mostly ignored.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Helena shakes Principal Baldwin's hand.

HELENA
Thank you again for deciding to
host your fine event here at The
Marqueen.

PRINCIPAL BALDWIN
The parents seem to love it. The
kids on the other hand, ungrateful
bastards.

Helena laughs too loud. Audience members look over.

Embarrassed, Helena watches the show.

INT. STAGE - DAY

Sonny sashays.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Helena points towards Sonny.

HELENA

Do you know her name? She's awfully good up there.

PRINCIPAL BALDWIN

I believe that's Sonny O'Sullivan.

INT. SONNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sloane throws the spoon, stabbing into the neck of Sonny's head shot. Sloane bursts out crying.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY

Helena sits down across from Herb.

HERB

Oh? I thought it was Sonny who texted me.

Herb lifts his phone: a text conversation with Sonny. All messages are from Herb besides the latest message.

HELENA

She did!

Helena peeks into her purse. There's a plastic bag with a bloody phone inside.

HELENA (CONT'D)

Something came up *again*. But, uh. You know, *I* used to be quite the performer back in the day.

Herb watches as THE WAITER sets a dish in front of someone at the next table over. The waiter walks away, but Herb snaps his fingers. The waiter comes back.

THE WAITER

Is there something you wanted, sir?

Herb points at the dish.

HERB

That.

THE WAITER

Splendid. Execeptional choice, I'll get your order in.

HERB

No, I want that one.

THE WAITER

Excuse me, sir?

HERB

I want that exact slab of meat.

THE WAITER

But, sir.

Herb pulls out a one hundred dollar bill. Helena's eyebrows raise. The waiter snatches it, then turns to the other table and whispers to the customer.

Herb smiles at Helena. She gives a nervous smile.

The waiter sets the dish down in front of Herb. He unbuttons his top buttons, revealing a blue paint on his chest. He stabs a fork in.

INT. FRANCHESKAAR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Francheskaar, in a paint-stained apron, steps back from the canvas-- a painting of Sloane. Pulling out her phone, she scrolls to find a picture of Sonny. Zooming in on different sections of the photo, she re-mixes her color palette.

She motions to different sections of the painting.

FRANCHESKAAR

(mumbling)

Just here. Here.

As she motions over Sloane's freckles, she stops. She sets the paint brush down.

INT. SLOANE'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sloane peers out from a doorway towards the living room. The TV is on, but the couch is empty. She tiptoes down the hall.

INT. SLOANE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sloane sneaks to the side of the TV, reaching over it to a stack of VHS tapes. As she bumps the stack, the TV pauses.

Sloane freezes. After a long moment, the TV resumes. Sloane squints to read the labels. Fourth from the top reads "Graduation Night." Sloane carefully "Jenga"s it from the stack. She tiptoes away.

INT. SLOANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sloane shuts her door behind her. She wheels the old CRT TV to the center of the room. Tracing cords, she plugs in the VCR. After a hard look at the door, she inserts the VHS tape.

The video starts:

INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Xavier holds the camera out for a selfie-view of Sloane, Sonny and himself.

XAVIER
Backstage. Live from the first
official O'Sullivan Production.

Xavier returns to being behind the camera.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I can't believe you're finally
doing it. You've always dreamed of
being up on this stage. How does it
feel?

Xavier moves the camera in front of Sonny's face.

SONNY
(giggling)
You should be asking Sloane. It's
her graduation.

XAVIER
How does it feel?

SLOANE
Like I should have rigged that
Round Robin contest to make sure I
lost.

XAVIER
Oh, sport. Don't say that. You're
going to be fine out there.

PRINCIPAL BALDWIN

Alright. Just finished my speech.
 Let's see if you're *all talk* or if
 you really can beat me at my own
 game.

Principal Baldwin hands the microphone to Sloane. Sloane,
 Sonny, and the backup dancers file through the curtain.
 Xavier weaves through the sidelines with the camera.

SLOANE (O.S.)

Hi everyone! Uh, I'm here because I
 won the Round Robin Writing
 contest, which isn't your typical
 freeform, but poetry. So I thought
 I would say these parting words to
 you all through a little rhyme.

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

XAVIER

Tough crowd.

Xavier walks along the front row, camera facing Sloane.

SLOANE

(sings)

The time we shared. So unaware.
 That we weren't giving up. We'd
 deal through. The bullies too.

Xavier turns the camera towards an unimpressed audience
 member.

INT. SLOANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A radioactive sound comes from the TV. Sloane pauses it. The
 sound stops. She presses play. The sound is there. She
 covers her ears. It dulls.

the VCR. A radioactive sound comes from it as Sloane stares
 at the audience member. She covers her ears. The sound
 dulls.

Francheskaar say nurse said not to worry, it happens all
 the time. try to figure out why she has stage fright,
 mention the graduation speech

Francheskaar makeover Sloane into Sonny (unknowing of the
 relation)

Xavier dealing

Aster making sure Sloane ready for Saturday

Sloane trying to solve TV mystery

[maybe she realizes that the radioactive sound she hears when an audience member looks at her is from the recording, or like -----ohhh. She realizes it's in the recording, and realizes it's the sound of something powering on to sabotage?]