

COMET

Written by

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EXT. PORCH - SMALL TOWN INDIANA - NIGHT

JERRY, 12, male, peaks his head out of the front door. TROY, 40, sweating, swallowed up in her hoody, hiding from the world, reaches up, and unscrews the porchlight.

She sits down in a rocking chair and stirs a few ice cubes around in her glass of brown soda before sipping. Fireflies show off. A car passes by, she slinks down.

When the car is gone, she lights a cigarette and sways front to back.

JERRY

Mama?

TROY

Yeah, baby.

JERRY

Do you want to play baseball before bed?

TROY

Of course. One game. Just give me a minute, and I'll be right in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Troy comes inside and closes the blinds, greeted by four, tail-wagging, mutts. Jerry has a video game cued up for them to play.

Troy sits down and takes the game controller from Jerry.

Jerry is the team on defense and thus, pitching. He throws a nasty digital curve ball and Troy's player swings and misses.

TROY

Oh?! That's how we're starting? I guess I better get my "A" game together.

Troy rubs Jerry playfully on the head and the boy laughs.

Jerry throws another curve ball and Troy's player drives a solid line drive to the wall, allowing her player to easily get a double.

Troy looks at Jerry, defiantly.

TROY (CONT'D)
 Uh-huh. You can't throw that same
 lazy junk at me twice in a row and
 not expect to get hurt!

Troy smiles. Jerry sturdies himself.

INT. ASIAN FOOD MARKET - DAY

Troy restocks some noodles. A CUSTOMER approaches.

CUSTOMER
 Could you tell me where the instant
 miso soup is?

TROY
 Aisle five. Try the Kikkoman brand.
 Fantastic.

CUSTOMER
 Like the soy sauce? Thank you.
 What's your name?

TROY
 Oh... you can just call me, Miss.

CUSTOMER
 I just meant... it's nice to have
 someone that speaks English here. I
 know it's an Asian market. I'm not
 racist, I just never know what I'm
 looking at. I should be thankful we
 have anything in this town other
 than fucking, Applebee's.

Troy smiles and goes back about her business. Once the
 customer is gone, Troy slips to one knee and grabs her head.

EXT. BROOKLYN CYCLONES BASEBALL PARK - EVENING

Begin Flashback:

TROY, 25, is standing behind the catcher at home plate in a
 clown suit, but wearing umpire's gear over the top.

The CROWD, mostly male, throws tomatoes at her and shouts
 insults.

CROWD ONE
 I thought only horses slept
 standing up!

CROWD TWO
Is your rule book written in
braille?!

CROWD THREE
You're gonna make someone a great
wife someday. Make it today and get
out of here!

End Flashback.

INT. ASIAN FOOD MARKET - DAY

Troy's BOSS, 50, Japanese, male, speaks loudly in his native
language over Troy, who is leaning up against the aisle.

BOSS
I don't pay women to sit around and
dream. If you can't do this job,
they are looking for people to
collect trash, but I don't think
you are strong enough.

Troy nods in acknowledgment, gets up, and shakes her head.

TROY
I'm sorry. Just tired I guess.

INT. CAR - DAY

Troy passes through some cornfields.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - PARKING LOT - DAY

Troy pulls into the parking lot in the outfield, rolls down
the window, and turns off the ignition. She checks the
rearview mirror and looks over her shoulder both ways, then
lights a cigarette.

Jerry is standing in centerfield. He looks over his shoulder
towards his mother. After a beat, he waves.

Troy redirects his attention to the game.

Just then a ball is hit on the ground at Jerry.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Troy puts her hands in front of her to simulate fielding the
ball.

TROY
 Okay, baby. You got this. The play
 is at third, play is at third,
 baby. Take a deep breath and show
 that cannon of yours off, just like
 we practiced.

Jerry fields the ball cleanly and makes a solid throw to the
 third baseman who applies the tag to the advancing runner.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - DAY

The umpire, 50, bearded male, FLUFF, makes a slow deliberate
 call, spreading his arms out to the side.

FLUFF
 (Strained voice)
 Safe!!!

INT. CAR - DAY

Troy hits the dash with her fist.

TROY
 Jesus, blue! That was pathetic.
 This is not tee ball!

EXT. TROY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Troy and Jerry get out of the car and walk toward the front
 door.

TROY
 That throw was straight gas! The
 Ump was out of position. But you
 did the right thing. You'll never
 change an Umpire's mind.

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Jerry takes his baseball bag towards his room.

TROY
 I'll get the dogs ready for a walk.

EXT. BACKYARD - EVENING

Troy walks outside to their backyard and sees the gate open that leads to the alley behind their house. The dogs are nowhere to be found.

TROY
No, no, no...

EXT. ALLEYWAY - EVENING

Troy runs into the alleyway, calling the names of all four dogs: JAIME, JOSIE, ANNIE, and RANDY.

TROY
Jaime!! Josie! Annie! Randy!

She shows an athletic resolution here. She rattles at gates and bangs on trash cans vying for the attention of the neighbors.

Then, Troy stops when she realizes some of the neighbors are coming to see about the noise. She turns and runs back to her yard.

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - EVENING

Troy approaches Jerry's room. She is sweating and out of breath.

She speaks very calmly here.

TROY
Did you happen to forget to lock
the gate?

Jerry sits down on his bed and puts his hands on his head.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Troy and Jerry drive around the neighborhood looking for the dogs.

JERRY
I shut it. I must not have pulled
the latch tight enough.

TROY
Randy's a smart old bastard. The
others listen to him.

JERRY
We'll find them, right?

TROY
Of course, we will.

Troy pulls the car over and the two of them get out.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jerry and Troy call the names of the dogs in every direction.

JERRY/TROY
Jamie! Annie! Josie! Randy!

They staple a lost dogs posters to a telephone pole.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Troy nods at the radio.

TROY
Go ahead. We need a little
motivation. They might hear us
coming.

Jerry plugs his phone into the radio of the car and picks out a song.

Begin Montage:

1. Troy walks up and down alleyways with a flashlight.
2. Jerry staples a poster to anything he can find.
3. Troy drives the two of them down a country road.
4. The two of them walk through a cornfield.
5. Troy pulls into the parking lot of the baseball field.
6. Jerry calls out their names from the pitcher's mound.

End Montage.

INT/EXT. CAR - STREET - NIGHT

Jerry and Troy move along slowly with their windows down, looking in every direction for the dogs.

A large SUV approaches them with ultra-bright headlights. Troy stops the car as the SUV stops directly in front of them.

Troy puts her hand on Jerry's chest.

TROY
What the hell is this? You stay here. If something happens, jump in the driver's seat and split.

JERRY
What would happen?

TROY
Everything.

Troy steps out of the car and shields her eyes from the lights.

EXT. UCLA SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

Begin Flashback:

YOUNG TROY, 20, holds her hand up to shield the sun from her eye, and strides to home plate in her deep sky-blue, home uniform.

In back of her, a swarm of FANS, cameras, clamoring to get a look.

One man separates himself from the crowd. Troy's father, RAY.
40.

He nods in approval.

RAY
Show them how you fly, kid. Show them how you fly.

She settles into the box and takes a deep breath.

The scoreboard reads: UCLA: 3 WASHINGTON: 3

The PITCHER looks in to get the call and begins a pretzel-like delivery. Troy stripes the ball into deep left-center field and takes off out of the box.

She sails around first base towards second.

She notices the center fielder having trouble picking up the ball and blasts toward third base.

As she nears third, Troy notices the THIRD BASE COACH, giving her the signal to head towards home plate.

She blazes... like a COMET! Safe at home! The crowd loses their collective minds.

End Flashback.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Troy sees a figure, Ray, now 60, step out of the passenger side door and approach her. He is obscured by the light.

RAY

Troy? What are you doing out in the street?

TROY

I could ask you the same if I knew who...

Ray's face comes into focus.

TROY (CONT'D)

Dad? What the hell are you doing here?

Ray opens his arms to invite Troy in for a hug.

RAY

It's nice to see you too.

Troy looks over Ray's shoulder.

RAY (CONT'D)

I brought a few friends.

A woman, ROSE, 40 steps out of the car.

ROSE

Hello, beautiful.

Rose moves past Ray and takes a hug from Troy. Troy softens a bit.

TROY

Rose. What are you...

ROSE

I brought somebody I'd like you to meet.

Rose turns and nods at the car. Out steps her son, IAN, 17.
Then his girlfriend, BRANDY, 17.

The couple hold hands and approach the group.

ROSE (CONT'D)
This is my son, Ian, and his
girlfriend, Brandy. I told them all
about you.

BRANDY
She said we needed to help her find
a friend who was lost... but here
you are, so maybe we don't have to
stay in whatever desolate place
this is.

Brandy shakes Troy's hand.

IAN
She also said you were some kind of
softball Goddess.

Troy looks at Rose and then to Ray.

TROY
(to Brandy)
Do you play?

BRANDY
No, sports are weird to me.

TROY
(to Ray)
I didn't have any phone calls from
you.

RAY
We didn't want to startle you
and...

IAN
He didn't want to give you a chance
to make an excuse.

TROY
I see. It's late. Were you just
going to knock on my door?

RAY
We have a place to stay down the
road... just wanted to make sure
this was the spot. Can I ask why
you're out this late?

Troy looks back at her car.

TROY
We were looking for...

RAY
Is that 'J money' in the car?

JERRY (O.C.)
Papa?!

Jerry gets out of the car, runs to Ray, and bear hugs him.

Troy looks back and forth from Rose to Ray. She raises her eyebrow at the realization that they are a couple.

TROY
So, this is a long way from
California. Like a road trip...
lots of time together. You all stay
in the same room?

ROSE
We wanted to tell you in person.

TROY
Fuck, me.

JERRY
How long are you here?

ROSE
Until you get sick of us.

RAY
Well... my business doesn't run
itself but...

Troy nods at Ray in acknowledgment.

RAY (CONT'D)
Which business is that now?

ROSE
He's got two food trucks. Ray
Romainos.

TROY
A salad truck?

ROSE
Like, the best fucking salads.

Jerry looks at Rose.

JERRY
Auntie Rose!

Jerry jumps in Rose's arms.

TROY
She's not your auntie, baby because
evidently that would be really
weird right now.

IAN
Is there any good food around here?

TROY
I think Applebee's is the only
place open right now. And by the
way, I met you when you were like
three, for the record.

IAN
Oh, yeah? But then you stopped
coming to L.A.... My mom said she
was always the one who would come
see you. I got left with my shitty
dad. He likes my girlfriend,
though.

BRANDY
Applebee's is an abomination.

RAY
Okay! Applebee's sounds perfect.
Will you join us, T? Dinner on me.

JERRY
Yaaayyyy!

Troy's eyes close. She hopes she has a reason to say no...

TROY
Jerry has to be at the school early
for band rehearsal.

RAY
It's summertime.

TROY
I'll call you after I get off work.
Jerry has a game...

ROSE
Whenever you do, we'll be here for
you.

TROY
You could take a look around for
our dogs on your way... four goofy-
looking things. They travel as a
pack.

ROSE
Of course.

Jerry reluctantly follows Troy to the car.

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Troy and Jerry enter the house.

JERRY
We'll see them tomorrow, right?
They won't sneak out again after
this, I promise.

TROY
Get some rest, kid.

Jerry moves to his bedroom.

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Troy pours a glass of whiskey and adds a splash of coke. She
leans on the counter and looks at the ceiling.

PRE-LAP

The sound of a dog BARKING...

EXT. STREET - SUNRISE

Troy follows the sound of a barking dog down a street. She
gets closer but can't see the animal...

TROY
JAIME! JOSIE! ANNIE! RANDY!

Finally, she rounds a corner to see a dog that does not
belong to her, barking at a coyote. Troy runs toward the
coyote with her arms stretched out wide...

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - MORNING

Jerry, holding a snare drum, strapped to his shoulder, is working on a drill for his marching band. He looks over and sees a young girl, FLORA, 12, clarinet.

Flora looks back and smiles.

JERRY

We could start a band someday.

FLORA

I heard you paying earlier. You might have to practice a little more.

Jerry looks down at his drum.

JERRY

The trombone is actually my best instrument... this is just...

A whistle is heard. The BAND DIRECTOR shouts at Jerry.

DIRECTOR

You don't get a chance to be a part of the five-time state champion Western High Panther band by rubbernecking your floppy little faces all around the place! Eyes forward! Now, march!

The Director BLOWS his whistle, Jerry focuses on his march.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - PARKING LOT - DAY

Ray, Rose, Ian, and Brandy approach Troy, who is leaning on her car.

RAY

Sorry, we're running late. Should we go sit?

TROY

You guys go ahead. I usually watch from out here.

Ray nods to the group to go on without him. They walk on.

RAY

You know this is why we came,
right?

TROY

To insert an image of my best
friend naked with my father into my
already sleepless nights?

RAY

You can't be a recluse holed up in
this nowhere town for the rest of
your life, hoping nobody sees you.

TROY

I didn't have it. I failed. I don't
belong anywhere else.

RAY

You walked away after one game,
fifteen years ago.

Jerry looks out at the two of them.

TROY

I should have known you'd come
around... you always showed up for
the game... but when they
stopped... I don't want to distract
Jerry out here.

Troy walks on.

EXT. BLEACHERS - DAY

Ian, Rose, and Brandy sit in the bleachers. Brandy watches a
girl named FAITH, 18, from concessions, walking through the
crowd, holding a tray full of candy. She wears purple, red,
and black licorice ropes around her neck.

BRANDY

This place is fancy. They bring
licorice and shit, right up to you?

IAN

You're right. I've never seen that
at a Little League game.

ROSE

They take it seriously out here. I
had a cousin from Illinois. Said
people went bananas for baseball in
the cornfields.

Ray and Troy approach, and sit.

Troy conceals herself with her hood from the other parents.

Ray spots Jerry running to the outfield to warm up before the first inning starts.

RAY

Yeah, Jerry! Show 'em how the walkers do it! You got this in your blood!

Troy grabs Ray by the arm.

RAY (CONT'D)

(to Troy)

Come on, baby. You should hope these hillbillies know your name. Jerry should be proud to be your son.

Ray looks at a quiet Troy.

RAY (CONT'D)

Oh, he doesn't know? Ah, baby that's not right.

TROY

I can't tell him one without the other.

RAY

Shit. You tell him the sun stuff first... then after a while, hit 'em with the moon.

TROY

I will. I just want him to be a kid.

The Umpire, HERMAN, 45, steps in behind the plate to start the game.

HERMAN

Play ball!

Brandy watches Faith move gracefully.

Ian notices this.

IAN

You seem pretty interested in the licorice girl.

BRANDY

I've just never seen such a thing.

Ian waves Faith over. She obliges.

IAN

Can I get all your licorice ropes?

FAITH

Do you mean the purple or the red?

IAN

All of it. The black, too.

Faith does some math on her fingers.

FAITH

That'll be thirty-five dollars.

Ian looks back at Rose.

IAN

Mom, can you get this? I'm a little short.

Rose looks at Faith.

ROSE

(to Faith)

Baby, he's just curious what you got going on there. Don't bother with him.

Rose signals an hourglass shape about Faith's full figure, then pulls out twenty dollars and gives it to her.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Just one purple and one red. Keep the change.

Faith obliges.

FAITH

Honestly, you don't have to...

ROSE

It's a special occasion.

Rose takes the purple rope and gives it to Brandy.

Ray and Rose do their own version of Lady and the Tramp with the red rope, before giving a kiss.

Troy shields her eyes.

The opposing team's batter stripes a pitch out towards Jerry, who fields the ball cleanly on a hop and fires it into the second baseman.

RAY

There you go, Jerry! Nice play.

Troy starts to study Herman, the way he moves, and settles in before the pitch.

The pitcher delivers and Herman calls a ball.

TROY

(to herself)

Clearly, that pitch was across the chest, blue. You have to tighten the ship.

The pitcher throws another ball, this time the batter swings and misses, and the runner from first attempts to steal.

The catcher throws toward second base.

Troy zeroes in on the Fluff, the creaky second base umpire, who moves like a sloth toward the play.

TROY (CONT'D)

Jesus, you're out of position. You can't make the call from there!

Fluff calls the runner safe.

TROY (CONT'D)

No, no, no. He had him on the laces before he slid by. This is why they are replacing us with computers!

Ray notices Troy getting agitated and is encouraged by the emotion she shows.

Some of the other PARENTS look Troy's way, and she feels them staring.

Troy looks at Rose with her arms around Ray.

TROY (CONT'D)

Did your son play sports?

ROSE

Ian? God no. He went to tennis camp when he was nine.

(MORE)

ROSE (CONT'D)
He said the other kids were
'unkind.' Something about duct-
taping hundreds of balls to his
body and letting a bunch of dogs
chase after him.

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

Herman walks over to the fence between innings and talks with
FRANK, 40s. Frank casually slides Herman something through
the fence.

Troy watches this interaction.

TROY
What the hell?

She is distracted by Rose and Ray arguing.

ROSE
I saw you looking at the
concessions girl. She's half your
age.

RAY
Well, she looks pretty good for
thirty-something!

A player from Jerry's team, THE BOILERMAKERS, steps up to bat
and hits a single to left field.

Jerry steps up to the plate.

RAY (CONT'D)
Let's go, Walker! Send one, kid!

Troy grits her teeth.

Jerry hits a hard ground ball to the shortstop who fields it
cleanly and drops it off to the second baseman for the first
out, then on to first base.

The throw is wide, causing the first baseman to come off the
bag to catch the ball and hit Jerry in the process, knocking
him off his course. Jerry loses his balance and stumbles out
into the field of play after touching first base. This allows
the first baseman to tag him.

Herman calls Jerry out.

The crowd erupts in frustration, but it's only momentary.

Troy simmers on the bad call and finally snaps.

She gets up and charges along the side of the fence near first base, unleashing on Herman.

TROY
Come on blue, the first baseman
clearly caused the runner to...

Troy looks around at the attention she is getting. She closes her eyes and breathes deeply...

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

Begin Flashback.

Young Troy, still in her UCLA uniform, beaming with joy, covered in Gatorade, sits in front of a row of microphones.

MEDIA 1
This must be just how you dreamed
it would be as a child.

TROY
Honestly, I never had this dream. I
didn't even know this was...

Troy is overwhelmed by the moment.

MEDIA 2
Have you thought about what comes
next?

Troy composes herself.

TROY
Actually, yes. Play professional
softball. Oh, wait, there is no
such thing. Well, I'm gonna work on
making sure there is one day. But
in the meantime, I always wanted to
be on the baseball field anyway.

There is a murmur around the room.

MEDIA 2
Do you plan on trying out for the
MLB?

TROY

Yes. But not as a player. I'm planning on being the first female umpire in the major leagues, but first I'm gonna go celebrate with my teammates.

End Flashback.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - DAY

Troy stops her breathing technique, then decides to continue on her skewering of Herman...

TROY

...I trust you're doing your best out here, but from my perspective, it appeared that the runner was impeded before the first baseman had the ball! Any person with cones in the rightful place in their eyeballs could sort that the fuck out!

Jerry watches in dismay.

HERMAN

I guess you want this job?

TROY

What I want, is for you to do your job!

UMPIRE

My job is working for the United States Postal Service. This, I do because there was nobody else who wanted to do it. But lucky for me, you just joined the ranks.

Troy looks around and notices everybody is staring at her.

HERMAN

Oh, nobody told you? They have a rule in this league, that if you cross the line with an umpire... the penalty is that you have to work the next game as the umpire yourself, so congratulations. My name is Herman by the way. Herman Fowler.

Troy looks at Jerry, who turns away.

TROY
You were safe, baby.

EXT. STREET - EVENING

Rose and Troy walk along, stopping to staple a lost poster on a pole.

TROY
I was yelling at myself out there.
I felt a rush. I saw me out there
in the uniform and I was yelling
at...

ROSE
Have you thought about a counselor?

TROY
Last I checked, the grocery store
doesn't cover a shrink. This summer
league costs a pretty penny.

ROSE
Did you ever look for help?

TROY
You're just gonna keep talking to
me like my stepmother, aren't you?

ROSE
Jesus, I'm sorry. You just...

TROY
Always had the answer? Well, I am
officially out of those.

ROSE
What are you going to do about the
league penalty?

TROY
I'm gonna have to tell Jerry that
we'll find another place to play. I
can't go back out there.

Troy stares off down a darkened street and shouts the names
of her dogs. Rose joins in.

TROY/ROSE
Jamie! Annie! Josie! Randy!

EXT. MOTEL POOL - NIGHT

Jerry plays basketball on the pool basket while Brandy floats on an inflatable flamingo.

Ian looks at his phone.

BRANDY

Is your mom always that crazy about sports?

JERRY

Crazy?

BRANDY

I thought she was going to murder that man. Like melt the fence with her eyes and murder him.

JERRY

It was a little embarrassing. She's just passionate I guess.

BRANDY

Sports people are crazy, yo. Losing their minds for teams they don't even play on. Like, they played when they were twelve and think they can just yell.

IAN

She didn't just play Little League or whatever.

Brandy looks toward Ian.

IAN (CONT'D)

She was like a college superstar at U.C.L.A.

Ian turns his phone towards Brandy. Jerry pretends not to be interested.

IAN (CONT'D)

You heard my mom in the car, right?

BRANDY

I mean, kind of.

Brandy paddles toward the edge of the pool and watches a highlight video of Troy playing college softball.

After a beat.

BRANDY (CONT'D)
Jesus. She was a beast. Okay like
if you were that good, I can
understand yelling. But the umpire
is not playing.

JERRY
She was a professional umpire.

Ian and Brandy look at Jerry.

JERRY (CONT'D)
She doesn't think I know... there
was no professional softball back
then, so she tried to become the
first female umpire in the MLB.

IAN
Holy shit. What happened?

JERRY
I don't know. She's never talked
about it.

BRANDY
And you've been hiding out in this
sweet-ass little cornfield your
whole life? Damn.

JERRY
Not my whole life. I think we came
here when I was six or so. We lived
in California.

Ian dives back into his phone.

IAN
Hold up. What's your last name?

JERRY
Walker. Are we going to be related
somehow?

IAN
Shit my last name is White, so that
would make my mom a white-walker.

Jerry wrinkles his forehead.

BRANDY
(to Ian)
They didn't have Game of Thrones
out here?

IAN

He was like, five when it ended.

Ian opens his eyes big, seeing something on his phone.

IAN (CONT'D)

Here's something. "Troy Walker, former college standout, can't make a call in her debut behind the plate!"

Jerry swims over to the edge.

IAN (CONT'D)

You sure you want to hear this?

BRANDY

Yeah, we don't need to do...

JERRY

Read it.

EXT. MOTEL POOL - LATER

Jerry is floating now, and Ian and Brandy are kissing in the corner of the pool. Jerry looks up at the stars, and then Flora, from band practice walks by. Jerry scrambles out of the pool.

JERRY

Hey, Flora.

Flora notices him and seems somewhat embarrassed.

FLORA

Jerry? What are you doing here?

Jerry looks over his shoulder.

JERRY

My relatives I guess? They're visiting. What about you?

FLORA

Same with me. I just came to visit.

Flora looks around anxiously.

JERRY

Have you been practicing the clarinet?

FLORA

Me? I'm solid. You need to work on your paradiddles, though.

JERRY

Like I said. I'm going to play the trombone. I'm just building a foundation...

FLORA

Okay, Maybe we can find a third and make it a trio. Go to New Orleans... I should go.

Jerry smiles.

INT. GROCERY - DAY

Troy restocks some items at the store.

She sees Herman from the game.

Troy tries to hide but Herman sidles up next to her.

HERMAN

Do you know where I can find a correct call around here?

TROY

I'm sorry?

HERMAN

You were pretty brutal out there. It's just a little league game.

TROY

I shouldn't have...

HERMAN

Truth is I don't know what I'm doing out there. Only four of us volunteered. I Read the rule book once, but...

TROY

It's a problem of mine.

HERMAN

They will force you to get out there now. Or you're kid will get blackballed.

TROY

The thing is. I know the rules up and down. But, I...

HERMAN

Afraid people will figure out who you are?

TROY

You know?

HERMAN

It's not every day you see the eyes of a comet.

TROY

Okay, that's corny. You think anyone else knows?

HERMAN

If they did, you think they followed your career after you left school? Nobody has that kind of attention span.

TROY

The internet has all the receipts.

HERMAN

If you decline or try to take your kid somewhere else... there isn't anywhere else by the way. That will cause a frenzy. People will need to know why. But if you show up and do a good job they might just let you be.

Troy nods.

Herman starts to walk away.

TROY

What did he give you?

HERMAN

I'm sorry?

TROY

One of the dads. He gave you a note or...

HERMAN

Like I said. It's just a little league game.

Herman continues on.

INT. ANIMAL SHELTER - EVENING

Troy walks the halls of the shelter and looks into each enclosure.

She bends down and lets a helpless dog lick her finger.

Troy looks up at the employee.

TROY
I don't see them.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING

Troy lights a cigarette and listens to the cicadas sing.

EXT. BROOKLYN CYCLONES PARK - DAY

Begin Flashback:

Troy, sweating, sees Ray, who nods and makes the motion of a bird flying. Troy tightens up her umpire gear and says an oath:

TROY
Umpires are facilitators who have
the responsibility to keep the game
fair by enforcing the rules without
prejudice or bias.

Troy takes a few deep breaths and wheels around toward the pitcher.

TROY (CONT'D)
Play Ball!

End Flashback.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - NIGHT

The gang has gathered at an empty field.

Troy squats behind the plate with a glove and a catcher's mask on.

Ray stands on the mound and looks in for a signal from Troy. Jerry stands at the plate. Ian, Brandy, and Rose are scattered around the infield.

RAY
This is your last chance to walk
away.

JERRY
Show me what you got, old man.

Ray smiles, rocks back, and delivers a slurve.

Jerry whiffs.

RAY
Oh, you ain't quite old enough for
the slurve. I forgot they only
throw meatballs at your age.

Jerry looks back at Troy.

JERRY
He thinks I've never seen a
curveball? I just didn't think he
had it in him.

TROY
He's got all the junk.

JERRY
Tell him to throw it again.

TROY
You want me to give you a leg up?
Ha. You're on your own.

Ray looks in and rocks back. This time he throws a
knuckleball that wobbles around before dropping in front of
the plate. Jerry swings and misses again.

JERRY
What the hell was that?

TROY
A man in his glory days.

JERRY
Look alive out there!

Troy gives Ray the signal for a fastball up and in. He
delivers and Jerry hits it up the middle. Ian happens to be
standing in the wrong place and the ball jumps up and gets
him in the groin.

Jerry takes off running. Ian goes down in a heap, Rose picks
up the ball and throws it in Brandy's direction, who is near
first base.

Brandy does not try to catch the ball, so Jerry takes off toward second. Finally, Brandy picks up the ball and chases Jerry.

Jerry rounds second and Ray calls for the ball. Brandy throws it at him in the dirt. Brandy leans down to attend to Ian. Rose tries to get in Jerry's way.

Jerry rounds third as Ray picks up the ball and throws it to Troy. She tags Jerry as he slides into home plate.

He's out.

Jerry looks at his mom, knowing he is out but waiting for her reaction.

Troy looks up at Ray and back down at Jerry.

TROY
You're out kid.

Jerry stands, dusts himself off, and hugs Troy.

JERRY
I knew you would do the right
thing. Your first game is tomorrow
night.

Troy smiles at Jerry, then nods to Ray.

Ian yells at Rose.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - EVENING

A crowd is gathered under the lights for Troy's first game behind the plate. Troy does a few breathing exercises and then says her oath:

TROY
Umpires are facilitators who have
the responsibility to keep the game
fair by enforcing the rules without
prejudice or bias.

She gives Ray a head nod.

RAY
Show them how you fly, kid.

TROY
Play Ball!

The first batter from the away team approaches the box.

Troy steadies herself behind the plate.

The batter steps in and watches the first pitch go by.

Troy takes a long beat after the ball arrives.

A man from the crowd shouts:

MAN 1
Come on blue, that was a strike.

MAN 2
Put on your glasses and call a ball
a ball!

EXT. BROOKLYN CYCLONES PARK - NIGHT

Begin Flashback:

Troy wipes her brow.

The pitcher delivers a strike, right down the middle.

Troy begins to hyperventilate.

The crowd immediately starts to boo.

End Flashback.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE FIELD - EVENING

Troy locks in.

TROY
Strike!

The away team, THE CARDINALS, coach, JAMES, 40's, calls out from the dugout.

JAMES
Good call, ump.

Troy looks in his direction and notices his sturdy stature. She is slightly confused by this since it was his player that she called a strike on.

The pitcher throws again, this time the batter hits the ball into center field. The fielder picks it up and holds the runner at first.

Troy motions for Fluff, to get a better vantage point at second base.

EXT. BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Rose is filming the game with her phone on a small tripod and marking down each pitch in a notebook. Ray notices.

RAY
You scoring the game?

ROSE
I'm keeping track of every call
Troy makes so she can review them.

RAY
Wow. That's good looking out.

ROSE
This is why we're here.

RAY
Troy's locked in.

ROSE
Why don't you keep an eye out?

RAY
For what?

ROSE
Anything out here that could affect
what's going on in there.

RAY
Copy that.

Ray's eyes dart around outside of the playing area.

JERRY
(to Ray)
How come you haven't come out here
before? We had to come visit you.

RAY
Good question, kid. I guess I like
shapes in the land. You know, and
waves.

JERRY
Summertime is nice here. There is
such a thing as corn sweat. They
can measure the moisture in the air
given off by all the corn. Part of
why it's so humid here. But I don't
like the winters. It's cold... and
lonely.

Ray looks out at Troy.

RAY
I'll make it up, I promise.

Brandy elbows Ian. Points him toward Faith.

BRANDY
Hey, Ian, I think we need more
licorice.

IAN
I don't have any money.

Brandy pulls out her wallet and with it a crisp \$100 bill.
There are several other bills inside her purse.

Ian raises one side of his mouth nervously.

IAN (CONT'D)
Okay, wow.

BRANDY
I gave you a chance to be the man.

IAN
You know, I'm okay with you having
more money than me.

BRANDY
That's bold of you, baby.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A PLAYER from the Boilermakers team hits a single. CHET, 30,
THE HOOSIERS, coach, calls a timeout and rushes out to talk
to the pitcher, WAYNE, 12.

CHET
You've got this, kid. Just focus on
your fucking throws.

As Chet pats Wayne on the back, he subtly slips something
into the pitcher's back pocket.

EXT. BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Frank watches this from the bleachers.

FRANK
Jesus, leave him alone.

RAY
(to Rose)
Did you see that?

ROSE
See what, Ray?

RAY
Son of a bitch.

Wayne readies himself to pitch, dips his hand into his back pocket, and throws a nasty curve ball, followed by two more that the batter swings at, and misses.

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

The players switch sides, and Troy takes a moment to catch her breath. Ray approaches her, concern etched on his face.

RAY
Troy, we need to talk.

TROY
What's on your mind, Dad?

RAY
(low voice)
I saw the coach slip something into the pitcher's pocket during that timeout.

TROY
Shit. This is my first game back.
Maybe don't...

RAY
Trust your instincts. We're here for you. Remember the oath...

TROY
I was happy with our life.

RAY
Were you?

Troy bites her lip.

TROY
Fuck.

EXT. CONCESSION STAND - DAY

The concession stand is abuzz with activity. Faith is busy serving snacks to the fans.

Ian approaches.

IAN

Hey there. You're doing a great job
keeping everyone fed.

Ian purses his lips at the less-than-smooth remark.

FAITH

Well, I hope they feed themselves
something healthier than this
garbage when they get home.

IAN

Oh? Of course. I wasn't going to
buy any of this...

FAITH

I'm the worst. I'm sorry. It's just
people aren't very healthy around
here.

IAN

Jesus, you should see the freaks in
California. Maybe they're fit but
they're not healthy.

FAITH

I'd love to see the beach someday.

IAN

You need any help around here? I
don't know how long we're in town
but...

Faith hands Ian a multi-colored hat.

FAITH

Yes, but you need to wear this.

Ian puts it on awkwardly and then looks at the other
employees without any uniforms on.

Ian rolls up his sleeves, ready to assist.

IAN

Great! I'm Ian, by the way.

FAITH

Nice to meet you, Ian. I'm Faith.

They exchange a friendly handshake.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The HOOSIERS take the field on defense.

Troy approaches Wayne at the mound.

TROY

Hey there, mind emptying your
pockets for me?

Wayne, taken aback, complies, revealing the substance Chet
had slipped to him earlier.

PITCHER

I didn't know what it was. Coach
told me it was a good luck charm.

TROY

Well, it's against the rules.
You're out.

The crowd stirs, noticing something going down.

FAN 1

That's right, fair play!

FAN 2

Boo! Unbelievable. He's just a kid!

Troy points to the dugout, signaling for Wayne to leave the
field. Chet, fuming, approaches Troy.

CHET

We don't go for no woke bullshit
around here. The kid didn't do
anything wrong!

TROY

Fair play is non-negotiable. You
pull anything else and you're gone
too.

Chet retreats to the dugout, disgruntled. The fans become
agitated.

FAN 3

Get outta here, ump! We don't need
anybody to enforce nothing!

TROY
Interesting.

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

In between innings, James approaches Troy.

JAMES
That's a trained eye, spotting
that. You done this before?

TROY
Coach, I'm going to need you to
step back toward your dugout unless
you have a question related to the
game.

JAMES
Okay, okay. She's all business. I
understand. Well, you might want to
keep an eye out after the game.

TROY
Is that a threat?

James nods toward Chet, who shotguns a beer in disgust.

JAMES
Not me you have to worry about.
Dude has some low-down friends and
will do anything to win. He thinks
his son is gonna get a scholarship.

TROY
Who's his son?

JAMES
Exactly.

CHET
You two talking about your favorite
Chardonnay out there?

James flips Chet the bird.

JAMES
(to Chet)
Trying to get her to come to my
Vinyasa class. You should come
sometime. It would be good for that
pent-up anger.

CHET

I might show up, just to drop a little sweat from my balls on your forehead while you're busy chanting in tongues and shit.

JAMES

Jesus.

TROY

Play ball!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

The Cardinals are up to bat. There is a runner on third.

The pitch comes in, and the batter makes contact, sending the ball soaring toward center field.

The third base coach gives the signal for the runner on third to go home after the catch.

The catcher braces for impact, ready to tag the runner out.

The runner reaches for home plate, and the catcher fields the throw and lunges toward him.

Troy is indecisive for a split second and then...

TROY

You're out!

Half the crowd erupts into cheers and applause, while The Cardinals express their disbelief. Hats and mitts are thrown. One player even throws the bats into the field. James quickly gets his team in order.

JAMES

Hey! We're not doing that. We know how to win and we ask why we lost. We don't throw tantrums out here. It's disrespectful to the game and the other team.

James turns to Troy.

JAMES (CONT'D)

(respectful, nodding)
Good call.

Troy nods back.

Jerry approaches the fence from the stands.

JERRY
He's right. Good call, ump.

Troy turns and smiles.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Ray and Rose said they'd take me
for ice cream...

TROY
They did now?

Troy reaches into her pocket and pulls out her wallet, slides
a five-dollar bill to Jerry.

TROY (CONT'D)
Have fun but you buy you're own.

Jerry takes the money and runs off.

Ray and Rose smile at Troy.

ROSE
We'll go over the game later.

TROY
Of course, we will.

Troy turns and rolls her eyes to herself.

Frank notices this interaction.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Troy is walking to her car alone pulling a wagon full of her
gear. She notices James in the distance with his son.

Just then, a large truck with tinted windows stops, blocking
Troy's path to her car. The truck revs up the engine for a
long dramatic beat. Troy reaches down towards her wagon and
puts her hand on a baseball bat.

On the handle, it reads COMET. The driver then pops the truck
into gear and tears off.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Troy, Ray, Rose, Jerry, Ian, and Brandy are putting up flyers
for the dogs around the town square.

Ray watches Troy closely, noticing a spark in her eyes.

RAY

You good?

TROY

I haven't been behind that plate in a long time, Dad. It felt good.

RAY

You've got a gift, Troy. It's never too late to give it another shot.

TROY

Maybe someday, Dad. But for now, I need to focus on J.

RAY

And you are. You're doing an incredible job.

Troy's smile fades, and she looks away, a hint of sadness in her eyes.

EXT. UCLA SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

Troy steps into the batter's box. Close on her bat with the inscription of the comet.

She rips a ball to the outfield and runs to first. The first base coach puts up his hands to signal to Troy to stop at first but she has no intention of stopping. She burns around first base, surprising the outfielder who quickly tries to get the ball to second base.

Troy slides in ahead of the tag and pops up.

The SECOND BASEMAN is surprised by how fast she got there.

SECOND BASEMAN

Jesus. I heard you were fast but damn...

Troy brushes herself off and smiles.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

TROY

Being an athlete was straightforward. It came naturally... but this... I'm in my head all the time.

Ray pulls Troy into a reassuring hug.

RAY
(to group)
Why don't we head back to the hotel
for a little celebration? I'll fire
up the grill.

ROSE
Count me in!

IAN
Pool party bitches!

JERRY
Can you cook a brisket?

RAY
Oh, kid, I like where your head's
at but how bout we start with some
burgers?

BRANDY
Is there a healthy option at this
party?

RAY
Ice cold water. As much as you can
drink.

EXT. MOTEL OUTDOOR POOL - EVENING

Rose and Troy, play a rousing game of cornhole against Ian
and Brandy on the pool deck. Jerry stands next to Ray at the
grill.

Ray holds out his hand with his palm down.

RAY
You know how to tell if a burger is
done?

Jerry shakes his head.

Ray pokes at the space between his thumb and forefinger when
it's relaxed.

RAY (CONT'D)
Try this.

Jerry follows his lead.

RAY (CONT'D)
That means it's still rare. Now do
this.

Ray turns his hand over and presses on the place below his
thumb on the palm side.

JERRY
Uh-huh.

Jerry obliges.

RAY
That means medium. Now stretch out
the hand and press on the same
spot.

Jerry does.

Ray nods at the burgers on the grill. Jerry touches one of
the burgers.

JERRY
Well done?

Ray smiles and nods.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Alright, folks, burgers are ready!

IAN
(leaning in towards
Brandy)
So, tell me more about Faith. She
seemed nice.

BRANDY
You couldn't let me have my own
chew toy? You had to go and be all
goofy over there with the hat on.

IAN
Goofy? I think I sold like ten bags
of popcorn.

Brandy takes a hit from her vape.

BRANDY
Lately, I've been feeling like
maybe we're just heading in
different directions.

IAN
Why do you think I took an interest
in Faith? That's something we could
have in common.

BRANDY
Maybe I should have said something
earlier before I joined you on this
family trip to the Fat Lands.

Ian watches her smoke disappear.

IAN
The Flatlands.

BRANDY
It's humor, Ian. Get into it.

RAY
These burgers will not serve
themselves!

Ian walks away.

Jerry sits by himself and goes in on his burger. He spots
Flora.

JERRY
Hey, Flora!

Flora, with a slightly surprised look, quickly averts her
gaze. She keeps walking.

JERRY (CONT'D)
Are you visiting again?

FLORA
Yeah, something like that.

JERRY
Okay...

EXT. MOTEL OUTDOOR POOL - NIGHT

Ray and Rose find themselves in a quiet corner, swaying to
the music coming from a portable speaker.

ROSE
I want to tell Troy about the baby.

RAY

She's just starting to make some progress. I don't think we need to...

ROSE

You know you could just apologize to her.

RAY

I don't want to live in the past. I don't think it does anybody any good. I'm here now and I want Jerry to have a shot at a good life.

Rose pulls away.

ROSE

So you're like some Zen master? Don't think about the future because you might get anxious and don't think about the burdens of the past?

RAY

You knew why we came out here. There will be lots of time for fighting about baby... Whatever its name...

ROSE

I think he's Ray Junior.

Ray bites at his bottom lip.

RAY

Nah. He deserves a better name than mine. You sure you want me around? I mean I'm a grandfather. Probably won't even be able to throw a ball... And there's something I need to tell you about Ray Romainos...

Rose has stopped listening and walks away.

ROSE

You're fucking stuck with me, old man.

EXT. MOTEL OUTDOOR POOL - LATER

The entire group is dancing and singing along loudly to the music which draws disapproving glances from some of the motel guests passing by. Ian finishes a beer and is clearly drunk.

IAN
(slurring his words)
Brandy! I love you, Brandy! You're
the cake to my fat kid!

Brandy, uncomfortable, tries to calm Ian down.

BRANDY
Ian, come on. Let's sit down for a
bit. Also, you can't piggyback on
my fat stuff. That's lame.

Ian grows increasingly erratic.

IAN
You don't get it! I love you!

Ian smashes his beer bottle on the ground.

ROSE
Ian, stop!

IAN
Mom, you didn't even check on me
when the ball hit my junk! You just
kept playing...

Ray attempts to restrain Ian.

RAY
Easy, Ian. Let it go.

IAN
Okay, "Dad." Groom young women
much?

A hotel guest shouts down at the pool.

HOTEL GUEST
She doesn't love you, Ian. Better
to know that now!

A police car pulls up.

Ian takes off running.

IAN
I'm a lover. I won't last in
prison!

He stops after a few feet and throws up on himself.

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The whole gang is gathered around with all of their luggage.

ROSE
(to Troy)
I'm so sorry about all this. We
won't stay long.

RAY
Jerry, you got an extra sleeping
bag? You and I can sleep under the
stars. Maybe I'll make you some of
my famous barbecue crapes in the
morning...

BRANDY
This is my fault. I don't think I
should have come.

ROSE
Well, I won't disagree with that,
but... He's almost an adult. I
shouldn't have let him drink. His
father was a drunk. Couldn't even
hold in his piss. So at least he...
didn't piss himself.

JERRY
Are we sure?

TROY
Jerry. Not kind. I'll get the tent
from the garage. Jerry can you put
some new sheets on your bed for
Brandy to sleep on? Rose you can
sleep in my bed. I'll take the
couch. I'll set up a bean bag
outside the bathroom for Slim,
here.

Troy points to Ian who is still visibly ill.

JERRY
This is amazing. My first slumber
party.

ROSE
Just the way you dreamed it up,
kid. Now make sure you find the
lesson in this.

JERRY
Don't mix alcohol and insecurity?

Everyone is quiet for a moment and then all laugh together.

RAY
We appreciate you letting us crash
here, Troy.

IAN
I'm really sorry, everyone.

Ian darts for the toilet.

BRANDY
You owe me all the licorice in the
world!

INT. ASIAN MARKET - DAY

Troy and Rose stand in the aisle of the store. Rose holds a
clipboard with a stack of papers.

ROSE
Alright, let's go over the stats
from the game.

Troy listens intently.

ROSE (CONT'D)
You handled most of the calls well,
Troy. Your strike zone accuracy was
on point for the most part.

TROY
Thanks. It felt so good to be back
there.

ROSE
There were a couple of close calls,
though. Like that play at third
base in the fifth inning. You
hesitated a bit.

TROY
You're right. I should have been
more assertive.

ROSE

And the strike zone wasn't always consistent. You drifted below the knees a few times.

TROY

Maybe it was good that I hadn't been on the field in years. I didn't feel any scar tissue out there.

ROSE

That's amazing, but we have to prepare for the worst.

TROY

You know what would really help?

Boss approaches.

BOSS

(in Japanese)

Should I get the two of you some snacks and fucking folding chairs? Maybe a sunlamp?

TROY

(to Rose)

You can restock the soup on aisle three.

Troy nods toward a stack of boxed goods.

ROSE

Of course. Is he always this nice?

TROY

You speak Japanese?

ROSE

I speak asshole.

The two put their heads together and laugh.

EXT. TROY'S BACKYARD - DAY

Ray and Jerry play catch. Jerry zips a fastball at Ray.

RAY

That's quite the arm, kid. You're Mom and I used to do this.

JERRY

Yeah?

RAY

Oh yeah. We'd spend hours out in the yard. We'd call out situational plays, like a man on second, two outs. She just knew what to do. I wish you could have seen her play. She was...

JERRY

Ray, can I ask you something?

RAY

Of course, buddy. What's on your mind?

JERRY

It's about Flora. The girl from the motel. She acted like she didn't know me.

RAY

Sometimes, people have their reasons for keeping to themselves. Don't take it personally.

JERRY

But how do I know if she wants to be friends?

RAY

Just be available, and when she's ready, she'll open up. Trust me. Now show me your change-up.

Jerry puts the ball in his glove and takes it off.

JERRY

Maybe later.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Troy is back behind the plate. The Hoosiers are the home team.

Chet hands one of his players a different bat, as he approaches the plate. The player hesitates, but Chet pushes him onward.

TROY
(to the player)
Hey, let me see that bat for a second.

The player hands over the bat, and Troy quickly checks the dimensions written on the bat. Her face tightens.

TROY (CONT'D)
Sorry, this bat doesn't comply with the rules. The weight limit is thirty-two ounces. You'll need to get another one.

The player reluctantly heads back to the dugout, and Troy approaches Chet.

TROY (CONT'D)
I won't give you another chance.

CHET
I think you fulfilled your obligation. Nobody in this park will be mad if you just hand in your uniform and focus on selling wontons.

Chet glances up into the stands, his gaze locking with Ray's. Then he finds Frank and motions for him to meet him back at the dugout.

EXT. DUGOUT - DAY

CHET
(to Frank)
Keep the dad occupied.

FRANK
Of course, my dude.

Frank tries to give a funky bro handshake. Chet walks away and leaves Frank hanging.

EXT. BLEACHERS - DAY

Frank sidles up next to Ray.

FRANK
She your daughter?

RAY
I'm sorry?

FRANK
She seems like she's done this before.

RAY
You could say that.

FRANK
I mean... I could say a lot of things, but I like to have the facts.

RAY
I'll bet you do. You gotta know the facts to mangle them...

FRANK
Just feels like maybe she's trying to make this about her and not the kids.

Ray scratches his head and looks at Rose, then back at Frank.

RAY
I'm gonna watch the game now, my friend. No offense.

EXT. DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS

Meanwhile, Chet gives an all-clear signal to someone stationed in center field, who's using binoculars to steal the signs from the opposing catcher.

Troy notices the next batter approaching the plate, fidgeting with what appears to be an earpiece. She squints to get a better look, but the earpiece seems to vanish.

TROY
Stay focused, Troy.

She shakes her head back and forth as if she thinks she might be hallucinating.

The next few batters from The Hoosiers step up and crush the ball, sending it soaring into the outfield. The crowd erupts.

The OPPOSING COACH calls a timeout and approaches the pitcher's mound.

He signals for the RIGHT FIELDER to take the PITCHER'S place.

OPPOSING COACH

They got a lock on you. Shake it off. Go take right field and we'll finish this thing strong.

PITCHER

These kids are animals. Something's not right.

EXT. CONCESSION STAND - CONTINUOUS

Ian works alongside Faith at the concession stand.

IAN

What do people do for fun around here?

FAITH

Well, I heard somebody was getting drunk at the Yates motel Friday night and smashing bottles and running from the police. You could try that.

IAN

Wow. Okay. I was thinking of something that anybody can enjoy...

FAITH

Like cow tipping?

IAN

That sounds awesome.

FAITH

Meet me tonight at the Jones ranch at midnight...

IAN

What do I wear?

FAITH

Clearly you don't wear anything.

IAN

Oh? Because of the...

FAITH

Easier to hose yourself off afterward.

IAN

Of course.

FAITH

Jesus. You've never seen 'Tommy Boy?'

IAN

Oh. I was just being polite. That was the movie with uh...

FAITH

Chris Farley. Legend. You could go to the strawberry festival in the town square, I guess.

IAN

That's not bad. You should come too.

FAITH

Perhaps. I don't want to cause any problems.

IAN

Great! We'll have a good time, I promise.

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

Troy calls the last out of the game. The Hoosiers are victorious. Chet approaches Troy.

CHET

You have a problem with the way my team plays?

TROY

My problem, Chet, is that you don't need to cheat to win. Play fair, and let the kids play. They might surprise you.

CHET

There really isn't a policy that says you have to do this. It just started as a joke. Ha ha.

Chet leans in.

CHET (CONT'D)

The joke is you.

TROY
Well, you could work on your
delivery a little. And maybe try a
breath mint.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

James approaches Troy.

JAMES
You did a fantastic job out there,
Troy.

TROY
Thank you, James. Do you come watch
all the games?

JAMES
Listen, I know this might be
forward, but would you be
interested in grabbing a coffee
sometime? I'd love to get to know
you better.

Troy hesitates for a moment.

TROY
Coffee sounds nice, James. I'm
just... I can't be seen with one of
the coaches. It would look...

JAMES
No pressure. After the season then.

Troy smiles and walks away.

EXT. TROY'S BACKYARD - EVENING

The whole crew sits in the backyard, lit up by a crackling
bonfire. Two tents have been set up nearby.

ROSE
So, Brandy, tell us about your
favorite part of the adventure so
far.

BRANDY
Oh, what a fantastic road trip this
has been.

Brandy pulls out her phone and starts pretending to text a
friend.

BRANDY (CONT'D)
(typing)
"Dear Jenny, you won't believe the
adventure I'm having..."

Brandy smirks, sarcasm dripping from every word.

BRANDY (CONT'D)
"... We left the sunny beaches of
California for the scenic
cornfields of Indiana. Ian, in all
his wisdom, is trying to play baby
games and sell hotdogs with a girl
I spotted first. Fast forward to
him running from the police covered
in his own vomit and crying like a
bitch! Weirdly, the Fleabag Motel
management didn't find it charming,
So here we are, tented up in the
backyard, where I'll probably be
sleeping next to his mother
tonight."

ROSE
Well, you are an honest one, aren't
you?

IAN
I try to let you know how I'm
feeling and this is what I get...

Troy gazes into the flickering flames of the bonfire.

EXT. CORN MAZE - NIGHT

Troy walks through a vast, rustling cornfield. The moonlight
bathes the scene in a soft, ethereal glow.

TROY
Annie? Randy? Josie? Jaime?

Suddenly, she spots a clearing up ahead.

In the clearing, her four beloved dogs are there, tails
wagging, eyes shining with recognition and joy. They bound
towards her.

TROY (CONT'D)
Oh, I'm so sorry!

She kneels, embracing each of them, tears of happiness
streaming down her face.

TROY (CONT'D)
I've missed you so much.

But then, something shifts. The dogs' eyes seem to gleam with an unnatural light. Their barks turn into strange, unsettling words.

JAIME
Women have no place in the bigs,
you crazy bitch.

RANDY
You should have never left the
softball field.

Troy's eyes widen, shock and confusion filling her face. She recoils, horrified.

TROY
Jesus.

JOSIE
(snickering)
Think you can compete with the big
boys, sweetheart?

ANNIE
You're in way over your head. One
mistake and it's over.

Troy stumbles back. She turns and runs.

EXT. TROY'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Troy comes out of her dream and realizes nobody notices her state.

TROY
You guys know where everything is.
I'm going to call it a night.

Troy gets up and walks inside.

ROSE
(to Ray)
I think it might be best if Brandy
and I share one tent, and you and
Ian take the other. I need to talk
to her about some things.

RAY
Okay. I might sleep outside then.

INT. TROY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Troy serves a selection of Dim Sum on the kitchen table.

Brandy bristles at the sight.

BRANDY

Do you have any avocado toast?

Jerry eats something with a smile on his face.

ROSE

(to Brandy)

Brandy, honey. Maybe it's time you show a little more respect to everyone.

Rose takes a dumpling, dips it, and plops it in her mouth.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Fuck me. This is exquisite.

Rose stops.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Wait. There's not any raw fish in here is there?

Troy looks at Rose and then to Ray. She shakes her head.

Ray and Ian follow Rose's lead. Brandy nibbles at the edge of a spring roll.

BRANDY

Hmm mmm.

IAN

So, what's on the agenda for today? I heard about a strawberry festival. I thought we could all go.

RAY

Sounds like a great idea. It would be good to see some local flare.

TROY

Well, my game isn't until tonight. I guess we could check it out.

BRANDY

Will there be more deep-fried stuff? I can't wait.

JERRY
They have chocolate-covered
strawberries! I'm sure we can have
them fry one for you.

BRANDY
I'm going for a run.

Ian takes out his phone and dials.

IAN
(into phone)
Hey, Faith. So, we're going to be
at the festival at noon. Will we
see you there?

Ian smiles.

IAN (CONT'D)
Amazing.

Brandy gets up.

BRANDY
I hate you.

EXT. STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL - DAY

Carnival atmosphere in the town square. The group approaches
a water gun game that requires you to fill up a balloon over
a clown's head.

IAN
Alright, ladies, watch and learn.
I'm going to win you the biggest
prize here.

Ray sidles up next to him, beats him handily, and wins a
prize for Rose.

Rose gives the prize to Ian, who declines.

FAITH
Nice try, Ian.

BRANDY
Maybe next time, champ.

Undeterred, Ian moves on to a basketball toss.

ROSE
Ray, you know, it might be nice to
let him win once.

RAY
He's on his own on this one. I
don't think anybody has ever won
this game.

Ian misses horribly on his first shot.

BRANDY
Ian, save your dignity. Nobody here
wants a stuffed animal it's
ridiculous.

ROSE
Speak for yourself, sweetie.

Ian locks in and the ball bounces out on the second shot.

FAITH
(whispering to Brandy)
You're the only reason I'm here
today.

BRANDY
Fuck me.

FAITH
I didn't know how to let Ian down
gently and I know you guys...

BRANDY
I need a drink.

FAITH
I might know where to find one of
those.

Faith pulls out a flask.

Troy approaches Ian.

TROY
Put a little topspin on it and let
go of the tension.

Ian takes a deep breath and prepares for his final throw. He
drops the ball ever so softly into the basket and it starts
to roll out but hangs on the edge before rolling back against
the back of the wall.

WORKER

Holy shit! You're not supposed to
be able to... I mean
congratulations!

The worker climbs up and unhooks a giant stuffed Giraffe and gives it to Ian.

Ian turns to show the girls, but they are gone.

Ian tries to give the animal to Jerry who declines. Troy graciously accepts.

Troy turns to see James and his son walking toward the group.

EXT. STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL - DAY

James gives his son a handful of tickets to use as he pleases.

JAMES

Meet me back here in thirty
minutes.

His son runs off.

Troy and James sit at a picnic table, sharing an elephant ear.

TROY

He looks just like you.

JAMES

I hope that's a good thing. Listen,
I need you to know, that I looked
you up. I was pretty sure I
recognized you. I just don't want
you to think that's why I asked you
for coffee.

Troy laughs out loud, almost deliriously.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Is that weird?

Troy composes herself.

TROY

I washed the fuck out. I mean, I
had big ambitions.

(MORE)

TROY (CONT'D)

I tried my hand at becoming the first female to umpire a men's professional game and after a couple of years of college games and rookie ball exhibitions, they gave me a shot. I mean I earned that shit. The whole steaming pile of shit went up in flames in one night. I couldn't get out of my damn head. I was so afraid of making the wrong call I couldn't make any calls at all. After that, I crashed. I went back home for a while, bounced around from job to job, got drunk one night, and met Jerry's dad. After a few years of people feeling sorry for me, I went underground. What's weird is you thinking that I might think that you were interested in a crazy lady like me for being crazy. But maybe you're into trying to save crazy ladies?

JAMES

Woh. I didn't know anything about that. I just knew they called you 'Comet.'

Troy closes her eyes.

Over James' shoulder, sits Frank, his hat pulled low over his eyes. He listens intently to James and Troy's conversation, then slips away.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - DAY

Ian, Brandy, and Faith stand in line, eagerly waiting for their turn on the Ferris wheel. When it's their turn, they climb into one of the brightly colored cars, with Faith taking the middle seat.

BRANDY

This should be... weird.

The Ferris wheel begins its ascent.

IAN

(playfully)

Alright, Faith, you're in the middle. That means you get to be the queen of the Ferris wheel.

BRANDY

Jesus. What does that even mean?

Both Ian and Brandy put their arms around Faith, creating a cozy space within the car. Brandy Looks at Faith.

FAITH

Queen? Will you be my lady wench?

IAN

What do I get to be?

BRANDY

You're the Court Jester.

Faith laughs. Ian smells the alcohol on their breath.

IAN

You're drunk? Jeez. Tell us about growing up in a small town.

FAITH

I see what you did there. You left the comment open-ended so I couldn't just give you a yes or no answer. That's not bad.

BRANDY

Nice job, Ian.

FAITH

Listen, it's a nice place to grow up. Summertime out at the Reservoir, fishing, drinking our faces off. The colors of the clouds at sunset over the cornfields are a little ridiculous, but I'm getting the fuck out of Indiana the day after I graduate.

BRANDY

Where will you go?

FAITH

I got a pretty prestigious scholarship to apply towards becoming a veterinarian, but I heard the surf is nice in Baja.

(to Brandy)

Maybe you could join me.

Ian takes his arm away, the smile fading from his face.

BRANDY

After I graduate from Pepperdine,
I'm in.

FAITH

I can see you becoming a real
estate diva on one of those shows
like 'Selling Sunset.'

BRANDY

God, I love you.

Brandy realizes Ian is down.

BRANDY (CONT'D)

Ian here is going to study AI
automation.

FAITH

The robots won't find me where I'm
going.

IAN

How will you eat? I mean are you
growing your own food in this
fantasy-filled hocus pocus place?

FAITH

Well, I am from Indiana.

IAN

So there will be churches and guns
on your commune too I suppose? And
lots of inbreeding. And everybody
will get to decide what is or isn't
truth, based on some YouTube
conspiracy videos. I bet. That's
fantastic.

BRANDY

Woh woh woh. Forgive the boy. He's
still nursing a hangover.

FAITH

People around here will give the
shirt off their back to their
neighbors.

IAN

And then we'd all get to see their
300-pound whale belly hanging out.

The wheel comes to the bottom of the circle and stops.

Faith calls over the fair worker.

FAITH
You can let us out now.

He obliges.

Faith walks off.

BRANDY
What are you doing?

IAN
Why are you humiliating me?

BRANDY
You've done that all yourself.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Troy works a game behind the plate. The score is tied at 2 runs, and there are two outs. Jerry waits in the on-deck circle. The batter before him hits a double.

Jerry steps into the batter's box. He avoids eye contact with Troy.

Jerry takes the first pitch. Troy calls a strike.

Rose and Ray wince in the audience.

The pitcher throws a ball outside.

On the third pitch, Jerry swings and fouls it off.

The Pitcher throws another ball.

Jerry fouls another pitch off, followed by a ball to make the count - three balls and two strikes.

Jerry takes one on the outside corner and Troy does not hesitate to call Jerry out on strikes.

TROY
Strike three! You're out! That's
the ballgame.

Jerry sets the bat on his shoulders in disbelief.

JERRY
Check the tape on that one. It was
outside.

Jerry walks back to the dugout. Troy let's it be.

INT. TROY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The atmosphere in the living room is heavy with unspoken frustration. The group, still reeling from the events of the game, sits in strained silence.

TROY

Look, I know tonight was...
difficult. I'm sorry, Jerry. I want
what's best for you, but you know I
can't give anybody any favors,
especially you.

JERRY

Well, at least you didn't freeze
up.

RAY

Jesus. Jerry, do you know what your
mother sacrificed for you to be
here?

JERRY

I'm sorry, do you? Because she
never wanted to sway my opinion
about you, but I could see it in
her eyes. She fucking needed you.

ROSE

Okay, Jerry, you need to be
respectful to Your papa. He's just
trying to help you see the whole
picture here.

TROY

Please don't tell my son what he
can say and that's rich coming from
you. When were you going to let me
in on the fact that you're going to
be the mother of my little brother
who happens to be forty years my
junior?

IAN

Wait, what the fuck? What's she
talking about?

ROSE

We were waiting for the right
moment.

BRANDY

Maybe I do like this road trip.
Makes me feel normal.

TROY

(to Ray)

You used to go through a woman
every week. What happened? The
supply dried up so you had to chase
my best friend? That's messed up.

ROSE

He didn't chase me. We saw each
other at the nursery and struck up
a conversation.

IAN

You hate plants! Were you stalking
him?

JERRY

Does that mean I'll have a baby for
an aunt or an uncle?

Rose goes green in the gills.

ROSE

Guys.

RAY

Can I say something here?

TROY/IAN

No!

Rose throws up on the carpet.

BRANDY

Ian and I might not make it but I
love all of you.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Jerry walks to clear his head. He arrives at the Yates motel.

Trying not to stalk Flora, he sits by the pool. Some of
Chet's players approach him menacingly.

PLAYER 1

Hey, you're the son of that umpire,
aren't you?

JERRY

Yeah, what's it to you?

PLAYER 2

Think you're special just 'cause
your mom's the ump? She sucks as
far as I can tell.

PLAYER 3

I bet you're a weak-ass mama's boy.

PLAYER 1

'Mommy, can I have a bottle to suck
on?'

PLAYER 2

How did it feel to have your Mommy
call your ass out on strikes?

Jerry starts to feel cornered, unsure of how to handle the
situation. Just then, Flora arrives.

FLORA

Hey, lay off him. Don't you have
mirrors to go flex in or something?
Jesus.

Flora's presence and confidence give Jerry a lifeline.

PLAYER 1

You know him?

FLORA

Jerry's the best drummer in the
band.

PLAYER 3

Wait, you're a band geek too? You
should have stayed in the shadows,
little man.

PLAYER 2

Fine, we'll leave him alone. But if
your mom gets in the way of our
championship, it's over.

The players walk away, grumbling. Jerry looks at Flora,
grateful for her intervention.

JERRY

Thanks. But maybe next time don't
mention the band?

FLORA

I could have told them that my
friend here likes to stalk me like
a crazy person.

Flora smiles.

JERRY

I just needed some fresh air.

FLORA

Well, this is the last place I'd
hang out if I didn't have to.

JERRY

So, like... you live here?

Flora looks back at the hotel room she stays in.

FLORA

I should get going. I'll see you
around.

JERRY

Okay.

Jerry walks away with a giant grin on his face.

He stops and shouts back to Flora.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You called me your friend.

Flora shakes her head in a playful gesture.

Jerry slaps his hands together with delight.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Frank sits at a dimly lit table, hunched over a laptop. He
Googles "Troy 'The Comet' Softball, Umpire," and begins
sifting through search results.

He clicks on one article titled... "The Comet burns out in
debut!"

Chet approaches the table and sits.

CHET

Well, well, it seems we've stumbled
upon quite the goldmine, haven't
we?

FRANK

We? Well... yeah, this is the key to breaking her.

They watch the video replay.

CHET

Holy shit. Now we just need to figure out how to use this against her.

FRANK

We leak this to the right people, and her reputation goes up in smoke. She'll be so distracted, she won't know what hit her.

CHET

Exactly. And once her focus is shattered, she won't stand a chance against us. But give her a shot across the bow first.

FRANK

Really?

CHET

We're not monsters for fuck's sake. What kind of example is that for the kids?

FRANK

Uh, yeah. Okay?

INT. ASIAN MARKET - DAY

Troy stands behind the counter, focused on stocking items near the register.

A CUSTOMER approaches.

CUSTOMER

Excuse me, there seems to be an issue with this product.

Troy's gaze shifts to the customer and moves toward her.

TROY

What is...

Customer hands Troy a photocopy of the news article with the headline: "The Comet burns out in her big debut!"

TROY (CONT'D)
Who gave this to you?

CUSTOMER
Some guy paid me ten dollars.

Troy goes back to the counter and leans down. She pulls out the bat with the word "Comet", inscribed on it.

Troy moves toward the female customer.

TROY
Get out.

She obliges.

Troy follows her out and looks around.

TROY (CONT'D)
Where are you?

Troy locks in on the SUV that approached her at the baseball field.

The driver peels away, but Troy cuts off the angle to the exit with remarkable speed.

TROY (CONT'D)
You want a war? You picked the
wrong burnout to pick a war with
you motherfucker!

Troy halls off and smashes the passenger side rearview mirror with her bat as the vehicle pulls away.

Troy doubles over, clearly out of breath.

Troy walks back to the store where she is met by her boss.

BOSS
I can't have you smashing cars
while you are on the clock. I need
you to get your things and go be
the bag lady you were always meant
to be.

Troy flinches her hand holding the bat, and the Boss scampers away.

Troy sits on the sidewalk for a long beat, looking at the broken mirror on the ground.

She pulls out a cigarette, lights it, and then moves in for a closer look at her fragmented reflection in the mirror.

She stands up and pulls her phone from her pocket. She scrolls down and dials...

A FEMALE voice answers

FEMALE

It's been a long time, kid.

TROY

I need your help...

Troy lets a tear break its way across her face.

INT. TROY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The gang sits in a circle.

RAY

I'd like to stand up here and apologize to everyone for the mess I created. I'd like to stay long enough to see Jerry's team play in the playoffs and then we'll leave y'all alone if that's okay.

BRANDY

Of course. Just when things are getting good around here...

RAY

I was trying to make up for my mistakes, and I thought I could shield myself with all of you. I should have come out and told Troy that I... I didn't know how to be a father when sports weren't involved. I failed her.

BRANDY

Are you watching this, Ian? He is taking responsibility.

TROY

Is that what this is called?

JERRY

Mom, for once, there are people here to call family.

ROSE

Ray, we should go sooner if that's what Troy wants. We dumped a lot on her. This was supposed to be...

IAN

Maybe on the way back we stay somewhere with a breakfast buffet? Like with sausage and eggs and stuff. I can't eat any more Wontons or whatever.

ROSE

Ian, she's let us stay at her house...

TROY

Well, you don't have to worry about the wontons or whatever. I got fired today.

The room goes silent...

Then there is a KNOCK at the door.

RAY

Oh, let me get that.

TROY

Nobody's going anywhere.

Troy perks up a bit.

TROY (CONT'D)

Jerry needs his family here. And maybe I do too.

BRANDY

Exactly what I was thinking. We keep camping on the lawn...

RAY

You sure about this?

JERRY

Yes!

Jerry hugs Ray.

IAN

I didn't want to sleep on a regular bed anyway. Fuck.

TROY

Well, that's good because there is a picture of you posted in every hotel lobby in town.

There is a second knock.

Troy moves toward the front door.

IAN

Like my mugshot? This is not cool.
I can't have people thinking I'm
some sort of degenerate...

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Troy opens the door.

After a beat, she hugs, KAT, late 60s, female. Both of them
are overcome with joy.

Troy steps back and touches Kat's face.

TROY

Coach.

KAT

I heard you have been hiding out.
Almost got lost in the corn trying
to find my star player.

TROY

Well, had I known you only lived
two hours from here, I might have
reached out earlier.

KAT

I'm sorry things worked out the way
they did for you, Troy. You know
you could have asked for me
anytime. I owe you my career. I
asked old Ray how you were a couple
of times but he said he didn't know
where you were.

Troy lets another tear fall down her cheek.

TROY

Speaking of "old Ray..."

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Troy walks back into the living room with Kat.

Ian is still rambling on about his image...

Ray turns to see Kat.

RAY

Oh... my.... ain't you a sight for
sore ears. I Didn't think this boy
was ever going to stop yammering
on.

Ray dawns a grin from ear to ear.

RAY (CONT'D)

What in the world brings the
winningest coach in Division One
history to the town of Kokomo,
Indiana?

Ray gives Kat a hug.

KAT

The only thing that would ever...

RAY

I see... so Troy rubbed the magic
bottle and you popped out. I need
to know more.

Troy realizes that the others have no idea who Kat is.

TROY

Everybody, this is Coach Kat. We
used to do a thing together a long
time ago. She was the best to ever
do it.

KAT

High praise coming from 'The
Comet...'

Jerry beams with pride.

JERRY

Mama? This was your coach?

TROY

Yeah, baby. Taught me everything I
know.

Ray clears his throat.

TROY (CONT'D)

Okay, not everything, but she
pulled the best out of me. Made me
a fighter.

Kat shakes Jerry's hand.

KAT
(to Troy)
Does he fly like you?

TROY
There's still time. He's only
twelve.

The group laughs.

KAT
So you gonna tell me why I'm here?

TROY
I need you to do it again. Get me
into game shape. Jerry here is
making a push for the playoffs, and
I need to be one hundred percent
present.

Kat looks around the room.

KAT
You know I'm an old lady now,
right?

RAY
If you're an old lady, then I'm...

Rose grabs Ray's arm.

TROY
I'd understand if you don't train
alongside me this time around.

KAT
Ha. You must be thinking of
somebody else.

IAN
Can I stay at your hotel?

Kat looks out at the tents in the backyard.

KAT
Looks like there's plenty of room
here at the inn. We start at 0500.
Now do I smell dumplings?

Troy and Kat embrace again.

TROY
You won't regret this.

KAT
My only regret is not coming
earlier.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - MORNING

Kat and Troy stretch on the empty field together.

KAT
You know you can stop at any point,
but I'm gonna push you hard.

TROY
I wouldn't have it any other way.

KAT
Because right now, I don't see a
comet. I see like a slow-rolling
snowball at best. At best!

TROY
Okay. Okay.

KAT
I'm gonna come at this from all
angles.

TROY
You act like I don't remember you.

KAT
I'm here to make you remember
yourself.

Troy closes her eyes. Takes a deep breath.

TROY
No more talking.

KAT
Let's get it, snowball!

Begin Training Montage:

- Troy and Kat run wind sprints.
- The two of them do a series of bodyweight exercises (push-ups, planks, etc...)
- Troy is seen dumping out her alcohol bottles and throwing away her cigarettes.

- Kat and Troy walk the aisles of the natural food store and stock up on leafy vegetables and fruit.
- Kat pays for the food.
- Troy and Kat swim in the pool at the local YMCA.
- Troy pours over the rule umpire rulebook for Little League.
- Kat gives her a flashcard test.
- Troy and Kat do agility drills.
- Troy throws up. Ian gets a laugh from this.
- Kat and Troy attend a yoga/meditation session.
- Kat throws pitching practice and Troy starts to regain some of her previous form.
- Jerry's team wins a game and celebrates.
- Troy works a game and confidently calls a runner out at home plate which results in Chet's team winning.
- Kat directs Brandy, Ian, Ray, Rose and Jerry in simulated scenarios on the field to test Troy's resolve.
- Troy takes a pitch from Kat that sails over the gang's heads and the fence.

End Training Montage.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Troy watches from the stands as The Boilermakers face off against The Cardinals.

Troy smiles at James and he waves back.

Troy is approached by Frank.

FRANK
You are a triple threat.

TROY
I'm sorry?

FRANK
Let's see, you have a son who plays on one of the teams that could very well be making it to the finals.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Family members act as spies for you during the games, and you have been seen fraternizing with one of the coaches on a social occasion.

TROY

I noticed a little ding on your car today when you arrived. You should have that mirror fixed before you get pulled over.

Frank leans in.

FRANK

You know I can have the board remove you from the league. I'm trying to save you the embarrassment of your past getting out. We're keeping this whole thing analog for now.

TROY

Why do you let that man lead you around like a little dog?

Troy nods toward Chet, who is watching from the bleachers.

FRANK

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

TROY

That's where you learned this whole blackmail situation. Let me guess, he has something on you? Maybe you were trying to fix games so you could run a little gambling ring on the side with all the dads to get yourself out of debt. Chet found out about it and for some reason, gambling went a little too far for that fool, so he threatened to have you and your son kicked out of the league. Am I getting warm?

Frank takes off his hat and grits his teeth.

FRANK

I'm just telling you, stay in your lane and let things play out how they will.

Just then one of Jerry's teammates hits a single that scores the winning run. Jerry's team celebrates.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Well, it looks like we're on a
collision course in the finals.

Kat leans into the frame.

KAT
I'd suggest you slather yourself in
fire retardant.

Frank scuttles away.

INT. FAITH'S HOUSE - DAY

Brandy looks around at the dingy walls of a double-wide
trailer.

BRANDY
Where's your mom?

FAITH
Probably passed out on a pile of
peanuts at some cowboy bar.

Brandy spots a plaque, hanging off kilter. It reads "4H
Honors Club Award -- Brandy Brandon."

BRANDY
I don't know which to ask you about
first...

Faith walks up behind Brandy and touches her hair.

FAITH.
Yes, I have two first names, one
being for a boy, and yes, I'm a
badass country girl who's going to
solve the problem of sustainable
farming.

BRANDY
So why, the year in Mexico?

FAITH
In order to start fixing the
problems with agriculture, I need
to know more about the humans that
consume.

Brandy turns and comes face to face with Faith.

BRANDY

What about love? You gonna just study people... or...

Faith puts her hand gently on Brandy's cheek.

FAITH

Who says I can't do both?

Brandy goes red in the cheeks and moves away.

BRANDY

I don't feel right...

FAITH

Ian is a good guy. I would never want you to feel uncomfortable.

BRANDY

I wish I had a direction like you.

FAITH

When you live in this place...

Faith looks around at the trailer.

FAITH (CONT'D)

It pushes on you from every direction. It will either crush you or propel you.

Brandy smiles.

BRANDY

Wow, okay.

FAITH

People like you don't just pass through the local cornfield.

BRANDY

Will you help Ian's family at the game?

FAITH

Of course. Ian quit though so I'll need an assistant to work the stands.

BRANDY

I've never actually... worked.

FAITH

Well, you can start by helping me milk a few cows over at the Phelps farm.

BRANDY

You haven't been on many dates, have you?

FAITH

Who said anything about a date? I'm trying to get your mind right for whatever is about to go down over there at the ballfield.

The two girls laugh.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Troy, behind the plate, fully suited in her umpire uniform, turns and faces Ray.

RAY

Say it with me...

TOGETHER

Umpires are facilitators who have the responsibility to keep the game fair by enforcing the rules without prejudice or bias.

RAY

After this, we take you to Florida Umpire School. Time for you to get back in the game.

TROY

Let's stay focused, old man. Things might get a little rough around here today.

Troy looks down at Chet who stands outside the third base dugout, giving his team a 'pep talk.'

CHET

Listen, I don't want anybody on this team thinking we showed up here today for a little fucking frolic in the flowers or whatever!

(MORE)

CHET (CONT'D)

We came here for two reasons, to embarrass the hell out of the other team and carry some motherfucking trophies off this field when it's all over! Does anyone think we came here for any other reason?

One player raises their hand.

CHET (CONT'D)

Not a real question Tayllor with two fucking L's! Now get out there and stomp on somebody's neck! Yeeeeee Boz!

Chet shotguns a beer.

EXT. HOME PLATE - CONTINUOUS

Troy shakes her head and turns to Ray.

TROY

Everybody here?

RAY

All set.

EXT. BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Rose sits on The Hoosier's side in disguise.

She strikes up a conversation with a FATHER.

ROSE

Can you believe all of the hard work these kids have put in?

The Father chuckles.

FATHER

Is that what you call it? I call it winning the lottery. Which kid is yours?

ROSE

Me? Oh, my boy is older now. I'm still just a huge fan of... the lottery. Yours?

FATHER

My kid doesn't play much. He's not
a conformist.

Father laughs at his comment and then points to his slightly
chubby son, CLAY warming up.

Rose wrinkles her nose at the confusing comment, then looks
at Clay.

CASS

Seems like a... sturdy little
feller.

Faith passes, carrying a box full of snacks.

FAITH

Get your snacks here... we have
basically anything that will clog
your arteries.

FAN

How much for the Hot Tamales?

Fan makes a gesture like honking a horn with both his hands.

FAITH

Actually, we don't...

Fan laughs at his own 'joke,' and high-fives his young son.
His WIFE is disgusted with him.

FAITH (CONT'D)

Oh. That wasn't even a joke. You
see it would have been funnier if
you had said "What did the tamale
say to the guacamole?"

Faith waits for an answer. The man is now embarrassed.

Faith kicks one foot up to the side of the fan and does a
suggestive stretch. She leans in and whispers...

FAITH (CONT'D)

"You're the perfect spread for
me..."

The Fan's Wife grabs him by the ear and pulls him away.

WIFE

We're sorry about that, honey.

EXT. HOME PLATE - CONTINUOUS

JERRY, approaches the plate. He looks up at Troy with a nervous glance. Troy does not look at him. The pitcher from The Hoosiers delivers a pitch outside the strike zone.

TROY

Ball.

CATCHER

That looked on the corner to me.

TROY

Good thing I'm in charge.

CATCHER

Just when you thought you were getting ahead... the machines are going to render you useless.

TROY

Ohhhhh. You must be Chet's son.

A pitch down the middle.

TROY (CONT'D)

Strike! Keep disrespecting the ump and you will be watching the game from the parking lot.

The next pitch comes in a little high but Jerry swings and hits a fly ball to the second baseman who catches it cleanly. Herman proclaims him OUT!

EXT. HOME PLATE - LATER

JOSH, from the Hoosiers, comes up to bat. His father, Frank approaches the fence behind Troy.

FRANK

Let's go, Son!

(to Troy)

I happen to have one of those strike zone computers in center field, so I can tell when you get it right, blue.

TROY

That seems a little intense.

FRANK

Just trying to keep you honest.

Troy grits her teeth but does not let her emotions out.

TROY

I am a professional. My job is to make sure the playing field remains level for all the players.

FRANK

Professional? Is that what they call Little League umpires today?

The Boilers pitcher delivers a ball and Josh rips it to the left field corner.

Ian gets right in Frank's ear with a megaphone and shouts:

IAN

Come on, Boilers! You can do this! Win won for the skipper!

Frank clutches at his ear.

FRANK

Jesus, Christ! Watch what the hell you are doing!

IAN

(into megaphone)

I'm very sorry, sir. I think it's called Hying!

Frank stammers off.

Troy approaches the fence.

TROY

Ian, I need you to do a little research for me. Everything you can find on The Hoosiers standing with the league office.

IAN

On it.

The Hoosiers send up a series of players who manage to hit the ball cleanly all over the park. The next batter steps in. The pitcher delivers one on the outside corner.

TROY

Strike.

Chet raises his arms in disgust and looks at Frank, who looks at his pitch monitor.

FRANK

That was an inch to the right, ump!

TROY

Sounds like a personal problem.

Chet walks out of the dugout and towards Troy.

CHET

Why are you here?

TROY

Who, me?

CHET

We don't need you on this field, or
in this town, or the state of
Indiana.

TROY

Well, you wouldn't want to lose on
a technicality, would you?

CHET

My kids are winners! You will not
take that away from me.

TROY

From you? Okay.

Chet huffs away.

Troy notices the same shimmering object she had seen once
before, on the approaching batter.

Troy calls timeout and calls both coaches to the front of the
plate along with Herman.

TROY (CONT'D)

I want to reiterate, that if there
is any cheating on either side, a
player will be ejected immediately.

CHET

This is trash. Don't insert
yourself into this game.

BOILER COACH

I... Have no problem with that at
all.

TROY

Again, for instance, if I find any illegal listening devices or banned substances...

CHET

We have a championship to win and beer to drink...

Troy nods toward Herman and then tilts her head toward the batter at the plate.

Herman takes a beat and then nods back.

Chet makes his way back to the dugout. The pitcher delivers another one and the batter hits a solid drive to right field where Jerry fields it cleanly on a hop over his shoulder.

He fires toward second base and forces the runner to slide hands first in safely.

HERMAN

Safe.

After Herman makes the safe call, he helps the runner up and feels along his back and collarbone.

This causes the runner to shove Herman away but not until he has found what he was looking for. A transmitter with an earpiece attached. The ball is thrown back to the pitcher.

The next batter hits the ball to the second baseman who checks the runner and throws to first but Herman is not paying attention, which forces Troy to make the call from behind the plate.

TROY

Out!

CHET

Come on! That's not your call!

BOILER COACH

Come on, pitch. One more out! We're still in this...

Herman raises his arms.

HERMAN

Time!

Herman and Troy meet in the infield.

HERMAN (CONT'D)
You're right. Some kind of
transmitter.

TROY
Jesus. Okay. Don't do anything.

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

Troy speaks quietly to Ray through the fence.

TROY
I need you to run some interference
in centerfield.

RAY
Now we are talking. I'm on it.

TROY
Also, tell Jerry to swing at the
top half of the ball. We've worked
on this a thousand times.

Ray nods and walks away.

A batter from the Hoosiers steps up and strikes out, but not
before Troy can hone in on the unusual spin of the ball.

TROY (CONT'D)
Time.

Troy takes the ball from the catcher and inspects it. She
notices a green substance on it. Troy walks out toward the
mound.

PITCHER
What is it?

TROY
Let me see your hands.

The pitcher reluctantly shows his hands, and Troy sees a
green hue.

TROY (CONT'D)
What's that?

The Pitcher stays silent.

TROY (CONT'D)
I can have you thrown out.

PITCHER

It's that nasty green stuff coach makes us drink. I think it has deer antlers in it or some shit. Comes out when you sweat.

TROY

Interesting.

The coaches approach the mound.

CHET

What's the problem here?

BOILER COACH

Looks like the golden boy might be cheating.

TROY

No. We're fine here. Play ball.

As Troy walks back toward home, she signals Rose in the stands with some discreet hand signals. Rose takes a minute to realize what she is doing and then refers to her handbook to decipher the signs.

ROSE

Oh!

Rose strikes up a conversation with the man next to her again.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Say... does the coach still have the God-awful energy drink? Roy never did like the taste.

FATHER

Roy is it? What year did he play?

CASS

It's been two... ten years.

FATHER

Ten years?

Pause.

CASS

Preeeeety sure?

Father motions toward a large yellow cooler in the dugout.

FATHER

I hate to think what that donkey
snot tasted like back then but he
swears by the shit. I told Clay not
to drink it. He's got IBS.

Rose calls Brandy over and buys a snack from her. She leans
in and whispers to Brandy.

ROSE

I need you to drain the water
cooler in the third base dugout.

BRANDY

No problem. That will be five
dollars.

Rose smiles and gives Brandy the money.

EXT. OUTFIELD BLEACHERS - DAY

Ray singles out a man with a tablet on a tripod and a camera
with a long lens hooked up to the tablet. He also is speaking
into a low-profile headset. Ray sits down next to him.

RAY

You a scout?

MAN WITH TABLET

I'm sorry?

RAY

That's a lot of gear.

MAN WITH TABLET

Just recording the game for
posterity. They're only twelve
once.

RAY

That's wonderful. Which one is your
boy?

MAN WITH TABLET

If you don't mind. I'd like to
watch.

EXT. HOME PLATE - CONTINUOUS

A Hoosiers player up to bat struggles with his earpiece since
he can't hear. Finally, he gets the information he is waiting
for and steps back into the box.

The pitch is delivered on the outside corner and the batter drives the ball to right center, fielded cleanly by Jerry.

EXT. CENTERFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Faith approaches Ray and Man with the tablet...

FAITH

Can I interest the two of you in a cold beverage?

RAY

Oh, perfect timing. It is downright boiling out here. I'd like two of your coldest drinks.

MAN WITH TABLET

I really don't want...

Man looks up at Faith and is distracted by her 'talent.'

MAN WITH TABLET (CONT'D)

Oh. Okay. I'll take whatever you have, but can you set it down over there?

He points toward an empty seat nearby.

RAY

Don't be ridiculous. This man is parched and needs a drink close by.

FAITH

Well, I can set it right here...

Faith bends over with the drink but does not adjust her tray. This causes all the drinks on her tray to spill on the man's electronic equipment, causing it to short out.

The man loses it.

EXT. HOME PLATE - CONTINUOUS

Troy notices the melee in centerfield. The batter realizes he can't hear anything in his earpiece. He looks up at the blazing sun, sweating green liquid, and takes a deep breath to gather his strength.

TROY

Okay, that's long enough. Batter up!

The batter steps into the box and is quickly called out on three strikes, ending the inning.

Ian approaches Troy and talks quietly through the fence. Troy nods in recognition.

Chet approaches Troy.

FRANK
I finally figured out how I
recognize you.

TROY
I don't need to hear about your
fantasies.

CHET
Troy Mullins. Played at U.C.L.A.

TROY
You watched softball in the 90s?

CHET
Now you're an umpire for Little
League.

TROY
Who wouldn't want to babysit grown-
ass men?

CHET
The way I see it, you're a loser
and are trying to cheat your son
into some sort of career so you can
ride his coattails.

TROY
Be careful what you project onto
others. You'll give yourself away.

CHET
I'm just saying... call a clean
game and nobody finds out what an
embarrassment you are.

Chet nods towards Jerry.

TROY
I have a better idea. You let your
boys play a 'Clean,' game and I
don't remind the board members how
much money you owe the league.

(MORE)

TROY (CONT'D)
I'd hate for the mighty Hoosiers to
have their title stripped away
because their deadbeat manager
spent all the money on beer.

Troy steps away.

TROY (CONT'D)
Play ball!

Chet shouts at Herman.

CHET
You're dead to me.

Herman flips Chet the bird.

EXT. DUGOUT - CONTINUOUS

Brandy does her best Ninja impression as she slides into the corner of the Hoosiers dugout undetected and inserts one end of a small hose into the top of the liquid.

Just as she is leaving she is spotted by Clay. After a moment he smiles at her and gives her the thumbs up.

Brandy finds a piece of grass and begins to suck on the hose to create a siphon. Some of the liquid hits her lips, and she nearly vomits as the liquid begins to drain.

EXT. OUTFIELD - DAY

Jerry sees Flora, playing with her friends in the park. She walks toward the fence.

FLORA
Hi, Jerry. Maybe when baseball
season is over we can work on that
band of ours?

Jerry looks at her and smiles.

JERRY
I'd like that.

FLORA
I hope you beat these boys. They
don't deserve to win.

Jerry notices a change in the wind direction. He pulls up a tuft of grass and lets it dance in the air.

JERRY

We will.

Flora blows Jerry a kiss and walks away.

Now that the liquid has been drained and the team is no longer getting the calls from the outfield - things start to even out.

The score is seven to one in favor of The Hoosiers at the beginning of this montage:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Several Hoosier players strike out which drives Chet crazy. Several Boilermakers players get hits and round the bases.

Jerry makes a diving catch.

The Hoosier players look visibly exhausted in the heat.

Jerry strikes out. The Boilermakers score a few more runs to close the score to ten to eight. Frank and Chet are beside themselves. The Hoosier crowd is bubbling up now.

A Hoosier player steps in and unloads a deep home run but it curves just foul. Troy picks up the bat after the hit which reveals a small seam in the top of the bat.

Troy inspects closer and pulls off the top of the bat which contains an illegal weight in it to give the bat more punch.

The crowd goes silent.

TROY

You're out!

Troy walks the boy back to the dugout and hands the bat to Chet.

TROY (CONT'D)

You'll have to sub in a new batter.

This boy is ejected from the game.

The Boiler fans cheer and the Hoosiers boo.

Chet is beside himself as this is his son the CATCHER that has been ejected.

Chet turns and looks at Clay.

CHET

Chubby. You're the last player we have.

Clay looks shocked and mortified. Eventually, he grabs a helmet and a bat and approaches the plate. His Father is very nervous. The pitcher on the Boilers looks at their coach, who nods in approval.

The pitcher serves up a slow pitch right down the middle that Clay connects with and dribbles it slowly down the third baseline.

The Hoosier player acts as if he is waiting for it to go foul but it never had a chance of rolling over the line. Clay makes it to first base safely.

FATHER

That's my Boy!

EXT. HOME PLATE - DAY

The scoreboard shows the bottom of the seventh inning which is the final inning for a little league game. The score is now the Boilermakers twelve and the Hoosiers eleven.

The first Boiler batter comes up and hits a double. The next two batters strike out. Jerry is in the on deck circle. Coach calls time out and approaches Jerry.

He is thinking of pinch-hitting for him and calls another boy out of the dugout.

TROY (TO HERSELF)

Come on, Coach. He's got this.

Coach changes his mind. He gives Jerry a pat on the head and sends him up to the plate.

Jerry steps into the box and the already-tired pitcher is distracted by the sight of Flora and her friends all walking behind home plate to cheer for Jerry.

When he finally regains his focus, he delivers a pitch over the outside corner.

Jerry looks it all-the-way-in and strokes the top half of the ball mightily, sending it deep into the right-field corner.

Jerry takes off, rounding first...
The runner from second scores easily to tie the score.

The right fielder has trouble picking up the ball as Jerry runs into second.

EXT. UCLA SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY(TWENTY YEARS EARLIER)

Troy rounds third base in all of her glory.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Jerry keeps running around second. The throw from right field sails over the head of second base and into left field where it is picked up by the left fielder.

Jerry rounds third...

TROY
Come on, Jerry. Hurry it up, you
crazy boy. Do not make me call you
out at home plate.

The throw is on track but hits the dirt and flies past the catcher.

Jerry steps on the plate and keeps running. He never thought about sliding.

The Bat Attitudes crowd goes berserk.
Jerry blows Flora a kiss to her delight.

Jerry is mobbed by his teammates and carried off the field!
Ray, Ian, Brandy, Rose, and Faith all jump for joy.
Clay smiles. James hugs his son in the stands.

Chet is devastated and collapses to the ground.

Troy revels in the sight of her son being carried around.
The Boiler players go on to shake the hands of the Hoosiers.

Troy walks toward a despondent Chet who now sits on a bucket in the dugout.

CHET
I will be filing a formal
complaint.

TROY
And you'll probably get somebody to
listen to you but I didn't make one
call that favored either team and
you know it. You cheated. A lot.
Like a ridiculous amount. These are
good kids on your team...

CHET
What do you want?

TROY
I want you to fucking do better.

Troy walks away and catches eyes with Ray, standing next to
Kat, who makes a bird-like motion.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

James and his son approach Troy. James carries two cups of
coffee. He hands one to Troy.

Troy smiles.

TROY
Yeah. I guess that's that.

JAMES
What now?

TROY
I think a long bath is in order.

JAMES
You deserve it.

INT. TROY'S HOUSE - TROY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Troy takes a moment to compose herself, looking in the
mirror. When she emerges from her room, she is met with an
eerie sight. The living room is empty, except for Jerry and
the four dogs.

TROY
(bewildered)
Jerry... Where is everyone?

Jerry looks at Troy, confusion in his eyes.

JERRY
(innocently)
What do you mean, Mom? Their all
here.

Troy's heart sinks as she processes Jerry's words. She looks around, trying to make sense of the surreal situation, then collapses to hug all the dogs.

EXT. TROY'S YARD - NIGHT

Troy sees an empty yard. The tents are no longer standing.

TROY
(whispers, to herself)
No... This can't be...

Troy's hands tremble as she pulls out her phone and dials Ray's number. After a few rings, he answers.

RAY (O.C.)
Hello?

TROY
Ray? Can you hear me?

RAY (O.C.)
Troy? Yes, I can hear you.

Troy's voice quivers with a mix of relief and apprehension.

TROY
Ray, where are you?

RAY (O.C.)
I'm right here in the bleachers,
cheering you on like I've always
been.

TROY
Tell me you are on a highway
heading west somewhere in Illinois.

RAY
Of course. Listen I was serious
when I said we should take a trip
to Florida. The whole gang. Get you
another shot at Umpire school. It
would be the best comeback story in
history.

TROY
Dad?

RAY
Yes, baby?

TROY
I love you.

RAY
I love you too.

COMET