

EIGHTH IN LINE
(alternative title: AMERICAN PRINCE)

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EIGHTH IN LINE/"PILOT"

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. BARTHWAITE HOUSE - MALCOLM'S ROOM - DAY

A very large teen boy's room of blue walls, a King size bed, and distressed wood desk with piles of books around it.

MALCOLM, 16-- skinny, with braces and eyeglasses-- sits on the floor with his two younger brothers, BRIAN, 11, and TEDDY, 9.

There's a DALMATIAN PUPPY sitting in his lap as he ties a red ribbon around the neck of an expensive whiskey bottle.

BRIAN

You stole that from the bar in the library.

MALCOLM

I did. You going to tell?

BRIAN

Nope. Just making an observation.

Malcolm chuckles.

GRIER, 16-- Black, pretty-- ENTERS the room holding a bouquet of balloons and a cake box.

GRIER

Hey.

MALCOLM

Hey, you got the cake. Let me see.

He takes the dog from his lap and hands him off to Teddy to stand.

Teddy holds the puppy carefully and kisses his head.

Grier sits the cake on the bed and lifts the lid: it's a lovely, round cake with "HAPPY RETIREMENT, HENRY" in colorful lettering on it.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

It's really nice. Thanks for getting it.

GRIER

Let me see the gift.

Malcolm grabs a nice gift bag on the other side of his bed.

Brian brings over the bottle of whiskey.

GRIER (CONT'D)

How'd you get this?

BRIAN

Well, he certainly didn't take it from the bar in the library.

Brian winks at Malcolm.

MALCOLM

I really regret telling you you're funny.

GRIER

You better hope no one thinks the staff took it.

MALCOLM

They're not. I left clues that give the impression Abel might've stolen it.

GRIER

Should've framed Evander instead.

BRIAN

Should've framed Evander instead.

Grier takes a card out of her purse and puts it inside the gift bag with the whiskey.

A valet-- MR. COLE, 30-- appears in the doorway. He KNOCKS politely, grabbing their attention.

VALET

Security says the mail truck has just reached the gatehouse.

Malcolm grabs the gift bag, Grier snatches the cake, and Brian takes the balloons as they hurry out of Malcolm's room.

MALCOLM

(exiting)

Thanks, Mr. Cole.

Teddy, holding the puppy, runs out behind them.

EXT. BARTHWAITE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

GATEHOUSE

A MAIL TRUCK passes through the gatehouse and makes it's way up the long, secluded driveway.

It reaches the FRONT DOOR of Barthwaite House; an 19th century estate resting on 5,000 acres of crisp, green lawn.

The mailman, HENRY, 65-- Black, kind eyes-- steps out of the vehicle and opens the back gate of the truck.

SECRET SERVICE AGENTS grab bags of mail and packages from the truck and carry them through the service entrance.

Malcolm, Grier, Brian, and Teddy careen out of the house toward Henry.

ALL
HAPPY RETIREMENT, HENRY!

He's startled for a brief moment before taking it all in; the cake, balloons, etc.

Tears well in his eyes at their thoughtfulness.

HENRY
Oh... Well, ain't y'all just too much.

MALCOLM
We're sorry this is your last route, but we're happy you're going to get to enjoy retirement now.

Malcolm gives him the gift bag.

Henry peeks into the bag.

HENRY
I can't take all this.

MALCOLM
It's just whiskey and your favorite candy.

BRIAN
Plus cake and balloons.

GRIER

And a gift card to that fancy groomer my grandma takes her stupid poodle to. But now you can take your dogs there.

HENRY

(laughs)

Well, alright. Check me out at the fancy dog spa with the lords and ladies of Kingsborough.

SECRET SERVICE close the back gate to the truck; they got all the mail.

Grier carefully puts the cake and balloons into the front of Henry's truck.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Y'all really are something. Thank you.

They give Henry a hug.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(tearing up)

Y'all keep being good kids, okay?

They nod.

Henry rounds the truck to the driver's side.

MALCOLM

Henry, wait.

Malcolm takes a small envelope out of his pocket and gives it to Henry.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

There's an open pass to the royal library inside. Every book in the world is there. You can go anytime you want and read all of them.

Henry smiles big, loving the small but meaningful gift.

He puts the gift bag into his truck and grabs something off the seat. It's a book. He hands it to Malcolm.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Yertle The Turtle?

HENRY

Was reading it to my niece's daughter last week and it made me think of you. Lot better than that one book you gave me. Put me to sleep.

MALCOLM

Barchester Towers is a good book.

HENRY

Mmm-hmm. If you say so.

MALCOLM

I do. Thanks, Henry.

HENRY

You're welcome.

FRONT DOOR

Malcolm approaches.

Teddy hands the puppy over to him.

GRIER

I should've got flowers, too. Sunflowers. Or carnations.

MALCOLM

I think the balloons were plenty.

GRIER

Glad he liked everything.

MALCOLM

Me, too.

GRIER

Can't believe you almost forgot the libr--

Suddenly, Grier is hit atop the head with a water balloon full of shaving cream!

GRIER (CONT'D)

What the fu--

Malcolm is hit with one next!

OS, LAUGHTER... They look up:

BALCONY

Two young men, ABEL, 24, and EVANDER, 21, are cracking up at having hit them both with balloons.

MALCOLM

Abel! Evander! Really?!

Evander and Abel direct hit Brian and Teddy at the same time!

The front door opens. Mr. Cole is on the other side.

MR. COLE

Psst.

He hands Malcolm three cartons of eggs and takes the puppy and book from him.

He holds his fingers to his lips and closes the door.

Malcolm hands Grier and Brian a carton.

They rush from the alcove and toss eggs at Abel and Evander!

They retaliate with more balloons!

They're all laughing, having a good time, as they toss eggs and balloons back and forth at one another.

HENRY

Henry watches them with an affectionate smile.

HENRY

Lord, stay good kids. Please.

He turns the engine over and heads back down the long driveway.

REARVIEW MIRROR

Malcolm and his brothers get smaller and smaller as he goes...

CUT TO:

CREDITS OVER TITLE SEQUENCE/SONG

(Footmen hang painted portraits of the characters in a family tree on the walls of a grandiose parlor room)

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. BARTHWAITE HOUSE - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A large office room of modern furniture and décor.

SITTING AREA

FIVE PEOPLE sit amongst one another with government documents and other official paperwork in their laps.

Amongst them are HIS MAJESTY FREDERICK "FREDDIE," King of the United States, 69, a smart, practical man with very little patience for insincerity.

And his Royal Chief of Staff, SIR IVAN DIAZ, 55, a mustached Latinx man wearing rimless eyeglasses.

FREDDIE

Another parlay?

ADVISOR #1

They'd like to discuss the parameters of their treaty.

FREDDIE

Of course they would. What specifically is it they'd like to talk about this time?

SIR DIAZ

A renegotiation of federal aid. That piece in *The Atlantic* shed light on a few things they wanted to keep in the dark. And now cable news has picked it up.

FREDDIE

I'll say. And what exactly would this renegotiation entail?

Advisor #3 takes a pack of Starbursts from his pocket.

Freddie makes a "gimmie" gesture at him.

Advisor #3 gives him a candy.

ADVISOR #2

\$25 billion in federal aid, \$15 billion in disaster relief, and \$5 billion for social programs to combat domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, and substance abuse.

The rest of the group wants a candy from Advisor #3, too.

Reluctantly, Advisor #3 doles out candy to each of them.

ADVISOR #1

Also, they're fine with remaining a territory. They're not looking for official statehood.

FREDDIE

Thank God. Not that they'd get it.

ADVISOR #1

But they do want a few perks of statehood.

FREDDIE

Such as?

ADVISOR #1

...Healthcare. And a lift of the guns embargo.

FREDDIE

Absolutely fucking not.

ADVISOR #3

Why didn't they ask their "sugar daddies" for the cash?

ADVISOR #2

As if a bunch of tight billionaires give a fuck if they beat their wives and have a heroin addiction.

FREDDIE

They do care. They haven't given them the money, or done anything about the crime down there, because writing a check to a bunch of racists so they stop smacking their wives around is bad optics. Which is bad for business.

ADVISOR #2

So's employing drug-addicted wife
beaters.

FREDDIE

Cheap labor in a free-market
paradise they can justify with
profit and demand. The rest they
can't. And neither can I.

SIR DIAZ

Sir--

FREDDIE

I don't want to give free
healthcare and guns to a bunch of
alligator-wrestling bigots. They
wanted an ethostate and they got
it. They wanted to take care of
their own, *and only their own*, in
their own way, they got it when my
great-grandmother gave them 66,000
square miles and said "Have at it.
Just don't bother the rest of us."
And now that the media has exposed
that their 122 year old experiment
is a failure, they want money from
me so they can pretend to fix it?

SIR DIAZ

We don't like it either, Fred.
Really don't like it...but they
vote. Every four years, all 20
million of them, vote to keep the
status quo. And unfortunately their
redneck votes count.

FREDDIE

...They don't let the women and
children leave. They traffik in
girls from Alabama to replace the
ones that manage to run away.
They're not getting fucking guns.
Ever.

The finality in Freddie's voice is enough of an
understanding.

SIR DIAZ

Okay. No guns. But healthcare...

Freddie really doesn't want to cave or bargain on any
concessions, but clearly a compromise is encouraged.

FREDDIE

That can be a discussion. A short one.

ADVISOR #1

They are technically US citizens, sir. Whether we want to call them that, or not. As a US territory--

FREDDIE

Yeah, yeah, yeah... Get with Jackie to schedule a parlay with these fucking people. Anything else?

SIR DIAZ

I believe that's all that needed your attention on state matters, sir.

FREDDIE

Good. Thank you.

They stand, gathering their things.

Freddie steals one more piece of candy from Advisor #3.

Advisor #1, Advisor #2, and Advisor #3 bow and curtsy to Freddie.

He nods, dismissing them. They EXIT.

SIR DIAZ

Fourth Sunday. Dinner with the boys?

FREDDIE

Yes. At Malcolm's house this time.

SIR TIMOTHY

Only an hour flight from here. Not too far.

Freddie checks his watch.

FREDDIE

Yeah. Got to meet CeCe before we go though.

SIR DIAZ

Well, give the boys a firm handshake for me. And tell Malcolm the Grob's Attack is a dirty move, but I can't wait to play him again.

Freddie's brow furrows Sir Diaz's mention of Malcolm.

Sir Diaz bows, then EXITS.

INT. QUEEN CATHERINE ACADEMY - CLASSROOM - MORNING

The class is full with 2ND GRADERS. All in red and blue school uniforms.

A CAREER DAY banner hangs in front of the blackboard.

TEACHER

Okay. Our next speaker for Career Day is Lawson's father.

CLASS

An East-Asian boy-- HRH PRINCE LAWSON of Virginia, 8-- smiles and waves to a white MAN sitting along a wall with other ADULTS in business casual.

The man, HRH PRINCE ABEL The Duke of Virginia, 43, smiles and waves back in return. He's unfairly good-looking and oozes charm.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Who I'm sure can introduce himself. Let's welcome him to our class.

The room claps appreciatively.

Abel approaches the podium at the front of the class.

ABEL

Uh, thank you, class. Ms. Solomon. I'm so glad you--

The FLASH from a camera stuns him a moment.

REVEAL: At the back of the class is a CAMERA CREW, REPORTER, TWO PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS, and SECRET SERVICE.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(mouths)

Sorry.

ABEL

It's okay, Danny. But why don't we keep the flashing lights to a minimum at the moment?

The photographer nods in understanding.

ABEL (CONT'D)

Great. Okay, so like I was saying, I'm really glad your very kind teacher, Ms. Solomon, has invited me to speak on Career Day. Before I get into all the boring stuff about my job, let me first introduce myself: I am indeed Lawson's proud father, and my name is Abel Holloway. But officially my name, my title, is His Royal Highness Prince Abel The Duke of Virginia. But my friends-- which you guys are now-- call me Abe.

INT. HIGHBURN HALL - HOME GYM - CONTINUOUS

A man with a shaved head and thick beard rests on a weight bench on his phone-- HRH PRINCE EVANDER The Duke of Illinois, 39; a "jarhead" and lovelorn romantic.

PHONE

He's Face-Timing a Latinx woman with a pixie cut wearing military fatigues-- COMMANDER SOFIA REYES, 35, an officer in the King's Army.

SOFIA

I hate to sound like such a girl, but how's it look?

She runs a hand through her hair.

EVANDER

It looks good. Really good.

SOFIA

Be honest, E. I don't look like a 12 year old boy?

EVANDER

(fond)
No. You look great.

She puts her cap on.

SOFIA

How 'bout now?

EVANDER

Still very female.

She chuckles.

SOFIA

Thanks, Evander. I got excited once it started growing in, but then I got nervous when I realized I might end up looking like my brother.

Evander laughs.

EVANDER

I don't think there's any way you could ever be mistaken for Santiago.

INT. Highburn Hall - Master Bathroom - Continuous

Modern, minimalist. Black walls and gray tile floors.

SHOWER

A stunning Arab woman masturbates under the steaming, hot water of a rainfall shower.

She's looking out of the floor-to-ceiling window at something...

WINDOW

Someone.

A Black man watches her as he masturbates in front of his own window.

They stare nakedly at one another across the barriers of their modern row homes.

The black man ejaculates, coming on the glass of his window.

SHOWER

The Arab woman-- HRH Princess Hena The Duchess of Illinois, 40, Evander's dutiful but neglected wife-- comes, too. Biting her lip to stifle her moans.

She catches her breath, smiling happily to herself.

HENA

Google. Cloak window please.

The window immediately turns to frosted glass, unable to see out or inside of.

INT. HIGHBURN HALL - BREAKFAST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The breakfast room is just as monochromatic and cold as the rest of the house.

Evander sits at the end of the table, reading through *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair*, occasionally picking at a chia seed and oatmeal bowl.

Hena, all smiles, ENTERS in an attractive red jumpsuit.

HENA
Morning, darling.

EVANDER
(nose still in book)
Morning.

She takes a seat at the other end of the table.

A FOOTMAN puts a plate of sweet potato toast with avocado and poached egg in front of her.

HENA
Beautiful weather today. It'll be hotter in Georgia though.

EVANDER
Uh-huh.

HENA
I can't remember the last time we had Sunday dinner at Malcolm's house.

EVANDER
Hmm.

HENA
Would be a lot less of a hassle to get to his place if he lived here in Virginia. Always wondered why he insists on living all the way in Georgia... Evander? *Evander*.

Evander finally tears his attention away from his book.

EVANDER
What?

HENA
Why does Malcolm live in Georgia instead of here?

Evander shrugs.

EVANDER
Never bothered to ask.

She's not surprised.

HENA
Of course not.

Their BUTLER ENTERS.

BUTLER
Your highnesses. The nanny has informed me that the children are dressed, fed, and packed for the evening.

Evander and Hena nod their approval.

The butler EXITS.

INT. FLATWICK MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

BED

A naked man-- HRH PRINCE BRIAN The Duke of Texas, 30-- snorts cocaine off the bare back of the WOMAN he's fucking on his 4-post bed.

The woman MOANS loudly as he pulls her hair, yanking her head up, so she's forced to watch them go at it in the mirror in front of them.

Brian smirks, watching them, too.

INT. TEDDY & JACOB'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A middle-class, single-family home.

STOVE

An attractive young man with long, blond hair dumps scrambled eggs from a frying pan onto a plate-- HRH PRINCE THEODORE "TEDDY" The Duke of California, 28.

Behind him, sitting at the island, are two small kids: an adorable Black boy, JACOB LINCOLN, JR. "JJ", 6, and cute East-Asian girl with bangs, DAISY LINCOLN, 6.

The toaster DINGS and Teddy grabs the two slices of wheat bread from it, butters it, and then places it on the plate of eggs.

DAISY
I want eggs and toast.

TEDDY
Well, I am sorry, madam, but you get oatmeal this morning.

DAISY
But why does daddy get eggs and toast?

TEDDY
Because daddy pays the mortgage.

JJ
What's a mortgage?

TEDDY
Money you give to the royal bank so you can buy a nice house like this one.

JJ
Why can't we have the house for free?

TEDDY
That's a good question, doodle bug. Please don't repeat it in front of daddy though.

He puts the cookware into the dishwasher.

OS, the side door opens and closes.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Take your shoes off please!

(long beat)

A tall, dark-haired man ENTERS the kitchen from the mudroom. He's sweaty, in a T-shirt and jogging shorts-- JACOB LINCOLN, 35, Teddy's dotting "republican" husband.

He's barefoot.

JACOB
(points to feet)
Disgusting running shoes are off.

TEDDY

Thank you.

JACOB

Are you done yelling at me or can I
kiss you now?

Jacob leans down to kiss Teddy.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Morning.

TEDDY

Morning. You stink.

JACOB

Thank you.

TEDDY

Here's your breakfast.

JACOB

Thank you again.

Jacob grabs his plate, along with a fork from a drawer.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(to children)

Morning, spawn.

DAISY

Daddy, can I have some of your
eggs?

JACOB

What did "The Boss" say?

TEDDY

"The Boss" said no and to eat your
oatmeal.

Daisy SIGHS, then slinks down into her chair.

JACOB

Aw. Give the girl some eggs, will
you? I mean, look at that pout.

TEDDY

I'm immune to it. And you should
be, too.

JACOB

But it looks so genuine.

TEDDY
Oatmeal is good for them.

JACOB
So are eggs.

TEDDY
Eggs upset her stomach and I'm not
about to get stuck on a small
airplane with a gassy six year old.

JACOB
Ugh. Understood.
(to Daisy)
Sorry, petal.

Jacob grabs a bottle of hot sauce and shakes it over his
eggs.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Hey, speaking of airplanes--

TEDDY
You're going.

JACOB
But I have so much...work?

TEDDY
Wow. You're not even remotely
trying. Why do you do this every
fourth Sunday?

JACOB
We both know the answer to that
question.

TEDDY
We're married and raising two
children. It's been years, Jacob.
You need to get over it. And they
need to get over it.

JACOB
You know it's not just us being
together that's the actual problem,
right?

TEDDY
Ohhh... Are you referring to that
whole thing of you being a very
public anti-royalist who doesn't
think a monarchy should exist?

JACOB

Yes. That's it. That's the thing. I'm deeply apoplectic about that *tiny* quirk that has caused unbearable tension between me and your very royal family for the last 9 years.

Teddy takes the plate from Jacob and eats a bit of his eggs.

TEDDY

You know, I gave up two titles and my position as a senior royal to marry you.

JACOB

Ooo, guilt. Are you going to follow it up with resentment? Because you know that's my favorite part of this never-ending conversation.

TEDDY

I haven't asked you to come to any royal events for over a year now. The least you can do is to continue to come to Sunday dinner once a month and smile painfully through a 4-course meal with my father...who hates you.

Jacob GROANS.

JACOB

One day I'm going to learn to say 'no' to you. And it'll be the most liberating day of my life.

TEDDY

It'll also be the day we get a fucking divorce.

He hands the plate back to Jacob. Jacob sets it down on the counter, frowning that he lost the argument.

JACOB

At least it's at Malcolm's house this week. I'm going to shower.

Teddy stops him, tugging on his hand. He WHISPERS in Jacob's ear...

A puckish grin grows on Jacob's face.

JACOB (CONT'D)
If you're lucky.

He pulls his shirt over his head and EXITS upstairs.

DAISY
You said a bad word.

TEDDY
You're still not getting eggs. Eat
your oatmeal.

Daisy SIGHS dramatically.

INT. QUEEN CATHERINE ROYAL HOSPITAL - DOCTOR'S OFFICE -
CONTINUOUS

Freddie and a GRAYING BLONDE WOMAN sit across the desk from a
DOCTOR with grim looks on their faces.

The doctor, DR. MILLER, 50, looks just as devastated as they
do.

DR. MILLER
I'm sorry, Your Majesty.

The woman holding his hand, is Freddie's wife, HER MAJESTY
CECILIA, 60, The Queen-consort of The United States; stronger
and smarter than she's given credit for.

CECILIA
So, it's...it's just going to get
worse?

DR. MILLER
Unfortunately.

FREDDIE
How long?

DR. MILLER
The progression varies patient to
patient. But with Alzheimer's it
can be anywhere from 3 to 9 years.

CECILIA
Nine years? He could... He
could...waste away like this for
nine years?

DR. MILLER
That's the longest researchers have
seen it progress until...

FREDDIE
Until death.

Cecilia fights back tears.

Freddie kisses the back of her hand. Even after being told he's dying he's more concerned for her.

Tears slip down Cecilia's cheeks. She wipes them away and takes a deep breath.

A beat.

CECILIA
So, what-what happens now?

DR. MILLER
Now, we start you on meds and a bit of psychosocial prevention. Reminiscence therapy. As the disease worsens, caregiving will be needed.

FREDDIE
Fuck.

DR. MILLER
I know this news is devastating. And scary.

FREDDIE
But not surprising. My grandfather had it.

DR. MILLER
I know. I saw it in your family's medical history.

FREDDIE
Watching him slip away like that... Seeing his light go out... I was seventeen when he died and it killed me that he didn't even...

DR. MILLER
Sir, I think the Royal Chief of Staff--

FREDDIE
No. No one.

DR. MILLER
Sir--

FREDDIE

Regardless of who I am, I'm more importantly a patient. Which means my medical records, my medical history, and diagnosis is private. And shall remain private until I say so. Which is a law created by my very own father you are obligated to uphold and respect. Understand?

DR. MILLER

...Understood, sir.

FREDDIE

Good.

(stands)

We're running late. It's the fourth Sunday of the month. Family dinner.

CECILIA

Freddie.

FREDDIE

I don't believe there's anymore to say at the moment.

She readies to protest--

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

I want normalcy, CeCe. At least until I can't have it anymore.

She gets that. Because she wants it, too.

Cecilia stands, grabbing her purse.

CECILIA

Thank you, Dr. Miller. We'll be back, on Tuesday, for his prescriptions.

Dr. Miller stands. She curtseys.

Freddie and Cecilia acknowledge her with a nod and EXIT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. ROYAL HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

Freddie and Cecilia sit opposite one another.

NOTE: Secret Service/Bodyguards are always present in the b.g. when the royal family are in public or traveling.

Cecilia flips open a TIME magazine (Abel is on the cover) as a ROYAL FLIGHT ATTENDENT hands Freddie a crystal glass of water and aspirin.

FREDDIE

Thank you.

ROYAL FLIGHT ATTENDENT

(curtseys)

Your Majesty.

She EXITS, returning to her seat.

Freddie takes the aspirin.

CECILIA

Are we telling the boys?

FREDDIE

No. Not yet.

CECILIA

Well, you certainly need to tell Abel soon.

Freddie rolls his eyes.

CECILIA (CONT'D)

What was that?

FREDDIE

What was what?

CECILIA

That look when I mentioned Abel.

FREDDIE

Florida wants healthcare. And guns.

CECILIA

Don't you dare. Is there a problem with telling Abel?

FREDDIE

No.

CECILIA

...Is there a problem with Abel in general?

FREDDIE

No. He's my son. I love him.

She closes the magazine.

CECILIA

I didn't ask if you loved him. I know you do. I asked if there was a problem with him.

FREDDIE

Can this be a discussion for another time? Preferably on a day in which I wasn't just told I have 3 to 9 years to live.

She puts the magazine down.

CECILIA

No. That's not, nor has it ever been, how we discuss the boys.

FREDDIE

The level of raw honesty this conversation would require is not something I think you'd appreciate.

CECILIA

And suddenly you don't know me at all...

FREDDIE

Alright then.

She squares her shoulders, bracing herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. AIRPORT, TARMAC - CONTINUOUS

There's a private jet waiting on the tarmac.

A black Escalade pulls up.

The DRIVER opens the door for Abel and his wife: HRH PRINCESS DANICA The Duchess of Virginia, 40. She's East-Asian, beautiful, and cutthroat when it comes to her family.

Their 3 biracial children: KORA, 12, DAVY, 10, and Lawson follow behind them.

FREDDIE (V.O.)
Abel's an arrogant, pampered boy
with no real fight in him, CeCe.

Abel checks his hair in the side mirror of the vehicle.

BACK TO:

INT. ROYAL HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

FREDDIE
And his entitlement bothers me. He
thinks when I...when I die, he can
just skip right on up to the
Throne, take a comfortable seat for
the next 40 years, and then simply
pass the Crown down to Kora when
it's her turn.

INT. ROYAL JET - CONTINUOUS

Abel helps Danica get their kids settled into their seats.

CECILIA (V.O.)
I think he has more respect for the
Crown than that. I don't think he's
that shallow either. Especially
given what a wonderful father and
husband he is.

All five of them are immediately preoccupied with a phone in their hands.

ABEL'S PHONE

Abel scrolls through a gossip blog.

He finds a poll ranking the "hotness" of he and his brothers.

Brian is currently in the lead.

He takes the poll and votes for himself.

FREDDIE (V.O.)

He is. And I'll never take that from him. Despite the odd circumstances of his marriage to Danica.

Kora pushes her cellphone in her father's face. On it is a Tic-Tac-Toe board. She's already made an 'X' on it.

He smiles and adds an 'O' with his finger.

INT. ROYAL HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

CECILIA

It works for them. It's what they need in order to have a happy relationship.

FREDDIE

Maybe I'm just too old to get it.

CECILIA

Or you refuse to. Because it's quite simple to understand.

FREDDIE

Are you calling me something?

CECILIA

I'm asking you to try harder to understand that part of Abel.

Freddie shrugs; he never will, nor does he want to.

CECILIA (CONT'D)

Is that the end of your criticisms? Abel is vain, and therefore, not fit to be king?

FREDDIE

He's also lazy.

CECILIA

He's a successful businessman. A charitable investor. How in the world can you see him as lazy?

FREDDIE

Maybe 'greedy' was the word I was looking for.

(MORE)

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

His royal duties as a civil servant seem of very little interest to him when they should take priority over him turning a profit for he and his shitty, rich "bros."

CECILIA

I admit he could use some...professional refocusing.

Freddie scoffs.

FREDDIE

As heir-apparent he's had his entire life to focus. He's more interested in celebrity than civil duty.

It finally dawns on her what exactly Freddie's really saying...

CECILIA

You don't trust him. You don't trust him to be a good king. Well, if not Abel, then who? Evander?

INT. ROYAL JET - CONTINUOUS

Evander, Hena, and their kids: NASIR, 10, and ZARA, 6, ENTER onto the plane.

FREDDIE (V.O.)

I don't think Evander would notice if his beard were on fire. I thought the military would teach him how to focus, but all it did was occupy his time.

Evander is so preoccupied with texting Sofia that he leaves his rowdy children for Hena to deal with.

FREDDIE (V.O.)

He always seems...distracted.

INT. ROYAL HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

CECILIA

Government isn't his thing. He's better at service. Direction, following someone else's lead, suits him better.

(MORE)

CECILIA (CONT'D)
Diplomacy and power aren't things
he's interested in.

FREDDIE
He's the second born to the King.
He *needs* to be interested in them.

INT. BENTLEY CONTINENTAL GT - CONTINUOUS

Brian scrolls through an escort app on his cellphone.

FREDDIE (V.O.)
And then there's Brian, who
indulges his every whim and desire
like he's Peter Pan. And not just
the carnal ones; elaborate
vacations, wild parties, designer
drugs, expensive gifts, exotic
foods, violent confrontations...
That time he bought a goddamn
giraffe I had to ship back to East
Africa.

Brian does a bump of cocaine off his fist.

CECILIA (V.O.)
You sound jealous more than
disappointed.

INT. ROYAL JET - CONTINUOUS

Brian boisterously ENTERS the plane.

His nieces and nephews run excitedly to him. He's "fun uncle
Brian" and they're happy he's there.

FREDDIE (V.O.)
Despite how entertaining it's been
watching him slither away from one
libertine fuck up to the next, it's
also been exhausting watching his
potential, his cleverness, swirl
around a drainage hole.

Abel and Evander exchange irritated looks; they know Brian is
high.

INT. ROYAL HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

CECILIA
At least he does it all with humor.

FREDDIE

But very little dignity. Even for a rake.

CECILIA

How serious do you expect the 9th in line to the Throne to be?

FREDDIE

I expect all of them to be serious. To act as though they'll each be King one day even if they won't.

CECILIA

Teddy keeps his head above water.

INT. ROYAL JET - CONTINUOUS

Lastly, Teddy and Jacob ENTER onto the plane with JJ and Daisy.

FREDDIE (V.O.)

Teddy would be a good ruler. Like King Solomon. Measured and fair. But all he wants is to let that moron, Jacob, shackle him with children.

They're an endearing mess of normal as they get their kids into their seats and settle into their own.

CECILIA (V.O.)

Now you're being hyperbolic. Teddy *wanted* to free himself of royal responsibilities. He *wanted* to be a stay-at-home dad. All he's dreamed of since he was a child was being a husband and a father and he is those things. I'd call him successful in his venture.

INT. ROYAL HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The flight attendant hands Cecilia a tumbler of whiskey then EXITS.

FREDDIE

But did he have to do it with him? With a Lincoln?

Freddie steals a sip of her drink.

CECILIA

This centuries old feud between the monarchy and the Lincolns is long and boring. Your youngest is happier than the majority on this planet. Royal or not, he's richer than most. You should find gratuity in that.

FREDDIE

They ran off, in the middle of the night, to Vegas. When he was nineteen.

CECILIA

I didn't say I liked the way they did it. I merely pointed out he's happy. And that's all that matters.

Freddie grunts a response, not wanting to admit Cecilia may be right about Teddy and Jacob.

CECILIA (CONT'D)

And just how inapt is your middle son?

FREDDIE

Malcolm isn't inapt. He's just...there. He exist. And it seems that's all he does.

CECILIA

So that's it? None of our sons are good enough to rule this country? We should wash our hands of them and simply pray for the best when you're gone? They're our boys, Freddie.

FREDDIE

I know. And that's the bare minimum that makes any of them deserving enough to be King.

INT. ELLERBY HOUSE - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

HRH PRINCE MALCOLM The Duke of Georgia, 35, sits at the desk reading and sifting through piles of office documents, legal papers, and financial records.

He's just as attractive as his brothers now. Gone is his scrawny frame and braces. But there's still a pair of eyeglasses resting on his nose.

Two adult Dalmatians-- HOLMES and WATSON-- sit quietly at his feet.

MR. COLE-- now 55 and Malcolm's butler-- ENTERS.

NOTE: None of Malcolm's domestic staff wear uniforms.

MR. COLE

Sir. Lady Atwood is on the phone.

Malcolm looks up from his work to give Mr. Cole a confused look.

Mr. Cole shrugs.

Malcolm taps the video phone on his desk.

VIDEO PHONE

A candid image of a Black woman playing with Holmes and Watson pops up on the screen with her name-- Grier.

MALCOLM

Yes?

LADY ATWOOD (V.O.)

(on video phone)

Your father invited me to dinner tonight.

MALCOLM

...Fine.

LADY ATWOOD (V.O.)

And Guillaume.

Malcolm's face sours into complete disdain.

He abruptly hangs up on her.

MALCOLM

(to Mr. Cole)

Please have Mrs. Lawry set two extra place settings for dinner tonight. Lady Atwood will be joining us. As well as her gentleman friend.

MR. COLE

Yes, sir.

MALCOLM

Thank you, Mr. Cole.

MR. COLE

I also wanted to inform you that
the princes are arriving, sir.

Malcolm looks at the mound of work on his desk he'd rather be
doing instead.

MALCOLM

(sighs)
Right.

Holmes and Watson follow Malcolm and Mr. Cole out of the
office.

EXT. ELLERBY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ellerby House is a secluded, antebellum home resting on acres
upon acres of land, with a long, oak alley driveway enclosed
by a gate and security post.

FRONT DOOR

Malcolm waits to greet the rest of his family with his
domestic staff: Mr. Cole, MAIDS, a NANNY, and FOOTMEN.

And his dogs.

A caravan of black SUVs make their way down the driveway and
park in front of the house.

Evander approaches first with Hena and their loud, obnoxious
children.

The staff show their respect with a bow or curtsy.

HENA

Did you get a nanny for the
evening?

MALCOLM

Yes. This is Miss Boden.

A young woman, MISS BODEN, 20, steps forward with a eager
smile--

HENA

Thank God. Take the children
swimming before dinner please.

Hena pushes her annoying children toward Miss Boden and
EXITS.

Miss Boden follows behind her with Nasir and Zara.

EVANDER

Hey.

MALCOLM

Hi.

Malcolm and Evander give each other an awkward hug. There's no brotherly intimacy between them and it shows.

Evander EXITS into the house behind his wife and Miss Boden.

Abel and Danica walk toward the house. Abel is on the phone.

ABEL

(mouths; to Malcolm)
Interview.

He quickly shakes Malcolm's hand and hurries inside.

DANICA

Hi, Malcolm. Thanks for hosting
this Sunday.

MALCOLM

Not a problem.

He kisses her cheek and says 'hello' to his obscenely polite niece and nephews.

DANICA

Are the King and Queen here?

MALCOLM

Not yet.

DANICA

Odd.

Danica EXITS into the house with her kids.

BRIAN (O.S.)

MALCOLM!

Brian runs and jumps onto Malcolm, wrapping his legs around him and giving him a big kiss on the cheek.

MALCOLM

(laughs)
Get off me, idiot.

Brian climbs off of him.

BRIAN

Miss me?

MALCOLM
With every bullet so far.

They hug. Unlike with Evander, Malcolm's embrace with Brian is sincere and close-knit.

BRIAN
Mumzy and daddums here already?

MALCOLM
No. They're late.

BRIAN
Weird. Well, I'm not going to complain about a delay from the firing squad.

Brian makes to ENTER the house but Malcolm stops him with a hand on his shoulder.

MALCOLM
Empty your pockets.

BRIAN
Really? You're a cruel man, Malcolm.

Brian empties his pockets: a vial of coke, pills, a dime bag of weed, and a pack of cigarettes.

Malcolm takes all the paraphernalia and hands it to his housekeeper, MS. LAWRY, 60.

She shakes her head at Brian and pockets his drugs.

MALCOLM
I'm having the footmen go through your bag, too.

BRIAN
Asshole.

Brian turns to EXIT again--

Malcolm grabs him and WHISPERS in his ear...

Whatever he says makes his brother laugh, then playfully punch him in the arm.

Brian skips into the house.

DAISY JJ
Uncle Malcolm! Uncle Malcolm! Uncle Malcolm!

Malcolm's face lights up at the two children careening toward him. He bends down with open arms as they run into him for a big hug.

He kisses both of them.

MALCOLM

I missed you both so much! You miss me?

They nod.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

How much?

JJ

To the moon and back.

MALCOLM

Nope. Moon's not far enough.

DAISY

To Mars.

MALCOLM

Still not far enough.

JJ

To Pluto?

MALCOLM

That is extremely far. I'll take to Pluto and back. Want to go swimming?

JJ

(frowns)

With Nasir and Zara?

Malcolm chuckles.

MALCOLM

Yes.

DAISY

Can we play games with you instead?

MALCOLM

I would love to give your dads a break and play games with you.

Speaking of who, Teddy and Jacob walk up. They're carrying their bags.

Malcolm stands.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
You're not pompous for letting the
footmen take your bags through the
service entrance, you know.

TEDDY
(to Jacob)
Like I told you. For the millionth
time...

JACOB
Yeah, yeah. Hi, Malcolm. Good to
see you.

MALCOLM
You, too, Jacob.

They politely shake hands.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
Mom and dad are late.

JACOB
Thank God. A moment of peace.

Jacob goes inside.

MALCOLM
He can't even fake it anymore.

TEDDY
Not even a little.

They laugh.

DAISY
Fake what?

TEDDY
Nothing, nosy beetle. Go inside.

MALCOLM
Pick out a game for us to play.

JJ and Daisy run into the house.

A beat.

TEDDY
You hung up on me.

MALCOLM
I know... I'm sorry.

TEDDY
Was there a specific reason you
called me?

MALCOLM
I don't know. I was drunk.

TEDDY
And needing to talk. We still can.

Malcolm turns toward the house, taking the steps. Teddy follows.

MALCOLM
Grier's coming to dinner. Dad
invited her. And her boyfriend.

TEDDY
Fuck, Malcolm...

MALCOLM
I know how to behave around certain
people in this family. Been doing
it for years.

TEDDY
Yeah, but--

They're interrupted by the abrasive sound of helicopter blades WHIRLING overhead.

Royal Helicopter comes into view above them, kicking up dirt and grass as it flies over the house.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Looks like Jacob's moment of peace
is up.

Malcolm and Teddy EXIT inside. Holmes and Watson bound inside behind them.

The staff EXIT through the service entrance on the side of the house.

DRIVERS park their cars around back.

EXT. ELLERBY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BACK PORCH

Malcolm's land is embarrassingly massive: with it's own pool and pool house, firepit, grill, screened sunroom, and garden exclusively filled with cabbage roses. All of it surrounded by oak trees covered in Spanish moss.

Malcolm and Teddy ENTER from the house just in time to catch their parents de-plane the helicopter with the rest of the royal family.

Freddie and Cecilia approach.

Everyone bows and curtsseys to them in unison.

INT. ELLERBY HOUSE - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

The royal family sip white wine and talk amongst one another in clusters.

TABLE

Malcolm and Freddie sit at opposite ends of the table. Daisy sits on Malcolm's lap, and JJ on Freddie's.

They're playing Candy Land.

FREDDIE

So, what's on the menu tonight?

MALCOLM

Mushroom duxelle on crostini with goat cheese and balsamic vinegar, roasted beet salad with feta and walnuts, beef wellington, and lemon meringue pie shooters.

Daisy and JJ make 'yuck' faces at one another over the night's perceived dinner.

FREDDIE

What? That sounds delicious. You guys don't want mushroom duxelle?

JJ

Gross.

DAISY

No, thank you.

MALCOLM

Well, I guess it's a good idea I decided to get you guys pizza instead.

JJ

Hawaiian pizza?

FREDDIE
Pineapple doesn't belong on pizza,
kid.

Cecilia approaches.

CECILIA
Who's winning?

MALCOLM
Daisy. But only because she keeps
moving her piece ahead when she
thinks no one's looking.

Malcolm tickles her, eliciting loud GIGGLES from her.

A FOOTMAN approaches and offers Cecilia another glass of
wine, which she takes.

The footman EXITS.

CECILIA
Malcolm, why aren't your staff in
uniform?

MALCOLM
Because they're more comfortable in
their own clothes.

CECILIA
That may be so, but sweetheart,
they're staff.

MALCOLM
Who still manage to do their jobs
and do them well without a uniform.

Before Cecilia can argue, a Black woman ENTERS the room: LADY
GRIER ATWOOD, 35; beautiful, cosmopolitan, and ruthless when
need be.

By her side is her boyfriend, GUILLAUME BREAUX, 40, a fair-
skinned Black man.

MR. COLE
(announces)
Lady Atwood and Mr. Breaux.

Grier and Guillaume cross the room to Freddie and Cecilia.

GRIER
I'm so sorry for being late.
Traffic.

Freddie stands with JJ on his hip.

Grier and Guillaume curtsey and bow.

FREDDIE

GiGi.

CECILIA

Oh, she hasn't been GiGi since she was a child. It's Lady Atwood now. Feels like ages since we saw you last. We're so glad you said 'yes' to coming to dinner.

Freddie and Cecilia hug her. They're genuinely pleased to see her.

GRIER

This is Guillaume Breaux.

GUILLAUME

(New Orleans accent)

It's an honor. Wow.

TEDDY AND BRIAN

BRIAN

Did you know Grier was coming?

TEDDY

Malcolm told me right when we got here.

BRIAN

At least tonight won't be as boring as I thought it'd be.

FREDDIE

FREDDIE

Thank you for letting me bully you two into joining us at the last minute.

GRIER

And invitation to dinner from my godfather isn't bullying.

FREDDIE

How are you? And your sister? How is she?

GRIER

I'm good. Sienna is good, too. She's still staying with me while she finishes up her last semester at Spelman.

FREDDIE

Is she joining us for dinner tonight, too?

GRIER

No, she has a date. I'm afraid an evening with the King and Queen of The United States couldn't compete with the cute guy who works at Yogurtland.

FREDDIE

God, the money I would pay to be able to witness what your dad would be like seeing you and your sister go on dates.

MALCOLM

He would have been terrifying. But understandably so.

Malcolm and Grier exchange a knowing glance Freddie takes notice of.

Mr. Cole ENTERS the room and makes his way to Malcolm.

MR. COLE

The dining table is set, sir. And the pizzas have arrived.

MALCOLM

Perfect. Thank you, Mr. Cole.

Freddie and Malcolm put JJ and Daisy to their feet. Mr. Cole takes their tiny hands and escorts them out of the room for pizza.

Malcolm taps his glass, getting everyone's attention.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Dinner is ready.

Everyone files out of the parlor behind Freddie and Cecilia.

Except Malcolm. He grabs Grier's arm, keeping her back.

GRIER
(to Guillaume)
Give me a minute.

They wait for everyone to leave the room...

GRIER (CONT'D)
Let go of me.

Malcolm releases her arm from his grip.

A beat.

MALCOLM
You didn't have to bring him.

GRIER
Your father insisted.

MALCOLM
With a gun to your head?

GRIER
No. You're the only one that makes
threats like that.

MALCOLM
I don't threaten you.

GRIER
Every word out of your mouth is a
threat.

MALCOLM
Trust me when I tell you you've
never been on the receiving end of
a promise I make.

GRIER
Such as now?

His jaw tightens as he glares at her.

They stare each other down...

Freddie appears in the doorway.

FREDDIE
Hey. You two eating with us or not?

Malcolm and Grier plaster on fake smiles.

GRIER
Just catching up.

MALCOLM

Been a minute since we've seen each other last.

FREDDIE

Well, talk at the table. The rest of us are ready to eat.

MALCOLM

Right.

Malcolm EXITS. Grier follows.

Freddie stares at them, curious of the odd tension between them.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. ELLERBY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT, CONTINUOUS

TABLE

LAUGHTER dies down around the table.

FREDDIE

I told you I have a million stories
about your father.

GRIER

You did. That was a good one.

FREDDIE

He was honestly one of the bravest,
funniest, and most ridiculous
humans I've ever had the pleasure
of knowing. I wouldn't have survived
military school without him.

GRIER

He told me the same of you.

FREDDIE

Bullshit. Everyone loved Aaron. He
would've been fine without me.

(slaps table)

Well. That's enough about me and my
crush on your late father. Let's
know something about the gentleman
beside you. So, Guillaume, Grier
says you're from New Orleans.

GUILLAUME

Uh, yes, Your Majesty. Born and
raised. Creole on both sides. But I
live here, in Savannah.

FREDDIE

Still got family in The Big Easy?

GUILLAUME

Yes, sir. My mama's people. My
daddy's side stays in Shreveport.

FREDDIE

Shreveport's nice. But I love New
Orleans.

CECILIA

What do you do, Guillaume?

GUILLAUME

I'm a trumpet player in a band.

HENA

What kind of band?

GUILLAUME

A jazz band.

The table erupts into a cacophony of GROANS.

GUILLAUME (CONT'D)

What's going on?

ABEL

What's about to happen in 3 seconds is my father's going to inundate you with long-winded monologues about the importance, and therefore, significance of jazz to the mind, body, and soul.

GUILLAUME

Well, Jazz is the life blood of all music. It's the rhythm, the heartbeat, of every note or beat you've ever heard.

FREDDIE

A man with some sense!

BRIAN

Would you two like to be alone?

FREDDIE

To talk about the greatest music genre there is without you uncultured lot present, yes. But I'm afraid Grier would object.

GRIER

No, please. Take him. I've heard it all before.

TEDDY

So have we.

FREDDIE

Smart-ass little shits.

CECILIA

What club does your band play at,
Guillaume?

GUILLAUME

All over. We travel. On tour right
now. I head back to Paris next
week. Taking my lovely fiancée with
me for a few days.

MALCOLM

What did you say?

CECILIA

You're engaged?!

Grier shifts under Malcolm's glare.

GUILLAUME

Did you not tell them?

GRIER

Haven't had the chance
unfortunately. And I forgot my ring
this morning.

GUILLAUME

Good thing I remembered.

He pulls her engagement ring from his pocket and slips it
onto her finger.

CECILIA

Oh, so sweet. We need champagne.

Cecilia acknowledges a FOOTMAN who goes to get a bottle of
champagne.

TEDDY'S POV - MALCOLM

Teddy watches his brother quietly fume across the table.

Brian nudges him with a worried glance.

This is bad. And they're the only two that seem to know it.

FREDDIE

Little GiGi is getting married.
Does your grandmother know?

GRIER

Yes.

FREDDIE

That woman loves weddings. She must
be thrilled.

GRIER

She is. Guillaume's managed to charm her into acquiescent bliss.

TWO FOOTMEN bring a bottle of expensive champagne and flutes to the table.

CECILIA

When's the date?

GUILLAUME

We haven't picked one yet. With me being on tour and everything. But hopefully soon.

FREDDIE

(stands)

Well, in the meantime, a toast. To Grier and Guillaume. Congratulations.

Everyone except Malcolm raises their glass to the couple.

He can't. He's enraged, scowling at Grier.

ALL

CONGRATULATIONS!

Grier downs her champagne in a single swallow, avoiding Malcolm's stare.

FREDDIE

So, are we invited? I'd love to come...and give my goddaughter away.

GRIER

I--

GUILLAUME

Why not? Why not have the King of the US at our wedding? Watching me marry my priceless gift.

He kisses the back of Grier's hand.

MALCOLM

What the fuck did you just say?

The table quiets; curious eyes on Malcolm.

GUILLAUME

Excuse me?

MALCOLM
What did you just say?

GUILLAUME
...I said Grier is my priceless
gift.

MALCOLM
She's priceless?

GUILLAUME
Yes.

MALCOLM
To you?

GUILLAUME
Yes.

(long beat)

Malcolm breaks from the table and EXITS.

ABEL
What was that?

FREDDIE
I don't know.

Grier pours herself another glass of champagne and drinks it
in one go.

Malcolm returns with something in his hand.

MALCOLM
Say that again.

GUILLAUME
What?

MALCOLM
About Grier. Say it again.

GUILLAUME
...She's priceless.

MALCOLM
You sure? How priceless?

GUILLAUME
P-Priceless... She means everything
to me.

MALCOLM

So there's nothing you'd trade for her? There's nothing you'd give for her? Or take?

GUILLAUME

Take?

MALCOLM

Yeah. Like...

The thing in Malcolm's hand is a checkbook and pen, which he uses to write--

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

A million dollars.

He tears the check off and sits it in front of Guillaume.

TEDDY

(low)
Shit.

BRIAN

(low)
Fuck.

Wide eyes all around turn to Malcolm.

GUILLAUME

Are-Are you serious, man? Did you just write a check for a million dollars?

MALCOLM

Yeah. I did. Is that how much Grier is worth?

Guillaume chuckles nervously.

GUILLAUME

W-W-What is this? Is this a test?

MALCOLM

(serious)
No.

The tension is thick with silence as Malcolm and Guillaume stare each other down.

(3 beats)

Guillaume pushes the check away.

GUILLAUME

No. Like I said: Grier's priceless.

Malcolm smirks.

He writes another check and puts it in front of Guillaume.

MALCOLM
\$5 million.

FREDDIE
What the hell...?

CECILIA
Okay, Malcolm, I think Guillaume gets whatever your point--

MALCOLM
Stay out of this please.
(to Guillaume)
No? Not good enough?

GUILLAUME
What are you trying to prove, man?
This is sad. You're a sad, little man.

MALCOLM
You've got a daughter, right? Lives full-time with her mom in Shreveport?

GUILLAUME
...So?

Malcolm writes another check and tears it off.

MALCOLM
\$7 million.

ABEL
That's enough, Malcolm! You're being an idiot and this is embarrassing!

MALCOLM
SHUT THE FUCK UP, ABEL!

Abel's taken aback. Malcolm doesn't yell. At anyone. He's quiet and meek...right?

Freddie takes notice of how quickly Abel does quiet when told to by his younger brother.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
\$7 million dollars. For her. Or is she still priceless?

Malcolm and Grier lock eyes. She's livid.

Guillaume stares at the check in front of him... He's a lot less staunch than he was a minute ago; wavering, considering...

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
No? Still not good enough?

Malcolm writes another check.

He bends down beside Guillaume's chair.

He places the new check in front of him.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
\$10 million.

The table collectively holds their breath...

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
That's my last offer. Take this or nothing.

Guillaume anxiously stares at the check.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
\$10 million dollars. That's full custody of your daughter. That's not a single missed birthday or Christmas. That's ballet lessons. Her coming to see you play in Paris, every time you're there. A brand new car when she graduates high school. That's you touring with your little jazz band for fun, and not to keep the lights on and your ex off your back. And all you have to do is take it and walk out of here. \$10 million.

Malcolm puts a finger on the check, pulling it ever so slowly away from Guillaume's reach.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
Last...offer...Guillaume--

Guillaume's hand slams down on the moving slip of money.

(long beat)

Guillaume keeps his hand on it, like it'll blow away if he doesn't.

Malcolm removes his finger.

The smirk on his face is of sinister satisfaction. He's won.

Grier's eyes are wet but she refuses to cry. Staring daggers at Malcolm.

Guillaume, guilty and full of shame, takes the check, quietly folding it under watchful stares. He slips it into his jacket pocket.

A beat.

He stands.

GUILLAUME

...Je suis desole, cherie.

She's not even looking at him. Her icy glower focused only on Malcolm.

Guillaume EXITS.

A beat.

Malcolm slides one of the candles atop the table toward him and grabs the three other checks he wrote.

He holds the checks over the candle flame, letting them burn.

He drops the singed paper onto Grier's plate.

MALCOLM

I guess you're right; everything I do say is a threat. Maybe you should keep remembering that.

Mr. Cole ENTERS, disrupting the tension.

MR. COLE

Sir. Mr. Varma called. There's an emergency. An accident at the oil refinery. He's just arrived.

Malcolm bolts from the room.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Malcolm grabs his jacket from the closet.

Freddie ENTERS.

FREDDIE

Hey! Are you insane?!

MALCOLM

No.

Malcolm EXITS.

FREDDIE

Where the hell are you going,
Malcolm?!

Freddie follows him out.

EXT. ELLERBY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An Indian man, SAHIR VARMA, 40, pulls up to the house in a jeep.

Malcolm walks to Sahir's car. Freddie continues to follow them.

FREDDIE

Malcolm. You need to get back
inside and apologize, Especially to
Grier.

SAHIR

Grier's at family dinner?

FREDDIE

I didn't invite her. He did.

Malcolm and Sahir climb into Sahir's car.

Freddie, fuming, and not knowing what else to do, jumps in the backseat.

SAHIR

The King coming to?

MALCOLM

(annoyed)
So it seems.

EXT. OIL REFINERY - CONTINUOUS

FIRE CREW and EMTs are present as fire and smoke erupt from the oil refinery.

Sahir's car skids up to the scene.

Malcolm, Freddie, and Sahir climb out of the car.

FREDDIE
Jesus Christ.

Two women and a Black man wearing masks hurry toward them:
DENNIS, 45, GINNY, 30, and IZZIE, 50.

Dennis hands them each a mask to avoid the bellowing smoke
from the flames and dizzying smell of gas.

IZZIE
Is that the fucking King?

MALCOLM
Anybody hurt?

DENNIS
Two security guards are dead. Smoke
inhalation. Fire crew says it has
to burn off. Safest way.

MALCOLM
How long is that going to take?

DENNIS
3 days.

MALCOLM
For fuck's sake... Any residential
areas in danger of inhaling this
shit need to be evacuated.

SAHIR
I'm already working with hotels on
where to put people that need to
leave their homes until the gas is
burned off, but the fucking Holiday
Inn is worried about people with
pets.

(off his look)
Which is not something anyone
should give a shit about right now.

MALCOLM
Was this an accident?

GINNY
They're trying to claim it was but
I know different.

Ginny hands Malcolm a file.

He flips through it, speed-reading and going through photos.

MALCOLM

Drag those old fucks out of their comfortable beds please.

IZZIE

Already did. They're waiting for you in there. With their lawyers.

She points to a trailer off to the side.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

TWO ELDERLY BILLIONAIRES in their silk pajamas and bath robes sit at a dinky table. Their LAWYERS stand behind them.

Malcolm storms inside with Freddie, Sahir, and Dennis.

They're taken aback by the King's presence. They attempt to stand so they may bow but--

MALCOLM

(takes off mask)

Sit the fuck down, you gremlins. Let's get to the point: two people are dead and the entire port is clouded in smoke because you greedy assholes decided to cut corners.

LAWYER #1

Your Royal Highness--

MALCOLM

I didn't give you permission to speak! This isn't a courtroom. There won't be any back and forth.

Malcolm tosses the folder Ginny gave him onto the table in front of the two elderly men.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Evidence. Of the regulations you ignored, the corners you cut, and the numerous safety violations you attempted to hide. You two fucking dinosaurs are lucky it was only two people who died.

ELDERLY MAN #1

We leave these things up to engineers and managers.

(MORE)

ELDERLY MAN #1 (CONT'D)

Their attempts at shirking their responsibilities, not complying with the rules, is not solely our liability.

MALCOLM

"Liability." What a nice word.

ELDERLY MAN #2

(to Freddie; imploring)

Your majesty--

MALCOLM

Who are you talking to? I'm the only one in this room.

Malcolm is clearly a force to be reckoned with. And Freddie's a little fascinated by it.

He shakes his head at them; he's not the one they should be addressing.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I told you two dusty husks that I wanted everything corrected on your last inspection. And apparently I was ignored. So either you thought I was joking, or you think I'm a joke. Which is surprising to me given the number of dealings we've had over the last year. I would have thought by now you understood the seriousness in which I run my district.

They may not have taken Malcolm seriously in the past, but they do now.

ELDERLY MAN #1

We will...compensate the families of the two men.

MALCOLM

Eduardo Villalobos and Dominic Ursino. And yes, you fucking will. You'll also pay for their funerals and foot the bill for the residents nearby who have to stay in a hotel for the next 3 days.

Their lawyers WHISPER in their ears...

The two elderly men nod, agreeing to Malcolm's demands.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
And you'll also shut down the refinery.

They stare up in horrified shock at Malcolm.

ELDERLY MAN #1
Shut down the refinery?!

MALCOLM
Yes. Your crude oil business is no longer welcomed in my district.

ELDERLY MAN #1
You can't shut us down!

MALCOLM
I can't?

ELDERLY MAN #2
We're a private business!

MALCOLM
And that may mean something if this were Florida, but it's not. It's the southeast United States. And in the southeast United States when I say you're shutting down your refinery, you're shutting down your refinery. Like I told you two buzzards the last time we spoke: Savannah doesn't need you. 95% of my district is green energy.

Freddie appears surprised to know that.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
Helping the last 5% put solar panels on their roofs, and getting them electric farming equipment, will be a lot less costly and a lot less dangerous than keeping you around.

ELDERLY MAN #1
You'll cost jobs around here. A lot of them.

FREDDIE
No, he won't. Not if your former employees are trained for renewable jobs.

MALCOLM

Quit scowling at me. You've got three other refineries. All in Florida. I'm only costing you the one. You're still despicable billionaires.

FREDDIE

Unfortunately.

EXT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Malcolm, Freddie, Sahir, and Dennis EXIT the trailer.

Sahir checks his phone.

SAHIR

Holiday Inn has suddenly become a lot more cooperative after I told them who will be paying for all those people staying in their hotel.

MALCOLM

And their pets.

SAHIR

And their goddamn pets.

(to Freddie)

I'm Sahir, by the way. Sahir Varma. Chief of Staff for Malcolm's office.

DENNIS

Dennis Greene. Director of Communications and Public Relations.

They bow to Freddie.

FREDDIE

It's nice to meet you both.

GINNY

I'm Ginny. Director of Online Research.

IZZIE

Fancy name for 'hacker'. Elizabeth Pearlman. Izzie. Private Investigator.

Ginny and Izzie curtsey. Poorly.

FREDDIE
 (to Malcolm)
 There's a hacker and a gumshoe on
 your staff?

IZZIE
 You wouldn't believe the lies
 people tell this kid to get in his
 good graces. Ginny and I are just
 here to weed through them.

MALCOLM
 Is everyone done fawning over my
 father? Good. Sahir, take him back
 to my place please?

FREDDIE
 Where are you going?

MALCOLM
 To knock on doors. We have to get
 people settled in the hotels.
 (to Sahir)
 Get CAT buses down here
 immediately, too, please.

SAHIR
 I'll call on the way.

Malcolm, Dennis, Ginny, and Izzie EXIT without another word.

FREDDIE'S POV - MALCOLM

Freddie watches his son speak with the Fire Crew.

He's impressed (and surprised) with how Malcolm has managed a sudden crisis.

SAHIR (CONT'D)
 Your majesty? Sir?

FREDDIE
 Oh. Yeah. Right.

Freddie and Sahir climb into Sahir's car.

INT. ELLERBY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FRONT DOOR

Freddie ENTERS.

Cecilia rushes into the foyer.

CECILIA
I want to talk to Malcolm.

FREDDIE
He didn't come back with me. He's
still at the oil refinery.

CECILIA
Why?

FREDDIE
There was an explosion.

CECILIA
Still doesn't explain why he's
there and not here.

FREDDIE
Trust me. He's needed there, CeCe.

CECILIA
That's ridiculous. What exactly
could he do to help?

INT. ELLERBY HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Abel, undressed and brushing his teeth, pokes his head out of
the adjoining bathroom.

ABEL
I mean, what the fuck was that?

DANICA
You're asking me like I know?

ABEL
You were there.

DANICA
So were you. We saw the same thing:
your brother pay his friend's
fiancé to not marry her.

ABEL
It was disgusting.

DANICA
Agreed.

Abel disappears into the bathroom.

OS, the sound of him SPITTING then the FAUCET turning on then
off.

He reappears into the bedroom.

ABEL

Did you hear how he snapped at me?
Like a stray dog.

DANICA

That was completely out of
character for him.

ABEL

That whole scene was not Malcolm.

Abel climbs into bed with Danica.

ABEL (CONT'D)

I never thought of Malcolm as
cruel. He'd always been so mild-
mannered. Shy. He rescues dogs from
dumpsters.

(off her look)

His first Dalmatian. 'Penny',
remember? Pulled her out of a
dumpster and nursed her back to
health.

DANICA

Penny. She was deaf. He taught her
sign language.

ABEL

Yeah. Were you watching my dad?

She shakes her head.

ABEL (CONT'D)

I was. He looked...surprised.

DANICA

We all were.

ABEL

No. He looked surprised, like...
Like he didn't know Malcolm had it
in him. Like something unlocked and
a door was opened.

DANICA

Honestly, Abel, I think we all had
that look. I know I did.

ABEL

What unlocked for you? What was
behind the door?

DANICA

A side of your brother I hope to
never see again.

INT. GUEST ROOM #2 - CONTINUOUS

EVANDER

Are you joking, Hena?

HENA

What? I thought it was romantic.

EVANDER

It was possessive and humiliating.
How could you not feel bad for
Grier?

HENA

I feel bad her fiancé is a greedy
piece of shit. Not that Malcolm
showed her that.

EVANDER

He didn't show her anything other
than how controlling he can be.
Which I was not aware of. He's
always been quiet. A little shy.
But tonight, out of nowhere, he's
Charles Foster Kane. It's warped.
Like *The Twilight Zone*.

HENA

It was sexy.

EVANDER

I can't believe you just said that.

HENA

Why?

EVANDER

How could you think... What was
sexy about it?

She gives him a kittenish grin.

She crawls into his lap.

She pulls her silk nightgown over her head. And leans down,
kissing him.

HENA

He wants her. And no one else can have her. Is worthy of her. She's priceless to no one but him. A man wanting you that much, needing you that much, is sexy.

Hena slips her hand beneath the bedding, fondling Evander.

He stops her.

EVANDER

Sorry. I--

She doesn't let him finish. She jumps out of bed, grabs her vibrator from her luggage, and storms angrily into the adjoining bathroom, SLAMMING the door behind her.

Evander bangs his head against the headboard.

He's a jackass.

INT. GUEST ROOM #3 - CONTINUOUS

VANITY

Cecilia sits at the vanity removing the makeup from her face.

CECILIA

Malcolm's driver took her home. She said she was fine, but I could see how heartbroken and embarrassed she was. I cannot believe the way he humiliated her. It was absolutely disgusting. I thought they were friends. Why would he hurt her like that?

MALCOLM

He's the only one that actually lives in his district.

Cecilia turns around to look at her husband, sitting in an armchair by the window, looking deep in thought.

CECILIA

What?

FREDDIE

Did you know Malcolm was assertive like this?

CECILIA

I think you mean 'aggressive'.

FREDDIE

I don't remember him being a mean-spirited boy.

CECILIA

He wasn't. Have you really not paid him any attention since he was a child?

FREDDIE

He was introverted. Quiet. He wasn't needy like Abel. Or a showboat like Evander. A troublemaker like Brian. Or the baby, like Teddy. He was--

CECILIA

The middle son. Easy to ignore.

FREDDIE

He was independent. Kept to himself and never gave me a headache. I didn't have to think about him too much.

CECILIA

You should always think about your children. Otherwise they'll turn into tyrannical adults right under your nose without you realizing it.

FREDDIE

I'd hardly call Malcolm's actions tyrannical.

CECILIA

What would you call them then?

FREDDIE

...Imperial.

CECILIA

Same difference. He must have really impressed you at that oil refinery. I, however, am not the least bit wowed with any of his actions tonight.

FREDDIE

Is that why we've been talking about him for the last hour?

She sneers at him. Not appreciating his retort.

INT. GUEST ROOM #4 - CONTINUOUS

Jacob's in bed reading a book.

Teddy ENTERS with a goofy grin on his face.

JACOB
Somebody's stoned.

TEDDY
Brian hid a vape pen in his shoe.

Teddy toes off his shoes and crawls toward Jacob on the bed.

JACOB
You know, I got to say, I was not
expecting Malcolm to take my place
as the family dinner menace.

Teddy takes the book from his hands and tosses it onto the floor.

TEDDY
I don't want to talk about my
brother. Our kids are asleep in an
entirely different part of this
very large house, so I want you to
fuck me as loudly as possible.

JACOB
I can do that.

TEDDY
Then do it.

JACOB
Take your clothes off.

Teddy hurriedly takes off his clothes while Jacob undresses, too.

They're both naked and kissing wildly.

EXT. GUEST ROOM #4 - CONTINUOUS

TWO MAIDS carry fresh towels down the hallway.

As they pass by the guest room they can hear Teddy MOANING loud enough to wake the dead.

TEDDY (O.S.)
Oh, my God! Jacob!

The two maids GIGGLE to themselves then scurry down the stairs.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. ELLERBY HOUSE - DAY

FOOTMEN help Abel, Evander, Brian, and Teddy load their bags into their respective cars.

ABEL

He skips breakfast and now he's not even going to say 'goodbye' or apologize?

TEDDY

Apologize for what?

ABEL

Were you not there last night?

JACOB

The only person that deserves an apology is Grier.

TEDDY

Exactly.

ABEL

I beg to differ.

BRIAN

Of course you would.

ABEL

Are you three the 'Malcolm Defense Squad' now?

BRIAN

I think of us less like a squad and more of a legion.

Ms. Lawry approaches and returns Brian's drugs to him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Nearly forgot. Thanks, love.

She shakes her head at him and EXITS.

Brian does a bump of cocaine.

ABEL

Are you fucking kidding me, Brian? Just out in the open? In front of the help?

BRIAN

Hey, remember when Malcolm put in
in your place last night? Best part
of the evening.

Teddy and Jacob snicker.

ABEL

Fuck you, Brian.

Abel slips his sunglasses on.

ABEL (CONT'D)

You have 20 minutes to get to the
tarmac or I'm telling the pilot to
take off without you.

Abel climbs into the first car. Danica and their kids are
already inside.

Abel's car drives off.

The second car pulls forward. The back window rolls down and
Evander pokes his head out.

Nasir and Zara can be heard arguing within the car.

EVANDER

So fourth Sunday was a fucking
mess.

(to Jacob)

Surprised it wasn't you and dad
screaming politics over roasted
duck again. I might've enjoyed that
more.

JACOB

It was nice not being the focus of
everyone's ire for once.

EVANDER

Teddy. I know you and Malcolm are
close, but don't... Maybe keep your
distance from him for awhile.

TEDDY

I live in Virginia and he lives
here in Savannah. That's pretty
distant.

EVANDER

You know what I mean.

TEDDY

Thanks for the advice, Evander.

They both know he doesn't mean that.

EVANDER

Yeah. Right. See you on the plane.

Evander's car drives off.

BRIAN

Evander giving a shit long enough to dole out advice? Malcolm really let the mask slip last night.

TEDDY

It didn't slip. He pulled it off and burned it.

Helicopter blades sound loudly and wind kicks up as ROYAL HELICOPTER flies overhead, getting further and further away as it goes...

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Nice of mom and dad to say 'goodbye'.

BRIAN

They must be livid.

Speak of the Devil-- Sahir's jeep comes down the oak alley drive toward the house.

The car stops in front of them. Malcolm gets out on the passenger side.

He's wearing the same clothes as yesterday and looks exhausted.

He waves Sahir off and the jeep EXITS back down the driveway.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Where the hell were you all night?

TEDDY

Dad didn't say.

MALCOLM

There was an explosion at the oil refinery.

BRIAN

And you had to take care of it personally because...?

MALCOLM
Because I had to.

BRIAN
Thank you for clearing that up for
me. I understand now.

MALCOLM
Everyone gone?

JACOB
Just us.

BRIAN
Mom and dad left without a word.

MALCOLM
Good. I've been up all night and
I'm too old for lectures.

BRIAN
You know you're fucked now, right?
Everyone else in the family knows
you're a psycho now. Good luck
hoping things go back to the way
they were.

MALCOLM
Another problem for another day.
Preferably after I've showered and
passed out for at least a couple
hours. What are you three still
doing here?

TEDDY
You took off in a flash last night.

BRIAN
After being a dick to Grier.

MALCOLM
...Was she upset?

JACOB
Dude. You paid her boyfriend \$10
million dollars to not marry her.
In front of the entire royal
family. Yeah, a little.

TEDDY

Malcolm, I know whatever the hell's been going on between you and Grier since middle school is beyond complicated, but Jesus, that was fucked up.

He at least has the decency to look guilty.

MALCOLM

I know. I'll fix it.

TEDDY

Please do. Because this rotten family actually likes her.

Malcolm nods, Teddy having gotten through to him.

BRIAN

(checks cellphone)

We got to go.

Malcolm hugs Teddy.

MALCOLM

You know you can leave Daisy and JJ with me anytime you need a break, right?

BRIAN

Same. I know I'm a bad influence, but I love those kids.

TEDDY

Can you behave yourself for an entire weekend?

BRIAN

48 hours? That's nothing. Anything more though and I'm on a binge.

TEDDY

You're going to die naked in a Motel 6 bathroom, aren't you?

BRIAN

Never. I'm going out in a blaze of glory. Mexican standoff or bust.

MALCOLM

You're joking, but we're 90% sure that's really how you'll die one day.

BRIAN

Hopefully.

(hugs Malcolm)

The next fourth Sunday is going to be like watching paint dry compared to last night.

MALCOLM

Sorry for setting the bar so high.

Teddy, Jacob, and Brian get into their cars.

Daisy and JJ roll the windows down and wave 'goodbye' to Malcolm as the car pulls away from the house.

INT. ELLERBY HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Malcolm ENTERS, closing the door behind him.

He takes his phone from his back pocket.

PHONE

He texts Izzie. Asking her to find Grier's current location.

Mr. Cole ENTERS.

MALCOLM

I just want to take a shower and then the longest nap I possibly can.

MR. COLE

Yes, sir. However...

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Every wall is fitted with shelves upon shelves of books.

Malcolm's dogs watch Freddie as he wanders around, sifting through a book here-and-there, before putting them back.

Malcolm ENTERS.

MALCOLM

I thought you left.

FREDDIE

No. That was just your mother.

MALCOLM

And why didn't you go with her?

Freddie is a tad taken aback by his son's bluntness, but presses on.

FREDDIE
You read most of these?

MALCOLM
I've read all of them. Why didn't you go back to Virginia with mom?

FREDDIE
All of these books?

MALCOLM
All of them.

FREDDIE
When?

MALCOLM
Middle school, high school, college. The 3 years I had to wait for my own district.

FREDDIE
What's your favorite book?

MALCOLM
Barchester Towers.

FREDDIE
Why?

MALCOLM
Because it's a good book.
Seriously, what are you still doing here?

Freddie takes a seat in an armchair by the fireplace. He motions for Malcolm to sit in the opposing chair.

His father doesn't seem to plan on leaving any time soon, so... Annoyed, Malcolm sits.

FREDDIE
What's Grob's Attack?

MALCOLM
A chess opening.

FREDDIE
You play chess with Diaz?

MALCOLM
Sometimes. Online.

FREDDIE
What's really your favorite book?

MALCOLM
...*Yertle the Turtle*.

FREDDIE
The Dr. Seuss book?

MALCOLM
It's about perceived power. Who really has it, who doesn't, and how it can be lost through vanity and selfishness. Did I impress you?

FREDDIE
Yes, actually.

MALCOLM
Goody.

FREDDIE
Quite a show last night.

MALCOLM
Who knew I could entertain?

FREDDIE
Are you in love with her or did you just feel like being cruel?

MALCOLM
I don't want to discuss Grier with you.

FREDDIE
Don't think I'd understand?

MALCOLM
Don't think it's your business.

FREDDIE
You're my son and she's my goddaughter. I think that constitutes being within the realm of my business.

MALCOLM
No.

FREDDIE
I'm asking politely.

MALCOLM
Oh? What's you *not* asking politely?

FREDDIE
Me going around you to find out
what you won't tell me.

That's the last thing Malcolm wants; his father, the King,
poking around in his affairs.

MALCOLM
Grier and I are complicated.

FREDDIE
Obviously.

MALCOLM
...We have a hard time being
together. And being apart. And
being with other people.

FREDDIE
That does sound complicated. I
imagine it gets even more
complicated when you buy the woman
you're in love with for \$10 million
dollars.

MALCOLM
I didn't buy her. I bought him.

FREDDIE
That's a sharp razor you're
splitting hairs with, dear boy.

MALCOLM
Is this it? Is this what you stuck
around for? My favorite book and a
vague discussion about Grier?

FREDDIE
I didn't want to be vague about
Grier. You did.

MALCOLM
Are you done is what I'm asking.

FREDDIE
You hate that I see you now.

MALCOLM

You don't see anything. That's why you're here asking questions other fathers would already know the answers to.

Freddie grouses. That stung a little.

Malcolm stands.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I'm assuming now we're done, and you'll be heading back to Virginia? For whatever luncheon is on your calendar?

FREDDIE

I actually might stick around for a bit.

Malcolm scowls.

MALCOLM

Suit yourself. I'm taking a shower. I have to be somewhere.

FREDDIE

Where?

MALCOLM

(exiting)

Just tell Ms. Lawry what you're hungry for and she'll get Ms. Patterson to make it for you.

He bothers not looking back as he goes.

FREDDIE

(under his breath)

Asshole.

INT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

The place is fairly busy for a Monday afternoon.

TABLE

Grier is shown to the table by a HOSTESS and given a menu.

GRIER

Thank you.

HOSTESS

Your server will be right with you.

GRIER

No rush. My client is running a little late.

HOSTESS

I'll show them to your table when they get here.

GRIER

Thank you.

The HOSTESS EXITS.

A BUSSER approaches with a basket of bread and pitcher of ice water. He pours Grier a glass and EXITS.

She rummages through her designer briefcase and takes out her cellphone.

PHONE

She checks all her socials, searching Guillaume's name.

He blocked her on every one of them.

GRIER (CONT'D)

Jesus Chrsit...

She tosses her phone back into her bag.

She takes a sip of her water and notices that it's suddenly quiet...

She looks around. The restaurant is completely empty. All the patrons and employees that were once there are gone. Like they vanished.

It's unsettling.

She grabs her bag, ready to bolt when TWO BODYGUARDS ENTER from the kitchen, standing by the swing doors.

She can see TWO MORE BODYGUARDS come through the entrance and stand guard.

She sits back down, irritated. She knows what's going on now.

(long beat)

Malcolm ENTERS from the kitchen. He crosses the restaurant to her.

He takes the seat across from her.

A beat.

GRIER (CONT'D)
You look like shit.

MALCOLM
I feel like shit.

GRIER
Good.

A beat.

MALCOLM
I'm sorry.

She chuckles wryly.

GRIER
You know, I don't do this to you. I
don't go out of my way to sabotage
your relationships with other
people.

MALCOLM
You're right. You hurt me in other
ways.

GRIER
And 'round and 'round we go.

MALCOLM
What was the point of you even
saying 'yes'?

GRIER
Maybe I thought for a minute that I
could have a little autonomy from
you. My mistake.

MALCOLM
We're two halves of the same coin.
There is no autonomy from each
other.

GRIER
Apparently.

A tear rolls down her cheek.

A beat.

GRIER (CONT'D)
Why the hell are we like this,
Malcolm?

MALCOLM
You know why.

GRIER
How many more years are we going to
keep having this fight?

MALCOLM
We're only like this because you...
You didn't let us be who we were
supposed to be in the beginning?

GRIER
We were children! There was
absolutely no way we could've held
ourselves together that young!

MALCOLM
How do you know that?! How?!

GRIER
You absolutely will not make me
feel guilty about it. Ever.

Grier breaks from the table.

BAR

She strides to the bar and pours herself two fingers of
vodka.

Then another.

Malcolm makes his way to the bar.

Grier pours herself another drink.

Malcolm takes the bottle from her and takes a swig from it.

(3 beats)

MALCOLM
I know the way we treat each other
isn't normal--

GRIER
It's toxic.

MALCOLM

Fine. Toxic. But there is something to be said for the fact that we've done nothing but bury ourselves under each other's skin since we were thirteen.

GRIER

No. That's just longevity. We've known each other for far too long.

She takes the vodka from him and guzzles a mouthful.

MALCOLM

Do you hate me? Despite all the bullshit, the perpetual merry-go-round of emotional sadism we inflict on one another, I've not once felt like I didn't love you. Like I hated you. So, do you hate me?

GRIER

...I'd feel a lot better, and it'd be a lot easier, if I could.

(long beat)

Malcolm grabs her and kisses her.

Grier tries to resist, knowing this is a bad idea, but it's Malcolm; their intensity for each other runs too deep to control.

She gives and he deepens the kiss. It's hurried and hungry.

Malcolm backs them into a table. He knocks everything atop it onto the floor and lifts her atop the table.

The BODYGUARDS discreetly turn their backs and slip through the doors they're standing by.

He lifts her dress, pulling down her panties.

Malcolm gets to his knees and goes down on her in the middle of the restaurant.

GRIER (CONT'D)

Oh, fuck!

EXT. FINE DINING RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

There's a waiting Escalade at the curb. With TWO BODYGUARDS standing by.

Malcolm and Grier casually EXIT the restaurant and climb into the car.

INT. ESCALADE - CONTINUOUS

They sit contently for a beat as the car pulls into traffic.

Grier takes her phone from her bag and opens her messages.

MALCOLM
Who are you texting?

GRIER
Rescheduling with my client. Our meeting was interrupted.

Malcolm grins at him being the "interruption."

GRIER (CONT'D)
Wipe that smirk off your face.

He can't.

Grier continues scrolling through her phone.

A beat.

Her brow furrows at her phone.

GRIER (CONT'D)
There was an explosion at the oil refinery last night.

MALCOLM
I took care of it.

She's not the least bit surprised he has.

GRIER
Good.

Malcolm YAWNS, still exhausted, having never gone to bed.

He leans over and rest his head on Grier's shoulder and lets his eyes slip closed.

Grier affectionately runs her fingers through his hair as he drifts off...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW.